



National Museums in France

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Summary

Since the opening of the *Muséum du Louvre* in 1793, France has developed an important network of state funded national museums, the majority of which are dedicated to art historical displays. This is especially the case for the majority of museums run by the *Réunion des musées nationaux*, a network that manages the largest group of national museums in France. It is striking that, at any given time throughout the country's history, some of the most important creations of national museums came about as a direct result of the personal initiative and implication of the country's leaders, whether they were kings, emperors or presidents. This proves the extent to which the museum was, and is, in France, an explicitly national enterprise of great political prestige and symbolic value. National museums have, since the Revolution, been a strong factor in the French nation building process and a clear definition of their administration, in terms of central state ownership, provides the best frame for their identification.

The Louvre, which obviously stands out as France's most important national museum, may best be defined as a 'Universal Museum' and thus as a reflection of the Enlightenment philosophy that greatly influenced the French Revolution, and the political agenda behind the establishment of the museum itself. However the breath of its scope, which has always strived for universality, is also the result of France's status as a former Empire. Its collections were very much formed and defined during the era of Napoleonic expansion and, although it cannot be considered to be a colonial museum, it has throughout history benefitted from France's relationships with colonies or areas of great political influence. The museum has contributed to founding France's identity on values and ideas that places it beyond its national and political borders.

The clearest tendency that may be observed in the evolution of France's national museums over time is geographic and related to the country's extremely centralised form of government. This means that the great majority of national museums are indeed concentrated in and around the area of Paris (approx. 70%) with a remarkable number of major institutions situated along the banks of the Seine river: the Louvre, Trocadéro (musée de l'homme), Quai Branly, Orsay etc. They are also, by far and away, the most visited (DEP, 2010: 34).

The second very clear tendency is the definite hegemony of the art museum that has received its own administrative structure with the RMN, a phenomena which should be considered as significant when observed in relation to the, relatively speaking, small contingent of history museums. Scientific, historical and technological museums tend to be directly related to one of the other government ministries and form less well-coordinated networks.

These facts indicate that a choice of France's five most important national museums (out of the eighty museums given in the annex) may neither be representative from a geographical point of view nor from a disciplinary one. It can only consider those institutions whose prestige has made them France's most famous ambassadors of culture – both for the French themselves and

internationally (France is the country with the greatest number of tourists visiting every year). The central hegemony of the Louvre over the world of French museums has already been stated. In choosing five major national museums, an attempt was made to encompass a variety of disciplines and territories, however categories related to France's ideology of culture guided the selection that mainly seeks to give an idea of the significance of these institutions in terms of the national paradigm. It tries to illustrate the main ideologies that appear to be at work in the policies and programs responsible for the development of France's national museums: the promotion of universal values (mainly of art); the illustration of national origins, culture and history and the representation of national grandeur and commemoration. One might add a more contemporary ideological tendency that has been put forward in policies behind the most recent national museum creations: the desire to represent diversity and to establish places of cultural dialogue (*Cité de l'immigration, Musée du quai Branly*). The following table provides basic information on five of the most well known and visited of France's national museums. Each museum will be considered as a case study at the end of this report, and taken as the most representative example in a specific genealogy of museums read as the expression of the ideologies outlined above.

Summary table, France

Name	Inaugurated	Initiated	Actors	Ownership	Type	Values	Temporal reach	Style Location
Musée du Louvre	1793	1793	Royal collection, nationalised (1793) by Revolutionary government. Today run by the RMN, Ministry for Culture.	State owned, managed as an autonomous national museum. Établissement public administratif.	Antiquities, Greco-Roman, Egyptian, Oriental etc. Decorative Arts, Fine Arts, European old master paintings, Islamic civilisations.	Oriental antiquities (+Islam), Egyptian ant; Grec-Rom-Etr ant; Paintings, Sculpture, Decorative Arts Europe (middle ages to 1848).	10 000 BC to 1848	Renaissance, classical extensions (17 th -19 th c.), Former royal residence.
Domaine national de Versailles: Musée des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.	1798 1837 (history museum)	1798	Former royal residence, nationalised. Today run by the RMN, Ministry for Culture.	State owned, managed as an autonomous national museum. Établissement public administratif.	Architecture, Urbanism, Decorative Arts, Religious Art, Fine Arts and History	Royal apartments with their decors. History of France from the 16 th to 19 th c.	17 th to 19 th c.	Former royal palace rococo style. Versailles, Ile-de-France.
Musée d'archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye	1867	1862	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. Service à compétence nationale.	Archaeology, Prehistory, Protohistory	Archaeology and history of France	Prehistory to 300 AD	Former royal palace, early Renaissance. Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

National museum of the Army, Hotel des Invalides	1905	1896	Ministry of Defense, Société des Amis du Musée de l'Armée	State owned, managed as an autonomous national museum. Établissement public administratif.	Military History, Art	European arms and armoury. Military souvenirs. Tomb of Napoleon Bonaparte, Displays dedicated to WWI and WWII. Memorial Charles de Gaulle.	Prehistory to 2000	Invalides (17 th c.), home for war veterans, Paris.
Musée Quai Branly and Pavillon des Sessions (Louvre)	2006	1878, 1937, 1960	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research	State owned, managed as an autonomous national museum. EPA	Ethnography, Art	Museum of the art and civilization of non-European culture, Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas.	500 AD to present day	Purpose built museum (Jean Nouvel), post-modernist, Paris.

Introduction: Important historical stages in the development of French national museums

The French Revolution, from *biens nationaux* to national museums

It would be difficult to imagine a more explicit relationship than that which can be observed between the defining political moments of the French nation-state and the establishment of the principle of the national museum. Between 1789 and 1870 every important political regime change has been related to the development of a specific museum project: Napoléon's Louvre, Charles X's new antiquities gallery in the Louvre (1827); the king Louis-Philipp's at *Musée d'histoire de France*, Versailles (1837) and Napoléon III's *Musée des Antiquités nationales* (1862).

The radical origin of this principle is of course, the French Revolution, a foundational moment for museum history due in part to the fact that this unprecedented political upheaval brought about one of the most massive transfers of property in European history (from the Church, clergy, aristocracy, royal houses, etc. to the new state). This transfer and the confiscations of cultural property in other European countries during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars provided the material basis for some of France's oldest and largest museums (although the majority of the collections confiscated internationally were returned after 1815).

The Revolutionary period developed the principle of *biens nationaux* or national possessions that were to be recognized as national heritage or *patrimoine* (Poulot, 1992). A set of criteria was progressively established in order to identify and conserve those objects of sufficient artistic and historical importance as to be deemed worthy of being transmitted as national heritage to future generations. In order to fulfil this objective and to make pedagogical use of these objects, a series of museums was founded on the basis of sometimes already existing royal or ecclesiastical collections: *Museum du Louvre*, the *Museum d'histoire naturelle*, the *Musée des Arts et Métiers* and the *Musée des Monuments Français* (though this museum no longer exists, it has become an important paradigm for national art and history museums in France). At the same time, a centrally organized network of municipal museums was organised by national decree of the Minister for Interior, Jean-Antoine Chaptal in 1801 (*décret Chaptal*). The revolutionary period has become paradigmatic in French museum history as the foundational period of invention and the establishment of first policy of national heritage although recent studies have also shown that the development of the notion of a public museum largely predates the Revolution. By opening the Louvre, the leaders of the Revolution brought to fruition a cultural and social idea that can be observed in the discourse of philosophers, critics and statesmen from the 1750's onwards. Institutionally, the *Ancien Régime* also made several attempts to create a public gallery for the presentation of the king's collection that predate the famous opening of 1793 (McClellan, 1994; Pommier, 1995).

In subsequent decades, two other major museums were to find their home in former royal palaces: Louis-Philippe's *Musée d'histoire* transformed Versailles in 1837, whilst under Louis-Napoleon the Second Empire and the history of France were celebrated in the *Musée des Souverains* (created in the Louvre); in parallel, the castle of Saint-Germain-en-Laye became the site of a representation of France's ancient origins in the *Musée des Antiquités nationales*. The Revolution founded the national museums and formulated an ideology of democratic access underlining the educational and socially elevating potential of public collections. However in practical terms, many museums were in a very chaotic state after having received a massive influx of material and

many measures needed to be taken in order to implement its ideology coherently. The 1848 Revolution provoked a second wave of political voluntarism in this area, promoting public appropriation of the collections through extensive cataloguing operations, a policy that was continued under Napoleon III. It included major reforms to renovate and restructure the state's museums undertaken by the count Nieuwerkerke that sought to rationalize the distribution of national collections in terms of new disciplinary evolutions (Granger, 2005).

National museums during the Third and Fourth Republic (1871-1959)

The Third Republic has received less scholarly attention than the period of the French Revolution, yet it was an extremely important period for museum history with an unprecedented wave of new museums opening across the country. The Universal Exhibitions were, as in other countries, catalysts for important museum creations, such as France's national ethnographic collections established in the Trocadéro palace in 1878, later to become known as the *Musée de l'Homme*. It was here too that the architect and restorer of historical buildings Eugène Viollet-le-Duc installed a major museum for architectural casts: the *Musée de la Sculpture comparée* later renamed *Musée des monuments français* in reference to the museum created at the end of the 18th century by Alexandre Lenoir, cf. case studies below. It displayed a history of architectural styles in France and compared antique with mediaeval-modern French sculpture, in order to show that the French medieval and modern productions were of equal quality to work of the Greeks and the Romans. However this demonstration quickly came to be considered as superfluous and the museum's name was changed when this comparative museography was abandoned – retaining only the French monuments in its presentation.

In terms of general museum administration, the most important event was the creation of the RMN in 1895. It was a response to the difficult financial situation of France's national museums and a competitive reaction fuelled by national rivalry especially with Germany and England (Callu, 1994: 443). The RMN's role was above all designed to help finance acquisitions and to handle the question of donations. From 1921 it also developed a *service commercial* which became an important part of its activity, including the publication of museum catalogues, reproductions of all kinds and the commercialisation of other related souvenir type products for museum visitors. The creation of the RMN did not however resolve the problem of limited public expenditure during this period that may also be characterized by the important contribution and patronage of collectors and sponsors (Long, 2007).

The discourse related to important donations that expanded or founded so many collections during this time is very much coloured and motivated by strong nationalist impulses. The direct impact of private initiative can be seen with the establishments of national museums related to gifts made to the state such as the *Musée national de la Légion d'Honneur et des Ordres de Chevalerie* first created through the initiative of medal holders. Amongst the RMN museums based on the collections of artistes or private collectors, we also find the *Musée Guimet* (1889, Paris); the *musée Magnin* (Dijon, 1937), the *Musée Gustave Moreau* (Paris, 1898) ; the *Musée Rodin* (Paris, 1911) ; the *Musée Jean-Jacques Henner* (Paris, 1926) and the *Musée franco-américain du château de Blérancourt* (1924). The museums of the *Institut de France* are also excellent examples of private initiatives that gave way to national museums.

Cultural policy and French Museums between 1959 and 1990

The role of André Malraux and the creation of a Ministry of Culture in 1959 do not appear to have had great consequences for the development of national museums (Boylan, 1992: 92). Their financing was not increased. Their administrative situation however became more complex as a split was operated between those museums managed by the ministry of Education and the ministry of Culture – with the ministry of culture mainly taking over the art historically orientated museums already part of the RMN.

In the 1960's the museum as an institution came under great criticism, its role as a provider of democratic access to knowledge and artistic beauty was violently questioned. It was attacked for its inertia, its inability to adapt and the absence of a truly pedagogical approach. The now famous sociological study carried out by Pierre Bordieu and Alain Darbel (1966), translated as *The Love of Art: European museums and their Public*, showed that the museum was not as open to all classes of society as it claimed. According to these authors, the museum was designed for the expectations of an ideal visitor who was more educated than the average citizen, let alone the socially disadvantaged citizen. The national museum and its treasures were thus to be read as the prerogative of the upper class and visitors were not thought to share equally in the wealth of knowledge that the museum could offer. This sociological perspective directly impacted on how museums were henceforth to define their pedagogical mission and it greatly influenced the conception of a wave of new national museums that were established in France in the 1970's and 1980's. Jacques Sallois characterized this period as one of 'unprecedented development' (Sallois, 2005: 3), especially remarkable as it did appear to be the direct reaction to this time of great pessimism about the role of museums in society.

The following two decades may also be characterized by the important developments in the system of public financing for museums. The *Loi-programme des musées* was adopted in 1978 facilitating major renovations and massive overhaul projects in museums across the country with a further important expansion of the budget under the ministry of Jack Lang (1979-1986). These major investments on the part of the government also profited new projects (such as the *musée Picasso* and the *musée d'Orsay*) and such significant renovations as the *Grand Louvre* project. They brought the museum back into the public eye in a more positive way and were also paralleled by an unprecedented wave of new museums established in medium and small towns across the country: forty-one museums were completed in the provinces between 1988 and 1991 (Boylan, 1992: 108).

This renewal was also fuelled by the concept of the *écomusée* or ecomuseum, a newly defined term coined by the Minister of Environmental affairs, Robert Poujade, in 1971 and whose ultimate goal was community development (Poulard, 2007). Indeed, although interest for the principle was expressed by representatives of central government – indeed the politics promoting this *nouvelle muséologie* were also firmly supported by the Lang ministry in the 1980s - it was more particularly conceived of for the representation of local concerns, to take into account natural, human and cultural environments (Poulot, 2004). It was also used to deal with pressing social issues such as the decline of major industrial regions such as *Le Creusot*. One should add that although the term *nouvelle muséologie* (Desvallées, 1992) translates easily into *New Museology*, it was in fact first used in France amongst museum professionals of the 1980s such as Georges-Henri

Rivière and is not necessarily equivalent with the concepts expressed in Peter Vergo's famous anthology (Vergo, 1989).

Boylan remarks on the fact that government support for national museums seems to be indifferent to right/left wing changes in power, as a relatively consistent consensus concerning their importance exists at the highest levels (Boylan, 1992: 111). One cannot help but consider the important presidential initiatives in the sphere of national museums in the last quarter of the 20th century as striking echoes of the regal or imperial tradition of establishing new museums practiced by the French sovereigns of the 19th century: Georges Pompidou made his direct contribution with *Beaubourg* (1971); Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was instrumental in the development of the *musée d'Orsay* project, the *Cité des sciences* and the *Cité de la Musique* (1978); François Mitterrand played a vital role in the establishment of the archaeological, site-museum Bibracte – where the results of the digs are presented alongside a museum of Celtic civilisation across Europe; and most recently Jacques Chirac played a decisive role in the creation of the *musée du Quai Branly* (Price, 2007). Even more recently, a new project for a Museum of national history has been the object of direct and voluntary statements by the current president Nicolas Sarkozy.

A new approach to museum building was developed in reaction to the critique of the museum as an elitist institution with undertakings such as the *Beaubourg* project (*Centre Pompidou*). President Georges Pompidou announced the plan for a new national Centre for Contemporary Arts in December 1969. Its conception might be considered as the national version of the series of *maisons de la culture*, those polyvalent culture centres that had began making their appearance all over the country in local contexts under the Malraux ministry. The Centre Beaubourg was to be impressive by its size and scope, integrating different functions including the museum, the library and a centre for experimental contemporary music (IRCAM). The chosen architecture for the museum (Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano) was to make a modernist, iconoclast statement in the heart of historic Paris.

Cultural policy and French National Museums since 1990

A strong specificity of the general organisation and structure of the French museum landscape is that the vast majority of its institutions today belong to a nationwide coordinated network, the *Direction des musées de France* (DMF). All museums fulfilling a specific set of criteria may become part of this network, whatever the governing or financing body managing it may be. Its role is to help promulgate a national policy in terms of museography, public access and pedagogy and its influence goes beyond that of national museums *stricto sensu*. The DMF was formerly a service of the Department of Education and up until 1945, it actually only managed its thirty national museums and to a certain extent exercised a kind of power of inspection and control over the museums of the provinces as they are called, that is to say the major municipal museums of France's larger towns. The DMF was radically transformed in 1991, it is now related to the Ministry of Culture and to the Ministry of Education, and has aimed to become an organisation which, as the title implies, attempts to coordinate the activities and the policy of all of France's museums, managing such nationwide events as the *Night of Museums* (*Nuit des musées*).

The expansion of the DMF's responsibilities to create an all-inclusive network of French museums is supported by the 2002 law defining the legal criteria that need to be met in order for

an institution to claim the title of *Musée de France* whether it be state-owned or owned by any other non profit-making private or public legal entity (all state-owned museums however automatically received the title). In return the museums that fulfil these criteria, related to their function and social utility, may benefit from state funding and the services of expertise provided by the DMF. This newly formed family of museums is governed by the *Haut conseil des musées de France*, a council that is made up of 7 representatives from central government, 15 from local government and professionals from the museum world.

In parallel to this, another major reform has led to the development of a new system of museum management and financing. National museums have, like the *Réunion des Musées nationaux* itself, been transformed into autonomous state establishments that manage their own budgets and profits directly and may also turn to private funding to complete their budgets for acquisitions and to expand their activities. Private input has increased inside of public institutions through a series of laws relating to patronage and sponsorship (Benhamou, 1998). In 1968 the first law on *dations* was passed – during André Malraux’s time as Minister of Culture. A *dation* (not to be confused with donation) allows private parties to pay their heritage tax in the form of art works that they have inherited, rather than through cash payments. However, in 2003, a new law considerably increased tax incentives, this time for companies who can benefit from tax cuts by becoming patrons of France’s national museums.

Since 2000 one can also observe a tendency to decentralize cultural institutions and their management. In 2002 a law introduced a new type of public establishment of cultural cooperation (*établissement public de coopération culturelle*) allowing the government to share financing with regional or departmental governing institutions. The case of the Louvre-Lens and Pompidou-Metz are examples of this as well as illustrations of an effort to decentralize the concentration of national museums and art works in the Paris and Ile-de-France area (Benhamou, 1998).

In 2007, a new Agency of Museums (*Agence France Museum*) was created to provide support to an important international project, the *Louvre* in Abu Dhabi (in fact eleven of France’s major national museums will contribute to this project); another example of such an international agreement is the Centre Pompidou in Shanghai. These examples will be interesting to follow, as they will determine how France’s national museums function in the context of a global society, where museums such as the Louvre export their expertise and their image, whilst remaining nationally funded institutions.

The Public in French national museums: overview

Public access to national treasures was a major ideological banner in the promotion of national museums during the Revolution. The political objective for the creation of the Muséum du Louvre was clearly defined from the outset by the Minister of the Interior, the citizen Roland in 1792: ‘It should be open to everyone. This will be a national monument. There will not be a single individual who does not have the right to enjoy it. It will have such an influence on the mind, it will so elevate the soul, it will so excite the hearts that it will be one of the most powerful ways of proclaiming the illustriousness of the French Republic’ (quoted by Duncan and Wallach, 1980: 56). Throughout the nineteenth century however it is clear that two types of public were

given privileged treatment: artists and foreigners, both were usually allowed to access most collections even on days when these were closed to the general public.

Access remained generally free of charge until 1921 when, after a long and vigorous parliamentary debate, a law was passed allowing museums to charge a limited entry fee (Sundays excepted). In 1989, the Sunday exception was revoked, however a largely acclaimed decision in 2000 introduced free access for all on the first Sunday of every month. Debates have remained lively concerning the question of admission, which of course appears to be a vital element in any move toward cultural democratisation, and special conditions are maintained for children under 18, the unemployed and senior citizens. In terms of the public in national museums it would appear that, according to visitor statistics, the determined investment made by the government since the beginning of the 1970s has paid off with visitor figures that have tripled between 1980 and 2000 (Sallois, 2005, 95).

The professionalization of the curator: overview

Not only does France have a usually unified and centralized system of museum management but in terms of professionalization, it benefits from two major institutions that provide specific courses of education for museum professionals. The first goes back to 1882, when the *École du Louvre* was created to provide a solid education for those entering the ranks of the rapidly increasing number of museums in France. Up until then, the image of the average curator was that of the artist or the dilettante amateur using his time in the museum to pursue his own interests and research.

Another major period of reflection in terms of professionalization began in the 1970 and was related to the increasing emphasis being placed on museum pedagogy, creating a wider variety of professions with new specific roles related to different levels of what has come to be known as cultural mediation.

More recently, the *École nationale du Patrimoine* (ENP) founded in 1990, bestows upon its graduates the official title of *conservateur des musées nationaux*, its objectives, structure and system of recruitment are based on the same principle as the famous *École nationale de l'administration* (ENA). The creation of this school has led to a wealth of discussion on the education and profile of museum staff in France and the history of this profession. Admission is based on an extensive and rigorous art history and history exam and once admitted, students follow a two-year programme of general courses on the administration and mediation of collections as well as doing several internships. This system is very much a French exception, which trains curators first and foremost as polyvalent general managers rather than recognized specialists in the field related to the collections under their responsibility. Museums run by other ministries than the Ministry of Culture may also recruit according to different criteria, depending on the museum's specific field. It should also be noted that, in comparison to other countries, there is a general absence of museums in universities although these are also state owned and run by the Ministry of Education that is second only to the Ministry of Culture in terms of the number of national museums that it manages.

One of the aims of the creation of the *Institut national d'histoire de l'art* in Paris, founded in 2002, was to house specialized laboratories for some of France's largest universities as well as the national art history library and the ENP, was to bring the world of the museum and art historical

research closer together. Its creations demonstrate, once again, to what a large extent the French system most essentially equates the museum with the concerns of art history and archaeology.

Categories of national museums in France

The criteria of ownership, in a sense provide the only clear frame of definition, for indeed as a group, France's national museums appear to defy systematic classification (Sallois, 2005: 14). After placing the *musée du Louvre* in a kind of category of its own, Sallois' typology rather haphazardly regroups all of France's museums according to a very nationally specific categories, the first of which are castle-museums, followed by museums dedicated to different types of art, divided into different chronological and geographical types, with an extra category for decorative arts and for history museums (Sallois, 2005: 14-27). Alternatively, one might adopt a disciplinary typology, considering museums as belonging to one of four main groups: art, cultural/historical, ethnographic and natural (Aronsson, 2008, 7). This however does not help us to class such a museum as the Louvre, which is indeed historically to be considered as an art museum, yet it has come to encompass, although from a predominantly aesthetic perspective, cultural, historical and even ethnographic approaches to its collections. It follows that the most effective way of establishing a clear relationship between political history and the country's cultural policy is to consider separately the history of the different administrative structures of ownership and management.

The Réunion des musées nationaux (1895)

The *Réunion des musées nationaux* was founded in 1895 as one of France's first major independently run public law establishments. It came about as the result of long negotiations and debates over the increasingly difficult financial situation of the four French museums what were officially recognized as national museums at this time: the Louvre (1793), Luxembourg (1818), Versailles (1837) and Musée des Antiquités-nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1862). These institutions respectively displayed ancient art, contemporary art, history and archaeology. The *musée du Luxembourg*, dedicated to the works of living artists, first opened in 1818. Today it no longer exists; contemporary art - not only national - is today presented in the Palais de Tokyo.

In order to allow for a more flexible management of the important acquisition budgets necessary to keep expanding their collections, the museums called for a new administrative structure providing them with greater independence from the direct state control exercised by the Ministry for Education. More particularly it was to allow for a more fluid system of acquisitions financing, thus increasing the institution's reactivity to the art market and encouraging the support of private donations. The RMN's first financial capital was funded by the sale of the diamonds of the former royal house.

Today the RMN is the coordinating and auxiliary institution of over 34 national museums that currently function according to two different systems of management. Indeed, in 1990, the RMN was transformed into an *Établissement public à caractère industriel et commercial* (EPIC). This new administrative status means that whilst it remains an establishment that is state owned and financed, it is run by a regime of private law that allows it to use its own profits to finance its activities. Over 20 of its associated museums remain directly under the management of the Ministry for Culture (through the *Direction des musées de France*) as *Services à compétence nationale*. The

others handle their own budget and are defined as EPA's, *établissements public administratifs* (the Louvre, Versailles and the musée d'Orsay) meaning that they are themselves autonomous in terms of their budget and can use the profits that they generate and reinject them directly back into their own projects. However, they retain their status as public establishments: their staff remains state employees and they are administered according to the public law regime. This means however that these important museums, the most successful and lucrative of the RMN group, have their own budget and no longer contribute to the common 'cash pot' of the RMN as before. An unfortunate consequence of this is that the RMN has less money to distribute to its more modest member museums.

All of the museums however remain affiliated to the RMN as a support organisation that organizes and finances exhibitions, publications and acquisitions. The RMN has become a label that clearly represents France's activity in the field of art museums and related publications. In terms of the territories and disciplines that its museums represent, they are, for the greatest part, exclusively dedicated to the Fine Arts. Although the RMN cannot be exclusively defined as a group of National Fine Art museums, all of its museums do however fall into the category of the most traditional museum types dedicated to art history, history and archaeology collections.

National museums not coordinated by the RMN under the tutelage of the Ministries of Culture, Education, Higher Education and Research, Defence, Finance or Justice

In addition to the easily identifiable administrative group of national museums run by the RMN, we must add as unequivocally national, a group of 20 museums also owned and run by the state but run by other ministries. These museums depend either directly on financing from specific ministries through their departments (i.e. *Direction des musées de France* ; *Direction de la mémoire, du patrimoine et des archives of the Ministry of Defence*) or they are run as autonomous public establishments (either EPA or EPIC) whose main subsidies are provided by a specific ministry. Such autonomous institutions have become the dominant trend in terms of new national museum creations. A series of new titles has also been introduced for these most recent inventions: *Centre Georges Pompidou*, *Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine*, *Cité des sciences* or *Institut du monde arabe*, in order to underline their more multi-faceted and multi-functional nature. In a sense, this illustrates an effort to redefine the concept of the national museum in terms of its form and its activities, based on an ideology developed in the 1960s whose aim it is to break down elitist structures and provide institutions that are more open and welcoming to a wider public.

The relative importance and the types of collections/themes that these state run museums display vary too greatly for us to define any kind of general principle to characterize this group. Their collections do however tend to be based on a pedagogic principle more related to the fields of the sciences, technology and society than to the art world (cf. II this is the direct result of the division of management operated with the creation of the Ministry of Culture in 1959). There is a general trend in the newer institutions to break with the principle of high art as illustrated by the ideology of the Centre Pompidou (cf. III).

Usually considered as a private institution, the *Musée des arts décoratifs* might also be defined as a rather unique exception in this category of national museums created and run by a state ministry. It was founded by the *Union centrale des Arts décoratifs* an associative organisation initiated by

Antonin Proust, in 1882 (he was at the time serving as France's first minister of the Arts and Manufactures). The museum moved into the Louvre palace in 1905, and since then has been related to the state by way of an official convention. Although strictly speaking it remains a private institution, it is housed in a public building and principally financed by the French state; in the museum world it represents one of France's unique examples of cooperation between the state and a private association. Its collections are principally dedicated to the history of the decorative arts in France, and as such it is truly and nearly exclusively national in scope.

Museums of the Institut de France

The status of these museums is somewhat particular and one might question the validity of classifying them as a group of national museums. Indeed, from a legal point of view, they are strictly speaking private institutions run as independent foundations that are managed by the *Institut de France*. Yet the *Institut*, made up of five separate scientific academies whose establishment goes back to the seventeenth century, has always been directly related to state power in a way that is *sui generis*. The *Institut* is a public establishment whose existence was constitutionally defined during the French Revolution. It is directly financed by the state but entirely free in how it handles its own budget. Its mission is to provide an independent body of scholars to serve as a reference to the highest aims of science and scholarship; the Institut indeed describes itself as the 'parlement du monde savant'. Its relatively liberal status has allowed it to become the guardian and controlling body of the roughly one thousand private foundations that it has received over the last two centuries through donations and legacies. The seven museums that are run under its tutelage (see table) all represent the legacies of private collectors, bestowed on the *Institut* between 1870 and 1950. The *Institut* certainly inherited these collections thanks to its specific status as a national institution of the greatest prestige, a public institution that enjoys the benefits of great freedom in its management decisions, an advantage that no other state body can claim to attract private donors. As such it provides an institutional framework that has accepted and provided for the often-constraining conditions accompanying these donations by collectors. The common denominator of all of these collections is that they are to be maintained and presented to the public on the sites and in the manner in which their owners organized them. Such requirements for the maintenance of a private patrimony in its original state could not have been met by the ministry of Education or the RMN. These museums are, in a sense, the direct echo of the taste of individual citizens who desired to make their personal heritage available to the nation. Such collector museums exist in every country but the specificity of this French example is their affiliation, as a kind of group, to a national scientific institution that epitomizes French science and expertise and that symbolizes universal values of art and culture (*académiciens* are famously called *les immortels*). Donating a collection and desiring it to be managed by the *Institut de France* legitimises the private collector in a very clear sense. One may argue that this group of museums represents a national reality in relation to the status of the private collector and the collector's role in the establishment of national heritage. Furthermore, the museums themselves are the repositories of collections of national magnitude: i.e. the Musée Marmottan holds one of the most important collection of impressionist paintings in France; the duc d'Aumale's beautiful collection displayed as the *musée Condé*, in the *château de Chantilly* which for

centuries belonged to one of the most powerful families in France, represents the second largest collection of old master paintings in France after the Louvre.

Relating ‘peripheral museums’, owned by municipal or regional administration to the national principal

Many major regional or municipal museums may be considered to represent nationally significant values, themes, subjects yet including them would mean opening a too vast number of museums up to our classification and it seems very difficult to establish criteria which could legitimately allow us to include some but not others. However, as shown by Daniel Sherman ‘the national and local dimensions of French museums are intertwined’ (Sherman, 1989: 5). The creation of France’s major municipal museums was not only the result of the individual initiative of each town but also of a clearly defined policy emanating from the central government in Paris. From this perspective it seems necessary to outline certain aspects of the history of their establishment.

A decree issued in 1801 by the minister of the interior, Chaptal, founded the principle of a government policy for France’s main municipal museums (Pommier, 1986). This policy was intended to distribute across the country those objects of artistic value that the Louvre could not and did not need to absorb. It was a gesture of conciliation that was to appease the difficult relationship between the capital and the provinces in the wake of the revolutionary conflicts that had pitted different parts of the nation against each other. The decree named 12 major cities, that already had a museum structure, which were to receive art works that had been confiscated or looted across Europe by the revolutionary and Napoleonic armies – it was an attempt to organise the redistribution of the vast quantities of art treasures nationalized during the Revolution (cf. II A). Throughout the nineteenth century before the creation of the *Direction des musées de France* (cf. II), state commissioned inspectors travelled the country to report on and advise on the future of the municipal museums. This advisory role was also supported by the continuing systems of redistribution that had been initiated in 1801 (DMF/Musée du Louvre, 2007). The Louvre clearly became the model for what a museum should be and its existence is echoed in the collection policy and construction of new museums across the French territory throughout the Nineteenth century.

No national history museum exists in France today; recent debates have tried to establish a project for a new institution (directly called for by the president Nicolas Sarkozy in 2009). It is interesting to observe that, in the absence of such a national institution, the most complete museums on the subject of the nation’s political, social and territorial history are the regional and city museums (Musée Gadagne of Lyon, Musée Arletan, the musée Alsacien in Strasbourg, the musée du château des ducs de Bretagne of Nantes and the Musée d’Aquitaine à Bordeaux). In some cases, national models are appropriated and used to express regional identity, allowing regions to appear as nations within the nation. The Félibrigien movement, a local academic movement dedicated to the langue d’Oc and the culture of the southern regions of France, for example initiated the *musée Arletan* in the hope of locating the culture of a « nation provençale ».

In terms of national identity, museums such as the *musée Carnavalet*, a museum of the history of Paris, are particularly important. *Carnavalet*, although dedicated to the history of the city is also very much a museum of the history of the French Revolution. Indeed a certain number of museums that are not state owned but which illustrate past conflicts that were of national

consequence thus appear to be particularly important for the narrative of national history in the museum: the Centre d'Histoire de la Résistance et de la Déportation de Lyon, Mémorial de Caen, Historial de la Grande Guerre, Mémorial Charles de Gaulle. This is also true of a series of museums related to the bicentennial commemoration of the French Revolution: Historial de la Vendée, Musée de La Révolution Française. It may be noted that the most important creations in terms of memorial museum in the last fifty years have not been national but regional or municipal, a phenomenon that needs to be taken into consideration.

Museums of the Former French Colonies

The museum has been identified as an integral part of the colonial system and post-colonial studies have, in the last two decades, contributed to showing how the nation promoted and justified its colonial action in these institutions (Oulebsir, 2004; Taffin, 2000; Gaugue, 1999). It should be added however that this post-colonial analysis took place later in France than in the anglophone world and appears to be developing according to somewhat different theoretical premises (Forsdick; Murphy, 2003).

The only clearly national museum directly related to the colonies in France was built relatively late in comparison to other European nations - the *Musée de la France d'Outre-mer*, constructed for the Colonial Exhibition in Paris in 1931 (Dias, 1998: 22). Made permanent after the exhibition, it presented, up until 1960, a history of the French Empire from the crusades to contemporary times and an art museum dedicated to the diversity of indigenous art forms and their influence on France. The relative tardiness of the creation of this museum also holds true for the museums founded in the colonies themselves. Just as we might question the relationship between the establishment of a network of national museums and the larger provincial and regional institutions, the history of museums created in the former French colonies should be considered in order to ascertain how they can be defined in relation to the national institutions of the Metropole. In a sense this question inverts our subject and we find museums that were colonial but that became the basis of the future national museums in the colonies after their independence.

The museums created in the French colonies were all due to the initiative of scientific and historic societies more or less directly related to the colonial governments in place. Whilst one may consider some of them to fall more clearly in the category of private or associative initiatives, some were directly promoted and influenced by state officials and clearly part of colonial policy.

The case of Algeria (conquered in 1830) and the creation of the *Musée algérien du Louvre* in 1845 shows that the first reflex of the Metropole was not to create museums in the colonies but to bring back the objects to Paris and exhibit them there (Oulebsir, 2004: 18). However, the French that began to settle in Algeria quickly started working against this exodus of cultural heritage to the Metropole by creating historical societies and administrations to check this movement. In 1853, the mayor of Constantine, Alphonse Étienne Zoepfell, proposed that the French State finance the creation of a museum in each of the three principal provinces of Algeria in collaboration with the municipal governments in place (Oulebsir, 2004: 107).

Yet only one museum really grew out of a state financed initiative: the project proposal for *Musée-Bibliothèque of Alger* was made as early as 1833 by the civil treasurer Stanislas Bresson to the Ministry of War. It was here that the antique objects that were not to be sent to France from the

three provinces of Constantine, Oran and Alger were deposited. The collection began to be seriously organized and structured in the 1850s. It was placed under the administrative control of the prefect of Alger but from 1848 onwards it was directly financed by the *ministère de l'Instruction publique* (Ministry for Education). Its collections quickly gained considerable notoriety, it became Algeria's principal museum and was soon more important than the *Musée algérien de Paris* situated in the Louvre which actually closed during the 1860s (Oulebsir, 2004: 111). Today it is Algeria's *Musée national des antiquités et des arts islamiques*.

The clearest national-colonial initiative was the creation of the *Musée national des beaux-arts d'Alger*, inaugurated by Paul Doumergue, President of the French Republic, on the 5th of May, 1930. It was founded on the basis of the former municipal art museum and was established to celebrate the centenary of the colonisation of Algeria. Today it is Algeria's national art museum, one of the largest on the African continent. Another museum was created to celebrate the centenary: the Maréchal Franchet-d'Espéray museum (also known as the *musée de l'Armée d'Afrique, Musée historique de l'Algérie*). It was situated in the middle of the old city and was modelled after the *Musée de l'Armée* in the *Invalides* in Paris. For Oulebsir, these museums were different from earlier establishments in that they did not seek to present local culture but to clearly establish a French history of Algeria (Oulebsir, 2004: 194).

This may not be said of the case of the *École française d'Extrême-Orient*, created in 1900 at the bequest of the *Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* and the Governor General of Indochina. Here, the motivation was mainly to organize scholarly activities and it was hoped that the establishment of a museum would contribute to preserving the cultural heritage of the area (i.e. the EFEO took charge of the archaeological dig at Angkor from 1907 onwards), it was created at the same time as the *Directoire des musées et des monuments historiques* (the colonial government agency for heritage management). The EFEO soon expanded to include a library and a museum in Hanoi (1902), the *musée Louis Finot* was built to exhibit the results of archaeological expeditions. During a new reopening in 1929, Finot declared that it would serve the triple purpose of being a 'scientific, educational and touristic' institution (quoted by Wright, 1996: 127). Wright (1996: 127) goes on to state that 'The École Française d'Extrême-Orient sought to study and display the art of a nation, but that nation – and therefore the 'culture' being presented – was itself an artificial creation. France assembled the colony it called Indochina during thirty years of conquest.' The rooms were each dedicated to the memory of a French military hero, government official, or scholar who had served in Indochina and the objects were labelled first in French and then in *Guoc Ngu* which is a Latinised transcription of Vietnamese (Wright, 1996: 128). In the years that followed the EFEO expanded this initiative into a network of five other museums founded on the same principle in Danang, Saigon, Hué, Phnom Penh and Battambang. Interestingly, since 1958, the building in Hanoi houses the first National Museum in Vietnam dedicated to the history of its territory from prehistory to 1945.

The history of museography in French West Africa begins later and coincides with the history of the IFAN, the *Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, a federal institution which was created in 1936 to 'stimulate scientific research in every domain and to ensure liaison and coordination' by the Governor General of the *Afrique occidentale française* (Ravenhill, 1996: 266). It was run until 1965 by Théodore Monod of the *Muséum d'histoire naturelle* in Paris who modelled on his home institution a number of research centers and museums throughout French West Africa (i.e. Dakar, Saint-

Louis, Abidjan, Conakry, Bamako, Niamey, Porto-Novo, Ouagadougou, Douala etc.). Whilst French museum building in Asia and North Africa was very much based on the fine arts paradigm, here, of course the emphasis was very much on ethnography.

This rapid overview of course leads us to consider the current situation of museums in the French *Départements d'Outre-mer* (the last remaining territories related to the former colonial empire, they are also some of the oldest of France's colonial conquests). It is sufficient to underline here the notable absence of any kind of 'national' museum in the four current *Départements d'Outre-mer*: la Guadeloupe, la Martinique, la Guyane et la Réunion.

Case studies in chronological order: Principles/ideologies underlying France's National Museum's

The Louvre and the *Quai Branly* two manifestations of Universal Values

Occupying a former royal palace situated in the very centre of the French capital, the Louvre indeed does exemplify what Duncan and Wallach termed as the 'Universal Survey Museum', a type of museum that they claim to be 'not only the first in importance, but also the first museum type to emerge historically, and (which was) from the beginning identified with the idea of the public art museum.' (Duncan and Wallach, 1980: 55). Before its opening, Diderot's famous *Encyclopedia* had dedicated an article to what it hoped the 'Louvre' might become. The institution was the direct intellectual product of the encyclopaedic principle of the Enlightenment, as implemented by the Revolution. Although the Louvre was indeed conceived of in light of an encyclopaedic or universal principal, it did so with some limitations: the productions of French artists and national monuments had at first little or no role to play in the establishment of the collections, nor did 'Exotic' collections, and the main accent was of course generally placed on Classical Antiquity and the Renaissance. At first it was mainly made up of a collection of old masters and classical antiquities, but it rapidly evolved towards a collection principal that was as widely inclusive as possible of different foreign civilizations and periods - including any cultures for which objects and materials became available to the French state.

It has, throughout its existence, served strong political and ideological causes 'born of three parents, republicanism, anti-clericalism and successful aggressive war' (Hudson, 1987, 4) and never more so perhaps than in 1803 when it became known as the *Musée Napoléon*. Until 1816, it was to be the home of the magnificent artistic war trophies that Napoleon's armies brought back to France from across Europe becoming the largest exhibition of art visible to the public anywhere. The *Musée Charles X* (1827) widened its scope to include Egyptian antiquities that were met with immense success, and so throughout the century new discoveries led to the development of new departments and specialities. The Louvre also came to house the arts of Asia, these were however sent to the *musée Guimet* after the Second World War. The *Grand Louvre* project and the highly controversial Pei pyramid (completed in 1989 and marking the bicentenary of the Revolution) changed the physiognomy of the building opening it up to the city and the public in a radical new way. The most recent independent department created in the Louvre is that of Islamic art (2003) it may in part be attributed to the initiative of the former president, Jacques Chirac (1995-2007) who declared his intention of reinforcing the universal vocation of the Louvre by presenting the exceptional contribution of the Islamic civilisation to the course of

world history¹. The slogan brandished was already the *'dialogue des cultures'* that has since become the main catchphrase of the *musée du Quai Branly*. Jacques Chirac also used the Louvre to make a clear political statement concerning the universal status of the so-called primitive arts by promoting the opening of the *Pavillon des Sessions* (2000), an exhibition space situated in the Louvre Palace, though independent in terms of administration and conservation. It is dedicated to presenting as veritable masterpieces in a modernist display environment, under the same roof as the Venus de Milo or the Victory of Samothrace, some of the most beautiful pieces of the collections of the *Musée des arts africain et océaniens*.

This museum is a kind of permanent antenna of the *musée Quai Branly* (2006) an 'embassy' (the term is used on the museum's own website) for extra-European art lending this most recent national museum creation a part of the Louvre's aura of artistic universality and placing this project firmly in filiation with these values. It is interesting to consider this policy also as a way of distancing the collections from the colonial context that was, of course, related to their presentation in the *Musée des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie* of the *Palais des colonies*- built for the 1931 colonial exhibition (it first housed the *Musée de la France d'Outre-mer* and it was Malraux ministry that transformed it into a Fine arts museum).

The museum's creation became the subject of violent debates, as its incorporation of ethnological collections from the *Musée de l'Homme* was accused of eliminating the ethnological perspective to embrace a purely aesthetic (universal) vision of extra-European arts, which for many detractors was a displaced form of eurocentrist thinking. The universal values represented by since the Louvre's creation have thus been ideologically expanded to include ideas of diversity and cultural dialogue and have been projected onto other national museums. In terms of the western arts, the *musée d'Orsay* and *Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou* in a sense chronologically pursue and complete the programme of the Louvre. Meanwhile the celebration of diversity became the *leitmotiv* of the creation of the *Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration* (2008) in the *Palais des colonies* former home of the collections now in the *pavillon des Sessions* at the Louvre and at the *musée Quai Branly*.

From the Musée des monuments français to the Musée national du Moyen-Âge and the Musée des Antiquités nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye: National origins - art, history and archaeology

As already observed, national antiquities found no place in the Louvre when it was created, some rare examples of archaeological finds on French soil could be seen at the *Cabinet des médailles et antiques* of the National Library since the end of the eighteenth century. Another museum born during the Revolution was founded to specifically house the historical heritage of France's *Ancien Régime*. The famous nineteenth century historian Jules Michelet considered the *Musée des monuments français* and the *Louvre* in relation to each other as "two immense museums" both born out of the Revolution. In describing the celebrations of the *fête de l'unité* that took place on the 10th August 1793, he wrote that the Revolution had for the occasion opened two institutions. The Louvre was described as the museum of nations, the universal museum where every country was represented by immortal works of art, whilst Alexandre Lenoir's *Musée des monuments français* (Poulot, 1992) – created from a revolutionary depot of stone monuments in a former convent (today the *École des Beaux-Arts de Paris*) was presented as a treasure of sculptures taken from

convents, palaces and churches (Michelet, 1979: 549). The museum established an entirely new kind of national narrative based on a chronological presentation of French art. Lenoir's creation was closed in 1816 under the Restoration but it set a museographical example that greatly influenced the development of museum practice in the nineteenth century as a means of expressing the growing popular interest for national history and archaeology.

Lenoir's example was first and most famously followed by the collector Alexandre du Sommerard who established a large personal collection of antiquities in the medieval *hôtel de Cluny* that formed the basis for what is today's national collection of medieval art (Marot, 1969). His collections were bought by the state after Sommerard's death in 1843 and combined with the ruins Gallo-Roman Thermal baths beside the *hôtel* becoming the first national museum of art and archaeology.

Despite the appropriate setting that these ancient ruins provided for the presentation of archaeological collections, a new project for a separate archaeological museum developed (Marot, 1979: 316-319). It became the personal project of Napoleon III (1851-1870), who, aided by some of the most accomplished antiquarians of his day, published a monumental biography of Julius Caesar (1865) and funded and organized for the first time in France important and systematic digs of archaeological sites related to the *guerres des Gaules*, episodes of particular importance for national identity. In 1862 he decreed the creation of an archaeological collection for Gallo-roman and Celtic antiquities in the former castle of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, it was opened to the public in 1867, on the day of its inauguration he ceremoniously handed over to the library of the museum a signed copy of his Caesar biography. On display were the Emperor's own collections, the results of digs, a collection donated by Boucher de Perthes illustrating the new discipline of pre-history but also a collection offered by Frederick VII of Denmark which was to form the basis of a display dedicated to comparative archaeology. Indeed, the museological model for the museum was the *Römisch-Germanisches Museum* of Mainz, founded in 1852 by Ludwig Lindenschmidt. Saint-Germain adopted the same extensive use of plaster casts and its chronological organization in terms of the succession of different populations. The museum's first mission statement in 1866 proclaimed that 'the aim of the *musée de Saint-Germain* is to centralize all documents pertaining to the history of the different races that have occupied the territory of the Gallic empire from the most far off times up until the era of Charlemagne; to class the documents in a methodical fashion; to make their study possible for the public and to promote education' (quoted on the museum's website: http://www.musee-antiquitesnationales.fr/homes/home_id20392_u112.htm, accessed on the 15 October, 2010)².

The tradition of digs thus inaugurated by Napoleon III to find the site of the siege of Alesia and the last stand of Vercingetorix was pursued into the beginning of the twentieth but came to a brutal halt in 1914, when the archaeologist Joseph Déchelette passed away. The research begun under the Second Empire had identified, on the mont Beuvray in Burgundy, a major Gallic capital. The site lay dormant until the 1980s when François Mitterrand visited the site and declared it to be of national importance. He greatly encouraged the establishment of a research centre and museum for Bibracte, an *in situ* pendant to the project of Napoleon III at Saint-Germain.

Domaine national de Versailles and Les Invalides: National glorification and commemoration

In this section we will consider two buildings, whose architecture epitomizes the heritage of the reign of Louis XIV, the *Château de Versailles* and the *Invalides*, as they have both come to house museums that glorify the nation and have become the site of distinctive forms of national commemoration.

After the Louvre, the museum of the former royal residence at Versailles is the second most visited museum in France. It is, in fact, the product of a series of museographical projects that go back to the presentation of the royal collections under Louis XIV. After the Revolution, most of these were sent to Paris and much of the royal furnishings were sold. The people of Versailles protested against the pillage and neglect that befell the palace and, as early as 1797, it was decided that it should become home to a special museum of the French school of painting to complement the collections of the Louvre. During the Empire, Napoleon formulated a project to install a series of panoramas in the gardens of Versailles that were to be pictorial celebrations of victorious battles. The symbolism of Versailles was too strong for it to become a royal residence again after the return of the monarchy in 1816. However no real project took hold until the king “of the French People”, Louis-Philippe (1830-1848) decided to use the castle for his historic program of national reconciliation. The *Musée de l'histoire de France* (1837) whose creation he personally oversaw was clearly dedicated “to all the glories of the French nation” as engraved on the facade of the palace. The museum based a major part of its narrative on the illustration of France’s military past, with the famous *Galerie des batailles* (Gaetgens, 1984) and was very much founded on an artistic rendering of the major, one might say mythical moments of France’s political past. At the end of the twentieth century, the director of Versailles, Pierre de Nolhac (1859-1936) began a century long resuscitation of the Versailles of the *Ancien Régime*, restoring the kings and queens apartments to their former glory. This tendency continues today, recent renovations have included the recreation of the gilded entrance and roof. The history museum established in the nineteenth century has given way to a museum that is above all known as a series of period rooms that recreate the palatial residence of the former kings of France from Louis XIV to Louis XVI.

The *Musée de l'Armée* was founded in the *Invalides* in 1905, in a building that also owes its existence to the initiative of Louis XIV. Built as a military hospital in the seventeenth century, it is also home to two religious establishments, the church of *Saint Louis des Invalides* and the church under the dome where the tomb of the emperor Napoleon is situated since 1841. In terms of the collection, it was formed as a fusion of the Artillery museum and an already existing historical army collection. The *musée de l'Artillerie* first opened in 1797 as a revolutionary museum housed in the former convent of the Jacobins and its first collections were based on the arms that had been confiscated during the taking of the Bastille. The proximity of Napoleon’s tomb, already an important attraction for visitors, before the creation of the museum, has caused it to appear to be, first and foremost, a place of commemoration of the military accomplishments of Napoleon Bonaparte (Westrate, 1961: 83).

In a direct sense, the *Musée de l'Armée* (1905) was created in the same mode of national glorification as the museum created by Louis-Philippe at Versailles in 1837 (Barcellini, 2010: 13). By the end of the nineteenth century after the crushing defeat of 1871, the military theme had

taken on a particular significance and the creation of this museum appears as a strategy to give France renewed faith in its military power (Barcellini, 2010: 11). The museum's mission is clearly expressed from the first as providing a place for patriotic and military education and vocation, to provide models and information for painters of military history and finally of course to celebrate the glories and the grandeur of France's army (Barcellini, 2010: 43). Although the museum only ever entertained a very tenuous relationship with the French Army proper - for example it never received any material for displays directly (Westrate, 1961: 90) - it was able, through donations and acquisitions, to accumulate considerable amounts of material during the Great War. The museum had managed to remain open throughout the war, during which time it had become a place of popular pilgrimage, so after 1918, it established more memorial or commemorative forms of display. This period reinforced the army-nation relationship and the museum's role in a discourse of national unity. Its museography has been described by Westrate (1961: 84-86) 'as topical, and no effort is made to provide a comprehensive description of French military history'. He points to the disproportionate attention given to the figure of Napoleon, with a hall dedicated to his 'family and personal items ranging from dishes and clothing to the bed in which Napoleon died. Such objects normally are not found in a military museum'. He praises the display of armour as one of the best in Europe and points out the existence of an unusual display dedicated to model soldiers of all nations.

The entrance fee for tourists visiting the tomb of Napoleon greatly contributes to the financing of the museum, so much so that Westrate claims that it is nearly independent of the Ministry for Defence, which exercises its control rather loosely – today it is indeed run as an autonomous national institution. Its museography recently underwent complete renovation under the so-called *Athena* project. It was, in recent years, also considered as a possible site for a future museum of national history, the idea has since been abandoned and the new museum is now to be installed within the buildings of the national archives. In conclusion to her study of the museum's history, Barcellini (2010) comments on the role of the museum today and its future, stating that although professionals have called for important changes to be made in terms of the exhibition and ideological principles of history museums, the same cannot be said for the *musée de l'Armée* nor for military museums in general. She maintains that these institutions do not principally aim to provide a scientific history of military questions but that their main mission is directly related to an ideological and commemorative role, a fact that constitutes the essence of the museum itself and as such cannot be altered. Whilst Westrate wrote (1961: 87) that: 'Its future is well assured because it functions as an instrument of patriotism and plays a somewhat supporting role to the suitable memorialization of a major national hero', Barcellini (2010: 240) points out that the disappearance of an obligatory military service in France and the changing nature of the army-nation relationship are a direct 'menace' for the museum's future. In the same vein of national glory but also of commemoration we also might place the *Musée Clemenceau - de Lattre, National museum of the Two Victories*, the *Mémorial Charles de Gaulle* (2008) and the group of six national museums dedicated to the Napoleonic legend.

Notes

- ¹ « L'objectif est de conforter la vocation universelle de cette prestigieuse institution afin qu'elle puisse mieux faire connaître à son vaste public la contribution exceptionnelle des civilisations de l'islam à l'histoire de l'humanité », <http://www.teheran.ir/spip.php?article988>.
- ² 'le musée de Saint-Germain a pour but de centraliser tous les documents relatifs à l'histoire des races qui ont occupé le territoire de la Gaule depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'au règne de Charlemagne ; de classer ces documents d'après un ordre méthodique ; d'en rendre l'étude facile et à la portée du public ; de le publier et d'en propager l'enseignement'.

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Annex table, France

Name	Inaugurated	Initiated	Actors	Ownership	Type	Values	Style Location
<u>Museums of the Réunion des musées nationaux</u>		<u>RMN was created in 1895.</u>	<u>The RMN is the auxiliary institution of the museums in this category. Some have become autonomous institutions themselves but under public law (EPA)</u>	<u>RMN is since 1990 an <i>Établissement public à caractère industriel et commercial</i>. (state establishment run under private law)</u>			
Musée du Louvre	1793	1793	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif</i> .	Antiquities, Greco-Roman, Egyptian, Oriental, etc. Decorative Arts, Fine Arts, Extra-European civilisations: Islam	The museum presents Western art from the Middle-Ages to 1848, as well as the civilisations that preceded it and influenced it. 7 departments: Oriental antiquities (+Islam), Egyptian ant; Grec-Rom-Etr ant; Paintings, Sculpture, Decorative arts and prints. A section is also dedicated to the history of the museum itself.	Paris, former royal palace
Domaine national de Versailles: Musée des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon	1837	1798	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif</i> .	Architecture, Urbanism, Decorative Arts, Religious Art, Fine Arts, History	Royal appartments with their decors, museum of the History of France from the 16 to 19 th c.	Versailles, former royal palace

Musée national de la Céramique à Sèvres	1934 (+musées nationaux)	1824	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Decorative Arts and Ceramics	French ceramic art from the 15 th to the 17 th c. A complete panorama of the productions of the Sèvres manufacture.	Sèvres, Ile-de-France
Musée national du Moyen Age - thermes et hôtel de Cluny	1843 (bought by the state), 1907 (joined RMN)	1835	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Archaeology, Religious Art, Decorative Arts, Fine Arts, Photography, Manuscripts, Numismatics, Ethnology	French history, art and archaeology from Gallo-roman to the middle ages.	Paris, former Roman Thermes and Cluny medieval gothic hotel.
Musée de la porcelaine Adrien Dubouché	1881 (nationalized)	1846	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Decorative Arts and Ceramics	Ceramics and pottery from the Antiquity (Greco-Roman, oriental), French from medieval times to present day.	Limoges
Musée d'archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye	1867	1862	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Archaeology, Prehistory, Protohistory	Archaeology and history of France, mainly objects from digs on French soil.	Saint-Germain-en-Laye
Musée Guimet (+ Musée d'Ennery en annexe)	1889	1879	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif.</i>	Far Eastern antiquities, Religious Art, Fine Arts	Asian art and archaeology, military arms, musical instruments, manuscripts, coins etc.	Paris (initialement Lyon)
Musée Gustave Moreau	1903	1898	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Fine Arts	Atelier and home of the artist Gustave Moreau with an important collection of his work and the objects he owned during his lifetime.	Paris

Musée national de Malmaison et Bois-Préau	1906	1903	RMN, Ministry for Culture, Musées nationaux napoléoniens.	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	History, Thematic	Napoleon museum, reconstituted apartments, art of the Empire era.	Rueil-Malmaison
Musée Rodin	1916	1911	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif.</i>	Fine Arts	Works by Auguste Rodin, Camille Claudel and other contemporary artists.	Paris
Musée national de Préhistoire, les Eyzies de Tayac	1920	1913	RMN, Ministry for Culture, Musées nationaux napoléoniens.	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Prehistory	Prehistorical finds from the South of France.	Périgord
Musée national de la Maison Bonaparte		1923	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	History	History of the family of Napoleon Bonaparte.	Ajaccio, Corse
Musée Jean-Jacques Henner		1926 (donation by the family)	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Fine Arts	Paintings and drawings by the artist.	Paris
Musée national de l'Orangerie des Tuileries	1927		RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif</i> of the Musée d'Orsay.	Fine Arts	Presents most notably Claude Monet's "Nymphéas" but also the Jean Walter and Paul Guillaume collections.	Paris
Musée franco-américain du château de Blérancourt	1931	1924	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	History, Fine Arts	Thematic history museum documenting the relationship between France and America, military and diplomatic history. Some art collections.	Picardie

Musée national du château de Pau		1929	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	History, Fine Arts, Decorative Arts	Castle of Henri IV, restauration began by Louis-Philippe in 1848.	
Aquarium tropical - palais de la Porte dorée		1931	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif</i> of the Cité de l'Immigration	Ichthyologie	Aquariums of tropical fish	
Musée national Napoléonien de L'Ile d'Aix et musée Africain	1959	1935	RMN, Ministry for Culture, Musées nationaux napoléoniens	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Decorative Arts, Fine Arts, History	Objects and souvenirs related to the life of Napoleon. The baron Napoléon Gourgaud also had an important collection relating to Africa and its wildlife which came to the the African museum.	
Musée national Eugène Delacroix	1971	1932	Société des Amis d'Eugène Delacroix, RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif</i> of the Louvre.	Fine Arts	Collections of art and objects having belonged to the painter Eugène Delacroix.	Paris
Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée: formerly: musée national des Arts et Traditions populaires	1969	1937	RMN, Ministry for Culture		Archaeology, Ethnography, History, Technics and Industries	National folk art and popular traditions.	Paris

Musée national Magnin		1937	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Fine Arts	Paintings and drawings of the French, Flemish, and Italian schools of the the 15 th to the 18 th c.	Dijon
Musée national du Château de Compiègne. And National car and tourism museum		1943	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Fine Arts, Architecture, History, Decorative Arts	Museum dedicated to the art and history of the Second Empire. The castle also houses a collection of vintage cars.	Compiègne
Musée de Port-Royal des Champs	1962	1952	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	History	Thematic history museum on the Jansenist movement, works by Philippe de Champaigne.	Magny-les-Hameaux, Ile-de-France
Musée Clemenceau - de Lattre, National museum of the Two Victories		1959	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	History	Thematic, commemorative, establishes an historical parallel between the two men who signed the peace treaties putting an end to the World Wars.	Mouilleron-en-Pareds
Musée national Picasso La Guerre et la Paix de Vallauris		1959	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Fine Arts, Contemporary Arts	Art by Picasso	
Musée national Fernand Léger de Biot	1967	1960	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Contemporary Arts	Pieces from the artists workshop	Biot, Côte d'Azur

Galeries nationales du Grand Palais	1966	1964	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif.</i>	Fine Arts	Dedicated to the presentation of temporary art exhibits of national and international importance.	Paris
Musée et Domaine nationaux du Château de Fontainebleau	1986 (ouverture du musée Napoléon Ier)	1964 (beginning of the restauration by Malraux)	RMN, Ministry for Culture, Musées nationaux napoléoniens	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif.</i>	History, Fine Arts, Decorative Arts	Restored interiors of the Renaissance castle, museum dedicated to Napoleon Ier.	Fontainebleau, Ile de France
Musée de la Renaissance - château d'Ecouen	1977	1964 ca.	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	History, Fine Arts, Decorative Arts	Part of the collections of the musée de Cluny, mainly French Renaissance, collections of all kinds.	Ecouen, Ile de France
Musée national Message Biblique Marc Chagall	1973	1967	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Fine Arts	Works by Chagall on the Bible.	Nice, Alpes-Maritime
Musée national Picasso	1985	1974	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned, part of the RMN. <i>Service à compétence nationale.</i>	Fine Arts, Contemporary Arts	Collection of work by Picasso and his contemporaries.	Paris
Musée d'Orsay (+le Musée Hébert)	1986	1978	RMN, Ministry for Culture	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif.</i>	Fine Arts, Decorative Arts	French arts from 1848 to 1914	Paris

<u>National Museums under the control of government ministries (but not RMN)</u>							
Musée du Cabinet des médailles et antiques		1793 (opens completely to the public)	Ministry for Culture and Communication; Ministre of Education.	Department of the National Library, Bibliothèque nationale de France	Numismatics, Archaeology	History, universal numismatic collections, greco-roman and gallo-roman archaeology.	Paris
Muséum national d'histoire naturelle		1793	Ministry for Higher Education and Research	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif.</i>	Mineralogy, Biology, Paleontology, Anatomy, Ethnography	(Includes the Musée de l'homme, created in 1937).	Paris
Musée des Arts et Métiers	1802 (galleries first opened)	1794 (creation of the Conservatoire)	Ministry for Higher Education and Research	State owned, administered as part of the Conservatoire national des arts et métiers.	Technology, Mechanics, Electronics, Communication ...	Scientific instruments, objects illustrating the evolution of technology in specific areas such as motors, communications, construction... historical presentation of technological evolution.	Paris
Musée national de la Marine	1827	1801	Ministry of Defense (rattaché à la Marine nationale en 1920)	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif.</i>	History, Ethnography, Art	History of maritime transport, modèles and art related to sea faring.	Paris, palais de Chaillot, with succursales: Brest, Port-Louis, Rochefort, Toulon.

Musées de la monnaie		env. 1830...	Ministry for Finance	State owned, run by the National mint	History, Numismatics	History of French coinage	
Museum of the History of France of the National Archives		1867	Ministry for Culture and Communication	State owned under the Direction des Archives de France, section of the Ministry for Culture	History	French history as to be illustrated through the documents of the archives. Mainly temporary exhibits.	Paris
Musée national de l'éducation	1980 (réouverture à Rouen)	1876	Ministry of Education and Research	State owned and run by the Ministry of Education and Research	Pedagogical Science	History of education in France	Paris, depuis 1980 à Rouen
Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine (former: Musée des Monuments français)	2008	1878	Ministry for Culture and Communication	It is an autonomous national institution <i>établissement public à caractère industriel et commercial</i>	Architecture, Art, Urbanism	French architecture from medieval times to the present day, through collections of plastercasts and models.	Paris
National museum of the Army, Hotel des Invalides	1905	1905	Ministry of Defense, Société des Amis du Musée de l'Armée	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif.</i>	Military History, Art	Arms and armoury from prehistoric times to medieval times from all over Europe. Military souvenirs of the most famous monarchs. Displays dedicated to WWI and WWII. Memorial Charles de Gaulle.	Paris
Musée de la Préfecture de Police de Paris		1909	Ministry of Justice	State owned, financed by the Ministry of Justice.			Paris
Musée de l'air et de l'espace du Bourget	1973	1919	Ministry of Defense	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif.</i>	History of air transport		Ile de France

Musée national de la Légion d'Honneur et des Ordres de Chevalerie	1925	1925	Founded be private means financed by members of the legion.	State owned, financed by the Ministry of Justice.	Military Decorations, History	History of France's honors, medals, decorations, and knightly orders from Louis XI Louis XI of France Louis XI to the present, including Napoleonic souvenirs etc.	Paris
Cité des sciences et de l'Industrie and Palais de la Découverte	1986 = Cité des sciences; 2007 union of both museums as one administrative establishment.	1937 (International Exhibition "Arts et techniques dans la vie moderne) = creation of the Palais de la Découverte.	Ministry of Education and Research	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public à caractère industriel et commercial.</i>	Physics, Chemistry, Astrophysics, Mathematics, Biology	Palais de la découverte: permanent exhibit based on the principle of demonstrations / experiments demonstrating fundamental scientific principes. Cité des Sciences et de l'industrie: looks at science in all of its applications to industry and others, temporary exhibitions explore diverse themes concentrating on the state of knowledge today.	Paris, Parc de la Villette and Grand Palais.
Musée de la Poste		1946			History	Cultural and social history of written communication	Paris
Museum Struthof of the former concentration camp Natzweiler.	1980	1965	Ministry of Defense. Direction de la mémoire, du patrimoine et des archives.	State owned, administered by the Direction de la mémoire, du patrimoine et des archives of the Ministry of Defense.	History of WWII	Displays and films dedicated to the history of the camp and its annexes. The creation of the camp, its organisation and the daily life of its prisoners.	Vosges

Musée de la bande dessinée et centre national de la bande dessinée et de l'image	1991	1974	Departmental, Ministry of Culture	State owned, autonomous, <i>établissement public caractère industriel et commercial</i> financed by the Département Charente, and the Ministry for Culture.	Contemporary Art, Popular Culture	History of French cartoons from the 19 th c. to the present day.	Angoulême, in a contemporary building beside the Abbey of Saint Cybard.
Musée national d'art moderne du Centre Georges Pompidou	1977	1970	Ministry of Culture and Communication	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum in association with the BPI and the IRCAM. <i>Établissement public à caractère culturel.</i>	Contemporary Art and Culture	French, European and American art of the 20 th c.	Paris
Musée national des prisons / National museums of prisons	2003	1982	Ministry of Justice	State owned, financed by the Ministry of Justice.	History	History of the penitential system in France.	Fontainebleau, Ile de France
Le musée de Bibracte	1984		Ministry of Culture	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum in association with state, regional and departmental administrations. <i>Établissement public à caractère culturel</i>	Archaeology	Celtique civilisation across Europe, the archaeological site of the Gaulish village of Bibracte.	Mont Beuvray, Bourgogne

Le musée national de la douane / National customs museums		1984	Ministry for Finance	State owned and managed by the National Customs office.	History	History of the administration of customs, it aims to tell a story of France through it's relations with other countries.	Bordeaux
Music Museum of the <i>Cité de la Musique</i>	1995		Ministry of Culture and Communication	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public industriel et commercial.</i>	Art, Music, Culture	Collection of musical instruments, thematic temporary exhibits.	Paris, parc de la Villette
Musée Quai Branly and Pavillon des Sessions (Louvre)	2006	1878, 1937, 1960 (complex history, built up from several museums and collections)	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif.</i>	Ethnography, Art	Museum of the art and civilization of non-European culture, Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas	Paris
La Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration	2007	1990 (creation of the Association pour un musée de l'immigration)	Ministry of Education and Research	State owned but managed as an autonomous national museum. <i>Établissement public administratif.</i>	Contemporary History	History of immigration to France in the 19 th and 20 th c.	Paris
<u>Museums of the Institut de France</u>							
Château de Chantilly	1898	1884 (legacy to the state by the duc d'Aumale)		Foundation of the Institut de France	Art History, History	Important paintings collection of old masters, antiquities, library of rare books.	Ile de France

Museum Jacquemart-André	1913	1875	Former private collection run by the Fondation of the French Academy of Fine Arts	Foundation of the Institut de France	Decorative Arts, Art History	Strong points of the collection are Flemish paintings, French eighteenth century, Italian Renaissance, rare furniture.	Paris
Royal Abbey of Chaalis	1913			Foundation of the Institut de France			Ile de France
Musée Claude Monet à Giverny	1980	1966 (legacy to the Académie des Beaux-Arts)		Foundation of the Institut de France	Art History	Impressionist painting	Giverny
Villa Éphrussi de Rothschild		1934		Foundation of the Institut de France	Art History, Decorative Arts	Furniture, porcelaines	Ville-Franche-sur-Mer
Villa Grecque Kérylos	1928	1908		Foundation of the Institut de France	Archaeology, Art History	House museum, replica of an ancient Greek home	Beaulieu-sur-Mer
Musée Marmottan Monet		1932		Foundation of the Institut de France	Art History	Collections of impressionist painting	Paris
<u>Museums of the Regions, major municipal museums whose resonance may be considered as national: a selection of examples.</u>							
Carnavalet, Museum of the History of Paris		1867	Municipal	Owned by the city of Paris. One of the <i>musées de la ville de Paris</i> .	History, Art, Decorative Arts	History of the city of Paris, the French Revolution	Paris

Musée Alsacien de la ville de Strasbourg		1907	Municipal	Municipality of Strasbourg, regional funding.	History, Art, Decorative Arts	Museum of art and traditional cultures, local architecture, costumes, furniture, ceramics etc. Period rooms traditional 'country' interiors.	Strasbourg
Ecomusée du Creusot-Montceau-les-Mines	1973	1972	Regional	Mixed funding from the Ministry of Culture, National fund for the development of the territory, but also regional and local.	History of Industry, Technology, Environmental studies, Society	The first ecomuseum created in France, its aim has been to study the impact of the history of industrialisation in the region on the society and on the territories of its activity.	Creusot, Bourgogne
Centre d'Histoire de la Résistance et de la Déportation de Lyon	1992	1965	Associative, municipal	Department, state, European funding.	History of WWII	Founded by an association of resistance fighters, it is today housed in the former Gestapo headquarters of Lyon. History of the resistance and dedicated to the fight against crimes against humanity.	Lyon
Musée de La Révolution Française	1989	1983	Departmental	Département de l'Isère	National History, Art, Literature	History of the 18 th c. the Revolution and the Romantic period in France through art works and objects of the period.	Château de Vizille

Historial de la Grande Guerre	1992	1986	General couciil of the Somme Department, Ministry of Defense; Ministry for Culture and Communication	Owned by the Department of the Somme, receives joint funding from department, region and state sources and European funding.	Military History	Military and cultural history of WWI in an international perspective.	Péronne
Mémorial Charles de Gaulle	2008		Regional	Region of the Haute-Marne, the museum was also financed by Europe and by State funding.	Biography, History	"Centre d'interprétation historique" a set of displays that illustrate the life of Gen. De Gaulle without any kind of objects.	Colombey-les-Deux-Églises