Chronology of Victor Hugo’s Early Works

in Defense of French Heritage

and Related Events

Created by Marva Barnett for the Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society Victor Hugo & Notre-Dame Weekend, July 1-3, 2022

Notes:

* I am indebted, as usual, to insightful Hugo scholars for their work on the writing and publication of Hugo’s early work to preserve French *patrimoine*, especially to the authors of these two essays:
	+ Jean-Marc Hovasse, “Dix ans de guerre littéraire: de “La Bande noire” à *Notre-Dame de Paris*,” in *Guerre aux démolisseurs!: Victor Hugo et la défense du patrimoine* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2018): 44-57. Catalogue accompanying the exhibition of the same name presented at the Musée du Temps and the Maison Natale de Victor Hugo in Besançon, 16 June 2018-27 January 2019.
	+ Delphine Gleizes and Chantal Brière, “Victor Hugo et la question des restaurations en France,” in *Victor Hugo et le débat patrimonial : Actes du colloque organisé par l’Institut national du patrimoine sous la direction de Roland Recht*. Paris, Maison de l’Unesco, 5-6 décembre 2022. Paris: Somogy éditions d’art / Institut national du patrimoine, 2003: 23-43.
* Events relevant to Hugo’s works appear in brackets.
* “Laffont” refers to this edition: Hugo, Victor. *Oeuvres complètes*. Edited by Jacques Seebacher and Guy Rosa. 15 volumes. Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, collection “Bouquins,” 1985-90; 2002.
* “Massin” refers to this edition: Hugo, Victor. *Œuvres complètes.* Edition chronologique sous la direction de Jean Massin. 18 volumes. Paris: Club Français de Livre, 1967-70.

[1820: *Voyages pittoresques et romantiques dans l’ancienne France / Picturesque and Romantic Travels in Ancient France*, volume I, par MM. Ch. Nodier, J. Taylor et Alph. de Cailleux (Charles Nodier, Baron Isidore-Justin-Séverin Taylor and Alphonse de Cailleux) is published. Illustrated volume about travels through ancient Normandy.

Online at Gallica, Bibliothèque nationale de France: [https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1040441k.texteImage](https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark%3A/12148/bpt6k1040441k.texteImage)]

1823: “La Bande noire” / “The Black Gang,” composed (the same year Hugo published *Han d’Islande*, which includes many Gothic novel characteristics.)

The poem was published January 19, 1824, in *La Muse Française.* Then published as the fourth poem in *Nouvelles Odes* in the 1824 edition and later in *Odes et ballades* as II, 3.

Online at <https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Odes_et_Ballades/La_Bande_noire>.

1825: “Fragment d’un voyage aux Alpes“ / “Fragment from a Trip in the Alps,“ composed while Hugo was traveling with his family and that of Charles Nodier from Sallanches through Servoz to Lake Léman and Chamonix, August 2-September 5, 1825 (Claude Gély, Laffont, *Voyages*: 1248).

The first part was published in August 1829 in the *Revue de Paris*, and the second part published in 1831 in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Recounted in Adèle Hugo, *Victor Hugo raconté par un témoin de sa vie*, Ch. XLII. In Laffont, *Voyages*: 507-16.

Online at [https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/En\_voyage,\_tome\_II\_(Hugo,\_%C3%A9d.\_1910)/Fragment\_d%E2%80%99un\_voyage\_aux\_Alpes](https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/En_voyage%2C_tome_II_%28Hugo%2C_%C3%A9d._1910%29/Fragment_d%E2%80%99un_voyage_aux_Alpes).

1825: “Note sur la destruction des monuments en France” / “Note on the Destruction of Monuments in France,” written on the back of the paper on which Hugo had drafted “Fragment sur un voyage aux Alpes.” Published three different times: in the August 1829 *Revue de Paris*; in the *Nouveau Keepsake français* early in 1832 (a version that Hugo complained was full of typographical errors); finally, as “Guerre aux démolisseurs! 1825,” in the later collection *Littérature et philosophie mêlées* (*Œuvres complètes* de Victor Hugo. Texte établi par Cécile Daubray, Imprimerie Nationale, Ollendorff, Albin Michel, 1934.) (Massin II, p. 569, n. 1)

Online at <https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Litt%C3%A9rature_et_philosophie_m%C3%AAl%C3%A9es/1825-1832_Guerre_aux_d%C3%A9molisseurs_>!.

[1830: The post of Inspector-General of Historic Monuments was created and first held by Ludovic Vitet. It was then famously held by author Prosper Mérimée beginning in 1834.]

1831: *Notre-Dame de Paris* published March 16, 1831.

Hugo’s 1832 “Additional Note to the Final Edition” / “Note ajoutée à l’édition définitive” dated October 20, 1832, was published with the 8th edition in December 1832.

Quotations come from Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*. Revised Translation and Notes by Catherine Liu; Introduction by Elizabeth McCracken. New York: The Modern Library, 2002.

Hugo’s 1832 “Note” (together with his novel) is online at [https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Notre-Dame\_de\_Paris/Note\_ajout%C3%A9e\_%C3%A0\_l%E2%80%99%C3%A9dition\_d%C3%A9finitive\_(1832)](https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Notre-Dame_de_Paris/Note_ajout%C3%A9e_%C3%A0_l%E2%80%99%C3%A9dition_d%C3%A9finitive_%281832%29)

1832: “Guerre aux démolisseurs!”, published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* on March 1, 1832.

Hugo continued and expanded on his 1825 “Note sur la destruction des monuments historiques.” For this essay, Hugo found much of the information from an 1831 report by Ludovic Vitet, then head of the Committee on Historical Monuments. Eventually published along with the text of “Note on the Destruction of Monuments in France” as “Guerre aux démolisseurs! 1825 — 1832” in the collection *Littérature et philosophie mêlées* (*Œuvres complètes* de Victor Hugo). Texte établi par Cécile Daubray, Imprimerie Nationale, Ollendorff, Albin Michel, 1934.) (Massin II, p. 569, n. 1)

Online at <https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Litt%C3%A9rature_et_philosophie_m%C3%AAl%C3%A9es/1825-1832_Guerre_aux_d%C3%A9molisseurs_>.

Also published as an anniversary publication in 2009 by the *Revue des Deux Mondes*: <http://www.revuedesdeuxmondes.fr/article-revue/guerre-aux-demolisseurs/>.

[1833: Charles de Montalembert, “Du vandalisme en France, Lettre à M. Victor Hugo, *Revue des Deux Mondes* (March 1, 1833)]. Online at [https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Vandalisme\_en\_France,\_lettre\_%C3%A0\_M.\_Victor\_Hugo](https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Vandalisme_en_France%2C_lettre_%C3%A0_M._Victor_Hugo).

1835: Minister of Public Instruction François Guizot invites Victor Hugo to join the newly formed Committee on Arts and Monuments / Comité des arts et des monuments. He was a member until 1848, though he attended fewer meetings as time went on. For details of the Committee’s work and Hugo’s contributions (and much more), see Jean Mallion, *Victor Hugo et l’art architectural* [doctoral thesis, Université de Paris] (Grenoble: Imprimerie Allier, 1962).

Examples of Victor Hugo’s later attention to cultural and architectural heritage around the world:

1857: On 28 February Henri Marquand ran an editorial in the Guernsey *Gazette* arguing for the proper preservation of Vale Castle (originally named Le Chateau St Michel, later becoming Chateau de Val, or Chateau de Valle, and also known as the Château de l'Archange). Marquand quotes Hugo in the course of his appeal for the preservation of the castle: “Chateau de Valle is the only medieval monument that remains to us, and we are thinking of demolishing it. The other day the restorer of archaeology in Europe—Victor Hugo—told us that the destruction of the castle of the Archangel would be a profanation, an absurdity without name and that today in Epirus or in Asia Minor a pasha would recoil before such an act of vandalism.” Details courtesy of Gregory Stevens Cox.

1861: On November 25, Hugo wrote from Hauteville House to Captain Butler, condemning the destruction and looting of the Palais d’Été (the Old Summer Palace) in Beijing by the French and British during the Second Opium War in October 1860. He compared the Palace’s fanciful art to the Parthenon’s ideal art and ended his letter by hoping “that the day will come when France, freed and cleansed, will return this booty to plundered China.” Hugo’s letter is online at <https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2004/10/HUGO/11563>.

1880: On October 5, Victor Hugo responded to Jules Romain-Boulenger (member of the Society of the History of Paris and the Île-de-France), who had appealed to him on behalf of the Tour du Vertbois in Paris, saying, in part, “Démolir le tour? Non. Démolir l’architecte? Oui. . . . Paris est la ville de l’avenir. Pourquoi? Parce qu’il [sic] est la ville du passé.” (Laffont, *Politique*, pp. 1042-43) (La Tour du Vert Bois—part of the Saint-Martin-des-Champs Priory, dating from the 12th century—is preserved today as a fountain at the corner of rue du Vertbois and rue Saint-Martin.)

1883: Hugo wrote to the Parisian Municipal Council president on July 27 (published the same day in *Le Rappel)*, a defense of the Arènes de Lutèce, saying, among other things: “Les Arènes sont l’antique marque de la grande ville. Elles sont un monument unique.” (Laffont, *Politique*, p. 1043)

1884: Hugo published in *Le Rappel* on January 14 a defense of Mont-Saint-Michel, his last intervention on behalf of French *patrimoine*, Jean-Marc Hovasse tells us (n. 2): “Il faut conserver à tout prix cette double œuvre de la nature et de l’art.” (Laffont, *Politique*, p. 1044)

[1887: The law passed on March 30 for “the conservation of monuments and art objects that have an historical and artistic interest” was the type of law Victor Hugo argued for in the 1830s.]