



L'Ancien Régime Paris before the Revolution

6–9 March 2025 (ML 634)

4 days • £2,410

Lecturer: Professor Glenn Richardson

Focused tour examining the arts, architecture and history of pre-Revolutionary Paris.

Magnificent interiors from the heyday of France's Ancien Régime.

Includes a visit to the domain of Chantilly, once a rival to Versailles.

Despite its temporary eclipse by Louis XIV's Versailles, before the Revolution Paris never ceased to be the true heart of France. All the absolutist monarchs of the Bourbon dynasty embellished it. In the 18th century, the city grew in size and became once more the kingdom's capital of culture, famed throughout Europe as a school of manners, a showcase for the French luxury trades, and a byword for amorous pleasures, where opulence jostled with Dickensian poverty.

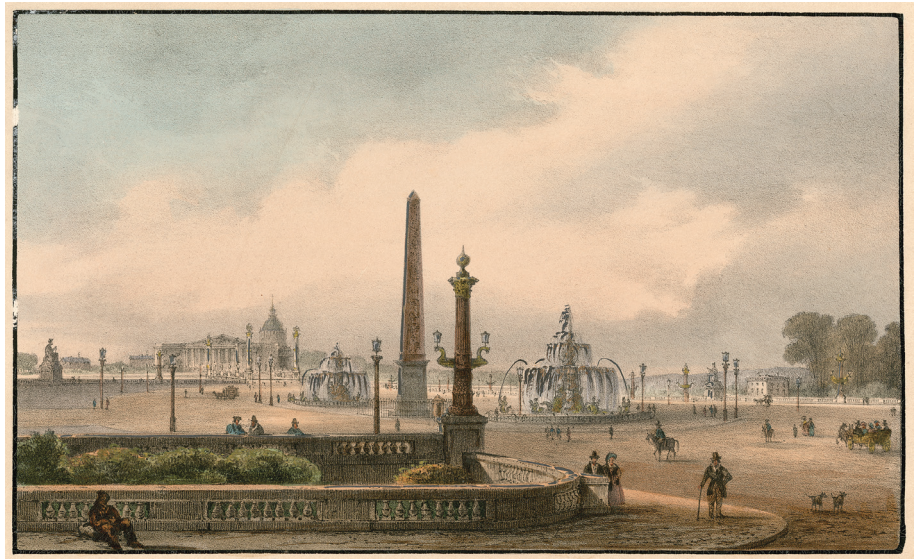
The tour goes in search of the vestiges of this lost Paris, mostly swept away since the Revolution. We visit former homes of French princes and nobles with their sumptuous interiors in the latest styles; squares and gardens announcing novelties in urban planning; and sites evoking famous moments in history, including the Revolution. The tour ends to the north of Paris with a visit to Chantilly, a mini-Versailles.

In the planning of the itinerary, visits have been chosen for ease of access and to illustrate high points and rarities both artistic and historical, links with famous names, and sites of major monuments since vanished.

Itinerary

Day 1. Take the Eurostar from London St Pancras at c. 10.30am. Drive to the Marais and visit the Hôtel de Soubise, its Rococo interiors considered masterpieces of the style. Continue to the Musée Carnavalet, the museum of Paris, with period rooms and memorabilia from the Revolution. End at the Place des Vosges, an early example (1612) of a planned urban development. Continue to the hotel for dinner.

Day 2: Paris. Morning lecture and walk through the gardens of the Palais Royal, residence of the Regent, Philippe d'Orléans (1715–22), its shops and opera house famous places of public resort. Continue to the Louvre.



Paris, Place de la Concorde, late-19th-century lithograph by Rigo Frères.

In Louis XIV's minority this was the chief seat of the monarchy and Paris residence of his mother the Queen-Regent. The young Louis improved the Louvre itself with the superb Galerie d'Apollon. We also visit the site of the Tuileries palace, gilded prison to Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, where the monarchy fell on August 10, 1792.

Day 3: Paris. Morning lecture before visiting the newly-restored Galerie Dorée housed in the Banque de France, a mini-Hall of Mirrors, remnant of a princely town-house. Continue to the Hôtel de la Marine, a Louis XV building used to house the Royal Furnishings Department. See superbly restored examples of the neo-Classical Louis XVI style in interior decoration. Finish at the mediaeval Conciergerie. Marie-Antoinette's last days were spent in solitary confinement in a cell on this site, turned by her brother-in-law Louis XVIII (1814–24) into the expiatory chapel visitable today.

Day 4. Chantilly. Drive north to the domain of Chantilly, seat of the princes de Condé, hugely rich royal cousins who held court here before the Revolution, when Jules-Hardouin Mansart's Grand Château was razed, to be entirely rebuilt in the late 1800s for the duc d'Aumale, an Orléans prince. Chantilly now houses his collections as well as important vestiges of the old estate. Return to Paris for the afternoon Eurostar arriving at London St Pancras at c. 6.30pm.

This tour is subject to the confirmation of a number of special arrangements and some places may close at short notice.

Lecturer

Professor Glenn Richardson. Professor of Early Modern History at St Mary's University, Twickenham. Following doctoral study at the LSE, his work has concentrated on the European Renaissance, on diplomatic and cultural relations between England, France, Venice and the Papacy. His books include: *Wolsey* (2020), *The Field of Cloth of Gold* (2013), *The Contending Kingdoms: France and England 1420–1700* (Ashgate, 2008), *Renaissance Monarchy: The Reigns of Henry VIII, Francis I and Charles V* (London, 2002) and *Tudor England and its Neighbours*, co-edited with Susan Doran (2005). Glenn is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £2,410 or £2,150 without Eurostar. **Single occupancy:** £2,830 or £2,570 without Eurostar.

Included: return rail travel by Eurostar (Standard Premier); travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts; 1 lunch and 3 dinners with wine water, coffee, plus light meals on the Eurostar;

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continued

all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Accommodation. Hotel Edouard VII, Paris. (hoteledouard7-paris.com): comfortable 4-star hotel, located on the Avenue de l'Opéra, a short walk from the Louvre. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? This is a short tour but a busy itinerary. Visits require a fair amount of walking and standing around.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.

Combine this tour with: *Ravenna & Urbino*, 10–14 March 2025 or *Venetian Palaces*, 11–15 March 2025.