

Cambridge University Press

0521530687 - The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution

Ann Rigney

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

Should we accept, as is, that differentiation between the main types of discourse, or between forms or genres, which sets science, literature, philosophy, religion, history, fiction, etc. against each other, turning each into some great historical individuality? We ourselves are not sure of the usage of these distinctions in our own discursive environment; let alone when it comes to analysing sets of statements which, at the time of their initial formulation, were grouped, classified and typified along quite different lines.

Michel Foucault, *L'Archéologie du savoir* (1969)

In the preface to his *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne* (1824), Prosper de Barante deplored the 'artificial dignity' of French history as it had hitherto been written. The 'faithful representation of truth', he claimed, was foreign to eighteenth-century histories; 'the vivid impression produced on our minds by the spectacle of real events is nowhere to be found in them' (1838 edn, I:12). Barante's critique of his predecessors was echoed by Augustin Thierry who complained, in his *Dix ans d'études historiques* (1835), that French history as written until recently had been 'cold and monotonous', because 'false and contrived' (1851 edn, VI:258).

The nineteenth-century historians' rejection of their predecessors exemplifies what Michel de Certeau has recently described as historiography's tendency to carve out its own territory in a negative way, by setting itself up as different from the discourses it perceives as fictional or falsifying (1982:19). For it is above all through their rejection of the 'literary', artificial, false histories written in the eighteenth century by pseudo-historians¹ that Barante and Thierry credit themselves *a contrario* with the authority to speak for the 'real', to give – as Barante put it – 'a faithful representation of truth'.

What is of particular interest here, however, is the fact that Barante and Thierry, in setting themselves up against their predecessors, not only criticise earlier work for its inaccuracy or literariness, but also for its monotony, its coldness, and its lack of animation. In this way, the nineteenth-century historians imply that the *nouvelle histoire* which they

¹ Barante, for example, presents his predecessors as 'men of the literary profession, dedicated to making artificial compositions' (1838, I:8).

Cambridge University Press

0521530687 - The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution

Ann Rigney

Excerpt

[More information](#)

themselves are engaged in writing is (or should be) warm, alive, natural, as well as true: a 'spectacle' capable of producing a 'vivid impression' on its audience. Where modern theorists might work within the framework of the difference science/literature, the key terms for these nineteenth-century historians are 'animate' and 'inanimate' (viz. cold, monotonous, artificial). A faithful representation of the truth, they imply, is recognisable by its capacity to come *alive* for the reader, to provide him with 'that intimate knowledge which comes from seeing and hearing living beings' (Barante 1838, I:10).²

In this way, the new generation of early nineteenth-century historians set themselves up in opposition to the conventionality and artificiality of their predecessors in the eighteenth century. Yet, the very fact that the same cluster of concepts should regularly recur across the extensive metahistorical discourse of this period already suggests that, in turn, the 'new history' became itself conventional; that its programme of representing 'living' historical reality became codified and, hence, imitable.³

For us nowadays, what is almost as remarkable as the correlation 'vitality' and historical truth is the fact that the historians should have been so concerned with the problems involved in the discursive transmission of historical knowledge. According to Barthes, one of the characteristics of historical discourse is the fact that there are generally no signs of the addressee (1982:15): the theoretical writings of Thierry, Barante and their contemporaries seem to place a question mark beside this assumption since, in commenting on their own work, they show a

² See also Sismondi's *Histoire des Français* with its complaint that 'the principal cause of the coldness of French history lies in its lack of truth' (1821–44, I:iv); and its complaint that his predecessors had put enormous philosophical effort into their presentation of past events 'without our perceiving the animating principle [*le principe de vie*] which had made these events grow out of each other' (1821–44, I:iii).

³ In their turn, the critical standards prevalent among historians in the first half of the nineteenth century were to be summed up, and with the same stone condemned as 'literary', by Charles-Victor Langlois and Charles Seignobos in their late-nineteenth-century positivist manual of historiography, *Introduction aux études historiques* (1898): 'Under the influence of the romantic movement, historians looked for expository techniques which would be more vivid than those of their predecessors, which would succeed in striking and in moving their public, and give the most poetical impression of lost realities... In the work of all the romantic historians, the way of proceeding and the choice of topic, of evidence, and of style were dictated by their concern to provoke an effect, a concern which is certainly not a scientific one. It is a literary concern' (1898:260–1). For the general background to the historiographical poetics of the first half of the nineteenth century, see Bann 1984, Reizov c.1962, Stadler 1958, Moreau 1935, Fueter 1911, Jullian 1897.

Cambridge University Press

0521530687 - The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution

Ann Rigney

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

3

persistent concern with the effect which their representations would or should have on their latter-day readers.

Historical scholarship, as Thierry insisted in his ‘*Considérations sur l’histoire de France*’ (1840), is only one aspect of the historian’s task; equally important is the way in which he communicates his findings. Thus, the work involved in researching and gathering facts has to be followed by the vital, complicated work of ‘narration’, requiring the interpretation, the collation, and the ‘painting’ of events. It is through the specifically literary work of narration that the historian actually re-presents past events for his contemporaries and makes manifest what is presumed to be their inherent, organic structure. It is only through narration that the historian can find ‘the law of cause and effect which links facts to each other’ and give to past events ‘their significance, their character, and that liveliness which can never be absent from the spectacle of human affairs’ (1851, VII:158). By implication, then, it is only through successful – vivid – narration that historical truth (by definition, vivid) can be encapsulated. The double task of the historian had been summed up earlier by J. Sarazin in his 1835 dissertation on modern historiography: after the historian had completed his research, Sarazin wrote, his power to resurrect the past as an organic whole must come into play:

alors viendra le génie de l’histoire, avec sa puissance de création, féconder cette inerte matière, et commander ... à ces ossements blanchis et épars de se redresser, de reprendre vie, de se rejoindre et de s’agencer de nouveau dans un corps harmonieux, et de reparaître aux regards de la postérité avec leur couleur, leur forme, leur mouvement d’autrefois.⁴

[And then the genius of history will come with its creative power, fertilising this inert material, ordering ... these bleached and scattered bones to stand up, to come back to life again, to reunite and join together in a harmonious body, and to reappear before the eyes of posterity with the form, the colour and the movement which they had in former times.]

That these early nineteenth-century historians should have been so concerned with the literary work involved in conveying the character and significance of past events to a contemporary reader, that they should have grounded the historical authority of their work in its capacity to

⁴ Sarazin 1835:22–3. The image of resuscitation or resurrection is also to be found throughout Michelet’s writings; in the 1873 preface to his *Histoire du dix-neuvième siècle*, for example, he summed up his professional achievements in the following terms: ‘I have given to many of the too long forgotten dead the assistance which I shall need myself. I exhumed them for a second life ... They now live with us and we feel they are our relatives, our friends. In this way, a family is formed, a federation [*une cité commune*] between the living and the dead’ (1982:268).

Cambridge University Press

0521530687 - The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution

Ann Rigney

Excerpt

[More information](#)

‘resurrect the past’ for the reader, can be explained by the historical conjunction of a number of related theoretical and material factors:

(a) There was the persistent, albeit declining, influence of the rhetorical tradition, where the addressee figured as one of the primary concerns of all literary composition and where historiography figured as one of the more serious literary genres.⁵

(b) In the first half of the century, historiography was still generally practised by ‘laymen’ who wrote for the general reading public; the historical institution with its own clerisy of specially trained academic historians, its own objects and methods of research, and its own legitimising authorities, was beginning to be established; but it did not emerge fully until later in the century.⁶

(c) In the absence of an autonomous historiographical territory, and in the wake of Walter Scott (who was the original catalyst and model for the historians’ emphasis on vivid narration), there was a certain degree of competition between novelists and historians for public attention and recognition.⁷

(d) Finally, the new poetics of history-writing, the new vivid manner of writing history based on narration, description, and details of local colour à la Scott, was regularly linked to, and as it were motivated by, the historian’s new, explicitly *popular* subject-matter. If history as it had hitherto been written seemed cold, monotonous, artificial, and uninteresting, this was not only because of the philosophical, dignified, or formulaic style in which it had been written: its ‘artificial solemnity’ (Barante 1838, I:11) also stemmed from its exclusive concern with the activities of courts and kings, and with what Sarazin called ‘those dry catalogues of political events in which the people played no part’ (1835:25–6).

The ‘new history’, then, was not just a matter of writing the same ‘history’ in a different way. It involved, rather, writing in a new way the

⁵ History was treated among the literary genres in Marmontel’s *Éléments de littérature* (1787), for example, and in Mme de Staël’s *De la littérature* (1800). Since then, it has not just happened that history ceased being ‘literary’; literature itself had been something quite different when it was defined by Mme de Staël as ‘everything which involves the exercise of thought through writing’ (1820:200). For the emergence of the modern literary institution in France between 1830 and 1850, see Dubois 1983:19–30.

⁶ For the emergence of history as an academic discipline in the course of the nineteenth century, see Keylor 1975, Den Boer 1987.

⁷ Barante, for example, wrote that it was time to restore to history ‘the attractions borrowed by the historical novel’ (1838, I:16), while Macaulay urged that ‘a truly great historian would reclaim those materials which the novelist has appropriated’ (1906, VII:217). For the influence of Scott on historiographical practice, see Massmann 1972:81–9. For the changing status of the novel in France at this period, see Iknayan 1961.

Cambridge University Press

0521530687 - The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution

Ann Rigney

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

5

real history, which had never yet been written about; what Thierry called ‘l’histoire des citoyens, l’histoire des sujets, l’histoire du public, l’histoire de la masse’ (‘the history of citizens, the history of political subjects, the history of the public, the history of the majority’):

cette histoire nous présenterait à la fois des exemples pratiques et cet intérêt humain que nous cherchons vainement dans les aventures bizarres d’un petit nombre de personnages prétendus seuls historiques. Nos âmes s’attacheraient au sort de ces hommes semblables en tout à nous mêmes, bien mieux qu’à la fortune des grands, la seule qu’on nous célèbre encore, et la seule qui ne nous importe point; leurs progrès nous sembleraient plus imposants que la marche des faiseurs de conquêtes, et leurs misères plus touchantes que celle des rois dépossédés.⁸

[This history would offer at once practical models and that human interest which we look for in vain in the bizarre adventures of the few figures hitherto considered historical. Our hearts would become involved in the fate of men who are like ourselves in all respects, much more than they do in the fortunes of the great, which are as yet the only fortunes celebrated and the only ones to which we are indifferent; the progress of men like ourselves would seem more impressive than the advance of conquerors, and their miseries more touching than that of dispossessed kings.]

The history of ‘citizens’ or of ‘the majority’ was to be found, for example, in the struggles of the subject or conquered peoples, in the early history of the race,⁹ in the history of customs, trades, technologies – all of which had hitherto received scant attention from the historians.¹⁰

⁸ Letter to the *Courrier Français* (23 July 1820); quoted in Smithson 1973:82. See also the opening of Monteil’s *Histoire des Français des divers états* (1828–44): ‘If nowadays one were to write history for the first time in the way in which it was written in antiquity, in the way it is still being written, no one would fail to say: “That is the history of kings, of clerics, of military men... it is not the history of the different estates, it is not history”’ (1843, I:5).

⁹ In his study of historiographical practices during the *Restauration*, Stanley Mellon describes the popularity of ancient Gaul as a historical topic, and how the Frankish conquest was interpreted as an aristocratic one (1958:62). Augustin Thierry proposed that representing the struggle of our forefathers to gain their liberty would serve to remind today’s generation of their debt to the past and to encourage them in their struggle to preserve that hard-won freedom in the future (1851, IV:95; V:365). On Thierry and this ‘liberal historiography’ see Gossman 1976.

¹⁰ Monteil, in his *Les Français pour la première fois dans l’histoire de France ou poétique de l’histoire des divers états* (c.1840), set out clearly a historiographical programme which would get away from what he called the old ‘histoire bataille’ to ‘what is truly history’ (1841:5). This new *national* history would concentrate on such socio-cultural topics as agriculture, commerce, industry, institutions, village life, hospitals, language, and literature. It is interesting to note that, in the preface to his *Comédie humaine* (1842), Balzac also staked his claim to this socio-cultural

Cambridge University Press

0521530687 - The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution

Ann Rigney

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Since it not only took as its subject ordinary men or ‘the people’, but also presented these subjects in a vivid way, the new history would offer the public of today ‘le vif intérêt d’un tableau de famille’ (‘the vivid interest of a family portrait’, Capefigue 1829, I:ii).¹¹ Our interest and our natural, filial sympathies would be aroused by the representation of men who are at once ‘like ourselves’ and different: being men like ourselves as they lived and struggled at a different point in time. Who these ‘men like ourselves’ were – or indeed who ‘we’ might happen to be – is not raised as a particular issue here.

What is clear, however, is that the historian’s claim to give a faithful or realistic representation of past actualities was regularly linked to his claim to take as his subject ‘society as a whole’ (however this might be defined in particular instances). For not everything in the past actually belonged to history, some topics being seen as more or less ‘historical’ than others. The ‘historical’ was thus recognised at once by the fact of its being ‘real’ and by the fact of its being *representative*, that is, by the fact that it represented the common past of the public, the adventures of society (‘les aventures de la vie sociale’, Thierry 1851, IV:95) rather than the bizarre adventures of some few, untypical, regal individuals.

In France, the project to write the ‘history of the majority’ was linked to the recent events of the Revolution, which had not only called upon the nation to play an active role in the making of history (Capefigue 1829, I:i-ii), but had also retrospectively brought to the light of day many, hitherto unrepresented, aspects of the past, ‘which had been constantly left in the shadows although they were an essential part of the general life’ (Sarazin 1835:7). The French Revolution inaugurated a democratic culture where the nation and public will are recognised as the source of political legitimacy, where power, therefore, belongs in theory to those who speak in the name of the people (Furet 1978:47, 85). The theoretical statements of Sarazin and his contemporaries show how the Revolution, in establishing the nation as the symbolic source of political legitimacy, also retroactively established the ‘nation’ – ‘the men like ourselves’ – as the

history, invoking Scott as his model and contending that social history (‘l’histoire des moeurs’) had simply been ignored by historians who had been too preoccupied with relating political events (1976–81, I:17).

L’historiographie se répète? Writing as recently as 1976, Carlo Ginzburg was still announcing history’s breaking away from the narrow confines of political ‘elite’ history: ‘In the past historians could be accused of wanting to know only about “the great deeds of kings”, but today this is certainly no longer true. More and more they are turning toward what their predecessors passed over in silence...’ (1981: viii).

¹¹ For the development of the moral and aesthetic category of ‘the interesting’ at the end of the eighteenth century, see Brooks 1985:13.

Cambridge University Press

0521530687 - The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution

Ann Rigney

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

7

subject of history and, hence, as the proper subject of modern historiography.¹²

Since it marked the beginning of the modern age and, retrospectively, of the new history, the Revolution was itself the historical topic *par excellence*. Pascal Duprat wrote in *La Revue indépendante* in 1847, for example, that the Revolution had inaugurated a ‘new life’ and was, therefore, still the most ‘living’ of topics:

Cette vie nouvelle...rend compte des oppositions et des sympathies que nos pères ont rencontrées dans leur laborieuse carrière; elle explique l'intérêt profond que leur oeuvre a suscité chez tous les peuples voisins. Elle justifie en même temps cette curiosité inquiète et passionnée que réveillent en nous les récits de leurs travaux. Nous serions tous moins ardents pour des choses mortes.¹³

[This new life...accounts for the oppositions and sympathies which our fathers encountered in their laborious careers; it explains the profound interest which their work aroused among neighbouring peoples. At the same time, it explains the anxious and impassioned curiosity which every account of their work awakens in us. We would all be less ardent about dead things.]

However, if the French Revolution, as the event which had inaugurated the modern age, was the most interesting and vivid of historical topics, it was for that very reason also one of the most frequently treated ones – it was far indeed from being the history which had never yet been written. By 1847, for instance, when Duprat wrote the above lines, the French Revolution had already inspired – to name only the most prominent – Mignet's *Histoire de la Révolution française* (1824), Thiers' *Histoire de la Révolution française* (1823–8), Buchez and Roux's *Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française* (1834–38), Lamartine's *Histoire des Girondins* (1847), Esquiros' *Histoire des Montagnards* (1847), and the first volumes of Michelet's *Histoire de la Révolution française* (1847–53) and Blanc's *Histoire de la Révolution française* (1847–62).

So many histories, so many ‘French Revolutions’ – each one claiming to represent ‘the French Revolution’ itself. The struggle between the different historians for what Furet has recently called ‘the political

¹² Linda Orr argues in her study of ‘L’Autorité “populaire” de l’historiographie romantique’ that the figure of the historian became theoretically eclipsed by that of the *peuple*: the public is both the ‘author’ of the history-to-be-represented and the addressee of the history-as-represented (1982:464).

¹³ Duprat 1847:62. Similarly, Etienne Cabet invoked the exemplary character of his topic in the 1839 preface to his *Histoire populaire de la Révolution française de 1789 à 1830*: ‘Of all the revolutions whose memory has been preserved in history, there is none which presents, to the same degree as the French Revolution, such a majestic, dramatic spectacle, throbbing with interest, filled with instructive lessons, and deserving careful contemplation by all friends of humanity...’ (1839–40, I:v).

Cambridge University Press

0521530687 - The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution

Ann Rigney

Excerpt

[More information](#)

administration of the revolutionary heritage' (1986:12) indicates the symbolic importance of 'the Revolutionary past' at each stage of the nation's development since 1789. At the same time, the multiplicity of different histories of the Revolution intimates the necessarily imaginary nature of any *single* 'national past' or single 'histoire de la masse'.

A survey of these different histories indicates the extent to which the (re)writing of history went together with the making of history in post-Revolutionary France.¹⁴ The production of histories of the Revolution was closely linked to ongoing political developments: on the one hand, fresh political developments cast a different light on the events of 1789–94; on the other hand, new perspectives on those events served as a model or guide for future political action. Thus, Thiers' liberal history of the Revolution, produced in the final years of the *Restauration* and in opposition to the current regime, is considered to have played an important role in providing the ideological foundations for the Revolution of 1830 and the constitutional monarchy which it established.¹⁵

In a review essay written in 1850, Henri Baudrillart related how the Revolution of 1830 had completed and brought to fruition the work of the great Revolution, and how it had been influenced and inspired in this by Thiers' *Histoire de la Révolution française* (Baudrillart 1850:813). Baudrillart then turns his attention to the recent crop of new 'demagogic' histories (814) and complains that they had led to a betrayal of the true legacy of the French Revolution: they not only distorted the true (Liberal) Revolution by rehabilitating the 'demagogic' phase of 1793, but in doing so they in turn had influenced the events of February 1848 which led to the fall of the constitutional monarchy and initiated the establishment of a new, if shortlived, Republic (819). Clearly, for Baudrillart – though not for those whom he calls 'demagogic' historians – the history as well as the historiography of the Revolution ended or should have ended with 1830 and with Thiers' 'definitive' history.

As Baudrillart's critique suggests, the Revolution of 1848 (like the Revolution of 1830) had been prepared for by a new generation of histories of the Revolution. It is difficult to establish exactly how the new histories appearing in the last years of the July monarchy actually influenced the course of events, and who precisely read them; but there is no doubt that the revised image of the French Revolution which they

¹⁴ See Mellon 1958 for a study of the period 1815–30 (when 'history was the language of politics', p.1). For general studies of the representations of the French Revolution during the Restoration and the July Monarchy (1830–48), see Gérard 1970, Geyl 1961, McManners 1965.

¹⁵ Coornaert, for example, refers to the Revolution of 1830 as 'the historians' victory' (1977:26).

Cambridge University Press

0521530687 - The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution

Ann Rigney

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

9

offered to the public reflected, at the same time as it contributed to, the growing perception that social change was needed or imminent; that the legacy of the first, of *the* Revolution had not yet been brought to fruition.¹⁶ For the last years of the constitutional monarchy saw the production of a number of histories which challenged the by-now dominant history of Thiers in which the Revolution was defined by its pre-Republican, constitutional monarchy phases; in their different ways, these new histories sought to rehabilitate the Republican, democratic phases of the Revolution, presenting these as its true legacy and as a guide for future action.¹⁷ Most prominent among these new histories were those written by Alphonse de Lamartine, Jules Michelet, and Louis Blanc – and it is these three works which shall be my particular concern here.

Lamartine's *Histoire des Girondins* appeared between March and June 1847 and, thanks to the prior reputation of the author and the prior publicity given it in the press, it was an immediate and immense commercial success; in July 1847, for example, a banquet was organised in Mâcon in honour of the poet-politician-historian and attended by more than 3,000 people.¹⁸ Indeed, Lamartine's reputation as author of the *Girondins* contributed greatly to the writer's becoming minister in the provisional government of February 1848 as representative of the centre-left and to his being elected by no less than 10 *départements* in the April elections.¹⁹

¹⁶ See Agulhon 1973:6–9.

¹⁷ See Furet's discussion of the chronological displacement within the historiography of the Revolution from the '89-ism' of a Thiers to the '93-ism' of the new historians (1986:12f).

¹⁸ According to Henri Guillemin, Lamartine had explicitly stated his desire to outdo Eugène Sue, the great popular success of *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842–3) having provided him with a model of what might be achieved with such a topical subject as the Girondins (1946:116n). And indeed he managed to sell the manuscript to the publisher for the phenomenal sum of 250,000 francs (cf. J.-P. Jacques' preface in Lamartine 1983, I:16n). Guillemin insists, however, that if Lamartine's motives were in part commercial (his personal finances were in a sorry mess), he was also motivated by his political commitment (1946:97f): having been aligned with the legitimist opposition in the early 1840s, he had grown increasingly aware that a return to the *status quo ante* was an impossibility; that radical social change was necessary and imminent; and that, this being the case, he should try to give direction to those changes (1948:6–7). Court 1985 (chap. 5) gives a detailed account of the reception of the *Girondins*: widely read and reviewed, it was highly acclaimed by many (particularly by women) as having shown the splendours and pathos of the Revolutionary period, while it provoked the anger of many others and, above all, of the legitimist opposition. See below, p.22.

¹⁹ Having occupied a conciliatory position in the centre-left, Lamartine was soon outmanoeuvred by the right and had effectively fallen from power by the end of June 1848. For a detailed account of Lamartine's sudden rise and fall, see Guillemin 1948 and Agulhon 1973.

Cambridge University Press

0521530687 - The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution

Ann Rigney

Excerpt

[More information](#)

The first volumes of Blanc's *Histoire de la Révolution française* also appeared in 1847; and the socialist Blanc, like Lamartine, also went on to belong to the provisional government of the 1848 Republic where, as representative of the far left, he was active in organising the controversial *ateliers nationaux*. Having been forced into exile after the swing to the right on 15 May and the bloody suppression of the workers' demonstrations at the end of June, Blanc was to finish his history in exile in 1862.²⁰

The first two volumes of Michelet's *Histoire de la Révolution française* likewise appeared in 1847. Although the professional historian, archivist, and university lecturer Michelet did not take a direct part in the Revolution of 1848, his rousing lectures at the Collège de France were considered so provocative in their republicanism that they were closed down by the authorities on 2 January 1848 (and opened again very soon after the declaration of the Republic on 24 February).²¹ The next three volumes of his history appeared between 1849 and 1851, and the final volume appeared in 1853. By that time, Michelet had lost his official functions as professor at the Collège de France and as head of the national archives, for having refused in 1852 to take the oath of allegiance to the new empire of Louis Napoleon.²²

It is against the background of these overlapping political, cultural, and metahistorical contexts that I propose to study the three histories of the Revolution written by Lamartine, Michelet, and Blanc.²³ Three histories

²⁰ Volumes 3 and 4 appeared in 1852, and the remaining eight volumes at yearly intervals over the next ten years. For the background to the writing of Blanc's history, see Godechot 1974:39–41; concerning his role in the events of 1848, see Agulhon 1973.

²¹ For the background to the writing of Michelet's history, see Walter's introduction to the 1952 edition. For an account of his work at the Collège de France during the period 1847–8, see Viallaneix 1973. Walter suggests that, by the time the Revolution broke out, the historian had effectively withdrawn from direct political activity (1952:I, xviii).

²² The opening volumes of Michelet's narrative, like those of Blanc's, received considerable attention (they were often reviewed together with Lamartine's *Girondins* – see Duprat 1847, *Le Charivari* 1847, Lerminier 1847, Baudrillart 1850). Due to the change in political climate after 1848, and to the protracted manner of publication, the remaining volumes of Michelet's history, like those of Blanc's, seem to have received relatively little public attention. Michelet's history was, however, later to be consecrated as a *lieu de mémoire* in the form of a 'national edition' voted by the Assembly of the Third Republic on the occasion of the first centenary of the Revolution in 1889 (see Ory 1984:527).

²³ Alphonse de Lamartine, *Histoire des Girondins* (Lamartine 1983); Jules Michelet, *Histoire de la Révolution française* (Michelet 1952); Louis Blanc, *Histoire de la Révolution française* (Blanc 1847–62a). Unless otherwise indicated, all references to