## Preface

During the EP meeting outside Barcelona in September 1994, I was approached by Laurent Koelblen to give some series of lectures of my choice at the annual GAEL meeting down at Luminy. GAEL is yet another invention of Hirshowitz, an acronym standing for **G***eometrie* **A***lgebrique* **E***n* **L***iberté*. Meaning, I assume, Algebraic Geometry for the young, on their own, with no inhibitions. The idea of those meetings, that as far as I have understood already have been going on for a few years, is that young people should meet and talk about their own work without interference from "adults". In this way they should be less shy in presenting their work, and also get to meet several of their contemporaries, the coming generation of which they will be part. However the meetings are not supposed to be entirely "adult-free", two seniors are usually invited to give a series of lectures. Last year Ciliberto and Xambo-Deschamps were so honored, and in the upcoming spring of 1995 I was to share this honor with Frank Schreyer. Needless to say I was delighted.

As usual I try to combine duty with pleasure, and tagged for that purpose on the two adjoining weekends to my trip. The first I intended to devote to Grenoble and my friend and colleague Chris Peters, and the second I wanted to spend in Paris.

What follows is now a more than usually detailed documentation of that trip. No drama, no adventures, but that has not stopped me from indulging in the inconsequential minutae of travel. The last, and longest, chapter of this travellog is devoted to a visit to an art musuem (*Museé d'Orsay*), putting great demands on the patience of the reader, as I systematically browse through, and comment upon, sometimes at great length, the one painting after the other.

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