This History is the first in a century to trace the development and impact of the novel in French from its beginnings to the present. Leading specialists explore how novelists writing in French have responded to the diverse personal, economic, socio-political, cultural-artistic and environmental factors that shaped their worlds. From the novel’s medieval precursors to the impact of the Internet, the History provides fresh accounts of canonical and lesser-known authors, offering a global perspective beyond the national borders of ‘the Hexagon’ to explore France’s colonial past and its legacies. Accessible chapters range widely, including the French novel in Sub-Saharan Africa, data analysis of the novel system in the seventeenth century, social critique in women’s writing, Sade’s banned works and more. Highlighting continuities and divergence between and within different periods, this lively volume offers routes through a diverse literary landscape while encouraging comparison and connection-making between writers, works and historical periods.

Adam Watt is Professor of French and Comparative Literature at the University of Exeter. Born in Edinburgh, he studied at the University of Oxford, where his doctoral research was supervised by the late Malcolm Bowie. His publications include Reading in Proust’s À la recherche: ‘le délire de la lecture’ (2009), The Cambridge Introduction to Marcel Proust (2011) and, as editor, Marcel Proust in Context (2013).
THE CAMBRIDGE
HISTORY OF
THE NOVEL IN FRENCH

Edited by
ADAM WATT
University of Exeter
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Acknowledgements

Linda Bree first invited my thoughts about the prospect of commissioning a history ‘of the French novel, or the novel in France’ in the summer of 2015. I am immensely glad that she did, since this invitation prompted me to read and re-read, to think, explore, reflect, make connections and, inevitably, realise the presence of all manner of gaps and shortcomings in my grasp of ‘the novel in French’ and what this might be, considered from a literary historical perspective. It also persuaded me that there was a real opportunity for an exciting collaborative venture. Since that venture began I have incurred debts that I would like to acknowledge here. I am very grateful to the anonymous readers whose reports on my initial prospectus helped improve and refine the volume’s final shape. I am indebted to my contributors, of course, and to Bethany Thomas at Cambridge University Press for her guidance (and admirable patience) in bringing the project to fruition. It has been a pleasure to work with Nigel Graves, Caro Drake and Kirsty Adegboro on the final stages of the volume. Earlier in the process, Tom Baldwin, Tim Chesters, Alison Finch, Eddie Hughes, Stacey Hynd, Elisabeth Ladenson, Josh Landy, Hugh Roberts, Faye Robertson and Helena Taylor talked, listened, read and offered support and encouragement at just the right times.

AW, Exeter October 2020

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Note on Conventions

Translations from French are provided throughout the volume except where the sense is straightforwardly evident from the context. Unless otherwise noted, translations are provided by the author(s) of the chapter in question. Upon first mention, where necessary, titles of novels are also translated, though subsequent references are usually to the French original. Where a novel has been published in English translation, this translated title is given in italics after the original, thus: Marguerite Duras, Le ravissement de Lol V. Stein (The Ravishing of Lol Stein, 1964). For works that have not been translated, an English rendering is provided between single inverted commas. In selected chapters, and in the chronology, where a great deal of material is surveyed, titles have not been translated for reasons of space. In all cases, unless otherwise specified, the date given after the translated title is the date of original publication in French. A list of selected ‘further reading’ is provided at the end of each chapter.
Chronology

Selected key publications are listed below; selected historical events are included in bold.

c.1150  ‘Romans d’antiquité’ – Roman de Thèbes, Roman d’Enéas, Roman de Troie (translated from Latin)
c.1237–77  Le Roman de la rose
1337–1453 Hundred Years’ War
1346  French defeat at Battle of Crécy
1353  Boccaccio, Decameron
1362–5  Guillaume de Machaut, Le Livre dou voir dit
1415  Battle of Agincourt
1431  Jeanne d’Arc burnt to death in Reims
1462  Cent Nouvelles nouvelles
1532–4  Rabelais, Pantagruel; Gargantua
1534  Establishment of ‘New France’ colony in Canada
1547  Amyot’s translation of Heliodorus, Aethiopica
1549  Du Bellay, La Défense et illustration de la langue française
1559  Marguerite de Navarre, Heptaméron
1562–98  Wars of Religion
1572  St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre
1607  Honoré d’Urfé, L’Astrée
1635  Foundation of the Académie française
1643–1715  Reign of Louis XIV, ‘the Sun King’
1648–53  Fronde civil wars
1651–7  Scarron, Le Roman comique
1654  Madeleine de Scudéry, Clélie
1664  Sorel, Bibliothèque française
1665  Furetière, Le Roman bourgeois
Chronology

1670  Madame de Lafayette, Zaïde with preface by Pierre-Daniel Huet, Lettre-Traité de l'origine des romans
1678  Madame de Lafayette, La Princesse de Clèves
1683  Anon., Vénus dans le cloître
1699  Fénélon, Télémaque
1704–17 Galland, trans., Les Mille et une nuits
1721 Montesquieu, Lettres persanes
1731 Prévost, Manon Lescaut
1747 Graffigny's Lettres d'une Péruvienne
1748 Diderot, Les Bijoux indiscrets
1756–63 Seven Years' War
1759 Voltaire, Candide
1761 Rousseau, Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse
1778–80 Diderot, Jacques le fataliste
1782 Laclos, Les Liaisons dangereuses
1785 Sade, Les 120 Journées de Sodome (in manuscript; published 1904)
1788 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Paul et Virginie
1789–99 French Revolution
1791 Olympe de Gouges Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne
1791–1804 Haitian Revolution
1792 Claris de Florian, Gonzalve de Cordoue
1795 Madame de Genlis, Les Chevaliers du cygne
1800 Madame de Staël, De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales
1801 Chateaubriand, Atala, ou Les amours de deux sauvages dans le désert
1802 Madame de Staël, Delphine
1803–15 Napoleonic Wars
1804 Napoleonic Code, 'code civil' established
1807 Madame de Staël, Corinne ou l'Italie
1815 Napoleon defeated at Waterloo
1816 Constant, Adolphe
1823 Madame de Duras, Ourika
1830 July Revolution
1830 Stendhal, Le Rouge et le Noir

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<th>Event and Author(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>Hugo, <em>Notre-Dame de Paris</em></td>
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<td>1832</td>
<td>Sand, <em>Indiana</em></td>
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<td>1835</td>
<td>Balzac, <em>Le Père Goriot</em></td>
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<td>1837</td>
<td>François-Réal Angers, <em>Les Révélations du crime ou, Cambray et ses complices</em></td>
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<td>Aubert de Gaspé, <em>L’Influence d’un livre: roman historique</em></td>
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<td>1837–43</td>
<td>Balzac, <em>Illusions perdues</em> (3 vols.)</td>
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<td>1839</td>
<td>Durham Report on the Affairs of British North America</td>
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<td>1842</td>
<td>Stendhal, <em>La Chartreuse de Parme</em></td>
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<td>1842–3</td>
<td>Balzac, <em>Avant-propos</em> to the <em>Comédie humaine</em></td>
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<td>1844</td>
<td>Sue, <em>Les Mystères de Paris</em></td>
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<td>1846</td>
<td>Dumas père, <em>Le Comte de Monte-Cristo</em> and <em>Les Trois Mousquetaires</em></td>
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<td>1848</td>
<td>Lacombe, <em>La Terre paternelle</em> (serial; book publication 1871)</td>
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<td>1856</td>
<td>Flaubert, <em>Madame Bovary</em></td>
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<td>1862</td>
<td>Hugo, <em>Les Misérables</em></td>
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<td>1865</td>
<td>Frères Goncourt, <em>Germinie Lacerteux</em></td>
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<td>1868</td>
<td>Zola, <em>Thérèse Raquin</em></td>
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<td>1869</td>
<td>Flaubert, <em>L’Éducation sentimentale</em></td>
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<td>1870–1</td>
<td><em>Franco-Prussian War</em></td>
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<td>1870–1940</td>
<td>Third Republic</td>
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<td>1871</td>
<td>Seige of Paris (January), <em>Paris Commune</em> (suppressed May)</td>
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<td>1873</td>
<td>Verne, <em>Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours</em></td>
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<td>1881–2</td>
<td>Conan, <em>Angéline de Montbrun</em> (serial; book publication 1884)</td>
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<td>1884</td>
<td>Rachilde, <em>Monsieur Vénus</em></td>
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<td>1885</td>
<td>Maupassant, <em>Bel-ami</em></td>
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<td>1887</td>
<td>Foundation of the Eiffel Tower</td>
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<td>1892</td>
<td>Rodenbach, <em>Bruges-la-morte</em></td>
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<td>1894–9</td>
<td><em>Dreyfus Affair</em></td>
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<td>1900</td>
<td>Colette, <em>Claudine à l’école</em></td>
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<td>1904–12</td>
<td>Rolland, <em>Jean-Christophe</em></td>
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<td>1905</td>
<td><em>Separation of Church and State</em></td>
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<td>1907</td>
<td>Segalen, <em>Les Immémoriaux</em></td>
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<td>1913–27</td>
<td>Proust, <em>À la recherche du temps perdu</em></td>
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<td>Alain-Fournier, <em>Le Grand Meaulnes</em></td>
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Chronology

1914–18  First World War
1916  Barbusse, Le Feu
1919  Dorgelès, Les Croix de bois
1921  Maran, Batouala
1922–40  Martin du Gard, Les Thibault
1925  Gide, Les Faux-Monnayeurs
1927  Mauriac, Thérèse Desqueyroux
1928  Breton, Nadja
1932  Céline, Voyage au bout de la nuit
1933  Malraux, La Condition humaine
1936–8  Popular Front, left-wing government
1938  Sartre, La Nausée
1939–45  Second World War
1940–5  German Occupation of France; Vichy government
1942  Camus, L’Étranger
1943  Genet, Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs
1944  Women in France gain right to vote
1945  Beauvoir, Le Sang des autres
       Roy, Bonheur d’occasion
1945–9  Sartre, Les Chemins de la liberté
1946–58  Fourth Republic
1946–52  Indochina War
1947  Camus, La Peste
1950  Duras, Un barrage contre le Pacifique
       Zobel, La Rue Cases-Nègres
1951–3  Beckett’s trilogy, Molloy – Malone meurt – L’Innommable
1954–62  Algerian Revolution/War of Independence
1954  Sagan, Bonjour Tristesse
1956  Colonial rule ends in Morocco and Tunisia
       Oyono, Une vie de boy
       Sarraute, L’Ère du soupçon
       Yacine, Nedjma
1957  Treaty of Rome: France joins the new European Economic Community
       Butor, La Modification
       Robbe-Grillet, La Jalousie
Chronology

1958–Fifth Republic
Wiesel, La Nuit
Glissant, La Lézarde

1958–60 Independence of French West African colonies
1959 Queneau, Zazie dans le Métro
Sarraute, Le Planétarium
Schwarz-Bart, Le Dernier des justes

1960 First French nuclear weapons test
1963 Le Clézio, Le Procès-verbal

1968 May 1968 student revolts and national strike
Ouologuem, Le Devoir de violence

1969 Perec, La Disparition
1970 Tournier, Le Roi des aulnes
1977 Doubrovsky, Fils
1978 Perec, La Vie mode d’emploi
1979 Ba, Une si longue lettre
Tansi, La Vie et demie

1980 Le Clézio, Désert
1981 François Mitterrand elected President; end of capital punishment
1984 Duras, L’Amant
Ernaux, La Place
1985 Djebar, L’Amour, la fantasia
Laferrière, Comment faire l’amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer
Toussaint, La Salle de bain
1989 Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, Éloge de la créolité
Condé, Traversée de la mangrove

1992 Alexakis, Avant
Chamoiseau, Texaco
1994 Rwandan genocide
1995 Jacques Chirac elected President
Makine, Le Testament français
1996 Darrieussecq, Truismes
1997 Modiano, Dora Bruder
1998 Cheng, Le Dit de Tianyi
Houellebecq, Les Particules élémentaires
Mabanckou, Bleu-blanc-rouge
### Chronology

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<td>Nothomb</td>
<td>Stupeur et tremblements</td>
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<td>Dai Sijie</td>
<td>Balzac et la petite tailleuse chinoise</td>
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<td>Chevillard</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Beyala</td>
<td>Femme nue, femme noire</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Némirovsky</td>
<td>Suite française</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Littell</td>
<td>Les Bienveillantes</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Nicolas Sarkozy</td>
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<td><em>Pour une littérature-monde en français</em></td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Ernaux</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Ndiaye</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Darrieussecq</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>François Hollande</td>
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<td><em>Fournel, La Liseuse</em></td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td><em>Terror attacks on Charlie Hebdo and Bataclan, Paris</em></td>
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<td>Binet</td>
<td>La Septième fonction du langage</td>
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<td>D’après une histoire vraie</td>
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<td>Houellebecq</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>Faye</td>
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<td>Slimani</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>Emmanuel Macron</td>
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<td>Sérotonine</td>
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