The Second Republic’s Contest for the Figure of the Republic

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Aside from the free Salon of 1848, the single most dramatic artistic event of the short-lived Second Republic was the general and open competition for a symbol appropriate to the new regime. Historically, the contest marks a watershed in the development of French art not only for the inclusive range of its participants – composed of academicians, “juste milieu” representatives, realists and Barbizon artists – but also because it vividly reflected the pictorial problems of artists living in a period of transition. Yet, while references are often made to this contest by art historians, their accounts are fragmentary and generally confused. This is not entirely the authors’ fault; the circumstances leading to the bizarre consummation of the contest presented a bewildering spectacle even to the participating artists themselves.

Perhaps the greatest source of confusion lies in the fact that no individual was declared winner of the competition. As planned originally, three artists were to have been selected on the basis of their sketch entry to compete again in a definitive trial, but the turnout was so heavy and the quality of the sketches so even that the jury expanded to twenty the number of finalists eligible to compete with large-scale versions of their entries. A special indemnity of five hundred francs was awarded these artists to help finance their definitive pictures. However, when the time came to make the final judgment, the outraged jury rejected all the monumental figures presented as unfit to represent the Republic, and abruptly terminated the entire affair. Daumier – who failed to participate in the second trial though he was eligible to do so – thus faced every bit as well as his nineteen rivals. Still another source of confusion was the anonymity of the participating artists. The government, wishing to demonstrate its absolute impartiality, required that entries bear numbers rather than the names of their authors. Contemporaries could therefore refer to the entries only by number, although in some cases the stylistic evidence was sufficient to enable critics to designate the painters. But aside from Daumier, the other contestants remain anonymous or obscure. Fortunately, documents discovered in the Archives Nationales, and printed here in the Appendix, now permit us to identify these artists and to clear up most of the confusion surrounding the contest. This essay will first sketch the development of the competition, noting its implications for the evolution of painting in nineteenth-century France, and then examine some of the representations of the Republic and identify the twenty finalists.

The contest for “The Symbolic Figure of the Republic” opened officially on March 18, 1848 with an announcement in the Moniteur by Joseph Garraud, acting Director of Beaux-Arts. In addition to the painting competition, there were to be contests for a sculptural representation and a commemorative medal. The rules required the painter to depict a single figure in sketch format on a number twenty canvas (approximately 73 x 60cm). Entries were required to be submitted unsigned, and the names of the winning participants were not to be made public until after the definitive judgment. In reaction to the previous administration, the government purposely went out of its way to declare its unbiased attitude toward the entire community of artists, enabling independents to compete on the same basis as the academicians and their disciples.

Equivocation in the scheduling and organization of the contest reflected the political confusion and improvisatory tendencies which prevailed during the first year of the

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2 Strahanan makes Millet a finalist and Gérôme the winner: Strahanan, 263, 310–11; Nicard dates the contest 1849: P. Nicard, Alexandre Hesse, Paris, 1882, 65; Stryjenski makes Landelle one of three competitors for the final version, the other two being Hesse and Gérôme: C. Stryjenski, Une caricature d’artiste au XIXe siècle, Charles Landelle 1821–1908, Paris, 1911, 19; Larkin makes the number of finalists twenty-four: O. W. Larkin, Daumier: Man of his Time, New York, 1966, 77.

3 Late in life, Landelle thought that he and Gérôme had won the contest, when in fact, no one was declared winner. See Archives Nationales F31 189, Landelle’s letter to the Director of Beaux-Arts, Jan. 23, 1900.


6 Any discussion of Daumier’s participation in this contest must begin with the penetrating article by Lemann, “Daumier,” 198f. See also L. Rosenhal, “Notes sur Daumier,” in Bulletin de la Société de l’histoire de l’art français, 1911, 332.


10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.
Second Republic. Initially, the sketches were to be deposited at the École des Beaux-Arts during the first week of April. A public exhibition of the entries was to follow from April 5 to April 8, at the end of which period the jury was to select three sketches to be enlarged for the final choice. But once the contest had begun, the deadline for the submission of the painted sketches was extended to April 10, and the sketches, together with the sculpted submissions, were to be exhibited during the week of April 25–30. A further change in plans resulted from the totally unexpected response of the artists. The turnout was so large that the blue-ribbon jury of artists, critics and political leaders (including Ledru-Rollin, Flocon, Lamartine, Pyat, Arago, Jeaunon, Thoré, Charles Blanc, Ingres, Delacroix, Delaroche, Meissonier, Robert-Fleury, Decamps, Cogniet and Schnetz) convoked a special session to amend the contest regulations. Delaroche proposed a resolution increasing from three to twenty the number of sketches to be finished, and requesting the government to set aside an indemnity of five hundred francs for the twenty finalists. The jury enthusiastically endorsed Delaroche’s proposal and selected twenty sketches graded in order according to a scale of preference. The definitive trial was then set for the month of October.

On June 7, 1848, Blanc (now official Director of Beaux-Arts) announced in the Moniteur that during the period June 9–10 the twenty preliminary winners had to visit him personally and declare formally their intention to participate in the final stage. Any artist failing to do so would be automatically disqualified and replaced by a supernumerary. Apparently, all twenty participants certified their intention to follow through with the second test. But the following month, on July 2, Flandrin wrote that his present circumstances prevented him from fulfilling the conditions of the contest and asked to be relieved of his obligation. Flandrin was promptly replaced by the first supernumerary on Blanc’s list, Diaz. Flandrin was thus the only participant to withdraw officially. Daumier, who is sometimes cited as having refused to enter the final trial, actually began work on the large-scale version. But for one reason or another, he failed to complete his figure in time for the October judgment. As a result of Flandrin’s defection and Daumier’s dropping out, the final lineup consisted of only eighteen of the original finalists; the addition of Diaz made the total nineteen.

The definitive judgment took place on October 23, 1848. The nineteen participants submitted their monumentalized figures to the scrutiny of a jury composed of Blanc, Flocon, des Beaux-Arts. Exposition des figures pour la République, La Presse, December 5, 1848.

12 The literature on this subject is of course enormous, but for an interesting first-hand account see E. Malpertuy, Histoire de la société française au XVIIIe et au XIXe siècle, Paris, 1854. One may also consult with profit the histories of the Second Republic by its ideological founders and leaders Lamartine, Garnier-Pagès and Louis Blanc.

13 Garraud, “Appel aux artistes.”

14 Garraud, “Direction des Beaux-Arts.”


16 Archives Nationales F355 566.


18 Archives Nationales F355 26, dossier, “M. Diaz. Tableau. Figure symbolique de la République, 15 juil 1842.” Flandrin’s letter to Blanc, July 2, 1848. Flandrin wrote that he had fully intended to execute the definitive work, but that “circumstances indépendantes de ma volonté viennent s’y opposer.” Flandrin may have been preoccupied at that moment with his plans for the decoration of Saint-Paul in Nîmes, which he began early in October of 1848. See L. Flandrin, Hippolyte Flandrin, sa vie et son œuvre, Paris, 1902. But Gautier wrote that Flandrin was dissatisfied with his sketch and grew frustrated over the means of translating it into a larger scale. T. Gautier, “École Nationale...

3 Daumier, La République, sketch. Paris, Louvre.

4 Charité (from Gravelot and Cochin, Iconologie par figures, Paris, n.d. [1789-91])

5 School of David, La Patrie, pencil sketches. Detroit, the Detroit Institute of Arts (courtesy the Detroit Institute of Arts)


8 Del Sarto, *Justice*. Florence, formerly Compagnia di San Giovanni Battista allo Scalzo (photo: Alinari)

Arago, Albert de Luynes, Vernet, Picot, Robert-Fleury, Meissonier, Couture and F. B. de Mercey.22 No one could have anticipated the jury’s reaction; indignant over the motley results and what it felt to be a disgraceful farce, the jury not only voted against awarding the prize but also precluded future attempts by vetoing the idea of a new contest.23 Impartial critics overwhelmingly supported the jury’s decision, and indeed, general dissatisfaction with the results was expressed on all sides.24 The final entries seemed to have presented a bewildering farrago of symbolic attributes and tactless, hybridized personifications. As in the case of the free Salon of 1848, an event heralded as the ultimate expression of artistic liberty culminated with the cry for sterner artistic controls.25

In spite of the disaster which finally overtook the contest, however, its underlying impulse stemmed directly from the upsurge of optimism and political idealism marking the first year of the regime. Completely free from bias, the competition excited artists of every stamp, including Daumier, Leleux, Millet, Diaz, Devéria, Chassériau, Chenavard, Isabey, the Scheffer brothers, Hamon, Amaury-Duval, Flandrin and Gérôme.26 The occasion induced Daumier to exhibit his unique painterly gifts publicly (perhaps because of the guaranteed anonymity) for the first time in his career.27 With few exceptions, it was a contest for the younger generation; older artists like Ingres, Delacroix and Delaroche declined to participate.28 Of the former group, the notable exception was Courbet; he had at first intended to enter the contest, but at the last minute decided against it.29 Still, he and his friend Bonvin enthusiastically supported Daumier’s effort to participate.30

In addition to the enthusiasm it aroused among individual artists, the competition’s democratic program was a seminal point in the evolution of artistic institutions in nineteenth-century France. As an entirely public event, it had for its support the united voice of the whole community of French artists. Although public contests were offered during the first two years of the July Monarchy, the response to these contests seems to have been more or less limited.31 Whereas less than sixty painters entered the third of three open competitions held during the July Monarchy, nearly five hundred entered the painting contest for the symbol of the Republic.32 This impressive turnout was a testimony to the powerful sentiment generated by the new regime and the trust it inspired in its management of its administrative functions. To be sure, a significant source of the contest’s appeal to the artists derived from the singular opportunity to gain immediate national recognition, but in the main the contest appealed to artists like Curzon, who entered primarily to demonstrate his commitment to its democratic principle.33 One contemporary critic noted that the sketches showed the most divergent characteristics, and that even stylistically opposed works “se trouvent placées côté à côté sur le premier rang.”34 He considered this appropriate for the new government, which regarded individuality in aesthetic expression as part of the broadened representation of divergent opinions in the polity at large. The Second Republic thus provided protection for the entire community of artists, and rejected a policy of showing special consideration for a favored faction within that community. For the first time in French history – during the Revolution of 1789 the Academy had suffered from prejudice – the bureaucracy regulating art assumed an essentially egalitarian position. It permitted the artists greater responsibility in the administration of the arts and sanctioned the establishment of artists’ associations and juries composed of academicians, romantics, realists and naturalists.35 Indeed, the government’s policy helped dissolve old prejudices and induced artists to act in concert.36 So lively was the liberal sentiment toward freedom of competition...
10 Coin struck for the Second Republic (from Saulcy, Souvenirs numismatiques de la Révolution de 1848, Paris, n.d. [ca. 1848–50])

11 Noblesse (from Gravelot and Cochin)

12 Nature (from Gravelot and Cochin)

13 Jules Ziégler, La République, sketch. Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts (photo: Studio Gérondal)

14 Janet-Lange, subject here identified as La République, sketch. Paris, Musée Carnavalet (photo: Bulloz)
that the artists wished to extend opportunities to foreigners. The government itself had not intended to invite foreign participants, but a group of artists pressed a petition upon the Minister of the Interior opposing such an exclusion on the grounds that it would be contrary to the fraternal aims and universal spirit of the regime. The petitioners further declared: “Le gouvernement désire avant tout que son programme soit rendu aussi bien que possible; nous avons la ferme espoir qu’il appartient plus spécialement à un coeur français de comprendre cette idée, mais si un autre artiste, quel que soit son pays, rendoit mieux que nous ce symbole, loin d’être jaloux, nous l’en remercions car il aurait rendu un service à notre pays.” Artists enthusiastically embraced the Second Republic’s theoretical idealism, and they refused to recognize barriers either among themselves or between themselves and their foreign peers—whether those barriers were of stylistic or national origin. By thus encouraging the abolition of these constraints during its ephemeral reign, the Second Republic stimulated the liberation of painting from narrow stylistic creeds and gave impetus to the lonely pioneers of avant-garde tendencies, such as the realists and Barbizon artists.

But it is not for this alone that the contest signals a turning point in the development of nineteenth-century French painting. In addition to its salutary democratizing effect, it mirrored the formal problems of a generation of artists in transition. For one thing, many of the artists had difficulty in carrying the spontaneity and vigor of their original sketch entry into the definitive work. Whereas twenty-five years earlier this would not have posed a problem of widespread concern, now critics expressed the general feeling in lamenting this failure to maintain the heat of initial inspiration. In fact, critics and officials seemed to have been unanimously willing to endorse the germinal product as an index of superior talent and even of genius—an idea that still aroused public controversy during the previous regime. Gautier and Jan both felt that the original sketches were far superior to the final representations. An English critic observed that although some of the sketches were “the result of a few slashes of the brush, they started by the brilliance or boldness of their expression.” Undoubtedly, Daumier’s failure to fulfill the conditions of the contest lay in part in his struggle to bring off the sketch qualities in the finished work. The fact that the critics recognized great potential in the twenty preliminary winning sketches, and then were so disappointed by the definitive figures, attests in good measure to a significant shift in taste since the Davidian era and its ‘‘nordic’’ basis on “fini.”

Perhaps even more important for the fate of the final entries, however, was the pressure on the contestants to express themselves in forms which had already lost most of their aesthetic viability. Having to reconcile reality and idealism on the one hand, and bridge the gap between tradition and modernity on the other, was a major pitfall for the artists. It is certain that these conflicts led to the ultimate failure of the competition, conflicts conveyed by Champfleury in his description of the symbolism exploited by the artists: “C’étaient des Républiques roses, vertes, jaunes; des Républiques entourées des attributs de 89: chaînes brisées, triangle égalitaire, faisceaux, table de loi; des Républiques en robe de soie, en robe de chambre, en habits à ramage, en garde national.” The very fact that the artists had to execute an allegorical figure to represent the new regime already bears witness to their dilemma. In a symptomatic predicament of other nineteenth-century artists, the contestants tried to achieve an image that would be both traditionally “elevated” and innovatively “modern”; but even by mid-century a synthetic combination of allegory and realism was no longer a viable formula. It is for this reason, I believe, that Courbet, who must have sensed the danger to himself, decided against entering the competition. But those who did participate valiantly attempted to infuse the personifications provided by such repositories as Ripa’s Iconologia and Gravelot and Cochín’s Iconologie par figures with vitality and originality. Indeed, the contest served as a kind of junction where the historical and

T. de Banville, Mes souvenirs, Paris, 1883, 166. For the difficulties other artists faced in their attempt to reconcile allegory and actuality for this contest, see A. Sensier, La vie et l’œuvre de J.-F. Millet, Paris, 1881, 157f.; E. Moreau-Nélaton, Millet raconté par lui-même, Paris, 1921, 1, 72f.; E. Reinaud, Charles Jalabert, l’homme, l’artiste d’après sa correspondance, Paris, 1903, 117f.


“learned” strains of the academic tradition and the enthusiasm for contemporaries were brought together in an unruly fashion. The artists were not blameworthy for having been caught in a period of transition, and for revealing a Janus-faced conception of realism and idealism just at that moment in history when one was superseding the other in French thought and culture. Even the critics revealed the ambivalence: Laurent Jan declared, “Soyons républicains, mais ayons aussi de notre temps et surtout de notre pays!”49

Unfortunately, the iconographic tradition of the Republic—which dated from antiquity and endured primarily through numismatic materials—weighed heavily upon the artists’ conceptions.50 The personified abstractions exploited by the artists for the 1848 contest were modeled to a great extent after those of Libertas and Victoria, traditionally linked to the Roman Republic.51 Libertas, the goddess of freedom, was represented as a Roman matron, holding in one hand a scepter, and in the other a phrygian bonnet—an allusion to the cap placed on the heads of emancipated slaves.52 Victoria was a winged deity crowned with laurel and generally equipped with a palm branch in one hand.53 Added to, or sometimes substituted for the attributes of Liberty were a pike, a dagger, and a cat, and to those of Victory a herald’s staff, a garland, or a fillet outstretched in both hands.44 The artists of the Second Republic—as those of the First—appropriated the symbolic accessories of both allegories and fused them into a new image whose precise counterpart could not be discovered in antiquity. Something akin to what Panofsky termed “pseudomorphosis” occurred; the ancient representations of Liberty and Victory, together with their attributes, became invested with different meanings as they underwent fusion and combination in later periods.55 Into this iconographic crucible were poured medieval and Renaissance reminiscences of Justice, Charity and Hope, and the final result presented a rich yet conglomerate complexity, no longer linked with a specific virtue but making confounded allusions to the Patria which, ironically, had only equivocally and uncertainly reconciled the republican form with its antecedent political tradition in regard to its own constitution.

As noted, the artists of 1848 were aided considerably by such iconographic handbooks as Ripa’s Iconologia, which drew on numismatics, hieroglyphics, and medieval mythographers, and wove from them complicated abstractions proclaiming highly moralized concepts.56 Ripa’s French translators and followers also played an important role, and such personifications as Liberty descended along a route that had been traced by Ripa and that continued into the nineteenth century.57 But Ripa’s repertory itself contains a number of allegories which bear striking affinities to those used by the artists of 1848 and indicate that he provided them with a large stock of visual ideas.58 Thus, what appeared to Roger de Piles in the seventeenth century as one of the reference guides “most useful to those in the profession,”59 managed to retain its importance for artists in mid-nineteenth-century France.

An eighteenth-century manual, the Iconologie par figures by Gravelot and Cochin, seems also to have had considerable influence; and while it owed a tremendous debt to Ripa, its female abstractions were submitted to a Rococo vision and possess greater charm, feminine sensuality and light-hearted elegance than its predecessor (Figs. 4, 11, 12, 21). It is curious to note that the allegorical types used to represent the Republic of 1798 had the sober restraint and somber character of Ripa’s figures, with added features of aggressiveness and ferocity—the result perhaps of a reaction to the “rococoized” representations of Gravelot and Cochin.60 An especially menacing personification of the Republic was conceived by David, who proposed that such a figure be installed on the Pont Neuf: “Que cette image imposante par son caractère de force & de simplicité porte écrit en gros caractères sur son front, Lumière; sur sa poitrine, Nature, Vertu; sur ses bras, Force; sur ses mains, earlier emblems by Augustin Dupré celebrating the American Independence of 1776. See E. Mâle, “La clef des allégories peintes et sculptées au xviie et au xviie siècle,” Revue des deux mondes, xxxix, 1927, 391. In this evolution, Liberty and the Republic become virtually “twin-sisters,” synonymous personifications as in the case of the First and Second Republics. See Renouvier, 403; J. A. Leith, The Idea of Art as Propaganda in France 1750–1799, Toronto, 1965, 98.

Ripa’s work was first published in 1593 (without figures) and the first illustrated edition was published in Rome in 1603. It had numerous editions; unless otherwise noted, we use Ripa’s Iconologia, 5 vols., Perugia, 1764–67. See M. Prat, Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery, London, 1939, 1139.

For Ripa’s successors, see Mâle, “La clef des allégories,” 371; Ripa, Iconologia, ou explication nouvelle de plusieurs images, emblèmes, et autres figures, ed. I. Baudoin, Paris, 1644; N. Verrié, Recueil d’emblèmes, devises, médailles et figures hieroglyphiques, Paris, 1724; Gravelot and Cochin, Iconologie par figures, 4 vols., Paris, n.d. (1789–91); J. B. Huet, Le trésor des artistes et des amateurs des arts, ou le guide des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs, graveurs, architectes, décorateurs, etc., dans le choix des sujets allégoriques ou emblématiques qu’ils ont à employer dans leurs compositions, 3 vols., Paris, 1810. For the Liberty series, see Ripa, Iconologia, iv, 30; Gravelot and Cochin, iii, 31; Huet, ii, 78.


to evidence of the pictorial problems discussed in the preceding section. Both the sketches and the definitive pictures will be examined from this point of view. Perhaps one of the most remarkable of the sketch entries was that of Flandrin, originally received as the best of the twenty preliminary winners (Fig. 1).66 Awestruck and remote, Flandrin’s figure is set above the globe of the world. While also possessing a vigorous body, her transcendental appearance is contradicted by her tense facial expression. The figure’s lips are parted, and her large anxious eyes convey a sense of fear. She carries in her left hand the tricolor, and her left arm supports the fasces, a sword and a buckler; holding an olive branch in her right hand and wearing a wreath of oak leaves, she thus presents a dual image of might and peace.67 There are several disconcerting elements here, however; the sword and buckler seem like theatrical accessories, and her expression of fear joined to the awkward way she holds these weapons give a feeling of self-consciousness in consonant with an allegorical abstraction. Then, too, her realistic head sits uneasily upon the symbolical body, modeled after the Winged Victory. Here Flandrin may have relied on a type found on a Roman bronze from Pompeii, or he could have been informed by similar figures in the iconographical handbooks (Fig. 2).68 But the effective silhouetting of the figure, the simplicity of the modeling and the gracefully circulating drapery folds contribute to suppress these contradictory elements and to project a monumental image.

Daumier’s sketch (Fig. 3)69 – which placed eleventh – is well-known, but it may be illuminating to compare it with Flandrin’s. Daumier’s figure is shown as the maternal protector, but like Flandrin’s, she combines a powerful body with a facial expression of concern and anxiety. Also like Flandrin’s Republic, she holds the tricolor and is silhou-

63 Renouvier, 392, 401f.
67 For the general interpretation of this symbolism, see Renouvier, 390f.; B. Paliser, Historic Devices, Badges and War Cries, London, 1870; A. Whittick, Symbols, Signs and Their Meaning, Newton, 1961. The tricolor of course represented the revolutionary Republic, the fasces a sign of unity, the laurel victory, the olive branch peace, and the oak stood for generation and the social virtues.
68 The example which springs instantly to mind is the Winged Victory of Samothrace, but this was only discovered in 1863. See also Ripa, Iconologia, x, 131.
etted against a neutral background. Daumier's figure, however, sits on a granite throne whose massive character determines the formal design of the composition. Instead of the supple and graceful folds of Flandrin's figure, Daumier's are large and forceful. Daumier also emphasized bulk by modeling the forms with heavy contours and areas of contrasted light and shade — qualities he would reveal in his later productions. Like Flandrin's, Daumier's concep of influenced by established precedent. Andrea del Sarto's in the Louvre is often proposed as Daumier's prototype. An example of the iconographical handbooks may also have aided him. Gravelot's allegory of Charity and Daumier's Republic show striking analogies, especially in the relationship of the putti seated on the ground and to the right of the central figure, as well as in the prominently highlighted thigh lending support to the putto at the right, and the rounded forms linked by arching contours (Fig. 4). As Lemann suggested, Daumier could further have invoked recollections of works from David's circle, or even of his friend Millet, in working out his design (Fig. 5). But while following older models, Daumier managed to transmute them with his own energetic ideas and achieve a lively and original sketch. Nevertheless, in the end he could not bring himself to complete the definitive version; his love of the spontaneous and improvised, joined to his loathing of allegory, could not sustain the magnification and final projection of his original expression. Yet in the sketch, Daumier seems to have reconciled his conflicting feelings. He thus benefited from the liberty afforded by the preliminary sketch requirement.

Although Cornu's and Landelle's Republics, which placed fifth and thirteenth respectively in the preliminary heat, are as commanding as the previous examples, they appear less remote and more immediately tangible (Figs. 6, 7). The head of Cornu's figure shows a frank, open expression, and her eyes fix intently on the spectator. Landelle's Republic is especially appealing; her dark, sensual head, the rather nonchalant pose and slightly disheveled look make a captivating image. In this context, the cumbersome size of the sword seems absurd, an incongruity heightened by the casual way the figure leans upon it. Here, too, the shackles and laurel sprig come off as theatrical accessories accompanying the figure — as if she is modeling the latest fashion. Like Daumier's work, Landelle's conception probably owes a great debt to Andrea del Sarto, whose figure of Justice from the fresco cycle in the cloister of the Scalzo in Florence it closely resembles (Fig. 8). The analogies of the pose and relationship to the oversized sword are strikingly apparent.

70 Gravelot and Cochin, i, No. 55. "Charité." See also Huët, Le trésor des arts, iii, No. 13. Ripa, Padua, 1611, 72.
71 Curiously, the model of the Detroit drawing published by Lemann are even closer in relation to the Gravelot and Cochin than to the Daumier, thus suggesting that Gravelot provided the point of departure for the Detroit groupings. See Lemann, 101, 111. Millet's Charité, painted at the end of the 1830's, bears a remarkable affinity to the Daumier. See Morceau-Nélaton, i, fig. 10.
72 Landelle is represented here by a replica of his definitive work in the Lycée Saint-Louis, Paris. The original, sent to the United States for an international art exhibition, disappeared there. See Archives Nationales F29, 99, Landelle's dossier: "Tableau. Figure symbolique de la République. 12 juin 1848"; also Strzygowski, 20.

W know that Landelle admired the Italian master, and th. during a visit to Italy in 1845 he sketched several copies of del Sarto’s work. Influenced also by contemporary coins and the iconographical manuals, Landelle thus conceived a figure based on earlier patterns, but whose best qualities are not indebted to these idealized references but to the felt presence of the live model. It is perhaps for this reason that contemporary critics preferred Landelle’s final version to all the rest.

Gérôme, who came in eighteenth in the sketch trial, is here represented by his definitive picture (Fig. 9). Androgynous in appearance, the figure’s bulk and massive strength are more reminiscent of the allegories of the First Republic, whose lingering echoes could be found in contemporary coins (Fig. 10). The powerful body, however, is tempered by the somewhat impassive and effeminate posture, which is emphasized by a magnificent descent of draped folds. The Republic’s left arm is extended toward the spectator — in a virtuoso display of foreshortening — and holds out a laurel sprig, while her right hand holds a sword pointing downward. Above her head glows a resplendent star designating her immortality, a symbol drawn from the picture manuals (Fig. 11). The landscape background is austere conceived, but relieved by a delicate effect of illumination: light blues and rosy pinks suggest the dawning. In a lucid compositional scheme, Gérôme balanced the frontal standing figure with a crouching profile view of a lion, an attribute symbolizing protection and power, and which was again provided by the manuals (Figs. 12, 19). An image that would reappear often in Gérôme’s later works, here the lion attests for the first time to the artist’s extraordinary pictorial grasp of this animal. But if his Republic exploits symbolic attributes, the composition is almost entirely deduced of antique trappings. The figure’s origin in studio studies is still felt, and it seems to belong to this world rather than stand for an abstraction.

Ziegler, a supernumerary in the contest, who unlike Diaz did not get to participate in the definitive trial, and Janet-Lange, whose entry was rejected outright, are represented here by their entries to further exemplify the pictorial dilemmas confronting the contestants (Figs. 13, 14). Apparently attempting to suppress the effect of the live model, Ziegler gave his Republic an impersonal masklike visage, but it is contradicted by the photographic clarity and naturalism of her garments, and by the incredibly lifelike rendition of the lion. His vivacious brush technique in these areas also defeats the purpose of the marmoreal head. However, we may note in passing that he has ingeniously integrated his

74 Strzygowski, 16.
75 Jan, "Portrait de la République"; Gautier, "Exposition des figures."
76 Formerly installed in the Mairie de Montmartre, this work is presently to be found in the Marie des Lilas, Paris.
78 For Jules Ziegler (1804–56), see Isard, "Concours," 162. Janet-Lange's sketch in the Musée Carnavalet is identified here for the first time. Its dimensions, 72.5 x 52cm, leave little doubt as to its place in this context. Ange-Louis Janet, called Janet-Lange (1815–72), would go on to carve out a successful official career.
into the composition, the "Triangle which is subtly echoed in the Republic’s ron surrounded by a plethora of symbolic representing abundance and fruitfulness. In her left hand holds the "Torch of Enlightenment," and in her right are the "Scales of Justice." At her right foot perch the cock, symbol of watchfulness. On the pedestal of the three carved reliefs of the popular triadic symbols of the Republic, the "Liberty Bonnet," the "Triumph of Liberty," and the clasping hands—summing up the famous shibboleth "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity"—which could be found everywhere in 1848, as for example in contemporary coins (Fig. 15). Indeed, Janinet-Lange borrowed his motifs from coins and the iconographical guides (Figs. 16, 17). But his careful treatment of such details as the farm implements and mechanical devices in the foreground, as well as the naturalistic treatment of the cock, undermines his allegorical intention. Furthermore, in the context of the authentic-looking industrial site, one might very well imagine that the figure and its accessories have been suddenly unloaded by some manufacturing concern to be used to decorate one of the yet unfinished buildings in the background.

J. F. Millet was one of the most ardent participants in the contest. But while he devoted much time and energy to working up his entry, he also failed to place among the finalists. While the whereabouts of his painted sketch is presently unknown, several of his preliminary drawings exist and bear upon the present study. It appears that he originally conceived of the Republic as huntress and conqueror, projecting her in the fearsome mode of the First Republic. After much hesitation, however, he chose a Republic "d’une simplicité lacédémonienne," a figure flanked by beehives and farm implements, and wearing in her hair ears of grain. She held honeycombs in one hand, and in the other, a painter’s palette and brushes—a combination that suggests an autobiographical statement: Millet, in effect, exchanged an older allegorical type for one that had direct significance for him.

In one of these preliminary sketches, which shows a transitional phase of his ideas, he depicted his figure as a kind of "Spartan" peasant (Fig. 18). Garbed in a simple costume, his figure is stripped of all allegorical clues save

79 A similar image is used today on the official stamps of the Fifth Republic, and to some extent it is reminiscent of Elihu Vedder’s allegories of the Government of the Republic in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

80 Sensier, Millet, 107f.; Moreau-Nélaton, 72f. In a letter dated June 28, 1848, Millet’s mother complains to her son about his neglect of correspondence owing to his deep involvement in the competition.

81 He executed at least four different projects in addition to the ultimate entry which is now lost; see Moreau-Nélaton, 1, figs. 50–51; J. Cain and P. Leprieur, Millet, n.d. [1913], fig. 10; also the Reims drawing discussed in the text below. They are all, unfortunately, relatively uninspired.

82 Moreau-Nélaton, 73, figs. 50–51.

83 Ibid., 72.

84 Musée des Beaux-Arts, Reims, entitled “Egalité.”
19  Etica (from Ripa, Iconologia)

20  Coin struck for the Second Republic (from Sauley)

21  Fécondité (from Gravelot and Cochin)

22  Agriculture (from Gravelot and Cochin)

23  Ary Scheffer, La République. Dordrecht, Dordrechts Museum

24  Ary Scheffer, La République. Dordrecht, Dordrechts Museum
for the carpenter's level, the “Triangle of Equality” that she holds above her head. She stands in an open field, and her somber, almost spectral appearance recalls Millet's isolated and gloomy Sower, and his shepherds and shepherdesses. This is further suggested by her bizarre bonnet, identical with the caps worn by his later peasant protagonists. Directly behind her, Millet placed a plow. A faint suggestion of a sword attached to the plowshare at the left invokes Isaiah's prophecy, “they shall beat their swords into plowshares.” Millet's figure supports her left arm on a cylindrically shaped monument showing a relief of embracing putti, a symbol of fraternal love. Yet while these essential features of a Republican millennium are projected, the shadowy figure imparts to the whole a pessimistic tone.

Millet's Republic lacks the monumentality of his great works, but it is in some ways an ingenious conception; as in the Zieglers, the “Triangle of Equality” is beautifully woven into the compositional scheme, here coinciding with the apex of the basic triangular design. Millet, however, looked for inspiration to the handbooks and contemporary coins, not only with respect to the figural motif but also for subsidiary details (Figs. 19–22). Understandably, he found it agonizingly difficult to reconcile the demands of reality and ideality, and his hesitation and vacillation attest to his profound dissatisfaction with this task. Indeed, it is tempting to hypothesize that this hybridized image marks a personal transition between his conventional and realist phases, especially when we recall that the following year he and his family withdrew to Barbizon.

Ary Scheffer also enthusiastically entered the contest, submitting two entries which, however, were both rejected by the jury, and they are represented here by his initial, quickly scribbled drafts (Figs. 23, 24). Even in this form they strike us as singularly uninspired, and once again the entries bear witness to the conflict imposed by the contest upon the artist, regardless of highly motivated intentions and artistic ability.

Thus, the central problem of evolving a successful image of the Republican in an age supporting originality and innovation was never overcome. Gautier declared after reviewing the paintings and sculptures: “L'actualité avant l'archéologie, l'essai avant l’exposé, l’essai avant l’étude.” The constant struggle is evident in this respect: how to stage an image that could satisfy everybody's expectations. As Laurent Jan proposed, “Commencez par afinqu'on ne vous l'a pas pris contre le parti de l'abbé Vital, que c'est un caractère, quels sont les symboles qui le mettent à jour – Voilà la République française.” The competition therefore spotlighted a contemporary conflict between the dual requirements of tradition and personality, research and modernity. This was a transitional dilemma which would be transcended only by the subsequent generation.

In 1848 the inchoate aims and aspirations of the Second Republic urgently needed at the very least some outward sign of unification and legitimacy. The emblem of the figure of the Republic provided a concrete badge of identification and thus answered to this need. It would, according to the man who first suggested the idea of the contest, represent a symbol of permanence and stability amid political and social chaos. But a society subject to dynamic change and fraught with anxiety could not find in a timeworn and vacuous residue of antiquity the sure sign of identification. It could not expect a contrived image from the aesthetic domain to be any more viable than the regime itself. The republican ideal in this sense was best expressed by the individual visions of the landscapists — the Barbizon artists and the realists — whose ideal would be consummated in the Third Republic. As an English critic summed up his observations of the definitive pictures: “In short, they are as heterogeneous and undecided in aim as is the great original, the French Republic itself, which resemblance is about the best encomium that can be passed on them.”

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Appendix

Here, the twenty finalists in the competition are ranked. As a point of departure, I have included a contemporary description of the twenty finalists, by the critic Charles Isaac, who gives a systematic description of the entries, as well as a few illustrative cases to the identity of the artists. I follow Isaac's attempts to identify the stylistic milieu of each artist, while sometimes erring on the side of caution. In the cases of Marie-Alexandre and Auguste Hesse, his observations are still valid. In one or two cases, it appears he has confused his notes. It should also be noted that artists were often given the freedom to work on their original sketches, so that Isaac's description may be at variance with the final entries, which are relevant only in the case of Landelle.98

We are now able to identify all twenty authors on the basis of a document found among the official papers of the 1847 administration in the Archives Nationales, showing a nearly complete list of the finalists in their order of preference.94 A further clue is the notification procedures used by the administration to inform the finalists of their selection. When each artist was notified, a duplicate of the arrêté was filed, showing the number of preference in the upper left-hand corner. By checking the list together with the numbers on the individual arrêtés, I was able to identify the artists.95 Isaac's descriptions, the name of the artist, and all relevant bibliographical references are included below.

I

No. 441. Ce numéro, reçu le premier, doit appartenir à un homme qui a étudié la peinture monumentale simple et large. Nous trouvons quelque analogie entre cette esquisse et un Napoléon législateur qu'on a pu remarquer à l'exposition de 1847. L'auteur de cette République nous l'explique lui-même. Donnons-nous la peine de lire ce qui se trouve écrit sur la partie inférieure du cadre: "La République prend pour base et pour tete l'autel de la Fraternité sur lequel elle sacrifie toute haine représentée par un serpent. Elle apporte au monde la paix, et de sa main droite lui en présente le symbole; de la gauche elle tient le drapeau français dont la hampe est fortifiée par le fasceau emblème d'union. La République est blanche et pure, c'est une vierge sans tache! Son trône pose sur le globe, elle a les ailes déployées, c'est dire la grandeur de son avenir." Cette figure est d'un aspect distingué; elle tient en effet une branche d'olivier dans la main droite, à son côté gauche pend un bouclier vu de profil. Le même artiste avait envoyé une seconde esquisse, portant No. 428, ayant à peu près le même aspect, seulement le bras droit était levé et le bouclier était vu de face.

Artist: Hippolyte Flandrin (1809-64).
Bibliography: Archives Nationales F11 26 (Diaz); L. Flandrin, Hippolyte Flandrin, sa vie et son oeuvre, Paris, 1902, 193, 329.
Present Location: Collection Flandrin, Paris.

II

No. 76. Ce numéro rappelle l'exécution souple, et la tendance au style élevé, du tableau de Cléopâtre et Antoine sur le Cydnus, qu'on a pu voir à la dernière exposition. Cette esquisse est originale et profonde d'idées; elle est digne d'un penseur allemand. La République aux formes michelangéliques, paraissant colossal par ses proportions, assise dans une niche sur une siège antique, appuie deux doigts de la main droite sur son front, de la main gauche elle presse son cœur et paraît vouloir faire à la fois appel à son intelligence et à son amour pour en doter l'avenir de ses enfants. Les enfants qui l'entourent, par l'effet des oppositions, contribuent à donner de la grandeur à cette figure.

Artist: Henri-Pierre Picou (1824-95).
Salon Reference: Salon de 1848, No. 3666, Cléopâtre et Antoine sur l' Cydnus.
Bibliography: Archives Nationales F11 50.
Present Location: Unknown to me.

III

No. 310. La République vêtue de blanc et se détachant sur un ciel d'un bleu noir, nous rappelle comme aspect le tableau du Passé, présent et avenir de l'exposition de 1847.

Artist: Dominique-Louis Papety (1815-49).
Salon Reference: Salon de 1847, No. 1247, Le passé, le présent et l'avenir.
Bibliography: Archives Nationales F11 49.
Present Location: Unknown to me.

IV

No. 394. Cette République, faite par un débutant, est d'un dessin distingué, elle tient un niveau dans la main droite, un drapeau tricolore et un livre ouvert dans la main gauche; on lit sur le livre Aimez-vous les uns les autres. Sur l'autel de la Fraternité placé à côté d'elle on voit s'animant dans les flammes la peine de mort, les abus, les privilèges; un joug brisé est à ses pieds et un jeune olivier, symbole de paix, sort de terre près d'elle.

Artist: Félix Fossey (1826-72).
Present Location: Unknown to me.

V

No. 400. Debout sur un trône de marbre la République proclame la souveraineté du peuple. Il nous semble reconnaître de la façon de plusieurs portraits et d'un Faust et Marguerite que nous avons vus au dernier Salon.

Artist: Sébastien-Melchior Cornu (1804-70).
Salon Reference: Salon de 1848, No. 976, Faust et Marguerite.
Bibliography: Archives Nationales F11 22.
Present Location: Musée des Beaux-Arts, Besançon.

VI

No. 304. La figure de la République est assise; ses pieds posent sur un lion, symbole de la force du peuple. Elle élève dans les airs le drapeau de la fraternité, représenté par deux mains qui se serrent. L'aspect de la composition est simple et l'idée belle. Nous reconnaissons l'auteur d'une étude de femme vue de dos, qui se faisait remarquer à la dernière exposition par l'élégance de ses formes.

Salon Reference: Salon de 1848, No. 728, Mimosa (?).
Present Location: Both the sketch and the finished version are in the Musée Ingres, Montauban.

93 Isnard, "Concours des figures symboliques," 161 ff.
94 Gauthier, "Exposition des figures."
95 Archives Nationales F11 496, dossier: "Exercices 1846, 1847, 1848. Ouvrages d'art et décoration d'édifices publics." The list of artists is nearly complete, except for the absence of Flandrin, Picou and Papety, and incorrectly reverses the order of Steinheil and Gariot at the end of the list. Beginning, then, with Fossey as No. 4 the list remains accurate until

Gérôme, No. 18 (the numbers are mine as the document is unnumbered).

98 For example, in the upper left-hand corner of Picou's notification we find "No. 2," and this message: "Le Citoyen Picou, peintre, est chargé d'exécuter pour le compte du Ministère de l'Intérieur et moyennant la somme de cinq cents francs, imputable sur le crédit des ouvrages d'art et décoration d'édifices publics, la figure symbolique de la République Française." In Archives Nationales F11 50.
VII
No. 382. Cette figure, peint avec audace, nous a paru dans une pause un peu tragique. Cette tendance au tragique se remarque même dans les plis des draperies. On trouve quelques rapports entre cette esquisse et la Prise de Barath par Amaury II, du dernier Salon.
Salon Reference: Here incorrect. The author of the Prise de Barath was Alexandre Hesse (Salon of 1848, No.2238).
Bibliography: Archives Nationales F1. 45.
Present Location: Unknown to me.

VIII
No. 399. Cette figure, qui a l’aspect d’une sainte, tient d’une main un livre sur lequel on lit Sanctum Evangelium, une balance et un sceptre de justice; de l’autre, elle dirige vers le ciel un drapeau. Cette esquisse appartient à un débutant.
Artist: Auguste Hesse (1795-1860). Hardly a debutant.
Present Location: Unknown to me.

IX
No. 197. La République est assise sur un char trainé par deux lions. Elle tient dans la main droite un flammé dans la gauche un drapeau. Cette composition est d’un aspect originel. Nous nous rappelons en voyant les Athéniens captifs à Syracuse portant à la dernière exposition le no.2892.
Artist: Jean-Baptiste Auguste Leloir (1809-92).
Salon Reference: Salon of 1848, No. 2882.
Bibliography: Archives Nationales F1. 42.
Present Location: Unknown to me.

X
No. 311. Cette République, d’un joli aspect, nous a paru un peu débraillée. Elle tient dans la main la statue de a Liberté. Nous pensons, en voyant cette esquisse, malgré nous et probablement par un effet bizarre des contrastes, à un événissement de la Vierge du Salon de 1845.
Artist: Alexandre Hesse (1806–79).
Salon Reference: Here incorrect. The author of the Examenissement de la Vierge in the 1845 Salon was Alexandre’s uncle, Auguste Hesse (Salon of 1845, No. 892). Both Jan and Gautier mentioned the disheveled appearance of Alexandre’s figure. Undoubtedly, however, Alexandre showed the influence of his uncle, an older and more experienced painter.
Present Location: Unknown to me.

XI
No. 361. On dit que c’est un dessinateur spirituel qui a fait cette femme puissante allant deux puissants enfants.
Artist: Honoré-Victorin Daumier (1806–79).
Present Location: Paris, Louvre.

XII
Present Location: Whereabouts of sketch unknown to me; replica of final version presently in the Lycée Saint-Louis, Paris.

XIV
No. 270. La République, appuyée sur un faisceau, porte dans sa main une boule du monde, autour de laquelle on lit: liberté, égalité, fraternité.
Artist: Alfred-Thompson Gobert (1822–95).
Bibliography: Archives Nationales F1. 33.
Present Location: Unknown to me.

XV
No. 180. Celle-ci se détache sur un fond jaune-lumineux; elle a dans une de ses mains une épée dont la pointe est tournée vers la terre, et dans l’autre un niveau. Quelques parties de cette esquisse, peintes avec habileté, nous font penser à l’exécution distinguée d’une Sainte Cécile qu’on a pu voir au dernier Salon.
Artist: Jean Auguste Ingres (1818–66).
Salon Reference: Incorrect here. Charles Landelle was the author of the Sainte-Cécile in the 1848 Salon (Salon of 1848, No. 2627). Perhaps Landelle and Gobert shared the technical qualities of their master Delaroche, who himself had painted a Sainte-Cécile in 1837.
Bibliography: Archives Nationales F1. 44.
Present Location: Unknown to me.

XVI
No. 298. Cette figure debout tient une table sur laquelle sont écrits ces mots: SUFFRAGE UNIVERSEL. L’auteur de cette esquisse pourrait bien avoir fait le Virgile lisant les Georgiques qu’on voit dans la galerie du Luxembourg.
Artist: Charles Jalabert (1818–1901).
Picture Reference: Jalabert’s Virgile had shown in the 1847 Salon and was purchased by the government for the Luxembourg Museum the same year.
Present Location: Whereabouts of sketch unknown to me; the final version was, until very recently, in the Mairie de Nîmes. I have been informed that it has been temporarily misplaced.
La République étend la main en signe de protection sur une en bronze composé de trois figures qui sont la personification du père devise LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ.

Président-Dominique Höffel (1804–79).

Bibliography: Archives Nationales F21 35.

Present Location: Unknown to me.

Voici, d’un fort joli aspect, nous rappelle
Amorceon faisant danser l’Amour. L’idée
heureuse et bien rendue; mais je verrais avec
beau soleil dont le disque va bientôt nous apparaître
dans tout son éblouissant éclat.

Artist: Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904).
Salon Reference: Salon de 1848, No. 1932, Anacreon, Bacchus et
l’Amour.
Bibliography: Archives Nationales F21 32.

Present Location: Whereabouts of sketch unknown to me; the
final version is presently in the Mairie des Lilas, Paris.

XIX
No. 253. L’aspect de cette esquisse est d’un ton jaune désagréable
à voir. La figure de la République tient un flambeau et s'appuie
sur un autel chargé de fleurs et de fruits.

Artist: Paul-César Gariot (1811–7).

Present Location: Unknown to me.

XX
La figure de la République porte un drapeau sur lequel on lit:
“Celui qui veut être le premier doit être le serviteur de tous.”
Une écharpe d’un beau jaune, comme on sait en faire dans cette
ecole, entoure le corps svelte de la République.

Artist: Louis Charles Auguste Steinheil (1814–85).
Bibliography: Archives Nationales F21 56.

Present Location: Unknown to me.