

# Philippe-Laurent Roland in The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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ONE OF A CURATOR'S favorite missions is to nurture interest in a given artist or school through acquisition. The sculptor Philippe-Laurent Roland (1746–1816) offers an attractive case in point.

Until 1975, the only works in the Museum to which his name could be attached were some decorative wood panels (Figures 6–8). They amply demonstrate his competence in supplying ornament in the best Louis XVI manner, but one would have no reason to guess from them alone that their maker was a master investigator of the human figure. Since 1975, three works by Roland have been added to the collection, two quite recently. These prove that he is worthy of consideration on the same high plane as Pajou, Julien, Clodion, and Houdon—his elders by a few years—even if his name is less familiar than theirs. In fact, his lesser fame is probably a result of the frequent merging of his talents in architectural programs such as those to which the carved panels belonged. This article seeks to bring the merits of his figural style to the fore.

Roland was born in 1746 in Pont-à-Marc, near Lille, the son of a tailor and innkeeper. After lessons at the local drawing school, he went to Paris and entered the shop of the great Augustin Pajou (1730–1809) in 1764. Although Pajou encouraged him to specialize in marble carving, Roland's actual employment was on the decorative schemes that kept his master busiest: he participated in Pajou's outdoor reliefs in limestone for the Palais-Royal (1767–69), ordered by the duc d'Orléans, and was a principal assistant on Pajou's wood and stucco embellishments for the royal opera at Versailles (1768–70), a collaboration with the architect Nicolas-Marie Potain (1713–1796), who was later to become his father-in-law. Roland would venerate Pajou to the end of his days.<sup>1</sup>

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With this solid experience behind him, Roland went to Italy for a stay of five years. It is a sign of his independence that he went at his own expense rather than go through the motions of trying for a *prix de Rome*. In view of his known occupations in Paris before and after, the Italian sojourn must have taken place between 1770 and 1776. His famous pupil and biographer, Pierre-Jean David d'Angers (1788–1856), knew three sculptures of the Roman period. The noble rhetoric of David d'Angers's prose may sound more than a little old-fashioned today, but it captures beautifully the striving for perfection that motivated Roland. The large principles to which his pupil appeals are somehow viated by translation and are therefore presented here in the original:

Après quelques années d'un labeur opiniâtre, Roland put consacrer le fruit de ses épargnes à voyager en Italie; il y passa cinq ans. Alors commencèrent pour lui ces études si sérieuses d'après l'antique, et les grands exemples que nous a légués l'art italien. Entre autres ouvrages où il s'essaya, ses premières inspirations se traduisent par un gracieux buste de jeune fille, et une statue mi-corps de jeune dormeur, par un vieillard également jusqu'à mi-corps. Ces deux derniers sont en terre cuite; le vieillard se voit actuellement dans le musée d'Angers. On remarque une vérité incroyable de nature dans ces productions: c'est de la chair qui, pour palpiter, semble n'attendre qu'une étincelle du feu sacré; mais ce n'est pas encore la vie grandiose et le goût épuré qu'on admire dans ses autres ouvrages.<sup>2</sup>

In 1990 the Museum had the good fortune to acquire at auction in Monte Carlo the captivating terracotta bust of a sleeping boy from the Roman period (Figure 2). It was described in the sale catalogue only as French, eighteenth century,<sup>3</sup> but was recognizable as Roland's for two reasons: the mention by David d'Angers and the publication of the marble of this composition in an article of 1901.<sup>4</sup> The Museum's agent had no competition at the sale;

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perhaps the coat of white paint failed to attract bidders. This usage, if not original, is an old one; it served the double function of regularizing surface damages (especially visible here along the edges of drapery and corners of the self-base), most likely caused when a plaster mold was taken from the bust, and of indicating to a potential buyer how the image would appear if executed in white marble.

The image is as tenderly meditated as a finished sanguine drawing by Greuze. Roland must have had in mind genre studies such as Greuze's half-lengths, which seem to render the eyewitness scrutiny of people's daily habits intimately and convincingly, close up. Yet the derivation is as classical as it can be.

Graeco-Roman sculpture presents numerous variations on the theme of the sleeping boy, beginning with the supine Cupid whose head is often propped up by one arm.<sup>5</sup> A clothed type dozing beside a lantern exists, figured to be a slave boy who has nodded off while waiting for his master.<sup>6</sup> The Museo Pio-Clementino in the Vatican, whose collections were just being arranged during Roland's Roman period, has several figures of boys standing while asleep, one arm of each tucked under the head, the other arm backed by an upturned torch—funerary types presumed to be Somnus when unwinged but Thanatos or a genius of death when alate.<sup>7</sup> The generous proportions and the triangulations of the latter type indicate that it comes closest to having served Roland as a source, although by instinct and training he is far more naturalistic, paying greater attention to the hair and to the way the fleshy cheek wells up under the pressure of the fingers that also make the mouth skew slightly to the side.

Busts that include the arms were a commonplace in European sculpture. The youngster's left arm, if it had been included, would have hung indecorously below the cut of the bust, so Roland chose to show only the supporting arm, using the drapery both as a counterbalance and to cover the truncated arm. The Musée des Beaux-Arts in Angers owns the *Old Man Asleep* made by Roland during the Roman stay (Figure 1). It is easy enough to see that it is contemporaneous with the *Sleeping Boy*. The grave ponderations are the same, and so is the combing of the hair in wavy striations like undulating corduroy. They even have comparable damage. Although the *Old Man Asleep* includes both arms and is no doubt based directly on Roland's observation of a venerable Italian model, it was probably also inspired by his recollection of Pajou's head of an ancient with balder pate and curlier beard shown at the Salon of 1761.<sup>8</sup>

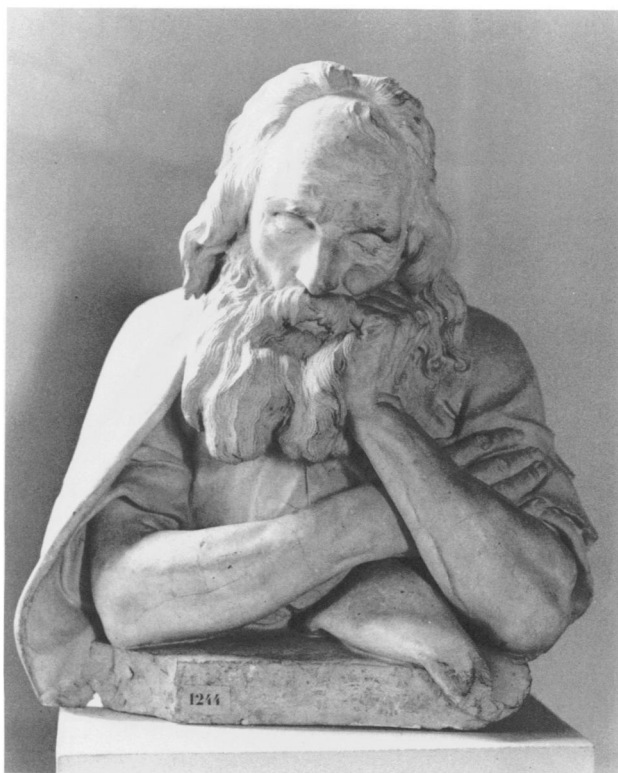


Figure 1. Philippe-Laurent Roland (1746–1816), *Old Man Asleep*, ca. 1774. Terracotta, H. 75 cm. Angers, Musée des Beaux-Arts (photo: Musée d'Angers)

Even as Roland consulted his master, nature, and the antique, one can hardly escape the impression that these works are also grounded in Christian imagery, whether consciously or not. The young Christs and Baptists of countless French and Italian masters come to mind, and so do their renditions of the drowsing Saint Joseph.

David d'Angers much later summarized the meaning of the Roman sojourn and its application to the highly analytical Roland, as he learned to combine the study of nature with corrective lessons from the antique and from his predecessors: "Ce qui distingue avant tout les productions du statuaire de Lille, c'est un sentiment de vie et de correction uni au grandiose exigé par l'art. A Rome, il comprit que c'est par l'étude raisonnée de l'antique et des anciens maîtres que doit se former le goût de qui-conque aspire à interpréter la nature dans ses manifestations les plus sublimes. La sculpture de Roland offre un air incontestable de parenté avec la sculpture romaine de la belle époque d'Auguste."<sup>9</sup>



Figure 2. Philippe-Laurent Roland, *Sleeping Boy*, ca. 1774. Terracotta, painted white, H. 60 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Wrightsman Fund, 1990, 1990.206



Figure 3. Philippe-Laurent Roland, *Young Roman Girl*, signed and dated 1774. Marble, H. without socle 39.4 cm. Location unknown (photo from *Catalogue of the Rodolphe Kann Collection*, 1907)

Roland's papers in the Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie (Bibliothèque Doucet), Paris, and his inventory and that of his widow in the Archives nationales, Paris, give several details concerning the later history of the *Sleeping Boy* and the other compositions studied here. The Bibliothèque Doucet conserves a bill of 1808 from one Micheli, a furnisher of plaster casts, for casting various compositions for Roland. He asked six francs for an "enfant mort," surely our poor boy, although mistitled.<sup>10</sup> The sculptor still thought highly enough of the model to show "Un jeune dormeur" in the Salon of 1814 (medium not given).<sup>11</sup> There is no mention of it in the inventory of the sculptor's dwelling at "rue

et maison de Sorbonne no. 11," which in any case names few works of art,<sup>12</sup> but it appears in the inventory of his widow's house, at 91, rue du Cherche-Midi, in 1845; the marble bust representing "un enfant endormi" was valued, together with some pictures, at 950 francs.<sup>13</sup> Mme Roland's only heir was their daughter, Lise, who had married Jean-Marie-Nicolas Lucas de Montigny, nominally the son of the sculptor Jean-Robert-Nicolas Lucas de Montigny, but actually the son of the comte de Mirabeau. The Bibliothèque Doucet has a manuscript list of Roland's works prepared by or for a family member, in which three Roman works are itemized under the date 1774:

1774. Buste de jeune fille romaine (Vous avez le marbre).  
Le petit dormeur, marbre.  
Une statue de vieillard que David dit être au Musée d'Angers.<sup>14</sup>

The reference to David's book dates this list after 1847. The marble of the *Sleeping Boy* remained in the hands of Roland's descendant Gabriel de Montigny until at least 1901, when it was published by another Roland descendant, Henry Marcel.<sup>15</sup> The small size of the illustration in the article makes it difficult to comment on quality, but it can be noted that Roland dispensed with the irregular rectangle of support that gives the terracotta some of its floating, dreamlike character; he replaced it with a lower, more earthbound circle, while filling out the area under the elbow with drapery, thereby making the whole more symmetrical if less winning. The composition of the marble, not the terracotta, was followed in an indifferent late bronze casting in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille.<sup>16</sup> The provenance of the bronze is unknown. Was it perhaps the gift of a family member to Roland's native city, cast after a *surmoulage* of the marble?

The third work from the Roman stay, the bust of a young girl in marble, signed and dated 1774, was last seen in the collection of Rodolphe Kann, Paris (Figure 3).<sup>17</sup> The girl, with flowers in her braided hair, is a stricter work, according more with the latest Neoclassical canons than do the *Sleeping Boy* and the graybeard in Angers.

In 1782, Roland was accepted (*agréé*) into the Royal Academy upon the presentation of his plaster *Cato of Utica* (the beautiful sketch-model is in the Louvre), but he neglected to follow through with the requisite marble *morceau de réception*. The Academy imposed a new subject, *Samson*, in 1786, but



Roland only got around to completing a marble for the Salon of 1795, by which time the Royal Academy had been suppressed. It may not have been so much a question of dilatoriness as that he was simply overwhelmed with work. The last years of the ancien régime were his most productive, since he was able to reestablish the ties that led to contracts after his return from Italy. The benevolent Pajou was responsible for sending several opportunities Roland's way. In 1776, Pajou recommended him for the relatively minor task of replicating his own bust of the dauphin.<sup>18</sup> In 1782, he arranged his protégé's marriage to the daughter of the architect Potain.<sup>19</sup> In 1783, Pajou and his wife pressed the comte d'Angivillers, the king's superintendent of buildings, to acknowledge their favorite's qualities of grace and truth to nature by awarding a commission.<sup>20</sup> In 1784, Pajou obtained a studio for Roland

in the Louvre that was later exchanged for one in the converted chapel of the Sorbonne.<sup>21</sup>

One of Roland's first projects after his return was the decoration of Bagatelle (Figure 4), the *folie* of the comte d'Artois, the future Charles X. The eighteen-year-old Artois acquired this property on the edge of Paris in 1775, and in 1777 erected his gem of a Neoclassical house in nine weeks—in time, the story goes, to win a bet with his sister-in-law, Marie Antoinette.<sup>22</sup> Bagatelle has suffered over the years because of its damp climate and because it has changed hands several times, but it leaves distinct impressions on the visitor's memory, from the strutting peacocks that encircle the building to the peculiar layout within, most rooms having several doors that allowed the easy and perhaps frequent passage of the lighthearted comte d'Artois's guests from room to room.



Figure 4. François Joseph Belanger (1744–1818, architect), Château de Bagatelle, Bois de Boulogne, Paris, erected in 1777 (photo: Roland Dreyfus)

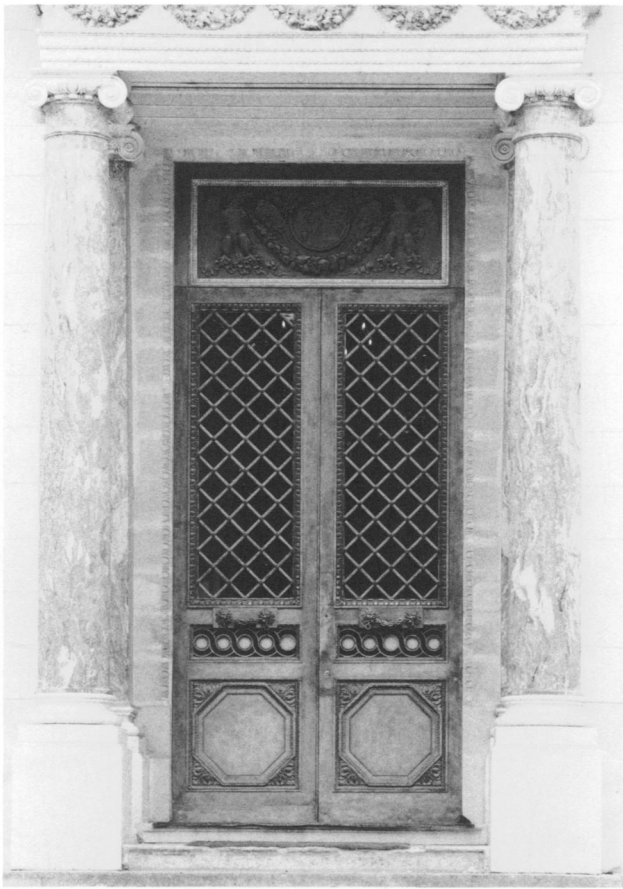


Figure 5. Philippe-Laurent Roland. Door, entrance portal at Bagatelle, subsequently modified (photo: Roland Dreyfus)

The architect of Bagatelle was François-Joseph Belanger (1744–1818). Roland's contribution was very considerable but can be gauged only partially. In a recent article Jean-Jacques Gautier traced Roland's two sphinxes in *pierre de Conflans*, carved for the steps leading up to the house, to the Château de Bonnemare (Eure).<sup>23</sup> The sphinxes and Roland's many models for relief sculpture at Bagatelle were subcontracted by a stucco specialist, Nicolas-François-Daniel Lhuillier. The Bibliothèque Doucet preserves Roland's *mémoire* of various works he had done. The date it supplies for the work at Bagatelle, 1776, may be approximate. Denise Genoux reprinted this list, headed "Pour Lhuillier pour Bagatelle."<sup>24</sup> Several of the models for arabesques and garlands mentioned by Roland are untraceable—some of these designs would hardly be distinguished amid the wealth of tracery in relief that was provided for several rooms, of which the chief surviving glory is the circular music room, with its stucco decor in white and gold on a buff-colored ground.

Another memorable aspect of the château is its entrance portal (Figure 5), and here we can be very sure of the extent of Roland's role. A delightful sense of coloristic harmony has been achieved by the combination of purplish marble columns, partially gilt iron and white marble balcony, and the ox-

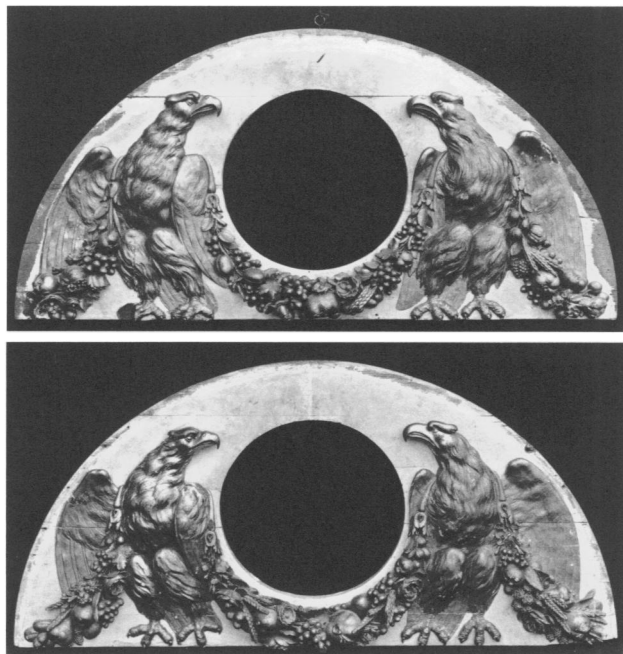


Figure 6. Nicolas-François-Daniel Lhuillier, after a model by Philippe-Laurent Roland. Overdoor for the portal at Bagatelle, ca. 1776. Oak, 73.7 × 165.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1906, 07.225.18

idized bronze double door with its grilles.<sup>25</sup> Over the door was an oak relief by Roland (Figure 6), since replaced by a metal copy. We know from Roland's *mémoire* that he received 216 *livres* for "2 aigles, bas relief en bois avec guirlande" that he supplied to Lhuillier, but apparently he consigned only the terracotta model to Lhuillier, who then translated it into wood.<sup>26</sup> In any case, this is the wide panel that came to the Metropolitan Museum as part of the vast collection of objects bought by J. P. Morgan from the Paris architect Georges Hoentschel (Figure 7). The panel came into Hoentschel's hands in the wake of extensive changes wrought by the fourth marquess of Hertford, who bought the château in 1835, and by his adopted son, Sir Richard Wallace, who had it until 1890. In fact, both men died there, in the comte d'Artois's bedroom.

The Museum's panel is of oak built up in sections and coated with dark greenish paint to resemble bronze. The young woman sacrificing at an altar in the center seems hardly perturbed by the flanking eagles. They probably allude to the young Artois's military distinctions: he was Colonel General of the Swiss Guards and Grand Master of the Artillery.<sup>27</sup>

Eagles also adorn two *oeil-de-boeuf* reliefs in the Museum, again from Bagatelle via the Morgan collection (Figures 7, 8). These, too, are of laminated oak, but were later gilt. Where exposed, the ground is a white coat over an original layer of turquoise blue. The model for these overdoors is apparently alluded to in Roland's *mémoire* as "dessus de porte de 2 aigles," for which he was paid 100 *livres*.<sup>28</sup> They served, however, as overmirrors in the château's billiards room, where they faced each other, one over the fireplace, the other on the window wall overlooking the park. Only one of these spaces is occupied by a mirror today, enframed by a late surround (Figure 9). Gautier reports that the date of 1836 discovered on the wall behind the trumeau reflects the date of the mirrors' gilding, and that another date found there, 1855, is that of their removal.<sup>29</sup> The original overdoors, as opposed to the overmirrors, survive above the four entrances in the billiards room; one is dimly reflected on the mirror in Figure 9. It is one of a pair of gaming trophies comprising jesters flanking tambourines. The gaming trophies alternate with a pair of military trophies composed of helmets flanking laurel wreaths. All have been regilt, no doubt during the same campaign of 1836 that resulted in the regilding of the Museum's overmirrors. The room's original delicate polychromy is hardly to be grasped in the present white-and-gold scheme. Gautier accounts for the wood sculptures'



Figures 7, 8. Philippe-Laurent Roland. Overmirrors for the Château de Bagatelle, ca. 1776. Oak, painted and gilt, 58.7 × 121 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1906, 07.225.17ab

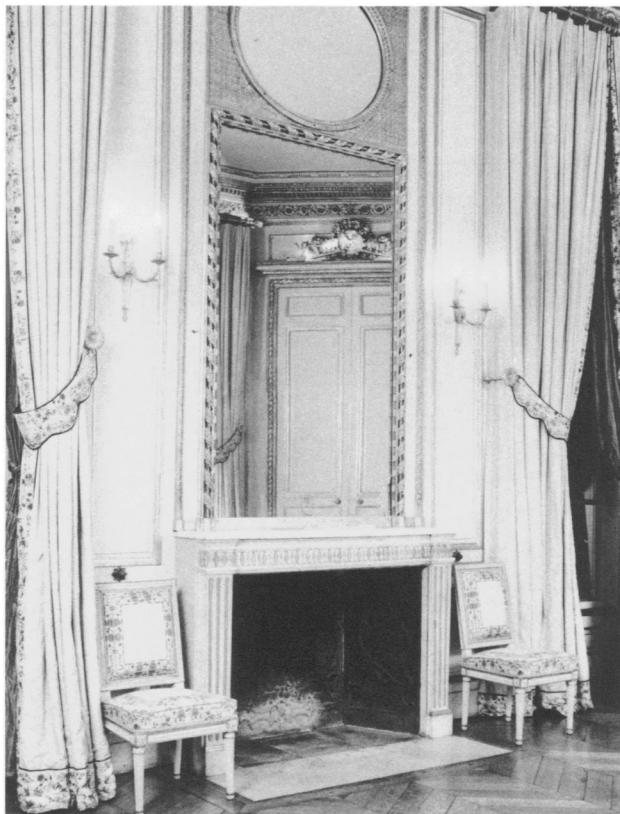


Figure 9. François Joseph Belanger (architect). Billiards room at the Château de Bagatelle, 1777 (photo: Roland Dreyfus)



Figure 10. Philippe-Laurent Roland. Detail of the marble mantelpiece from the Hôtel de Sérilly, Paris, 1778. London, Victoria and Albert Museum (photo: Victoria and Albert Museum)

history, ascribing their carving, after Roland's models, to Daniel Aubert, who requested the very large sum of 20,652 *livres* for sculpture at Bagatelle, making him the likely candidate for most of the work of this sort there.<sup>30</sup> A defter hand was engaged in the realization of Roland's elegant, curvilinear over-mirror than was the case with the exterior overdoor.

Bagatelle was only one of several important sites that received Roland's attention in the 1770s and 1780s. In 1778 he carved the herm-figures for a marble chimneypiece in the Hôtel de Sérilly, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Figure 10).<sup>31</sup> Echoing the French past all the way back to Claus Sluter, the figures establish Roland's total command of the techniques of marble carving. Among the ripest, most brilliant of all contributions to Neoclassical relief sculpture are his limestone friezes with scenes of ancient sacrifice on the rue de Lille façade of the Hôtel de Salm-Kyrbourg (Figure 11); he exhibited the models in the Salon of 1783. The individual forms are perhaps a step more severe than those of our sacrificing vestal from Bagatelle (Figure 6).

Eminently visible in the heart of Paris, the Hôtel de Salm-Kyrbourg, now the Palais de la Légion d'Honneur, was built by the architect Pierre Rousseau (1751–1810). By this time Roland was very well connected, enjoying the advantages of Pajou's and Potain's recommendations besides that of Potain's other son-in-law, the same Pierre Rousseau who was responsible for various royal projects at Fontainebleau. It was no doubt through Rousseau that Roland gained work at Fontainebleau: a gilt-lead fountain for the king's apartments in 1784, and in 1786 a marble chimneypiece for the king and plaster overdoors for the queen's gaming room and for her spectacular gold- and silver-hued boudoir. The models for the last, representing the Muses, are in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris.<sup>32</sup> Napoleon made the late king's powder-cabinet his bed-chamber, preserving most of its main elements. It is easy to imagine that Robert's mantel, centered on an eagle grasping thunderbolts, would have continued to appeal to the emperor (Figure 12).

Roland had exhibited at the 1783 Salon in some depth—besides models for the Hôtel de Salm-Kyrbourg, there were two "bustes d'étude," whose subjects are unexplained, and two medallions for the interior of the Halle au Blé. This grain market in Les Halles, the commercial district of Paris, received a total of four marble portrait medallions by Roland representing Louis XV and Louis XVI; Philibert Delorme, the architect of Henri II, who had devised the domed roof of the building; and Jean-





Figure 11. Philippe-Laurent Roland, *Scenes of Ancient Sacrifice*, ca. 1783. Limestone. Paris, Hôtel de Salm-Kyrbourg, now the Hôtel de la Légion d'Honneur (photo: Caisse des Monuments Historiques)

Charles-Pierre Lenoir, the official under whose aegis the restoration by the architects Jacques Molinos (1743–1831) and Jacques-Guillaume Legrand (1753–1809) took place.<sup>33</sup> As a result of later iconoclastic assaults on royal imagery, the roundels were destroyed or dispersed.<sup>34</sup> The École des Beaux-Arts owns a plaster cast of the *Philibert Delorme*, which is in need of cleaning but shows the literal, rather numismatic nature of retrospective portraiture

during the reign of Louis XVI (Figure 13). In the Bibliothèque Doucet's manuscript list of Roland's works, the Halle au Blé medallions are said to be colossal,<sup>35</sup> but the *Philibert Delorme* is only a couple of feet across. No doubt they were imposing when hung high on the interior walls between the arches of the vast circular space, each enframed in a wreath.<sup>36</sup>

The reason why the Halle au Blé project is treated



Figure 12. Marble mantelpiece in the Château de Fontainebleau, powder-cabinet of Louis XIV (subsequently the bedchamber of Napoleon I), 1786 (photo: Musée national du château de Fontainebleau)





Figure 13. Philippe-Laurent Roland, *Philibert Delorme*, ca. 1783. Plaster medallion. Paris, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (photo: École des Beaux-Arts)

in some detail here is that the Museum recently acquired a marble roundel portraying Louis XVI, signed by Roland and dated 1787 (Figure 14).<sup>37</sup> There is every reason to suppose that this was destined for a second campaign at Les Halles, that of decorating an even older building that had just been restored, again by Legrand and Molinos: the Halle aux Draps, or Drapers' Hall. The edifice in question, long and rectangular, survived from the twelfth century. It was reroofed, and many of the lower surrounding buildings were razed as a precaution against fire. The officials responsible observed that these steps were needed "pour faire de ce dépôt précieux pour le commerce un monument digne de la capitale."<sup>38</sup> An interior rearrangement was accordingly commissioned, with Roland once more providing four roundels, representing Philip Augustus, under whom the old Halle aux Draps was erected; Louis XVI, under whom the hall was re-done; and two unnamed ministers—perhaps the comptroller, Charles-Alexandre de Calonne, and



Figure 14. Philippe-Laurent Roland, *Louis XVI*, signed and dated 1787. Marble medallion, Diam. 70 cm in a gilt and marbled wood frame, 151 × 158 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Wrightsman Fund, 1990, 1990.234



Figure 15. Philippe-Laurent Roland, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1785. Marble. New York, private collection



Figure 16. Philippe-Laurent Roland, *Le Grand Condé*, 1785–87. Marble. Versailles, Musée de Château National (photo: Réunion des Musées Nationaux)

the baron de Breteuil, named in the memorandum on this massive rehabilitation preserved by the Archives nationales. The Halle aux Draps roundels were probably also installed high up. The memorandum explains that marble tablets, presumably on the walls beneath the portraits, were to have bronze explanatory inscriptions, but the architects found this would involve more cost, and the letters were engraved instead.<sup>39</sup>

Someone copying from documents left notations in the Bibliothèque Doucet's dossier on Roland to the effect that Roland asked 650 francs for the "médaillon d'roi en pierre" in a bill of 1786.<sup>40</sup> A second notation, dated 1787, records "2 médaillons en marbre mis en place le 3 mars dans la halle aux draps—3000 francs."<sup>41</sup> The account of the archi-

tects prepared on August 25, 1789, gives Roland's share as 3,500 francs, of which 2,800 had been paid and 700 remained to be paid.<sup>42</sup>

The *Louis XVI* acquired by the Museum serves as the sole remnant of the Halle aux Draps scheme. It will be recalled that Roland had finished the *Louis XVI* for the hall in 1786; it was appropriate to supply the year of installation when he dated the work, so that must be what the date of 1787 on the relief reflects. The account of Molinos and Legrand names all the materials involved in the job, from masonry to a clock by Lepaute.<sup>43</sup> It includes mention of woodwork but not in enough detail to allow us to say with certainty whether the marble roundel's exceedingly handsome surround of green marbleized wood and gilt wood, embellished with laurel



Figure 17. Detail of Figure 14

and a sunflower, belonged to the original paneling. This is not a frame in the normal sense, and the molding around the outer edges is later than the rest, but the circumferential rhythms accord remarkably well with the relief's chaste style. Looking back at the *dessus de glace* from *Bagatelle* (Figures 7, 8) and their resonant, responsive interplay of curves and voids, one is tempted to speculate that Roland designed *Louis XVI's* surround as well as the roundel, and that the sunflower-laurel wreath may be a fragment of *boiserie* from the *Halle aux Draps*.<sup>44</sup>

The two projects for Les Halles show Roland honing his talent as a portraitist, a gift that had been little exercised before the 1780s. His marble *Self-Portrait* shows him lean and alert and attaining an authoritative level in this field (Figure 15).<sup>45</sup> One factor that led him to focus on characterization was his commission for the retrospective figure of the *Grand Condé* in the king's series of the Great Men of France, the plaster for which was shown at the Salon of 1785, the marble at the Salon of 1787 (Figure 16). His approach to surfaces is highly specific. The *Grand Condé*, dressed in a period costume rippling with energy, formed a kind of centerpiece in Ro-

land's career; he was asked to recapitulate it during the Restoration, as one of Louis XVIII's series of colossal marble figures of royalist heroes on the Pont Louis XVI, now the Pont de la Concorde, but he did not live to see that project beyond his maquette.

The king's features were so well known that Roland would not have required a royal sitting for the *Louis XVI* medallion. He could easily have consulted bronze medals with their impeccable sense of balance, in which the coiled wigs lend interest to the almost comically fleshy countenance.<sup>46</sup> Roland goes through much the same concerted efforts at equilibrium, but as a monumental sculptor he takes a more arching, expansive line. He builds the face up in arcs, while concentrating on the artful curls at the side of the wig, locating the image slightly asymmetrically in the field so as to bring an unaccustomed grace to his royal subject. David d'Angers understood the formulaic aspect of Roland's portraiture quite well: "On ne saurait pousser plus loin la rigidité du trait, l'élégante pureté des contours, la netteté et la grace: c'est toujours, si je puis m'exprimer ainsi, la stéréotypie de la nature à un haut degré."<sup>47</sup>

The *Louis XVI* is of further interest as an illustration of the pointing technique, whereby the drill followed indications in the model that served to establish the relief's measurements. A detail shows not only the curvilinear basis of Roland's style and tiny diagonal flaws in the marble; also visible, on the cheek, nostril, below the inner brow, and on the temple, are four regular holes caused by the drill's going slightly too far while following the working model's points (Figure 17). Such imperfections are frequently encountered in Neoclassical sculpture before improvements took place in the transfer of measurements in the course of the nineteenth century; in any case, they would not have been seen from the floor of the *Halle aux Draps*.

With the Revolution, Roland gained commissions for a statue and a relief, *Law* and *Legislation*, that formerly graced the peristyle of the Panthéon (1792–93). In 1795, he was made a member of the Institut, and in 1798–99, he was one of the commissioners sent to Italy to advise on the works of art to be brought to France by the conquering army. An unpublished notebook he kept during this time shows him uncharacteristically with plenty of time on his hands, awaiting orders in Grenoble, sketching the local sites, and musing on various topics such as longevity. He has heard, for instance, that "la metresse de Cromvel" lived to be 142!<sup>48</sup> If the notes are



Figure 18. Philippe-Laurent Roland, *Bacchante Riding a Goat*, signed and dated 1796. Terracotta, H. 40 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Charles Ulrick and Josephine Bay Foundation, Inc. Gift, 1975, 1975.312.8

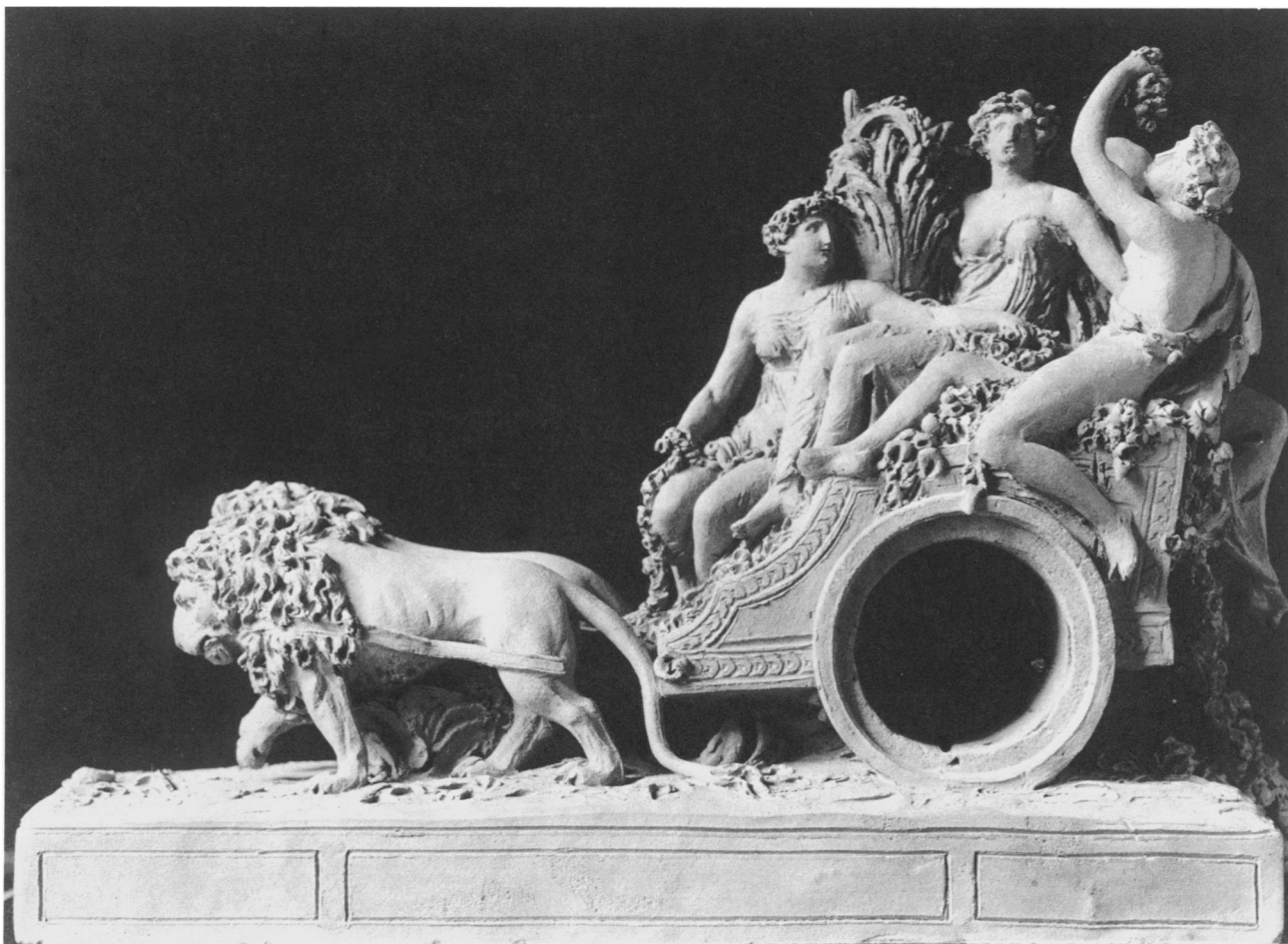


Figure 19. Philippe-Laurent Roland, *Four Seasons in a Chariot Drawn by Lions*, model for a clock case, ca. 1798. Terracotta. Formerly Bouissou Collection, Paris

not always well lettered, there are, by compensation, his avid lists, also unpublished, of the volumes on antiquities he saw in Italian bookstores.<sup>49</sup>

The 1790s produced new economic realities for artists, and Roland seems to have adjusted his sights—in terms of size, not of quality—to meet the frugal spirit of the times. There was the occasional marble nude—*Paris* in the Salon of 1793, *Samson* in the Salon of 1795—but increasingly he exhibited models for works on a smaller scale, no doubt hoping to appeal to new markets.

The best known of the Museum's works by Roland is the latest in date, the careering *Bacchante Riding a Goat*, signed and dated 1796 (Figure 18).<sup>50</sup> That this terracotta is Roland's autograph model and not a reworked cast is certain, not only because of its dazzlingly variegated surface treatment but also because one can discern the marks of the grain left by the wooden stand upon which the clay was formed.

Despite the difference in dates, this heady work must be the group shown in the Salon that opened on the first of Thermidor, year 6—July 19, 1798.<sup>51</sup> The material is not specified. Roland's other Salon entries that year were a life-size portrait bust, the material also not stated; a marble group, *The Vow of Love*;<sup>52</sup> and an elaborate bronze clock case with the *Four Seasons*, cast after Roland's model by the firm of Pierre-Philippe Thomire.<sup>53</sup> The maquette for this clock case has lost the Cupid leading the lions (Figure 19). The open, spiraling pose of the Bacchus at far right is reminiscent of that of our *Bacchante*. Her easy stretch recurs in a work of larger scale, in the left-hand figure of Fame in the great relief of the Pavillon de l'Horloge of the Louvre, 1805 (Figure 20).

Roland sold the *Bacchante* soon after the Salon of 1798. His receipts for year 7 (1798–99) include: "Reçu du Citoyen Thomire à compte sur la Bacchante 120 f."<sup>54</sup> The minutely studied composition





Figure 20. Philippe-Laurent Roland, *Pediment with Fame and Plenty*, 1805. Limestone. Paris, Palais du Louvre, Pavillon de l'Horloge (photo: Réunion des Musées Nationaux)



Figure 21. Louis-François Jeannest, after a model by Philippe-Laurent Roland, *Bacchante with a Goat*, early 19th century. Bronze, H. 41.4 cm. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John R. Gaines in Honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art (photo: National Gallery of Art)



Figure 22. Detail of Figure 18

was undoubtedly intended from the start to be replicated in bronze. However, surviving bronze casts were not made by the *bronzier* Thomire but by the firm of Louis-François Jeannest. Casts, including one in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., show with what relish the *ciseleurs* attacked particulars such as the goat's hide (Figure 21),<sup>55</sup> straining to approximate, if never equaling, the surface excitement of the original (Figure 22). A bronze of the *Bacchante* was kept by Mme Roland.<sup>56</sup>

Roland enjoyed official favor under the Empire.

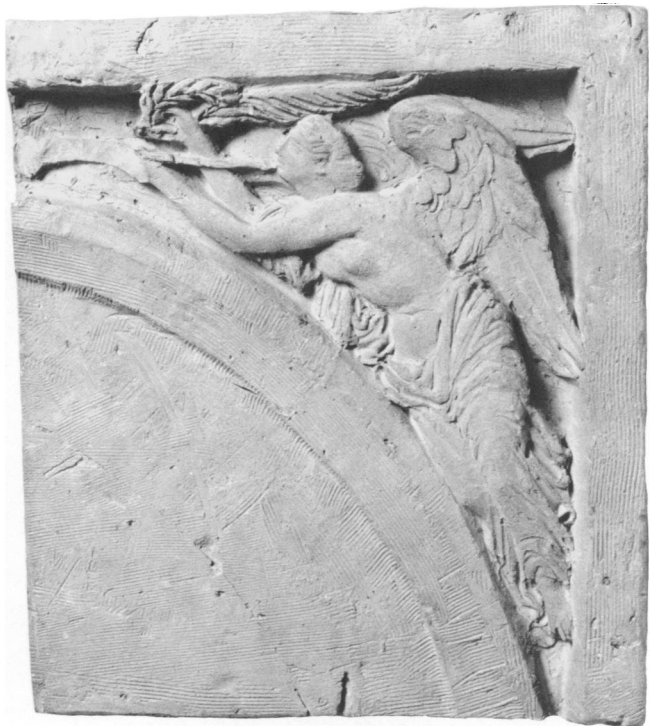
He was the unanimous choice of his colleagues in sculpture, who voted by secret ballot, to produce a marble statue of Napoleon for the Institut, proudly signed by him in 1810 as a member of the Institut as well as of the Légion d'Honneur. Excellent statues of Homer, Cambacérès, Tronchet, and Malesherbes date from his later years, but it could be argued that he never surpassed the rare moment of perfection encapsulated in the *Bacchante*. Despite the endless adumbration of detail and research of texture, there is a quality of abstraction in this ap-

proximation of suspended explosion. Even if she goads her improbable mount audaciously, there is nothing especially naughty about this follower of Bacchus. Her expression is appropriately both possessed and oblivious, but the subject nearly eludes us, the compositional impact being Roland's paramount concern. David d'Angers insisted upon a sort of formal ethic in Roland's female figures that made them superior to the promiscuous charmers turned out by such "apostles of vice" as Clodion: "Roland a doté ses figures de femme d'un sentiment de formes chaste et sérieux et d'un voile de gracieuse modestie. Bien différent en cela de Clodion et d'autres artistes qui, dans leurs modèles de femmes, ont prostitué l'art au plus affreux sensualisme, et se sont faits les apôtres de vice et de la plus excitant débauche."<sup>57</sup>

That "veil of graceful modesty" protects even our Dionysian demoiselle. David d'Angers further singled out the work for its formal purity: "une figure de Bacchante portée sur une chèvre qu'elle tourmente avec son thyrses. La vivacité, la grâce de la pose et la pureté des formes font ranger cette oeuvre parmi les plus belles qu'ait exécutées son ciseau."<sup>58</sup>

The integrity of Roland's production is underscored by the fact that he had only four pupils, according to the best of them, the same David d'Angers. The succession Pajou/Roland/David d'Angers guaranteed the purest artistic bloodlines and a lineage of much portent, for David d'Angers would be the prophet of Romantic sculpture. By temperament as well as by association, Roland established a situation within this heritage somewhere near the threshold of modern art.

Proof of the last assertion can be found in David d'Angers's own work, where elements of Ingres meet with presentiments of Bourdelle, and traces of Roland are frequently to be sensed in the mix. The Museum recently purchased two sketch-models by David d'Angers for the *Porte d'Aix* at Marseilles, completed in 1835 (Figures 23, 24).<sup>59</sup> The brusque surface treatment that was David's special gift to modern sculpture does not conceal the fundamentally curvilinear nature of these figures of Fame with their thrown-back heads. In them he frankly acknowledges a debt to prior allegorical figures by Roland (Figures 19, 20).



Figures 23, 24. Pierre-Jean David d'Angers (1788–1856), *Figures of Fame* for the *Porte d'Aix* at Marseilles, ca. 1830. Terracotta, 26 × 22.2 cm and 26.4 × 23.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Gifts of Friends of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, 1992, 1992.49ab

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## NOTES

1. His terracotta bust of Pajou, dated 1797, is in the Louvre; the marble was in the Salon of 1800. For a bronze portrait roundel of 1802, see Denise Genoux, "Quelques bustes et médaillons retrouvés de Philippe-Laurent Roland," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français* (1965) pp. 197–198.

2. Pierre-Jean David d'Angers, *Roland et ses ouvrages* (Paris, 1847) pp. 46–47.

3. Christie's Monaco, June 16, 1990, lot 141, as "Sculpture du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle" and with the note that the Research Laboratory for Archaeology at Oxford dated a sample by thermoluminescence to between 1700 and 1800.

4. Henry Marcel, "Quelques oeuvres inédites de Philippe Roland," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* ser. 3, 25 (1901) p. 186.

5. Magdalene Söldner, *Untersuchungen zu liegenden Erosen in der hellenistischen und römischen Kunst, Europäische Hochschulschriften*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt/Bern/New York, 1986), presents the thesis that the bronze *Sleeping Eros* in the Metropolitan Museum (43.11.4) lies at the origin of the reclining type.

6. Orietta Vasori in Antonio Giuliano, ed., *Museo Nazionale Romano: Le Sculture* 1, 1 (Rome, 1979) pp. 21–22, no. 23.

7. Georg Lippold, *Die Skulpturen des Vatikanischen Museums* 3, 2 (Berlin, 1956) pp. 274–275, no. 3 (158), pl. 125 ("Somnus"); pp. 318–319, no. 53 (186), pl. 142 ("Thanatos," discovered only in the late 1780s); p. 408, no. 2 (251), pl. 172 ("Genius of Death," bought in 1791); p. 444, no. 36 (270), pl. 183 ("Genius of Death," perhaps closest in feeling to the *Sleeping Boy*).

8. Henri Stein, *Augustin Pajou* (Paris, 1912) p. 23.

9. David d'Angers, *Roland et ses ouvrages*, pp. 38–39.

10. Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie, carton 41bis, fol. 21234.

11. *Livret* of the Salon of 1810, no. 1131 on p. 112.

12. Archives nationales, Min. centr., XXIX, 809, Sept. 23, 1816.

13. Archives nationales, Min. centr., XXIX, 1105, July 24, 1845, fol. 5.

14. Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie, carton 41bis, fol. 21397.

15. Marcel, "Quelques oeuvres inédites," pp. 182, 186. Most of the works illustrated were family owned, including the ravishing marble bust of Roland's daughter recently acquired by the Louvre. Jean-René Gaborit in Musée du Louvre, *Nouvelles acquisitions du Département des Sculptures, 1984–1987* (Paris, 1988) no. 30, pp. 108–110.

16. Inv. 34, Sculp. 154, as "Jeune fille endormie," in storage.

17. *Catalogue of the Rodolphe Kann Collection. Objets d'art 2: Eighteenth Century* (Paris, 1907) no. 96. Roland had sold the terracotta in 1790; a note in the Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie, carton 41bis, fol. 21394, reads: "le 9<sup>bre</sup> reçu de la terre cuite de la petite romaine 90 F." A plaster remained in the family, illustrated by Marcel, "Quelques oeuvres inédites," p. 182.

18. Denise Genoux, "Travaux de sculpture exécutés par Roland pour Lhuillier, Rousseau l'aîné et Molinos et Legrand," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français* (1966) p. 189.

19. Stein, *Augustin Pajou*, p. 51.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 354–356, and again in 1784, p. 359.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

22. Georges Pascal, *Histoire du château de Bagatelle* (Paris, 1938) pp. 25–29. For Bagatelle, see especially Annie Jacques et al., *La Folie d'Artois* (Paris, 1988).

23. Jean-Jacques Gautier, "L'Art des sculpteurs de Bagatelle," *L'Estampille/L'Objet d'art* 252 (Nov. 1991) pp. 76–79, for these and exterior figures by other sculptors now at Bonnemare.

24. Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Histoire, carton 41bis, fol. 21390; Genoux, "Travaux de sculpture," p. 190.

25. These later bronze doors were faithful to the original design, as can be seen in a contemporary print after Belanger and in sketches by the German architect Friedrich Gilly, who visited in 1797 when the building housed a restaurant. Jacques et al., *La Folie d'Artois*, p. 40; "Description de Bagatelle," *L'Oeil* 126 (June 1965) p. 18; Gautier, "L'Art des sculpteurs de Bagatelle," p. 68.

26. Genoux, "Travaux de sculpture," p. 190; Gautier, "L'Art des sculpteurs de Bagatelle," pp. 68, 69 n. 10, cites Archives nationales RI 322 and 326 for the information that Lhuillier carved the panel.

27. Genoux, "Travaux de sculpture," p. 190. Another eagle design by Roland, "L'aigle dans la couronne de chêne. Modèle de terre" (*ibid.*) has left no trace in the decorations at Bagatelle.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Gautier, "L'Art des sculpteurs de Bagatelle," p. 69.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 69–75. Roland had first supplied a model for overdoors with helmets flanking shields, but the inspector of the comte d'Artois's buildings caused these to be modified to the present design (*ibid.*, p. 71 and n. 14, citing Archives nationales RI 332). For Aubert's *mémoire* on the worth of his sculpture for Bagatelle, see *ibid.*, p. 75 n. 17, cited as Archives nationales RI 308.

31. Genoux, "Travaux de sculpture," pp. 191–192; Margaret English and Lucia Scalisi, "The Sérilly Cabinet. Anne-Marie de Sérilly and the Story of the Boudoir," *The V&A Album* 4 (1905) pp. 197–198.

32. Denise Genoux, "Philippe-Laurent Roland décorateur et ses travaux au Palais de Fontainebleau," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français* (1964) pp. 119–125; Colombe Samoyault-Verlet, "Les Travaux de Pierre Rousseau à Fontainebleau," *Antologia di Belle Arti* 2 (1977) p. 166.

33. Genoux, "Travaux de sculpture," pp. 193–194; Mark K. Deming, *La Halle au Blé de Paris 1762–1813* (Brussels, 1984) pp. 181–183, 229 n. 68.

34. Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie, carton 41bis, fol. 21471: a receipt of 1815 from a *sculpteur marbrier* named Alexandre H, who left the marble of Louis XV at Roland's house to dispose of as he liked. According to Genoux, "Travaux de sculpture," p. 193, it is still walled into the interior of a modern building at 89, rue du Cherche-Midi.

35. Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie, carton 41bis, fol. 21397.

36. Engraving in Deming, *La Halle au Blé*, p. 183.

37. It appeared at Christie's Monte Carlo, June 18, 1989, lot 177, with no indication of earlier provenance.

38. Archives nationales, cote: H/2/2165, liasse 17, carton 417. Luc-Vincent Thiéry, *Guide des amateurs et des étrangers voyageurs à Paris* . . . (Paris, 1787) I, pp. 479–481, reported on the restoration as it was advancing.

39. Archives nationales, cote: H/2/2165, liasse 17, carton 417.

40. Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie, carton 41bis, fol. 21366.

41. Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie, carton 41bis, fol. 21367.

42. Archives nationales, cote: H/2/2165, liasse 17, carton 417.

43. Ibid.

44. In the event that the imagery is accepted as royal, the artist would have reached all the way back to Louis's great-great-great grandsire, the Sun King, for the motif of the sunflower.

45. Dated ca. 1785 by Joseph Baillio in *The Winds of Revolution*, exh. cat., Wildenstein (New York, 1989) no. 26. Like the marble of the *Sleeping Boy*, the *Self-Portrait* descended in Roland's family to Henry Marcel. A marble copy by Auguste Dumont is in the library of the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris.

46. *Catalogue général illustré des éditions de la Monnaie de Paris* 1 (1977) pp. 298–301.

47. David d'Angers, *Roland et ses ouvrages*, p. 26.

48. Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie, carton 41bis, fol. 20952.

49. Ibid., fol. 21215.

50. It is apparently this terracotta that was in an anonymous sale in Paris, June 29–30, 1829 (Lugt 12101), lot 50 ("Jeune nymphe montant un bouc, terre cuite de Roland"). Its later provenance is sale of Monsieur T., Galerie Charpentier, Paris, June 19, 1934, lot 66, ill. opp. p. 24 (height erroneously given as 57 cm); sale Galerie Charpentier, May 23, 1950, lot 65, pl. 19; Paul Gouvert, Paris.

51. *Livret* of the Salon of the year VI, p. 85, no. 543.

52. This served as the basis for the design of a marble clock case that was sold at Drouot Richelieu, Paris, July 3, 1991, no. 231.

53. Several examples of the clock survive. See Hans Ottomeyer and Peter Pröschel, *Vergoldete Bronzen. Die Bronzearbeiten des Spätbarock und Klassizismus* (Munich, 1986) I, p. 343. That in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, signed and dated 1798 and bought the same year, may be the one that was in the Salon. Roland's authorship of the design is sometimes ignored, as, for example, by Ger vase Jackson-Stops in *The Treasure Houses of Britain. Five Hundred Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C./New Haven/London, 1985) pp. 568–569, and José Colón de Carvajal, *Catálogo de Relojes del Patrimonio Nacional* (Madrid, 1987) p. 183.

54. Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie, carton 41bis, fol. 21396.

55. Alison Luchs, in *Art for the Nation. Gifts in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C., 1991) pp. 122–123, discusses one of these casts, surmising that Jeannest was Roland's pupil and that the bronze was exhibited in the Salon of 1798. A similar Jeannest cast is on the London market, and a gilt one was sold by Sotheby's, New York, June 1, 1991, lot 106. It will be recalled that the *Four Seasons* clock case that Thomire cast was described as such in the Salon *livret*, and it may be inferred that a bronze signed as distinctly by the founder as is that in the National Gallery would have been described in comparable terms. The Jeannest casts of the *Bacchante* have slight variations in chasing and in the form of Jeannest's signature. Alison Luchs reports a cast in the Washington area signed "Clodion." An unconvincing-looking marble in the Cassel van Doorn sale, Parke-Bernet, New York, Dec. 9–10, 1955, lot 267, bore a spurious signature of Julien and the date of 1781.

56. "Une statuette un bronze représentant une bacchante montée sur un bouc" valued at 600 francs together with a terracotta statuette representing "La Nature." Archives nationales, Min. centr., XXIX, 1105, July 24, 1845, fol. 6.

57. David d'Angers, *Roland et ses ouvrages*, p. 59.

58. Ibid., p. 25.

59. An engraving of the Porte d'Aix is in Viviane Huchard, *Galerie David d'Angers* (Angers, 1985) p. 92. Signed models in this scale for other areas of the arch are in the Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Orléans.