The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of Paris

No city more than Paris has had such a constant and deep association with the development of literary forms and cultural ideas. The idea of the city as a space of literary self-consciousness started to take hold in the sixteenth century. By 1620, where this volume begins, the first in a long line of extraordinary works of the human imagination, in which the city represented itself to itself, had begun to find form in print. This collection follows that process through to the present day. Beginning with the ‘salon’, followed by the hybrid culture of libertinage and the revolutionary hotbeds of working-class districts, it explores the continuities and changes between the pre-modern era and the nineteenth century, when Paris asserted itself as cultural capital of Europe. It goes on to explore how this vision of Paris as a key capital of modernity has shaped contemporary literature.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dan Gunn and Colin Jones for their help in the early stages of this project, and Kate Briggs, Erica Burnham, Mark Gore, Rosemary Milne and Mike Sadler for their help and support in the latter stages. And it has been a pleasure to work with Linda Bree, Maartje Scheltens and Thomas O'Reilly of Cambridge University Press on this project. But most of all I would like to thank all the students of ‘Paris au pluriel’ at the University of London Institute in Paris who have made thinking about the literature of Paris such a challenging and rewarding process.
CHRONOLOGY AND KEY REFERENCES

1610  Assassination of Henri IV, rue de la Ferronnerie; Louis XIII comes to the throne.

1612  The Place Royale, future Place des Vosges, is inaugurated.

1615  Work begins on the Luxembourg Palace for Marie de Médicis.

1622  The windmill called Moulin du Palais, later to become the Moulin de la Galette, is built on the hillside of Montmartre.

1624  Cardinal Richelieu becomes King’s Councillor; work begins on the Hôtel Sully in the Marais.

1629  Work begins on the Palais Cardinal, future Palais-Royal, which will be Richelieu’s residence.

1631  Théophraste Renaudot launches the first newspaper, *La Gazette de France*.

1632  A bridge, later called Le Pont Royal, is built to replace the boat or ‘bac’ that linked the Left Bank to the Louvre and Tuileries Palaces. The ‘bac’ left its name to the rue du Bac, key access route to the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

1634  Pierre Corneille’s comedy *La Place royale* is performed in the Marais.

1635  Richelieu founds the Académie Française.

1637  J.-L. Guez de Balzac publishes his *Nouvelles lettres*; Pierre Corneille’s tragicomic play *Le Cid* causes a scandal.
CHRONOLOGY AND KEY REFERENCES

1641
Descartes publishes his Meditations and a theatre opens within the Palais Cardinal (Palais-Royal).

1643
Louis XIII dies; Louis XIV comes to the throne, aged 5. France is governed by Prime Minister Mazarin.

1645
Malherbe publishes his Lettres.

1646
Madame de Sévigné begins writing her letters to her daughter.

1648
The beginning of the Fronde; the Court of Louis XIV leaves Paris for Saint-Germain-en-Laye until August 1649.

1649
Madeleine de Scudéry’s first novel, Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus is published.

1653
The period of the Fronde is over and Louis XIV’s power consolidated.

1661
Molière’s troupe takes up residency in the Palais-Royal.

1662
The first ‘carrosses à cinq sous’, a horse-driven form of public transport, take to the streets of Paris.

1665
First edition of Les Maximes by La Rochefoucauld.

1666
First production of Molière’s Le Misanthrope and Le Médecin malgré lui.

1667
First production of Racine’s Andromaque in the Louvre.

1668
La Fontaine publishes his first Fables.

1670
Work begins on the Hôtel des Invalides in what is now the 7th arrondissement.

1670
Port-Royal publishes Pascal’s Pensées.

1671
Louis XIV leaves Paris to take up residency for the rest of his life in Versailles.

1672
The first café opens in the Saint-Germain market; the first issue of the ‘magazine’ Mercure gallant, subsequently renamed Mercure de France, appears. It will start publishing texts on fashion and fashionable life in 1678.

1673
Lully’s Cadmus et Hermione is performed at Versailles, marking the beginning of French opera.
1678  Madame de La Fayette publishes *La Princesse de Clèves*.

1682  Colbert, Secretary of State under Louis XIV, gives orders for all Protestants in Paris to be put on file.

1685  The revocation of the Edit de Nantes, forcing French Protestants into exile.

1715  Beginning of the Regency following the death of Louis XIV; Philippe II, Duc d’Orléans, establishes his rule until Louis XV comes of age in 1723. The Court returns to Paris.

1718  Work begins on the Hôtel d’Evreux, future Élysées Palace, in what would become the 8th arrondissement, on the Right Bank.

1720  Work is completed on the Place Louis-le-Grand, later called the Place Vendôme.

1722  The Hôtel Matignon is built in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Instruction in oriental languages begins at the Collège Louis-le-Grand with the aim of facilitating trade between France and the East.

1723  A royal ordinance restricts all printing activities to the area round the University.

1728  The first street signs appear in Paris, and the first issue of the clandestine Jansenist publication, *Les Nouvelles ecclésiastiques* is published. The King bans printing on roller presses, which are too difficult for the police to keep under surveillance.

1731  Voltaire begins publishing his *Lettres philosophiques* from Rouen having fled the capital. The book will be banned and the publisher imprisoned in the Bastille.

1734  Montesquieu publishes his *Lettres persanes*.

1745  First authorisation to publish granted to the *Encyclopédie*; it will extend to thirty-five volumes containing entries by, among others, Diderot, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau and Condillac. Parliament outlaws all handwritten gazettes.
Buffon begins publishing his forty-volume *Histoire naturelle*.

The Archbishop of Paris condemns the *Encyclopédie*.

Rousseau publishes *Le Contrat social*.

The Place Louis XV – now the Place de la Concorde – is inaugurated.

Louis XV dies and Louis XVI comes to the throne.

First performance of Beaumarchais’s *Barbier de Séville*.

Houses start to be numbered all across Paris; work begins on the Odéon theatre near the Luxembourg gardens.

The first pavements are built, on the rue de l’Odéon.

First publication of the Marquis de Sade’s *Cent vingt journées de Sodome*; the Marquis has been imprisoned in the Vincennes dungeon since 1777.

The first ruling on the dimensions of streets and the height of buildings is passed into law: a street must be at least 30 feet (9 metres) in breadth.

The Fermiers généraux wall is built, imposing a toll on goods entering and leaving the city.

The first restaurant is opened by Antoine Beauvilliers in the Palais-Royal.

General Assembly of Parisian electorate at the États Généraux.

The Bastille falls.

Louis XVI, having recognised the new municipality, returns to Paris to take up residence in the Tuileries Palace.

The Parisian populace learns that the King has fled.

The Tuileries Palace is invaded and occupied by the people of Paris; Year 1 of the Republic is declared.
1793
(21 January) Louis XVI is guillotined in the Place de la Révolution; the Louvre Palace is opened to the public as a permanent museum, ‘le tutoiement’ (the use of the ‘informal’ pronoun ‘tu’) is decreed obligatory in Paris, and all churches are closed.

1794 Robespierre takes control of the city; the months of June and July are marked by an exacerbation of the Terror; Robespierre is guillotined on 28 July (10 Thermidor).

1795 The last uprising in the eastern Faubourgs; the rule of the Directory begins.

1799 Bonaparte overthrows the Directory in the Coup d’État of the 18 Brumaire.

1800 Paris loses its single mayor and is organised under twelve mayors, two prefects and forty-eight police commissioners; the Passage des Panoramas, one of the most popular shopping arcades of the nineteenth century, opens on the boulevard Montmartre.

1800 Madame de Staël publishes her ‘manifesto’ for romanticism De la littérature.

1802 Chateaubriand publishes his Génie du christianisme, having returned from his exile in England.

1804 Bonaparte is crowned Napoleon I, Emperor of France.

1806 Napoleon I lays the first stone of the Arc de Triomphe.

1810 The Vendôme Column is finished.

1814 Siege of Paris by the English, Germans, Austrians and Russians.

1814 The Municipal Council forces Napoleon to abdicate and Louis XVIII returns to the capital, which is occupied by the coalition armies.

1820 (13 February) Assassination of the Duc de Berry at the Opéra.

1822 Géricault paints the ‘Radeau de la Méduse’.

1824 Louis XVIII dies; (27 September) Charles X, brother of Louis XVI and Louis XVIII, arrives in Paris.

1824 (16 September)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>Delacroix paints 'Massacre à Scio'.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>The Canal Saint-Martin is linked to the Villette port enabling easier shipping access to the city.</td>
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<td>1827</td>
<td>Violent street-fighting and barricades in the rue Saint-Denis; the first giraffe arrives in Paris, a gift from the Pasha of Egypt to Charles X.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>Victor Hugo publishes his Preface to the historical drama <em>Cromwell</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Gas-lighting is turned on for the first time in Paris.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1830 (July)</td>
<td>'Les Trois Glorieuses', a popular uprising lasting three days against Charles X, who abdicates and retreats to Saint-Cloud. Louis-Philippe d'Orléans is declared King of France by eighty-nine votes against ten in the Chamber of Lords.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>First performance of Hugo’s <em>Hernani</em> which sparks the ‘battle’ between the adepts of romanticism and the proponents of classicism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Berlioz’s <em>Symphonie fantastique</em> is performed for the first time, issuing in a new era in French music.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Auguste Comte begins publishing his <em>Cours de philosophie positive</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>Balzac publishes <em>La Peau de chagrin</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Tocqueville begins publication of <em>De la démocratie en Amérique</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Musset publishes his autobiographical <em>Confessions d'un enfant du siècle</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>The obelisk from Luxor is installed in the Place de la Concorde.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>The first train line between Paris and Saint-Germain-en-Laye opens on the site that will become the Saint-Lazare Station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>Stendhal publishes his <em>Mémoires d'un tourist after a stay in the capital</em>.</td>
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</table>
1840 Napoleon’s coffin is transferred to the Invalides and the monument to the fallen of the 1830 uprising is inaugurated on the Place de la Bastille.

1842 Balzac regroups his novels into *La Comédie humaine*, which will ultimately comprise ninety novels; Eugène Sue begins his *Mystères de Paris*.

1843 Train travel is developing fast: a new line is opened to Orléans and Rouen. The first experiments in electric lighting are carried out at the Place de la Concorde.

1845 The construction of the fortifications around Paris, known as the Thiers Wall and later as ‘les fortifs’, is completed.

1848 A popular uprising forces Louis-Philippe to abandon the throne; the Second Republic is declared.

1848 The chemical processes enabling reinforced concrete are developed in France, enabling the construction of much higher buildings in future decades.

1850 Courbet’s painting of a rural funeral, ‘Un enterrement à Ornans’, creates a scandal when it is exhibited at the Salon.

1851 President of the Republic, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, declares himself Emperor Napoleon III; the Second Empire begins (2 December 1852).

1855 The first department store in Paris, Au Louvre, opens for business.

1857 Baudelaire publishes the first edition of *Les Fleurs du mal*; Flaubert publishes *Madame Bovary*. Both works are incriminated by the State censor along with Eugène Sue’s *Les Mystères du peuple*.

1858 The boulevard de Sébastopol is inaugurated, followed three years later by the boulevard Malesherbes. Work has begun on the future avenue de la République and the boulevard Voltaire.

1860 The thirteen suburban communes are absorbed within the administrative structure of the city, which rises to twenty arrondissements.
CHRONOLOGY AND KEY REFERENCES

1861
Nadar takes some of the first photographs using artificial light in the catacombs of Paris.

1862
The long construction of Garnier’s Opéra begins; it will open for business in 1875. Victor Hugo publishes Les Misérables while still in exile on the island of Guernsey.

1863
Daumier paints ‘La Blanchisseuse’, part of a long series of depictions of everyday life in the city.

1865
Manet’s painting ‘Olympia’ causes a huge outcry at the Salon.

1867
Opening of the Universal Exhibition in Paris with a bateaux mouche service inaugurated to transport visitors to the site on the Champ-de-Mars.

1870
France defeated by the Prussian army at Sedan; Paris under siege.

1871 (March)
The Prussian army marches up the Champs-Élysées.

1871 (18 March)
Declaration of the Paris Commune.

1871 (May)
The Tuileries Palace and the Hôtel de Ville are burned to the ground in the last stand of the Commune known as the ‘semaine sanglante’ [bloody week], 21–7 May.

1871
Thiers becomes the first President of the Third Republic

1871
Zola begins the Rougon-Macquart series on the ‘natural and social history of a family under the Second Empire’.

1872
Monet paints ‘Impression, soleil levant’, which will prompt the designation of a new school of painting, impressionism, in 1874.

1872
Sarah Bernhardt rises to prominence on the Parisian stage in Victor Hugo’s Ruy Blas.

1873
The project to build a basilica on the hill of Montmartre is approved by Parliament.

1873
Rimbaud publishes Une Saison en enfer.

1876
Degas paints ‘L’Absinthe’, a picture of a woman sitting alone in a Parisian café.
1881 The Chat Noir nightclub opens on the boulevard Rochechouart.

1884 The first public swimming pool opens on the rue Château-Landon in the 10th arrondissement.

1885 Victor Hugo’s funeral, for which the church Sainte-Geneviève is renamed the Panthéon, dedicated to ‘the great men’ of the nation.

1889 Opening of the Universal Exhibition in Paris and inauguration of the Eiffel Tower.

1890 Van Gogh paints the church at Auvers-sur-Oise.

1894 Durkheim publishes his *Règles de la méthode sociologique*.

1894 The beginning of the Dreyfus Affair.

1895 The Lumière brothers reveal the first machine enabling the projection of films; the first public cinema screening takes place in the basement of the Grand Café, boulevard des Capucines.

1897 Rodin’s sculpture of Balzac is revealed to the public, provoking mixed reactions.

1898 Zola publishes ‘J’accuse’ in defence of Dreyfus.

1900 The first metro line is opened between Vincennes and Maillot for the Universal Exhibition, which receives over 50 million visitors; the Pont Alexandre III and the Gare d’Orsay, later to become the Musée d’Orsay, are built for the occasion.

1902 First production of Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Opéra-Comique; first projections of Méliès’s *Voyage dans la Lune*.

1907 Picasso paints ‘Les Demoiselles d’Avignon’ in the artists’ community of the Bateau-Lavoir established up in Montmartre.

1910 The Ballets Russes (the Russian National Ballet) are at the Théâtre du Châtelet under the direction of Diaghilev, with Nijinsky delighting the audiences.
1913 Proust begins the long composition of À la recherche du temps perdu.

1914 (31 July) Jean Jaurès is assassinated on the rue Montmartre.

1914 (August) War is declared; the government leaves the capital for Bordeaux only to return two weeks later.

1916 Chinese labourers arrive in Paris to work in the Renault factories where the first armoured tanks are being built.

1918 (11 November) The Armistice is signed; the war is over and people celebrate in the streets.

1919 (14 July) The Marshalls of France lead the Victory parade from the Porte Maillot to the Place de la Concorde; the first commercial airline opens between Paris and Brussels.

1921 The first refrigerators are installed in Les Halles, the central Parisian market.

1922 Man Ray starts producing ‘surrealist’ photographs and Max Ernst depicts the ‘surrealist’ coterie in his painting ‘Au rendez-vous des amis’. The first traffic lights are introduced on the crossroads between the rue de Rivoli and the boulevard de Sébastopol.

1925 The Decorative Arts Exhibition opens and the Eiffel Tower is lit up with adverts for Citroën cars for the occasion; Le Corbusier exhibits his first major plan for Paris, Le Plan Voisin, which projected the wholesale demolition of Le Marais.

1927 Lindbergh crosses the Atlantic to arrive in Paris.

1930 The military zone ringing Paris is decommissioned and absorbed within the city boundaries.

1931 The Colonial Exhibition takes place in the Vincennes forest, attracting 8 million visitors; the Surrealists stage their counter exhibition in opposition to colonialism.

1934 (6 February) Right-wing riots in the Place de la Concorde.
1936 Victory of the Popular Front in the legislative elections followed by a massive strike movement which obtains significant reductions in the working week and paid holidays for salaried employees.

1937 International Exhibition of Arts and Technology, which attracts 34 million visitors; the Chaillot and Tokyo Palaces at the Trocadéro are built for the occasion.

1938 Sartre publishes his first novel, *La Nausée*.

1939 Hitler declares war.

1940 (14 June) The German army occupies Paris.

1942 (18 July) 12,884 Jewish people of all ages are arrested all across Paris and transferred to the Vélodrome d’hiver in Paris before being deported.

1944 (19 August) The people of Paris rise up against the occupying army; (26 August) de Gaulle marches triumphantly down the Champs-Élysées.

1945 (29 April) Municipal elections and French women vote for the first time.

1946 The Fourth Republic is declared.

1949 Piaf entrances her audiences with her inimitable brand of popular Parisian song; Simone de Beauvoir publishes *Le Deuxième sexe*.

1953 Beckett’s *En attendant Godot* is performed for the first time.

1954 War begins in Algeria; Abbé Pierre launches his appeal in the name of the massive homeless population, many living in shanty towns in the outskirts of Paris.


1957 Work on the *boulevard périphérique*, the high-speed ring road around Paris, begins, and prefabricated concrete starts to be used massively in the construction of housing.
CHRONOLOGY AND KEY REFERENCES

1958  De Gaulle returns to power at the height of the Algerian War; beginning of the Fifth Republic; the business district La Défense is inaugurated.

1959  La Nouvelle Vague in cinema begins to transform the way the city is filmed, starting with Truffaut’s Les Quatre cents coups.

1961  The ‘Battle of Paris’ takes place between Algerian demonstrators and police, resulting in the death by drowning of tens of Algerian protestors, if not more.

1968  Student uprising in the Latin Quarter followed by mass strikes.

1969  The central market, Les Halles, closes and is transferred to Rungis.

1970  Work begins on the controversial Tour Montparnasse.

1977  Jacques Chirac is elected mayor of Paris, the first single mayor for the whole of Paris since 1871 when Jules Ferry and Étienne Arago had briefly governed the city in the wake of the collapse of the Second Empire; the Centre Pompidou opens its doors and the metro-RER station Châtelet-les Halles is inaugurated.

1981  The Socialist Party comes to power for the first time since the Popular Front; the first TGVs appear on French railways, reducing travel times between Paris and other major cities such as Lyons, Tours and Bordeaux.


1988  The Louvre Pyramid is inaugurated.

1995  Beginning of a series of scandals surrounding the attribution of social housing in fashionable districts to members of the political class.

1998  France wins the World Cup; huge crowds celebrate on the Champs-Élysées.

2005  Three weeks of rioting in the Parisian suburbs spreading to other major French cities.