

Study day

Lyon,

March 26-27, 2020

Studying medieval buildings (1850-1950). Actors, methods, issues.

Call for papers

"The 19th century was, to a considerable extent, with regard to the Middle Ages, what the 16th century had been with regard to Greco-Roman antiquity": in 1975, Michel de Bouàrd introduced his *Manuel d'archéologie médiévale* this way¹.

In France, the founding by François Guizot of the General Inspectorate of Historical Monuments, in 1830, and the Committee of Historical and Scientific Works, in 1834, accompanied a patrimonial awareness² and the emergence of new disciplines³. The creation of a chair of medieval archeology at the École des Chartes in Paris in 1847 symbolically marked the recognition of the monument as an object worthy of interest in a field of research previously focused on the sources of archives. The numerous travels that Prosper Mérimée made throughout France, for historical monuments, with the support of local institutions and learned societies, also testify to the national scope of the project. Questionnaires sent to all French communes by the Committee of Historic and Scientific Works, under the direction of Narcisse-Achille Salvandy, in 1838 and in 1847, betray the priority that the State gave to the medieval heritage⁴. This patrimonial policy, largely centralized, continued during the second half of the 19th century and, as early as the 1880s, the creation of new lessons and the proliferation of learned societies⁵ favored the study of medieval monuments and, especially, Christian buildings.

However, outside Paris, the situation was very uneven from one region to another as it depended on the initiatives of single people or persons integrated into learned societies. Only Normandy was an exception thanks to the precursory work of Arcisse de Caumont who founded, in 1834, the French Society of Archeology. Without being completely neglected, other regions did not know the same craze for the study of medieval monuments. In cities such as Vienne or Lyon, the phenomenon is probably due to the preponderance of ancient archeology. For example, the works devoted to Burgundy and Lyonnais by Joseph Bard, who defined himself as a "monumentalist", had only limited repercussions, as suggested by the lists of subscribers, at the end of

¹ M. de Bouàrd, *Manuel d'archéologie médiévale. De la fouille à l'histoire*, Paris : Sedes, 1975.

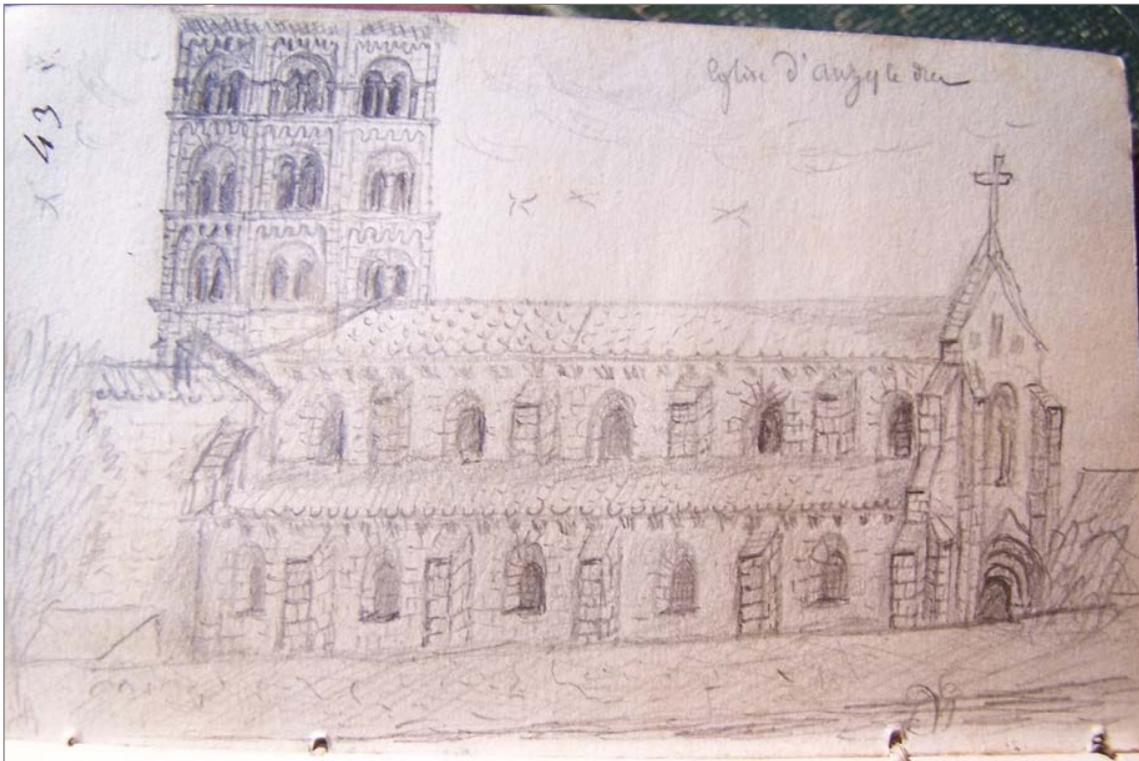
² P. Nora (dir.), *Les lieux de mémoire : la nation ***. *Le territoire, l'état, le patrimoine*, Paris : Gallimard, 1986.

³ E. et J. Gran-Aymerich, « L'archéologie au CNRS : origine et mise en place », reprint des *Cahiers pour l'histoire du CNRS*, n°9, 1990, <http://www.histcnrs.fr/pdf/cahierscnrs/gran-aymerich.pdf> ; L. Therrien, *L'histoire de l'art en France : genèse d'une discipline universitaire*, Paris : CTHS, 1998 ; S. Talenti, *L'histoire de l'architecture en France : émergence d'une discipline (1863-1914)*, Paris : Picard, 2000.

⁴ X. Charmes, *Le Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques (histoire et documents)*, Paris : Imprimerie nationale, 1886, 2 vol.

⁵ J.-P. Chaline, *Sociabilité et érudition en France : les sociétés savantes en France aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles*, Paris : CTHS, 1995.

his two major books, where the actors of regional erudition shine by their absence⁶. However, at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, the situation had evolved in Lyon: regional lessons of medieval art were given at the Faculty of Arts and at the School of Fine Arts and, moreover, learned societies multiplied and took a new interest in medieval monuments. But academics and learned societies were two parallel worlds, whose members hardly knew each other and did not collaborate.



Sketch of the church of Anzy-le-Duc by the abbot Devoucoux (1804-1870).
Société éduenne, *Carnet de voyage* 6, fol. 43 (picture: A. Nicolier).

The history of medieval architecture was thus written, from the mid-19th century, by men whose training, career and objectives were varied. In fact, they each developed their methods of analysis and their interpretations of medieval buildings, which are at the origin of our practices in art history and archeology. To be interested in these men and their works: this is the purpose of the day *Studying medieval buildings (1850-1950). Actors, methods and issues*.

Currently, the way medieval architecture was perceived in the 19th century is a topic discussed by many researchers in Western Europe. Many works deal with the point of view of the architects, like Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, who restored medieval buildings⁷. This study day is part of this dynamic while widening the perspectives: it

⁶ J. Bard, *Statistique générale des basiliques et du culte dans la ville de Lyon, précédée d'instructions sur l'archéologie sacrée dans la province ecclésiastique de cette métropole et dans une partie de celle de Besançon et suivie d'études sur divers types et sous-types d'architecture burgondo-lyonnaise, choisis dans nos diocèses du sud-est*, Lyon : Revue du Lyonnais, 1842 ; *Idem, Derniers mélanges d'archéologie sacrée*, Lyon : Chambet fils, 1847.

⁷ For example, B. Phalip et J.-Fr. Luneau (dir.), *Restaurer au XIX^e s. (I-II)*, Clermont-Ferrand : Presses universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2012-2013 ; A. Timbert, *Restaurer et bâtir : Viollet-le-Duc en Bourgogne*, Villeneuve-d'Ascq : Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2013. International symposium organized by M. Piavaux, Cl. Houbart and A. Timbert, *Matériaux, métiers et techniques. Vers une histoire matérielle du chantier de restauration (1830-1914)*, Paris-Liège-Namur, December 2017, Seminar organized by the national Institute of Art History and the University of Picardie Jules Verne : *Construire, restaurer, détruire : les chantiers du XVIII^e au XX^e siècle*, February-June 2018.

will not deal with exceptional personalities who worked on prestigious building sites in big cities. On the contrary, it will deal with figures whose works remained unknown but are eloquent testimonies on the origin of our disciplines. By their profession (departmental or diocesan architects) or simply by passion (scholars, local historians), they were field men trying to describe, to draw and to understand here a small rural church, there the remains of a keep. In short, this study day will overcome the exceptional case to be more interested in the daily lives of men rooted in their territory. Among them, the scholars who, like Father Camille de La Croix in Poitou, tirelessly traveled all over their region, will hold special attention⁸: their documentation constitutes a fundamental link in the transmission of knowledge. As of now, it is possible to say that, like historians, art historians and archaeologists have neglected the documentation they produced⁹.

This study day proposes to implement, at the scale of Western Europe, this epistemological approach of the medieval sciences dedicated to the castral, civil or religious building. It will exploit, from a multidisciplinary perspective, any material likely to feed these issues. Beyond the monuments themselves, which take the place of a major source, correspondences of scientists, archives of learned societies, photographs, old drawings, or the funds of historical monuments, for example, may be used to deal with one or more of the topics presented below.

Topics

- **« Heritage actors »**

It will be possible to focus on some of these characters who, on a local or regional level, have worked for the conservation or knowledge of medieval buildings. Attempting to trace their backgrounds and their career paths will help to understand why they studied this heritage, sometimes against the current of regional institutions, but also to question their conception of medieval art history and archeology. Did they work alone or were they involved in networks of scientists? Did they confront the result of their work with the opinions of others?

- **Scholarly documentation**

To compare the buildings preserved with the graphical and textual documentation produced on them between 1850 and 1950 will allow to understand the methods of analysis used and to evaluate the reliability of the results obtained by these scholars. It is necessary to pay more attention to their numerous archives, which are sometimes the only sources on missing buildings. Finally, it will be interesting to evaluate to what extent these pioneering works have had an impact on subsequent scientific research.

⁸ J.-M. Guilloët et N. Faucherre, « Des archéologues au service de la foi ? Le père de la Croix à Saint-Philibert-de-Grandlieu et le chanoine d'Urville à Nantes », *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest* [En ligne], 118-3 | 2011, mis en ligne le 30 novembre 2013, consulté le 19 mars 2019. <http://journals.openedition.org/abpo/2071> See also the ongoing collective work on this scholar's archives coordinated by N. Dieudonné-Glad, in the University of Poitiers : <http://sha.univ-poitiers.fr/histoire-art-archeologie/enseignants/conferences-et-valorisation/archives-de-camille-de-la-croix-pretre-et-archeologue-1831-1911/>

⁹ Concerning the relationship of historians to the documentation of scholars, see the study days organized by Jérémy Delmule et Haude Morvan, *Les médiévistes face à la documentation des érudits modernes. Méthodes et enjeux*, Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes, 7-8 mars 2019.

▪ **Scholarly backgrounds and official circles**

To wonder about the interactions, or the absence of interactions, between these provincial men and the representatives of the State or the great personalities can also lead to think about the way in which Art history and Archeology have been built, far from big cities, on territories not very conducive to such work. It will undoubtedly allow to observe varied situations from the admiration of the modest scientist towards the recognized researcher to the lack of consideration, even rejection, of any work not emanating from a character of the region.

*Procedures for the
submission*

This study day is organized for Team 3 of the ArAr *Archaeology and Archaeometry Laboratory* (UMR 5138) by the members of Axis 4 "Medieval architecture in the test of modern societies". The study day will take place in the Archives départementales du Rhône et métropolitaines de Lyon, **on 26 and 27 March 2020**.

Each paper will last from 20 to 25 minutes. Communication proposals will include a 400-word abstract and a short CV. They may be written in French or English. They should be sent jointly to Olivia Puel (puel.olivia@gmail.com), Anelise Nicolier (anelise.nicolier@orange.fr) and Laura Foulquier (laurafoulquier@wanadoo.fr) **by October 31st, 2019**.

Scientific committee

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*Stu day day
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