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CENTRE INTERNATIONAL D'ÉTUDE
DU XVIII^E SIÈCLE

WILLIAM HANLEY

*A biographical dictionary
of French censors*

1742-1789

II

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CENTRE INTERNATIONAL D'ÉTUDE DU XVIII^E SIÈCLE

FERNEY-VOLTAIRE

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Abbreviations

- AAAS* *American Academy of Arts and Sciences*
AAE:N Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Nantes
AAE:P Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Paris
AAF Archives de l'Académie française
AAP Archives de l'Archevêché de Paris
AAS Archives de l'Académie des sciences
ABNF Archives de la Bibliothèque nationale de France
ACF Archives du Collège de France
Acte B acte de baptême
Acte D acte de décès
AD Archives départementales
ADNL Archives of the Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina
ADS *Accademia delle scienze dello Istituto di Bologna*
Affiches *Affiches, annonces et avis divers*
AI Archives de l'Institut national des sciences et des arts de France
AIH *L'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*
AKL *Allgemeines Künstler-Lexicon*
AL *Année littéraire*
AM Archives municipales
Ami *L'Ami de la religion*
AMLH Archives du Musée national de la Légion d'honneur
AN Archives nationales de France
ANF *Almanach national de France*
Annonces *Annonces, affiches et avis divers*
ANOM Archives nationales d'outre-mer
AnR ancien régime
AP Archives de Paris
Appendix D + a number an appendix in Voltaire 2

ABBREVIATIONS

- AR* *Almanach royal*
'Arrest du Conseil' 'Arrest du Conseil d'état du roi, qui supprime plusieurs libelles imprimés sans permission'.
Arsenal Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal
ASHAT Archives du Service historique de l'armée de terre
A Tittmoning Archiv des Erzbistums München und Freising, Matrikel Tittmoning
AVL *Almanach de la ville de Lyon*
Beaumarchais 1 *Œuvres*
Beaumarchais 2 *Théâtre complet*
BHS *Biographie des hommes célèbres, des savans, des artistes et des littérateurs du département de la Somme*
BIM Bibliothèque interuniversitaire de médecine
BIN *Bibliothèque de l'Institut national des sciences et des arts*
BLC *The British Library general catalogue of printed books to 1975*
BM Bibliothèque Mazarine
BNC *Catalogue général des livres imprimés de la Bibliothèque nationale*
BNF Bibliothèque nationale de France
B Sade *Bibliothèque Sade*
BSG Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève
BTG *Biographie de Tarn-et-Garonne*
BU *Biographie universelle (Michaud)*
Bulletin *Bulletin des lois du royaume de France*
BV *Bibliothèque de Voltaire*
Catholicisme *Catholicisme, hier, aujourd'hui, demain*
'Châtelet de Paris' 'Châtelet de Paris: répertoire numérique de la série Y', under series Y of the Archives nationales
CHF *Catalogue de l'histoire de France*
CM *Catalogus magistrorum sacrae facultatis parisiensis juxta doctoratus ordinem*
Commentaires *Commentaires de la Faculté de médecine de Paris. 1777 à 1786*
Compendiaria *Compendiaria medicorum parisiensium notitia*
Contrat Contrat de mariage
D + a number a letter in Voltaire 2
DAR *Dictionnaire de l'ancien régime*
DBF *Dictionnaire de biographie française*
DF *Dictionnaire de la franc-maçonnerie*
DHG *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*
Diderot 1 *Correspondance*
Diderot 2 *Œuvres complètes, 1875-77*
Diderot 3 *Œuvres complètes, 1975-*
Dj 1 *Dictionnaire des journaux*

ABBREVIATIONS

- DJ* 2 *Dictionnaire des journalistes*
- DMF* *Dictionnaire de la musique en France*
- DPF* *Dictionnaire des parlementaires français*
- DRE* *Dictionnaire historique et bibliographique de la Révolution et de l'Empire 1789-1815*
- DSB* *Dictionary of scientific biography*
- DSVL* *Dix siècles de vie littéraire en Tarn et Garonne*
- DTC* *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*
- EC* 'Eloge de M. Coypel'
- EHC* 'Eloge historique de M. de Crébillon'
- Encyclopédie* *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*
- GANS* *The German Academy of natural sciences Leopoldina*
- GF* *Gazette de France*
- Grimm* 1 *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique*
- Grimm* 2 *Correspondance littéraire*
- Grove* *The New Grove Dictionary of music and musicians*
- HI* *Histoire de l'Académie royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres*
- HIF* *Histoire et mémoires de l'Institut de France*
- HJF* *Histoire des juifs en France*
- HM* *Histoire et mémoires de la Société royale de médecine*
- HS* *Histoire de l'Académie royale des sciences*
- Huzard Collection* Jean-Baptiste Huzard, Bibliothèque de l'Institut national des sciences et des arts (manuscripts)
- IAD* inventaire après décès
- IBAS* *Index biographique de l'Académie des sciences*
- IDB* *International dictionary of ballet*
- ILP* *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*
- JE* *Journal encyclopédique*
- JJR* 1 Rousseau, *Correspondance complète*
- JJR* 2 Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes*
- JM* *Journal de médecine, chirurgie, pharmacie, etc.*
- JP* *Journal de Paris*
- JS* *Journal des savants*
- LH* Légion d'honneur
- LIV* *Lettre inédites de Voltaire*
- LMM* *Liste des messieurs les chevaliers de l'Ordre de S. Michel*
- MAM* *Memorias de la Real Academia médica de Madrid*
- MCN* Minutier central des notaires
- MF* *Mercure de France*
- Montesquieu* 1 *Œuvres complètes, 1950-55*

ABBREVIATIONS

- Montesquieu 2 *Œuvres complètes*, 1949-51
MU *Gazette nationale, ou le Moniteur universel*
N notoriété
nafr nouvelles acquisitions françaises
NE *Nouvelles ecclésiastiques*
N&O *Nomina et ordo magistrorum*
NHC *Le Nécrologe des hommes célèbres de France*
NUC *The National union catalog: pre-1956 imprints*
ODD *The Oxford dictionary of dance*
PA private archives
Patrologiae Patrologiae cursus completus
PMC 1 Conlon, *Prélude au siècle des Lumières en France*
PMC 2 Conlon, *Le Siècle des Lumières*
PMC 3 Conlon, *Voltaire's literary career*
PVA *Procès-verbal de l'Assemblée générale du clergé de France*
PVAP *Procès-verbaux de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture*
RAF *Les Registres de l'Académie Française*
RAL 'Registre de l'Académie des sciences, belles-lettres et arts de Lyon'
Rétif 1 Rétif de La Bretonne, *Monsieur Nicolas*
Rétif 2 Rétif de La Bretonne, *Mes Inscriptions*
RH *Recueil des harangues prononcées par Messieurs de l'Académie française*
RLF *Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises*
RPP *Remonstrances du Parlement de Paris*
RRS *The Record of the Royal Society of London*
SPM 'Société des philathènes de Metz'
SVEC *Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century*
T will
TAS 'Tableau chronologique des membres de l'Académie' (Somme)
TDA *The Dictionary of Art*
TEC *The Eighteenth century*
Voltaire 1 *Œuvres complètes*, 1877-85
Voltaire 2 *Œuvres complètes. The Complete works*, 1968-
Voltaire 3 *Le Temple du goût*
YAPS *Year Book of the American Philosophical Society*

(*) Mention is made in the source that the subject of the entry was a censor, if the fact has not been noted in the text. It is used only for the first reference to the source.

Selected legal and related terms

<i>arrêté de compte</i>	settlement
<i>convention</i>	agreement
<i>inventaire après décès</i>	post-mortem inventory of the deceased's possessions
<i>mainlevée</i>	withdrawal (for example, of opposition)
<i>notoriété</i>	attested affidavit
<i>placard après décès</i>	announcement of and invitation to a funeral
<i>procuration</i>	power of attorney
<i>prorogation</i>	extension of time
<i>quittance</i>	receipt or discharge
<i>rente viagère</i>	life annuity
<i>scellés après décès</i>	seals affixed in the home of a recently deceased person by a <i>commissaire au Châtelet</i>
<i>subrogation</i>	substitution of one person for another
<i>tontine</i>	annuity, the capital of which was contributed by subscribers, whose potential share in the benefits increased with the death of each of the others
<i>traité</i>	agreement
<i>transport</i>	transfer

C

72. *Cadet de Saineville, Jean-Baptiste-Claude*

BIRTH AND PARENTS

Believed to have been born in 1729 or 1730: one of his death documents states that when he died – his death occurred on 31 March 1814 – he was eighty-four.¹ The birth may well have taken place in Paris since in both 1729 and 1730 his father was living in the capital.²

Father: Claude Cadet.³ The son of Claude Cadet and Edmée Menfroy, he was born in Regnault, a hamlet in the commune of Fresnoy (Aube) near Troyes, on 5 July 1695 and was baptised the following day in the parish church of Clérey (Aube).⁴ Though the child of a labourer, he was the great-nephew of Antoine Vallot, principal physician to Anne of Austria and later to her son, Louis XIV.⁵ Cadet practised surgery at the Hôtel-Dieu in Paris from 1716 and was admitted *maître en chirurgie* by the Collège royal de chirurgie in 1724. To help in the fight against scurvy he published *Dissertation sur le scorbut* (Paris, 1742). Highly respected, he died in Paris on 10 February 1745.⁶ It is thought that his death was sudden and that he left his spouse the paltry sum of 2 *écus* (the equivalent of 6 *livres*) with which she had to raise their thirteen children, all of whom were young.⁷

Mother: Marie-Madeleine-Charlotte Godefroy.⁸ She was the daughter of Antoine Godefroy, an officer in the Hôtel de ville, and Marie Patu.⁹ Living in a house in Montmartre owned by her eldest son, she died in her seventy-eighth year on 17 March 1786.¹⁰ She was buried in the parish church of Saint-Pierre there the next day. As of the following 21 March no post-mortem inventory had been undertaken. Indeed, her heirs decided not to follow the usual legal procedures following her death because of the perfect terms on which they had always lived and because of the modest nature of her estate, which would have been swal-

lowed up by the fees involved. Four of her sons (Jean-Baptiste-Claude, Louis-Claude, Jean, and Charles-Edme) had provided her with between 1,400 and 1,500 *livres* annually for the last twelve years of her life. A brother, Jean-François Godefroy, an *officier des gardes* in Paris and the husband of Nicole-Charlotte Racine, was in attendance for the signing of her son Antoine-Alexis's marriage contract on 4 July 1773.¹¹

He had at least eleven siblings, six brothers and five sisters. The former were: the eldest child of the family, Claude-Antoine Cadet (called 'le Saigneur' because of his renown as a phlebotomist), who may have been born in 1728, became a member of the Académie royale de chirurgie, and married Aglaé-Geneviève-Emilie Joly, an accomplished enameller and the daughter of a *secrétaire des commandements de la maison de Condé*;¹² Louis-Claude Cadet de Gassicourt, who was a chemist, pharmacist, and member of the Académie royale des sciences, who is said to have been born in Paris on 24 July 1731 and to have died in the same city on 10 or 17 October 1799, and who was the husband of Marie-Thérèse-Françoise Boisselet, tragically for her family the mother of an illegitimate son of Louis XV (known as Charles-Louis Cadet de Gassicourt);¹³ Jean Cadet de Limay, a distinguished engineer and *inspecteur général des ponts et chaussées* as well as *ingénieur en chef des ponts et chaussées de la Touraine* and *ingénieur en chef des canaux d'Orléans et Loing*, who is reported to have been born in Paris on 8 December 1732, who died in Orléans at the age of sixty-nine on 15 May 1802 (25 floréal an X), who was ennobled in December 1786, and who was created a *chevalier* of the Ordre de Saint-Michel in 1788, having married Perpétue-Félicité Des Friches on 11 November 1771;¹⁴ Charles-Edme (or Edme-Charles) Cadet de Chambine, who was born on 14 January or 14 March 1737 and was baptised the following day in the parish church of Saint-Eustache in Paris, who became an *avocat au Parlement* and a simple *commis* and then served from 1 April 1764 to 1 November 1792 as *premier commis des ponts et chaussées*, and

who married Marie-Michelle Molin;¹⁵ Pierre-François Cadet de Fontenay, *écuyer*, captain in the Regiment of the Isle-de-France, and *chevalier* of the Ordre royal et militaire de Saint-Louis; and Antoine-Alexis Cadet de Vaux, who was also a censor and is the object of the following entry. The seven sons were all alive on 21 March 1786. As for his known sisters, they were five in number: Marie-Anne, who was born on 22 September 1741 and was baptised the following day in the parish church of Saint-Eustache in Paris;¹⁶ Aglaé, a miniaturist married to a certain Fatout, a print seller in Paris;¹⁷ Rose, who is reported to have wed a M. Lemaire in 1792, to have divorced him the following year, and to have married the elderly member of the Académie des sciences Marc-René de Montalembert in 1794 or 1795; Marguerite-Jeanne-Madeleine, the wife of Augustin-Jean-Baptiste Maubert, a *procureur au Châtelet de Paris*;¹⁸ and Marie-Geneviève, who married François Nay, a merchant in Paris.¹⁹ None of her daughters was listed as heirs to their late mother on 21 March 1786. On 30 October 1810 Cadet de Saineville states in his will that he was born into a family which was not well off; that he was one of thirteen children, of whom only three others were then alive, namely Cadet de Chambine, Cadet de Fontenay, and Cadet de Vaux; and that those siblings were the primary objects of his affection, as they ought to be.²⁰

The above is the usual spelling and the one which he used in his signature. The second element of his surname was also written Seineville and Senneville, however.²¹ The sons of the family took the last component of their names from the villages in which they had been nursed with the exception of the first-born, who signed his name simply Cadet.²² In Cadet de Saineville's case this would seem to have been Senneville in the commune of Guerville, which is today in the Département des Yvelines.²³

CIVIL STATE

Celibate.²⁴ As will be seen, he comments on this fact in one of his reports on a book submitted to the authorities for approval.

CAREER

Assisted by his eldest brother.²⁵ Upon the death of the boys' father many people took an interest in the family's welfare because of the esteem in which he had been held. Two were particularly solicitous. The first was the jurist and author Louis-François de Sozzi.²⁶ The second was Joseph de Saint-Laurent, a *trésorier général des colonies françaises dans l'Amérique*, who assumed that position as an alternate in 1764.²⁷ Thanks to Sozzi a number of distinguished figures became Claude-Antoine's patients, and because of his great success with them in the operating theatre he became fashionable.²⁸ The most prominent women at Court and in Paris would not be bled by anyone else. Consequently, he was able to raise his fee to a *louis*

(the equivalent of 24 *livres*) for each blood-letting. With the wealth that he thus acquired he proved to be generous towards his family: 'Il devint le soutien de sa mère, de ses frères et de ses sœurs, et n'épargna rien pour leur éducation, leur instruction et leur établissement'. As for Saint-Laurent, he is said to have declared that he would replace the children's deceased father and lend his support to all of them.²⁹ Among the witnesses to sign the marriage contract of the censor's brother Antoine-Alexis were three men of that name: Jean-Baptiste de Saint-Laurent, a *chevalier* of the Ordre royal et militaire de Saint-Louis; Joseph de Saint-Laurent, an *écuyer, conseiller secrétaire du roi maison couronne de France et de ses finances*, and the husband of Marie-Anne Le Couteulx; and another Joseph de Saint-Laurent, an *écuyer*.³⁰ The second of these may be the figure in question.

Undertook studies in the University of Paris probably around 1744. Jean-Baptiste-Claude Cadet took his *maîtrise-ès-arts* there on 2 September 1746.³¹ That degree was awarded following completion of a two-year programme in *philosophie*.³² By then he was already a *clericus* from the archdiocese of Paris, as the Latin record of his degree shows.³³ That word was presumably the equivalent of the French *clerc*, a broad term in eighteenth-century France: 'On comprend sous ce nom tous ceux qui par état sont consacrés au service divin, depuis le simple tonsuré, jusqu'aux prélats du premier ordre'.³⁴ In that case, he would have already taken the tonsure. It could be received at any time following a boy's seventh birthday and was the first step towards eventual ordination, though by no means an inevitable one.³⁵ For whatever reason the future censor turned his back on a career in the Church.

Enrolled in a Faculty of Law – in all likelihood in the University of Paris – around 1746. To qualify there a candidate had to obtain a *maîtrise-ès-arts* before undertaking studies in jurisprudence, then a *baccalauréat* in law following an additional two years, and finally a *licence en droit* at the end of a further programme lasting one year.³⁶ He was admitted an *avocat* by the Parlement de Paris on 4 August 1749.³⁷ The record of that event does not contain the second element of his surname. In several contemporary legal documents he is said to be an *avocat au Parlement*.³⁸

Assumed his new responsibilities as censor around 1761. A register of the Librairie, the bureau responsible for preventive censorship, which covers the period from 20 March 1760 to around October 1763 contains an undated entry in which he appears at the beginning of the final third of that part of the volume containing the entries.³⁹ His name is to be found for the first time in an entry which can be dated on 23 July 1761.⁴⁰ An unspecified person had sought an authorisation for the manuscript of Simon de Beaumont's *Jurisprudence des rentes par ordre alphabétique*. It was granted a *privilege* for ten years on 3 December of the same year. Anonymous, it was published in Paris in 1762 according to

of his father's post-mortem inventory he was living with his mother in the rue du Jardin.⁶¹ He, too, of course was an *écuyer*.⁶²

SIGNATURE⁶³


NOTES

[1]. AD Ain, parish registers, 28 May 1669. [2]. AN, MCN, étude LXXXIX, 502, 31 January 1746, inventaire (hereafter IAD), f.40r; Baux, II, 219 (*). [3]. Castin, p.152 (*). [4]. IAD, f.40r; Baux, II, 219. [5]. *Encyclopédie*, V, 468. [6]. AN, MCN, étude IV, 359, mariage (hereafter Contrat), f.1r. [7]. AN, MCN, étude LXVII, 394, 23 December 1724, inventaire, f.1r; étude I, 408, 5 April 1742, transaction et partage, f.1v. [8]. AN, MCN, étude I, 408, 5 April 1742, transaction et partage, f.1r. [9]. AN, MCN, étude LXXXIX, 502, 22 January 1746, testament olographe déposé (hereafter T), f.2r-2v. [10]. AN, MCN, étude I, 408, 5 April 1742, transaction et partage, f.1r. [11]. AN, MCN, étude LXVII, 394, 23 December 1724, inventaire, f.5v; étude I, 408, 5 April 1742, transaction et partage, f.1r. [12]. AN, MCN, étude LXVII, 394, 23 December 1724, inventaire, f.1r, 5r. [13]. AN, MCN, étude LXVII, 394. [14]. *Encyclopédie*, I, 151; II, 7; IX, 482, 893. [15]. Nivelles, p.7. [16]. Goujet, III, 427 (*). [17]. *Encyclopédie*, I, 152. [18]. Contrat, f.1r; AN, MCN, étude I, 331, 3 April 1727, traité d'office, f.1r; ABNE, AnR 42, f.40v; AN, Y12934, 22 January 1746, f.1r; MCN, étude I, 408, 5 April 1742, transaction et partage, f.1r; T, f.2r; IAD, f.2r; procuration, f.1r in IAD; ABNE, AnR 49, f.41r, 42r, 43r-43v, 44v, 45r; AR, 1730, p.301; 1746, p.323; Goujet, III, 427. See also Baux, II, 218. [19]. BNF, Ms fr. 21940, f.87r. [20]. BM, Ms 2760, p.333, 336; BNF, Ms fr. 21997, f.203r. [21]. Hanley, 'Une réclamation'. [22]. AN, O¹54, f.99v-100r. See also ACF, dossier Capon. [23]. Goujet, III, 427-28. See also p.429. [24]. ACF, dossier Capon. [25]. The patent of nobility is reproduced in Baux, II, 218-20 with omissions. [26]. IAD, f.52v. [27]. AN, MCN, étude I, 338, 9 September 1728, dépôt de pièces, procuration. [28]. ABNE, AnR 49, f.44v. [29]. ABNE, AnR 49, f.44r-45r. [30]. ABNE, AnR 46, f.224v. [31]. ABNE, AnR 42, f.40v; 46, f.218v, 224v; 49, f.44v, 45r. [32]. ABNE, AnR 46, f.211r. [33]. Balayé, p.169-70. [34]. AR, 1746, p.53. [35]. AN, Y12934, 22 January 1746, f.1r; IAD, f.2r. [36]. AN, MCN, étude I, 331, 3 April 1727, traité d'office. [37]. *Encyclopédie*, III, 525. [38]. Antoine, 2004, p.11. [39]. *Encyclopédie*, VII, 920. [40]. *Encyclopédie*, IV, 18. [41]. Goujet, III, 428. [42]. T, f.2r. [43]. BNF, Ms fr. 22140, f.120v. [44]. T, f.2r. [45]. BNF, Ms fr. 22140, f.120v. [46]. AN, Y12934. [47]. IAD, f.2v; Hillairet, 1997, II, 130. [48]. Goujet, III, 428. [49]. T, f.2r. [50]. T. See also AP, DC⁶231, f.295v. [51]. IAD; ABNE, AnR 49, f.44r. [52]. IAD, f.2v. [53]. IAD, f.49r; Antoine, 2004, p.97. [54]. T, f.2v; IAD, f.2v; Antoine, 2004, p.97. [55]. Antoine, 2004, p.97. [56]. IAD, f.2v. [57]. ABNE, AnR 49, f.44v. [58]. ABNE, AnR 49, f.41r, 43r-43v. [59]. IAD, f.2r. [60]. Antoine, 2004, p.97. [61]. IAD, f.2r. [62]. ABNE, AnR 49, f.44v. [63]. T, 2.1r.

77. *Capperonnier, Claude*

BIRTH AND PARENTS

Baptised in the parish church of Saint-Sépulcre in Montdidier (Somme) on 1 May 1671.¹ He is believed to have been born in that town on the same day.²

Father: Jean Capperonnier. The baptismal certificate provides no further information on him. In fact, he was a tanner.³ The members of his family had long practised that trade.

Mother: Charlotte de Saint-Léger. As we shall see, she had a brother who would play a decisive role in Capperonnier's career.

He had at least two siblings: Jean, a tanner as well, whose son Jean would also become a censor; and Marie, who was the wife of Jacques Vailland, a *marchand drapier* and at one time an *échevin* in Montdidier.⁴

CIVIL STATE

Clerically celibate.

CAREER

Began to work as a tanner, his family having destined him for that occupation.⁵ Following a natural inclination, he spent as much time as he could reading. By chance he secured a Latin primer and had soon learned it by heart. In this way he acquired the fundamentals of the language completely on his own. During a visit to Montdidier early in 1685 his maternal uncle, Charles de Saint-Léger, who was a Benedictine from the abbey in nearby Corbie, was surprised to see how much progress his nephew had made. Believing that the boy had a special vocation, he compelled his brother-in-law to allow his son to abandon his trade and to attend the school in Montdidier in which the Benedictines taught Latin. He remained there for eighteen months. During that time he undertook a comparative study of Greek and Latin grammar. In this exercise, which understandably he himself would always consider to have been precocious, he realised the extent to which it was mandatory to study both languages in order to master the second of the two perfectly. Thereafter, they would together remain his primary intellectual preoccupation, and it was by constantly comparing them that he eventually reached the point where no difficulty which he encountered in Latin was beyond him.

Enrolled in the Jesuit school in Amiens in October 1686.⁶ There he studied for two years with Père Longuemare. The only member of the Society of Jesus by that name to have left any significant trace was Jean-Pierre Languemare, who eventually abandoned the order.⁷ For the priest Capperonnier's eagerness to learn and his ceaseless diligence set him apart from the other pupils.⁸ To improve his

charge's knowledge of Greek he gave him private lessons. Upon the completion of his *humanités*, which normally required approximately six years in all, Capperonnier moved to Paris.⁹ By now he had decided to become a man of the cloth. One possible reason for his choice is easily understood. For a young man of modest origins who had a predilection for scholarship, the Church was an obvious solution, affording opportunities which would otherwise not have been open to him. He entered the Séminaire des Trente-Trois in 1688.¹⁰ Established in 1633, the institution was named for the thirty-three years which Christ spent on earth in poverty and was founded with the purpose of educating indigent seminarians.¹¹ It was also known as the Séminaire de la Sainte-Famille.¹² The usual practice was to complete the two years of *philosophie* and the three of theology – together they constituted the quinquennium – elsewhere before entering the seminary.¹³ But Capperonnier did so there.¹⁴ He took advantage of the opportunity to improve his knowledge of Latin and Greek. In fact, he had adopted a rule by which he would seek out what the ancient philosophers and the Fathers of the Church had to say about whatever subject he was studying. It may have been at this time that he took the tonsure, which could be received at any time following a boy's seventh birthday and which was the first step towards eventual ordination, though by no means an inevitable one.¹⁵ As well, the four minor orders (porter, lector, exorcist, and acolyte) may have been conferred on him there.

Left the seminary in 1693 and moved into the Collège de l'Ave-Maria.¹⁶ Also sometimes called the Collège de Huban in honour of its fourteenth-century founder Jean de Huban, a president of the Parlement de Paris, it became part of the Collège Louis-le-Grand in 1763.¹⁷ Capperonnier was studying oriental languages there in 1694 when Henri Feydeau de Broue, his bishop in Amiens, called him back to his diocese to teach Greek to the priests in the parish of Saint-Georges in Abbeville.¹⁸ The following year he sent him to the parish of Saint-Valois in Montreuil-sur-Mer to teach *humanités* and *philosophie*. He remained there for only one year, however: 'L'air de la Mer & le travail excessif, auquel son emploi l'engageoit, parce qu'il n'avoit pas voulu renoncer à ses Etudes ordinaires, nuisirent à sa santé'. For this reason he returned to the capital where he was to be found in September 1696.

Took his *maîtrise-ès-arts* at the University of Paris on 15 September 1696.¹⁹ By then he was already a *clericus*, as the Latin record of his degree shows. That word was presumably the equivalent of the French *clerc*, a broad term in eighteenth-century France: 'On comprend sous ce nom tous ceux qui par état sont consacrés au service divin, depuis le simple tonsuré, jusqu'aux prélats du premier ordre'.²⁰

Engaged as a private tutor, preparing his pupil to enter a *collège*.²¹ But Capperonnier found that the job distracted

him too much from his own work. Hence, he abandoned the position and made do with the bare necessities. By giving less demanding private lessons he was able to afford accommodation at the Collège du Cardinal Lemoine. He moved there in May 1697. The same year he defended his thesis (the *tentative*) to earn his *baccalauréat en théologie*, normally the reward for three years of theological studies.²² This he had done by 8 August 1697: a legal document of that date describes him as a *bachelier en théologie*.²³ A few days later he entered the Séminaire de Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet to prepare for ordination.²⁴ The time spent in the seminary in formal training for holy orders varied from diocese to diocese and was in one see a mere three months.²⁵ In unusual circumstances it could be abbreviated even further: the censor François Bonnay advanced from the tonsure to the priesthood in five weeks, as we have seen. In Paris it was as a rule nine months for the subdiaconate, three for the diaconate, and an additional three for the priesthood. Frequently, there were intervals between the periods of preparation for each of the three major orders so that the time spent as a candidate for the priesthood could be considerably more protracted. That was not the case in this instance. In 1698 Capperonnier left Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet and travelled to Amiens to take holy orders.²⁶ He would only ever be ordained subdeacon and deacon, never becoming a priest.²⁷ According to some that decision sprang from his humility and lack of self-confidence, he believing that he was not good enough to take the final step.²⁸ Without a dispensation the minimum age for ordination was twenty-two for subdeacons, twenty-three for deacons, and twenty-four for priests.²⁹ He stayed in Montdidier for several months before returning to Paris.³⁰

Took up residence in the Collège d'Ainville in the capital.³¹ During his time there he prepared his *licence* in the company of Armand-Gaston-Maximilien de Rohan, who would later be appointed Bishop of Strasbourg and a cardinal, and the Abbé Camille Le Tellier de Louvois, who eventually assumed the direction of the Bibliothèque du roi. Both remained his loyal protectors, and he benefited from their benevolence in a variety of ways. Having completed his *baccalauréat en théologie*, he would have had to become a *ubiquiste* or register in one of the two primary colleges of the Faculty of Theology, the Collège de Navarre or the Collège de Sorbonne.³² Enrolment in a programme of theology at the university and ordination to the subdiaconate were prerequisites for advancement to the *licence*. Since his family could not help him financially, he had to fend for himself.³³ He met his needs in three ways: he lived abstemiously; he did a small amount of private tutoring in Greek; and he received a very modest income from a benefice in the form of a chapel in the church of Saint-André-des-Arts. Thus, he was able to cover the expenses of his

been laid to rest in the parish of Saint-Eustache on the preceding day (p.530). His inhumation was also announced in the *Journal de Paris* on 6 March 1781 with no details regarding its date or place (p.262).

His post-mortem inventory was undertaken on 12 March 1781.⁴⁰ His books are listed (f.5r-5v) and his papers described (f.7r-10r).

Honoured in a memorial service held in the chapel of the Faculty of Medicine on 17 March 1781.⁴¹ Prayers were offered for the repose of his soul.

Commemorated in a ceremony organised for his family and friends on 28 March 1781.⁴² According to the records of the Faculty of Medicine it took place in an Augustinian establishment near the rue des Victoires. This would have been the order's house in the rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires.⁴³

Eulogised at a meeting of the Faculty of Medicine on 1 September 1783.⁴⁴ The encomium was delivered to the gathering by Lafisse. It has apparently not come down to us. The eulogist was doubtless Claude Lafisse, a professor of surgery and *docteur régent* in the Faculty of Medicine.

POSTERITY

1. Gabrielle-Sophie Casamajor.⁴⁵ Like her sister she had attained her majority by 12 March 1781. The two women were living with their mother on that date.

2. Marie-Louise-Emilie Casamajor.

3. Louis-Gabriel Casamajor. An *écuyer*, at the time of his father's post-mortem inventory he was serving in the military as an *aide major* in Le Cap-Français in Saint-Domingue, which is today Haiti. He was also referred to as an infantry captain.⁴⁶

Two children at least had predeceased him. Adélaïde-Elisabeth Casamajor died at the age of ten on 29 March 1752 and was buried the following day in the parish of Saint-Maurice, where she was boarding.⁴⁷ Antoine Casamajor had pursued a military career, the principal events of which are as follows: he entered the navy in 1753, serving in the port of Rochefort as a clerk until June 1757; he set sail for Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island in March 1758, arrived there at the end of May of that year, lost his ship (which was burned during the siege of the colony), and returned to France on an English vessel following the fall of the fortress on 26 July 1758; he served in the Bureau des armements in Brest from 1759 until May 1760; he was assigned to a ship during that latter month, left for Saint-Domingue, was blocked in Spain for five months, and arrived at his destination at the end of the year; he returned to France in March 1761, spending time in Paris on leave, and went back to Brest to work again in the Bureau des armements; he received orders from Louis XV in March 1763 to return to Saint-Domingue as *commissaire de la marine*, arrived there at the end of the year, and remained in his post until November 1766; he returned to

France, having received permission to do so in order to recover his health; and he ended his career as *commissaire général* in Rochefort.⁴⁸ Much appreciated, he is thought to have died on 17 or 27 October 1780. He was single. Following his death his sisters, who were reportedly in dire straits, sought support from the State. Louis-Jean-Marie de Bourbon, duc de Penthièvre, who on 1 January 1734 had been appointed Admiral of France, took a lively interest in their cause.⁴⁹ Curiously, the report on their request declared that in this context they could be regarded as their brother's widows or daughters. Their effort proved successful with each receiving a pension of 500 *livres* around 2 December 1780.

SIGNATURE⁵⁰

NOTES

- [1]. Procuration, 7 February 1732, f.1r in AN, MCN, étude LIX, 209, 20 February 1732, mariage (hereafter Contrat) (*). [2]. AN, Marine, C⁷54, Casamajor dossier (*). [3]. Contrat, f.1r. [4]. Contrat, f.2v; procuration, 7 February 1732, f.1r-2r in Contrat. [5]. Contrat. [6]. AN, MCN, étude XX, 721, 14 July 1784, inventaire (*). [7]. Death certificate in AN, MCN, étude XX, 722, 11 December 1784, notoriété; étude LIX, 195, 3 February 1725, constitution viagère, f.1r. [8]. Contrat, f.1r; AN, MCN, étude, LXXXIII, 408, 20 December 1748, inventaire, f.1r (*). [9]. AN, MCN, étude XXXVI, 310, 1 June 1704, mariage, f.1r; Y11676, scellés (*). [10]. AN, MCN, étude LXXXIII, 408, 20 December 1748, inventaire. [11]. AN, MCN, étude XXXVI, 310, 1 June 1704, mariage, f.1r; étude LIX, 195, 3 February 1725, constitution viagère, f.1r; étude LXXXIII, 408, 20 December 1748, inventaire, f.1r; death certificate in étude XX, 722, 11 December 1784, notoriété. [12]. AN, MCN, étude XXXVI, 310. [13]. AN, MCN, étude LXXXIII, 408, 20 December 1748, inventaire, f.1r. [14]. Portal, V, 367 (*); Carrère, 1776, II, 392-93 (*). [15]. Dulieu. [16]. *Encyclopédie*, V, 8-9; AR, 1740, p.303. [17]. *Encyclopédie*, V, 9. See also AR, 1740, p.303. [18]. *Encyclopédie*, V, 9; BIM, Ms 2325, p.786-89; Ms 2326, theses 9, 18; PMC 2, 20:337, 21:359, 22:401. [19]. BIM, Ms 2326, thesis 17; PMC 2, 22:400. [20]. BIM, Ms 2326, thesis 17, p.4. [21]. BIM, Ms 2326, thesis 48, p.1. [22]. Procuration, 7 February 1732, f.1r in Contrat. [23]. *Encyclopédie*, V, 7, 9. [24]. BNF, Ms fr. 21995, f.53r. [25]. Lottin, II, 4. [26]. BM, Ms 2760, p.337; BNF, Ms fr. 21997, f.203v. [27]. Contrat, f.1r; AN, Y11676, 11 December 1748, scellés, f.3r; MCN, étude LXXXIII, 408, 20 December 1748, inventaire, f.1r; étude LXXXIII, 424, 19 November 1751, constitution, f.1r; AD Val-de-Marne, parish registers of Saint-Marice, 30 March 1752 (*); AN, MCN, étude LXXXIII, 475, 18 September 1761, bail, f.1r. [28]. Hanley, 'Une réclamation'. [29]. BNF, Ms fr. 22141, f.105r. [30]. BNF, Ms fr. 21998, 21994. [31]. BNF, Ms nafr. 3345, f.27r-29v. [32]. BNF, Ms fr. 21999, p.171. [33]. BNF, Ms fr. 21992, p.69. [34]. GF, 1 July 1763, p.238; Bachaumont, II, 88; Delaunay, p.285-95 (*). [35]. AN, MCN, étude

XX, 695, 12 March 1781, inventaire (hereafter IAD), f.1r (*); étude XX, 721, 14 July 1784, inventaire, f.1r; Marine, C⁷54, Casamajor dossier. [36]. Placard après décès (BNF, Ln¹77); AN, Marine, C⁷54, Casamajor dossier; IAD, f.1r; *JP*, 6 March 1781, p.262; AN, MCN, étude XX, 721, 14 July 1784, inventaire, f.1r; étude XX, 721, 30 August 1784, titre nouvel et transport, f.1r. [37]. AN, Marine, C⁷54, Casamajor dossier. [38]. AN, Y13133 (*). [39]. Placard après décès (BNF, Ln¹77). [40]. IAD. [41]. *Commentaires*, II, 702. [42]. *Commentaires*, II, 702. [43]. Hillairet, 1997, II, 189. [44]. Bordeu, IV, 235 (*); *JM*, October 1783, p.370. [45]. IAD, f.1r. [46]. AN, MCN, étude XX, 721, 30 August 1784, titre nouvel et transport, f.1r; étude XX, 722, 11 December 1784, notoriété, f.1r. [47]. AD Val-de-Marne, parish registers of Saint-Maurice. [48]. AP, DC⁶23, f.141v-42r; AN, Marine, C⁷54, Casamajor dossier. [49]. On this figure see Levantal, p.838-40. [50]. Contrat, f.4r.

85. Cassini, Jacques

BIRTH AND PARENTS

Born on 16 February 1677 and was baptised in the parish church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois in Paris two days later.¹

Father: Giovanni Domenico Cassini. In the baptismal certificate he is given the forenames by which he was known in France, Jean-Dominique. There he is said to be a *chevalier* and 'grand mathématicien du roi'. The son of Giacomo Cassini and Jullia Crovesi, he was born on 8 June 1625 and was baptised in Perinaldo in the county of Nice two days later.² In 1650 the senate of Bologna selected him to occupy the chair in astronomy at the university there.³ Having achieved renown, he was invited to France by Louis XIV at the instigation of his principal minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, with the offer of a pension.⁴ He arrived in Paris at the beginning of 1669 and was received by the King. Though he had not intended to remain permanently in France, that is what he did. He was a member of the Académie royale des sciences from early in 1669, received his letters of naturalisation in April 1673, and was named *pensionnaire astronome* of the academy on 28 January 1699.⁵ On 22 May 1672 he became a member of the Royal Society of London.⁶ He died in Paris on 14 September 1712 and was interred in the presence of his son Jacques in the parish church of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas two days later.⁷ His death certificate described him as an *écuyer*. In his *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (Paris, 1686) Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle (who would become a censor) characterised Cassini as 'l'homme du monde à qui le ciel est le mieux connu'.⁸ Voltaire wrote of him in *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* (Berlin, 1751): 'Il a été le premier des astronomes de son temps, du moins suivant les Italiens et les Français'.⁹ And in his article 'Astronomie' in the *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris, 1751-

1780) D'Alembert praised Cassini: 'L'Académie royale des Sciences de Paris, protégée par Louis XIV. & par Louis XV. a produit aussi d'excellens Astronomes, qui ont fort enrichi cette Science par leurs observations & par leurs écrits. M. Cassini, que Louis XIV. fit venir de Bologne, s'est distingué par plusieurs découvertes astronomiques'.¹⁰ Like his son the censor, he was scientifically conservative, adopting a Cartesian view of the universe.¹¹ Despite this fact he has more recently been recognised for his contributions to the science of his age: 'His indisputable discoveries are sufficient to win him a high position among the astronomers of the pre-Newtonian generation'. Among his publications were: the anonymous *Découvertes de deux nouvelles planètes autour de Saturne* (Paris, 1673); *Abrégé des observations & des réflexions sur la comète qui a paru au mois de décembre 1680 & aux mois de janvier, février & mars de cette année 1681* (Paris, 1681); *Observations sur la comète qui a paru au mois de décembre 1680 & en janvier 1681* (Paris, 1681); *Premières observations de la comète de ce mois d'aoust MDCLXXXII* (Paris, 1682); *Les Elémens de l'astronomie vérifiez* (Paris, 1684); *Découverte de la lumière céleste qui paroist dans le zodiaque* (Paris, 1685); *Règles de l'astronomie indienne pour calculer les mouvemens du soleil et de la lune* ([Paris, 1689]); posthumously *Observations de la comète de 1531 pendant le temps de son retour en 1682* (Paris, 1759); and posthumously with Philippe de La Hire and Jean Picard *Calcul des observations de la comète pendant le temps de son apparition en 1682* (Paris, 1760). The last two works were edited by his grandson César-François Cassini de Thury.

Mother: Geneviève Delaistre. The daughter of Pierre Delaistre, a *lieutenant général* in the bailliage of Clermont-en-Beauvoisis, and Anne Durand, she wed in Paris in 1673.¹² By 4 April 1711 she had died.¹³ On that date she had at least three siblings: Paul, a former *maître* in the Chambre aux deniers; Catherine, who had attained her majority and was unmarried; and Madeleine-Françoise, the widow of Paul Vollant, a *chevalier* and seigneur de Berville et de Laiglempied.

He had at least two siblings. His older brother Jean-Baptiste, whom we shall meet in connection with Cassini's thesis, was a *garde marine* who was killed in the Battle of La Hougue in the Nine Years War during which Edward Russell led a British and Dutch fleet to decisive victory over the French off the Norman coast on 2 June 1692.¹⁴ He also had a sister: Anne-Tullie was born on 2 June 1678 and was baptised in the parish church of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas in Paris on the same day.¹⁵

Some contemporaries referred to him as de Cassini, as we shall see. This was by no means always the case. He himself eschewed that usage in his signature, seen below. The family's armorial bearings appropriately featured six stars.¹⁶

fonds Michel Chrétien. [112]. Bibliothèque municipale Vendôme, fonds Michel Chrétien. [113]. Bibliothèque municipale Vendôme, fonds Michel Chrétien. [114]. Bibliothèque municipale Vendôme, fonds Michel Chrétien. [115]. *Encyclopédie*, II, 819. [116]. *Encyclopédie*, II, 817. [117]. Bibliothèque municipale Vendôme, fonds Michel Chrétien. [118]. Rochambeau, p.304. [119]. Bibliothèque municipale Vendôme, fonds Michel Chrétien. [120]. Jones, p.257. [121]. *BNC*, XXVIII, 990, 991; *NUC*, CVIII, 105. [122]. Acte D. [123]. AD Loir-et-Cher, 3 E 56, 11, p.35. [124]. AD Loir-et-Cher, 3 E 56, 11, p.35. [125]. Bibliothèque municipale Vendôme, fonds Michel Chrétien. [126]. AD Loir-et-Cher, 3 E 56, 11, p.35. [127]. Bibliothèque municipale Vendôme, fonds Michel Chrétien. [128]. AN, MCN, étude XIX, 901, 4 September 1791, quittance, f.1v.

94. Clairambault, Nicolas-Pascal de

BIRTH AND PARENTS

Born on 30 March 1698 and was baptised on the following 2 April in the parish church of Sept-Saints in Brest.¹

Father: Charles de Clairambault. He was an *écuyer*, *conseiller du roi*, and *contrôleur de la marine* in the port of Brest at the time. Believed to have been born on 15 December 1647, he went on from that latter position to become *commissaire général et ordonnateur* in the navy, having been posted to Port-Louis (Morbihan).² He died at the age of approximately seventy-four years on 8 June 1720 and was buried on the following day in the parish church of Notre-Dame in Port-Louis.³ He had received the sacrament of extreme unction. Seigneur de Doulon, he was the son of Pierre Clairambault, a *secrétaire du roi* who was reportedly born around 1608 and to have died on 24 August 1695 in Vitteaux (Côte d'Or), and Jeanne Le Boiteux, the daughter of Claude Le Boiteux and Madeleine de Gennevois.⁴ Among Charles's eight siblings were Nicolas, *écuyer conseiller secrétaire du roi maison couronne de France et de ses finances près la chambre de l'édit de Languedoc réunie au Parlement de Toulouse*, who was said to have been born on 3 May 1643, who served on the Conseil de la marine, and who died in Paris on 11 December 1730; and Pierre, who is thought to have been born in Asnières-en-Montagne (Côte d'Or) on 30 May 1651 and to have died in Paris at approximately at one o'clock in the morning on 15 January 1740 and who was an *écuyer*, employee of the Bibliothèque du roi, *conseiller de marine*, *premier commis* to Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux de Maurepas, and genealogist of the Ordres du roi.⁵ Also a censor, Pierre was assigned his first book to examine on 27 January 1707.⁶ He would play an influential role in his nephew's life.

Mother: Gillette-Françoise de Penfentenio. Her name has been transcribed variously. In the baptismal certificate it appears as Penfuntuniou. Elsewhere, it is recorded as Penfentenyo, Penfeutenio, and Penfeuteniou.⁷ She was

the daughter of Jacques de Penfentenio, seigneur du Penhouet (or de Penhoet) et du Cosquer, and Jeanne L'Olivier-de-Saint-Maur.⁸ She may have signed her marriage contract on 3 March 1695 and wed on the same day.

His name was written in a variety of ways such as Clerambault, Clérambault, or Clairambaut, as we shall see.

He had a brother at the time of his post-mortem inventory: Charles-Alexis was an *écuyer* and former *commissaire général et ordonnateur* of the navy in Port-Louis, where he was living.⁹ He was born on 17 July 1701 and was christened in the parish church of Sept-Saints in Brest three days later.¹⁰ One source affirms that he married Hyacinthe de Chappedeleine, the only daughter of Georges de Chappedeleine, seigneur de Bourgeneuf and *commissaire de la marine*, and Anne-Catherine Le Gros, on 28 May 1731.¹¹ He was forced into retirement in 1759 from his position as *commissaire général et ordonnateur*, which he had occupied since 1744.¹² He had at least three children: Françoise-Perrine, who was reportedly born in May 1732; Charles-Raymond, who was the elder son; and Nicolas-Pascal-Jean, who held a special place in the censor's heart, as we shall see.¹³ Clairambault had at least two other siblings who had predeceased him: Marie-Françoise-Charlotte (or Marie-Charlotte), who is believed to have been born on 2 April 1708 and to have married Alain de Nogerée de La Fillière (a *chevalier* of the Ordre royal et militaire de Saint-Louis, a sub-lieutenant of the king's vessels, and a member of the Compagnie des messieurs les gardes marines) following the signing of their marriage contract on 1 August 1735; and Thérèse-Charlotte, who was thought to have been born on 9 January 1711 and to have signed her marriage contract on 14 February 1739 before wedding Louis-François d'Aché de Serquigny, a *capitaine de vaisseaux*.¹⁴ Both girls were described as minors on 4 and 24 April 1731.¹⁵

CIVIL STATE

Celibate.¹⁶ As will be seen, his marital status did not mean that he abstained from at least one sexual relationship.

CAREER

Moved to Paris while he was still young. He may have been summoned to the capital by a solicitous uncle given the fact that he acquired the reversion of the office of genealogist of the Ordres du roi on 31 March 1716, the day following his eighteenth birthday, in succession to Pierre Clairambault.¹⁷ Replacing Joseph-Antoine Cotignon de Chauvry, Pierre had been appointed to that position on 26 August 1698 and took his oath of office the next day.¹⁸ There were three lay Ordres de chevalerie: the Ordre du Saint-Esprit, the Ordre royal et militaire de Saint-Louis, and the Ordre de Saint-Michel. The appointment meant that Nicolas-Pascal was *ipso facto* a member of the Ordre du

Saint-Esprit. The *Almanach royal* lists him for the first time as *généalogiste en survivance* of that body in 1726 under the heading 'Autres Officiers' (p.60) and in 1736 indicates for the first time that 1716 was the year of his appointment by reversion (p.90). The *chevaliers* of that order were automatically members as well of the Ordre de Saint-Michel.¹⁹ In 1698 the position of *généalogiste de l'Ordre du Saint-Esprit* was worth 30,000 *livres*.²⁰ In 1717 Clairambault's salary was 2,700 *livres* with a *gratification* of a further 1,000 *livres*.²¹ Much later, the grateful nephew declared in his will that he would always respect the memory of his uncle Pierre.²²

Collaborated with his uncle Pierre on the preparation of an inventory of the genealogical papers and books of Charles d'Hozier, who had donated them to the king.²³ Considered the most curious collection of its kind in Europe, it was delivered to the Bibliothèque du roi on 16 and 22 November 1717. For his contribution Nicolas-Pascal was paid 3,000 *livres* on the following 23 November. The inventory was completed on 16 February 1720 and received by the library on 2 April of that year.

Accompanied Pierre Clairambault to Versailles on 26 August 1722.²⁴ The senior Clairambault had been summoned in a letter received on the previous day from Cardinal Guillaume Dubois, the principal minister. He presented them to the Regent to whom they gave documents concerning the Ordres du roi. He seemed to wish to inform himself of certain details concerning the Ordre du Saint-Esprit. Clairambault also travelled with his uncle by coach to Rheims on 4 October of that year. The reason for the journey was the coronation of Louis XV, which took place there twenty-one days later. The afternoon following that ceremony the Clairambaults attended a reception given by the King in the cathedral. The next day they were both presented to the monarch and received the honour of being permitted to kiss his hand.

Received on 10 November 1722 the assurance that he would be accorded a pension of 600 *livres* upon the death of Pierre Clairambault.²⁵ On that day his uncle obtained a pension of 2,000 *livres* for his work and a decree promising 600 *livres* for his nephew. Dubois wrote to the relevant authorities in the Regent's name so that the two *brevets* would be issued. On 2 February 1723 the younger Clairambault obtained from the Regent a decree awarding him the pension. At some point he requested that it be increased by 140 *livres*. In addition to his pension of 600 *livres*, it seems that he was paid another 600 *livres* in 1726. The Regency came to an end on 16 February 1723.

Granted the right to assist his uncle more fully in the office of the royal genealogist by Louis XV on 11 May 1728.²⁶ On that day an *arrêt du Conseil du roi* explained that Pierre Clairambault's advanced age no longer allowed him to discharge his duties as he had done in the past. Consequently, he asked the King to order that his nephew be permitted to continue his work and to sign relevant

documents. In so doing, he pointed out that Nicolas-Pascal had been accorded the reversion of the position of genealogist of the Ordres du roi twelve years earlier, that he had been trained in the field, and that he had worked with his uncle on the organisation and conservation of the depository of material which was of such value to the nobility. Louis XV acceded to the request, ordering 'que ledit Sieur Nicolas Paschal Clairambault genealogiste des Ordres en survivance, conjointement & concurremment avec ledit Sieur Clairambault son oncle, continuëra de rassembler lesdits jugemens & papiers, & délivra des expéditions des jugemens de maintenuë de noblesse, condamnations, ou autres actes dont le Sieur Clairambault son oncle a esté chargé'.

Referred to in notarial documents as seigneur de Doulon on 4, 5, and 24 April 1731 and again in church registers on 30 September 1732 and around 8 August 1734.²⁷ It will be recalled that this had been his father's title.

Purchased from Pierre Clairambault the position of *secrétaire du roi près le Parlement de Toulouse* (or more fully, *écuyer conseiller secrétaire du roi maison couronne de France et de ses finances près la chambre de l'édit de Languedoc réunie au Parlement de Toulouse*) on 24 April 1731.²⁸ His salary was 2,196 *livres* 'pour trois quartiers sans aucun retranchement'. The relevant *lettres de provision* were catalogued along with his other papers in his post-mortem inventory.²⁹ As we have seen, Nicolas Clairambault had occupied that office. He had acquired it through *lettres de provision* on 2 September 1695 and had been installed by the Chancellor, Louis Boucherat, on the following day. Pierre Clairambault had obtained it *en survivance*.

May have certified the authenticity of Charles VIII's marriage contract and related papers on 7 September 1736.³⁰ The Clairambault in question did so in his role as genealogist of the Ordres du roi at the request of Louis XV. There is no indication whether this was Pierre or Nicolas-Pascal. Antoine Lancelot of the Collège royal and the Académie royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres also worked on the assignment. The contract was dated 6 December 1491.

Selected to be his residuary legatee and the executor of his will by Pierre Clairambault on 13 April 1739.³¹ The will was prepared on that date.

Contacted by Cardinal André-Hercule de Fleury, Louis XV's principal minister, in a letter dated 12 January 1740.³² The purpose of the missive was to enquire about the health of Clairambault's uncle Pierre. In replying at an unspecified date that his mentor had died on 14 January of that year, Clairambault asked for the prelate's protection.

Indicated as the intended recipient of certain objects in Pierre Clairambault's possession following the latter's recent death in an order issued by Louis XV on 28 January 1740.³³ The King's wishes were that Nicolas-François Menier, a *commissaire au Châtelet de Paris*, visit the home of

DC⁶227, f.240v; AN, MCN, étude XIII, 266, 15 January 1740, testament déposé, f.1r; Anselme de Sainte-Marie, IX (1), 445; Moréri, III, 711; Mézin, p.199. [6]. BNF, Ms fr. 21941, f.4r. [7]. AM Brest, parish registers, parish church of Sept-Saints, 20 July 1701, baptisms; Mézin, p.199; Kerviler, IX, 288; Anselme de Sainte-Marie, IX (1), 445. For the spelling Penfentenio see AN, MCN, étude XIII, 241, 5 April 1731, quit-tance, f.1r (in which the order of her Christian names is reversed, as they are in Kerviler); étude XIII, 263, 28 April 1739, extraits de partage, f.1r; BNF, Ms fr. 32138, p.405-406 (where her forenames are recorded as Guillemette-Françoise). [8]. BNF, Ms fr. 32138, p.405; Anselme de Sainte-Marie, IX (1), 445-46. [9]. AN, MCN, étude CVIII, 553, 6 October 1762, inventaire (hereafter IAD), f.2r. [10]. AM Brest, parish registers. [11]. BNF, Ms fr. 32138, p.406. [12]. Pritchard, p.93. [13]. AN, MCN, étude CVIII, 553, 7 September 1762, dépôt de testa-ment (hereafter T), f.1r-1v; BNF, Ms fr. 32138, p.406. [14]. AN, MCN, étude XIII, 241, 4 April 1731, renonciation, f.1v; étude XIII, 263, 28 April 1739, extraits de partage, f.1r; IAD, f.2r-2v; procuration, 2 October 1762, f.1r in IAD; BNF, Ms fr. 32138, p.405; Anselme de Sainte-Marie, IX (1), 446. [15]. AN, MCN, étude XIII, 241, 4 April 1731, renonciation, f.1v-2r; *extrait des registres du greffe* (f.1r-1v) in AN, MCN, étude XIII, 241, 24 April 1731, traité d'office. [16]. Bluche, 1957, p.9; Mézin, p.199. [17]. Moréri, III, 711; Anselme de Sainte-Marie, IX (1), 446; Colleville, p.63. [18]. Anselme de Sainte-Marie, IX (1), 445; Delisle, II, 19-20 with a transcription of part of the *lettres de provision* which named him to the post. [19]. *Encyclopédie*, V, 973. [20]. Bluche, 1957, p.8. [21]. Du Roure de Paulin, p.84. [22]. T, f.2r. [23]. Du Roure de Paulin, p.84-85; Leprince, 1856, p.373; Delisle, I, 357-58. [24]. AN, M370, dossier X, pièce 1, f.2v-3v. [25]. AN, M370, dossier X, pièce 1, f.3v-4r; pièce 3, f.1r; pièce 4, f.1r. [26]. BNF, Ms fr. 27252, dossier 17506, f.37r-38r. [27]. AN, MCN, étude XIII, 241, 4 April 1731, renonciation, f.1r-1v; étude XIII, 241, 5 April 1731, quittance, f.1r; étude XIII, 241, 24 April 1731, traité d'office, f.1r; Jal, p.388. [28]. AN, MCN, étude XIII, 241, 24 April 1731, traité d'office. [29]. IAD, f.33v. [30]. AN, O¹80, p.473-74. [31]. AN, MCN, étude XIII, 266, 15 January 1740, testament déposé, f.1r. See also AP, DC⁶227, f.241r. [32]. AN, M370, dossier X, pièce 4, f.1r. [33]. AN, O¹84, p.38-39. [34]. AN, O¹84, p.64-65. [35]. Moréri, III, 711. [36]. AN, O¹84, p.64-65. [37]. IAD, f.33v. [38]. AN, M370, dossier X, pièce 4, f.2r. [39]. BNF, Ms fr. 21997, f.40v. [40]. BM, Ms 2760, p.334, 339; BNF, Ms fr. 21997, f.204r. [41]. Hanley, 'Une réclamation'. [42]. AN, MCN, étude XIII, 241, 4 April 1731, renonciation, f.1r-1v; étude XIII, 241, 5 April 1731, quittance, f.1r; étude XIII, 241, 24 April 1731, traité d'office, f.1r; Jal, p.388. [43]. AN, M272, dossier XXX, f.3r. [44]. AN, MCN, étude LIII, 375, 6 December 1761, devis et marchez, f.1r; Y14410, 3 and 4 September 1762, f.1r. [45]. BNF, Ms fr. 22151, f.211r-13r. [46]. BNF, Ms fr. 21998, f.110v. [47]. Delisle, II, 22-23. [48]. Moréri, III, 711. [49]. Delisle, II, 22-24. [50]. Delisle, II, 24-25 with the text of the decrees. [51]. Delisle, II, 333. [52]. BNF, Ms français 22146, f.8r-9v. [53]. AN, O¹102, p.81-82. [54]. IAD, f.33v. [55]. AN, M272, dossier XXX, f.2r, 3r-3v. [56]. AN, M272, dossier XXX, f.3r-3v; MCN, étude XLVIII, répertoire 3, 6 April 1758. [57]. AN, M272, dossier XXX, f.2r-3v. [58]. AN, MCN, étude LIII, 375, 6 December 1761, devis et marchez, f.1r; O¹106, p.137; Y14410, 3 and 4 September 1762, f.1r; T, f.1r; AP, DC⁶244, f.112r; AD Seine-et-Marne, parish registers, Grégy-sur-Yerres, 4 September 1762, burials (hereafter Acte D); IAD, f.2r; procuration, 2 October 1762, f.1r in IAD; AN, MCN, étude LXIX, 700, 24 October 1764, arrêté de compte, f.2v. [59]. T, f.1v. [60]. IAD, f.33v. [61]. *AR*, 1749, p.113; 1750, p.114; 1751, p.114; 1752, p.114; 1753, p.114; 1754, p.114; 1755, p.113; 1756, p.113; 1757, p.114. [62]. AN,

M272, dossier XXX, f.3r. [63]. AN, MCN, étude LXIX, 700, 24 October 1764, arrêté de compte, f.2v; étude LIII, 375, 6 December 1761, devis et marchez, f.1r; O¹106, p.137; T, f.1r; AN, Y14410, 3-4 September 1762; Acte D; IAD, f.2r; procuration, 2 October 1762, in IAD. [64]. AN, MCN, étude CVIII, 530, 18 April 1759, contrat de vente. [65]. For example, AN, O¹106, p.137 (April 1762); MCN, étude LIII, 375, 6 December 1761, devis et marchez, f.1r; AP, DC⁶244, f.112r; AN, Y14410, 3-4 September 1762; T, f.1r; IAD, f.2r; procuration, 2 October 1762, in IAD. [66]. Mézin, p.200-201. [67]. IAD, f.28v-29r. [68]. Bluche, 1957, p.8. [69]. AN, O¹106, p.137; M272, dossier XXX, f.3r; MCN, étude XIII, 241, 5 April 1731, quittance, f.1r; étude CVIII, 530, 18 April 1759, contrat de vente, f.2r; étude LIII, 375, 6 December 1761, devis et marchez, f.1r; étude LXIX, 700, 24 October 1764, arrêté de compte, f.2v; T, f.1r; Acte D; IAD, f.2r; procuration, 2 October 1762, f.1r in IAD. [70]. T, f.1r. [71]. AN, Y14410, 3-4 September 1762, f.1r. [72]. T, f.1r. [73]. Acte D. [74]. AN, Y14410. [75]. Acte D. [76]. T, f.2v. [77]. AN, MCN, étude LXIX, 700, 24 October 1764, arrêté de compte, f.2r. [78]. T. See also AP, DC⁶244, f.112r-12v. [79]. IAD. [80]. T, f.2r. [81]. T, f.1r-1v. [82]. T, f.1r. [83]. T, f.2v.

95. Clairaut, Alexis-Claude

BIRTH AND PARENTS

Believed to have been born in Paris on 7 or 13 May 1713.¹ That would mean that on 17 May 1765 he was fifty-two. His death certificate, however, asserts that he was fifty-one on that day.² As we shall see, other sources claimed that that was not his age when he died.

Father: Jean-Baptiste Clairaut.³ A corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of Berlin, he was a *maître de mathématiques* in Paris.⁴ There he was held in high repute.⁵ Among his students were young military officers.⁶ He published four scientific papers in the volumes of the Académie royale des sciences.⁷ Following his death on 30 August 1767 his post-mortem inventory was undertaken on 10 September of that year.⁸ He had drawn up his will – he was obliged to dictate it because of the poor state of his health – on the previous 6 July, having recommended his soul to God.⁹ Two codicils written in his hand followed on 8 and 13 July 1767. He prepared another will on 31 July of that year.¹⁰

Mother: Catherine Petit.¹¹ On 20 January 1759 the Académie des sciences dispatched two representatives to present its condolences to Clairaut on the death of his mother.¹²

He was the second of at least twenty-one children.¹³ The brother who was next in line is thought to have been born in 1715 or 1716. Also a gifted mathematician, he read a paper on triangles to the Académie des sciences in 1730.¹⁴ As well, he published *Diverses quadratures circulaires, elliptiques et hyperboliques* (Paris, 1731). The book was praised in the Académie des sciences and in the wider world of math-

ematics.¹⁵ Though only sixteen, he is thought to have died the following year. Had he lived, he surely would have emulated his older brother and fulfilled the promise of his youth according to some. Of Clairaut's twenty siblings nineteen predeceased him.¹⁶ The exception was a sister: married to Louis-Nicolas Charpentier, Marie-Etiennette passed away on 24 July 1767.¹⁷

CIVIL STATE

Celibate.¹⁸

CAREER

Nursed by his mother.¹⁹ She had entrusted her first-born to a professional wet-nurse, and the infant had died. Such was her grief that she resolved to breast-feed any other children whom she might have in the future. In the event, this proved to be possible only in the case of the future censor and of the author of the work on quadratures.

Educated at home.²⁰ His father was happy to encourage a certain precociousness in the child prodigy: 'Il montra dès qu'il put parler, qu'il seroit un jour capable des raisonnemens les plus suivis, & son père se fit un plaisir de cultiver des dispositions si marquées'. For example, he learned the alphabet from the figures in Euclid's *Elements*.²¹ His father suspected that he would try to reproduce them and that he would want to know what purpose they served. As a colleague would later write: 'C'étoit une espèce de piège qu'on tendoit à sa curiosité, il réussit parfaitement'. He was given rewards for his efforts when appropriate. By the time he was four he could read, and he could also write fairly well.

Spoke often about the figures in Euclid's book.²² In order to understand that work, however, he had to learn calculus, which was more off-putting than geometric figures, especially for a child. An ingenious method was devised to facilitate the task: 'On imagina pour cela un expédient à peu-près semblable à celui qu'on avoit déjà employé; ce fut de lui faire écrire de suite tous les nombres naturels depuis l'unité jusqu'à un très-grand nombre, dans des cases toutes préparées, en l'avertissant que toutes les fois que les nombres n'étoient exprimés que par des 9, il falloit dans la case suivante mettre autant de 0 qu'il avoit trouvé de 9 & les faire précéder à gauche du chiffre 1; on remplissoit aussi d'avance quelques-unes des cases des multiples des nombres premiers'. In this way his curiosity was aroused, and the answers to his questions taught him the theory of numeration. Through similar techniques he was taught the various elements of arithmetic including multiplication. Thus it was that he learned this branch of mathematics almost without having noticed that he had studied it or at least without having developed any aversion to it. In this connection, he caused two contemporary scientists to recall the feats of the young Blaise Pascal, who revealed

similar precocious talents.²³ As we shall see, Voltaire would compare Clairaut and Pascal.

Revealed a strong fondness for war as he was growing up.²⁴ Enjoying hearing about it, he was frequently able to indulge himself in the company of his father's military students. This predilection would certainly have interfered with his studies had he not been made to understand that mathematics was an indispensable part of the education of anyone wanting to excel in the army. The desire to enlist – which originated in many young people with their wish to end their studies – motivated Clairaut to work more assiduously. For the same reason he spent his free time copying maps. This interest was even used to inspire him to learn Latin. Books on instruments of warfare written in that language were intentionally left out so that he would find them. In order to understand these works he studied the ancient tongue. His primary mathematical preoccupations at the time, algebra and geometry, were regarded by him merely as a preparation for service. In the meantime, even though he took care to say nothing to his son about his intentions, the boy's unmistakable aptitude for mathematics led his father to the decision that he would push him as much as possible so that he would one day become a member of the Académie des sciences.

Introduced to Nicolas Guisnée's *Application de l'algèbre à la géométrie, ou méthode de démontrer par l'algèbre les théorèmes de géométrie & d'en résoudre & construire tous les problèmes* (Paris, 1705) when he was nine years old.²⁵ Having read it the first time with the help of his father, he did so a second and third time on his own. By the end of his third reading he was able to solve most of the problems posed in the book more simply and more elegantly than the author had done. This was an important moment in his intellectual history: 'L'étude commençoit déjà à développer en lui ce génie inventif & lumineux qui faisoit la principale partie de son mérite'. He was so stimulated by his work that he had to be diverted from it for the sake of his health. A colleague would later observe: 'Sa passion pour l'étude, & l'ardeur de son génie, eussent dévoré trop tôt une santé jeune & fragile, si on les eût laissés s'exercer avec continuité, & sans une économie bien entendue'.²⁶ The opportunity to distract him came in 1722.²⁷ Between 12 September and 2 October of that year a spectacle was organised for the benefit of the young Louis XV in a military camp which had been established between Montreuil and Versailles, the headquarters of which was located on a farm called Porché-Fontaine.²⁸ There the siege of a fort was staged. The *Mercure de France* devoted a lengthy article to the event, which attracted large numbers of spectators. The Chevalier Jean Du Lau d'Allemans, a former friend of Nicolas Malebranche and a captain in the king's regiment, was familiar with Clairaut's talents.²⁹ Hence, he arranged for him to witness the display.³⁰ The *chevalier* is mentioned in the report of the *Mercure de France* as a participant in the

Benefitted in his career from his association with Antoine-Louis Chaumont de La Millière and Antoine-Jean Amelot de Chaillou if one source is to be believed.¹³³ The first was *avocat général* in the Cour souveraine de Lorraine et Barrois, *maître des requêtes, intendant des ponts et chaussées, intendant du département des ponts et chaussées et hôpitaux du royaume*, and *intendant des finances*.¹³⁴ The second was *avocat du roi au Châtelet de Paris, maître des requêtes, président au Grand Conseil, intendant de Bourgogne, intendant des finances, and secrétaire d'état de la Maison du roi*.¹³⁵

Seems not to have acted as *médecin de la Cour de Parlement* in Paris. Among those used here only two sources claim that he did so.¹³⁶ They may have been in error: between 1768 and 1790 the *Almanach royal* does not mention him in that connection.¹³⁷ Rather, it informs the public that the position was held by Boyer and Thierry de Bussy in 1768 and by Thierry de Bussy alone from 1769 to 1790. These physicians were the censor Jean-Baptiste-Nicolas Boyer and François Thierry de Bussy

Received a mixed review for his publications from one evaluation made in 1828: 'Sans se faire remarquer par des qualités d'un ordre supérieur, les ouvrages de Colombier méritent d'être lus; ils sont d'un esprit sage et d'un praticien expérimenté'.¹³⁸

Acknowledged in the nineteenth century as a pioneer in the modernisation of the Hôtel-Dieu and several provincial hospitals: 'Avant lui, ces établissements consacrés aux misères humaines étaient plutôt des lieux empestés où l'on entassait des mourants, que des asiles ouverts aux malheureux malades'.¹³⁹

DEATH

Fell ill with a disease which resulted in gangrene.¹⁴⁰ Though unwell, he had insisted on undertaking an unspecified assignment which he had been given according to one report.¹⁴¹ Upon his return home, he passed away. One biographer has ascribed the cause of his final illness to fatigue, a consequence of his unrelenting work.¹⁴² Those in his circle are elsewhere quoted as having put another complexion on his demise: 'Ceux qui l'ont connu particulièrement disent qu'il avait approché trop souvent ses lèvres de la coupe de Circé, et qu'il y puisa la mort'.¹⁴³ Circe was a mythological seductive and cunning enchantress.

Expired in his home in the rue du Roi-de-Sicile in the parish of Saint-Paul in Paris a few moments before twelve thirty in the afternoon on 4 August 1789.¹⁴⁴ He was fifty-two. He had received the sacrament of Extreme Unction.¹⁴⁵ Seals were affixed there on the same day, as well as in his country home in the village of Le-Pré-Saint-Gervais near the capital. That operation was announced in the *Journal de Paris* on 9 August 1789 in a notice which stated that it had also been carried out in an apartment in the rue Saint-Louis in the Ile Saint-Louis (p.993). In Paris

his home adjoined the Hôtel de La Force, to which it belonged. He left his wife a widow.

Interred following his funeral, which was held in his parish church on 5 August 1789, as announced in *Affiches, annonces et avis divers* two days later (p.2282).

His obituary was published in the *Journal de Paris* on 7 August 1789 (p.986).

His post-mortem inventory was undertaken on 10 August 1789.¹⁴⁶ His books are listed (f.26v-27v) and his papers described (f.28r-36v).

POSTERITY

1. Antoinette-Jeanne-Marie Colombier.¹⁴⁷ Like her sister, she was a minor on 10 August 1789. She married the physician Thouret, whom we have met.¹⁴⁸ A protégé of her father, he was also his friend. Along with Doublet he was one of Colombier's assistants as *inspecteur général des hôpitaux civils et des maisons de force du royaume*.¹⁴⁹ She was later described as a 'femme distinguée par son esprit et tous les agréments de son sexe'.¹⁵⁰ They had a son who survived them.

2. Charlotte-Anne Colombier.¹⁵¹ She also wed a prominent doctor, René-Nicolas Dufriche Desgenettes.¹⁵²

SIGNATURE¹⁵³



FURTHER REFERENCES

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NOTES

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99. Condillac, Etienne Bonnot de

BIRTH AND PARENTS

Born on 30 September 1714 and was baptised the following day in the parish church of Saint-Louis in Grenoble.¹

Father: Gabriel Bonnot. Described in the baptismal certificate as a *conseiller secrétaire du roi*, he did not attend his son's christening. He is said to have been born to François Bonnot, a notary, and Anne Allois in 1666 or on 11 June 1675.² In this connection, his death certificate declares that on 21 September 1726 he was approximately sixty years old.³ That statement supports the contention that he was born in 1666. His family is supposed to have originated in Savoulex, a village which became part of Piedmont as a consequence of the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713.⁴ He had at least two sisters (Jeanne and a second who has not been identified) and three brothers (Jean, a notary in Briançon, *receveur des décimes royaux*, and *conseiller procureur du roi des fermes*; Antoine, a notary in Savoulex; and Etienne, who was known as Bonnot de La Tour, and *commis des tailles, conseiller du roi, receveur de l'annuel, trésorier des fortifications du Dauphiné*, and *lieutenant général de l'épée*).⁵ In a baptismal certificate which he signed in his capacity as godfather on 19 December 1694 Gabriel is said to be a *greffier des insinuations* in Vienne and *contrôleur des taxes* in the bailliage of Briançon.⁶ The baptismal certificates of his own

106. *Court de Gébelin, Antoine*

BIRTH AND PARENTS

Said by two friends to have been born in Nîmes in 1725.¹ That information was accepted as fact by several early biographers.² As did his father, Court de Gébelin himself maintained that the year of his birth was 1728.³ In this connection, he appears in a manuscript document entitled 'Rôle des réfugiés français qui sont à Lausanne et dans le baillage en l'année 1740' in which he is reported as being twelve years old.⁴ That claim is consistent with the year of birth which he provided. Two historians in particular have been sceptical, however, arguing that both he and his father shaved years off his age and either that he had in fact come into the world in the rue du Boule in Geneva in February 1719 or that he was born somewhere in the Bas-Languedoc in 1724 or 1725.⁵ He is also reported to have been born in Lausanne in 1727.⁶ As we shall see, his father declared that one of his daughters was born on 17 October 1724 and that she was his oldest offspring. If this is true, barring a premature birth, the earliest possible date on which Court de Gébelin could have been born was 17 July 1729. Given that the family remained in France until 1729, the argument that contends that he was born there is the most persuasive.

Father: Antoine Court. He was born in Villeneuve-de-Berg (Ardèche) to Jean Court, a *marchand cardeur*, and Marie Gébelin, who were illiterate and who had wed in Lagorce (Ardèche) on 15 May 1684 following the preparation of their marriage contract on the preceding 27 April.⁷ Unsure of his date of birth, he affirms in his memoirs that he was born in Villeneuve-de-Berg on 17 March 1695 or 1696. Despite the family's Protestant faith Antoine was baptised a Catholic, as the law required, on 27 March 1695. He had three siblings, all likewise christened in the Catholic Church: Jeanne on 3 October 1688, Pierre on 8 September 1691, and Suzanne on 17 March 1698. One of the pre-eminent European figures in the history of eighteenth-century Protestantism, Antoine, who was a minister, fought indefatigably to restore that religion in France.⁸ He published (all anonymously): *Apologie des protestans du royaume de France sur leurs assemblées religieuses* (Au Désert, 1745); *Réponse des protestans de France à l'auteur d'une lettre imprimée* (Au Désert, 1745); *Mémoire historique de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable au sujet de la religion réformée en plusieurs provinces de France depuis 1744* (n.p., [1751]); *Le Patriote françois et impartial, ou réponse à la lettre de Mr l'évêque d'Agen* (n.p., [1751]); *Lettre d'un patriote sur la tolérance civile des protestans de France et sur les avantages qui en résulteroient pour le royaume* (n.p., 1756); and *Histoire des troubles des Cévennes* (Villefranche, 1760). He died in Lausanne on 12 June 1760.⁹ He was much admired by

Court de Gébelin, as can be seen in two of the latter's remarks: 'Quel modèle il me laisse en tous genres! Que je m'estimerai heureux de l'égalier!'; and 'Nous eûmes l'avantage d'avoir pour père un homme rare, plein de génie et d'élévation, fait, par son éloquence naturelle, par son courage héroïque, par le coup d'œil le plus sûr et le plus imposant, par la présence d'esprit la plus tranquille au milieu des périls les plus éminens, pour entraîner les peuples, pour commander aux nations, et qui, très jeune, avoit rendu des services assez importants à sa patrie, pour que le Grand-Régent daignât lui faire des offres qu'il ne crut pas devoir accepter'.¹⁰

Mother: Etiennette Pagès. She was perhaps born in Uzès (Gard) during the second half of 1698 and is believed to have been married in August 1722.¹¹ She had to abandon her fields and possessions there when, as we shall see, she migrated to Lausanne. Later, Court de Gébelin was apprised of the means by which he could recuperate these effects. He was unable, however, to bring himself to dispossess those who had acquired them. As did certain colleagues with their wives, her husband called her 'ma Rachel'.¹² She is believed to have fallen ill on 14 June 1755 and to have died at Le Timonet, a small property which her husband had purchased near Lausanne, four or five days later.¹³ The famous physician Théodore Tronchin of Geneva was consulted during her final illness.

He had at least nine siblings.¹⁴ On 3 May 1738 his father wrote that on the previous day Court de Gébelin's mother had given birth to their tenth child, a large daughter. Of these children only two sisters are known to us. Her father stated that the eldest of his progeny was referred to as Bellon, that she was born on 17 October 1724, and that she died on 10 August 1731.¹⁵ Thought to have been born in 1727, a second sister was alive on 22 May 1784: Court de Gébelin's sole heir, Marguerite-Pauline was married to Etienne Sollier.¹⁶ They were residing in Geneva on that date. On 14 September 1783 he was a member of the Société académique des enfants d'Apollon.¹⁷ When she wed, Court de Gébelin gave her almost all of his small inheritance.¹⁸ On 20 July 1762 he informed a correspondent with some sadness that he had been to Le Timonet on the previous day to pack his books and other possessions: 'Ne trouvant pas qu'il me convînt d'avoir le Timonet pour indivis, ne trouvant pas d'ailleurs par bien des raisons qu'il me convînt lui-même, j'ai laissé le choix à la famille de mon beau-frère, de le prendre ou de me le laisser sur le pied de 2.500 livres et la moitié de la récolte pendante, et ils l'ont pris à eux'.¹⁹

He took the name Gébelin from that of his paternal grandmother. By as early as 1746 he had done so as a precautionary measure: all French Protestant clergymen adopted *noms de guerre* to protect themselves from the government.²⁰ That was not his only assumed name. For example, around 19 December 1754 a letter was addressed to

him under the name Monsieur Gontrespac.²¹ Once he had moved to Paris he abandoned all other pseudonyms and was known as Court de Gébelin or M. de Gébelin.²²

CIVIL STATE

Celibate.²³

CAREER

Educated in his early years by his father, who did not wish to entrust this important task to others.²⁴ Preceded by his spouse and two of their children, Court abandoned France to settle in Lausanne, arriving in Geneva on his way there on 6 September 1729.²⁵ A victim of considerable persecution in France, he had decided to emigrate.²⁶ That decision provoked the criticism of many French Protestants, who saw the move as an evasion of responsibility. The following year the future censor joined him, having been taken to Lausanne by the elderly preacher Jacques Bonbonnoux, a former Camisard who arrived in Geneva with his charge on 15 September 1730.²⁷ The boy's education was a priority for Court, who called him Toinon.²⁸ Years later, Court de Gébelin would observe of his father: 'Ne pouvant nous laisser du bien, il voulut du moins nous laisser la Science'. He did so at some considerable cost, which involved sacrifices in the family. Between the ages of ten and twelve the boy inspired few hopes in his father according to a friend.²⁹ Another offered an explanation of the reasons for that sense: 'On sera surpris d'apprendre que celui qui a si bien écrit sur la parole, ne parlait pas encore à l'âge de sept ans, & que le Savant qui a étudié à fond un très-grand nombre de langues, & qui a comparé toutes les langues, avait la mémoire la plus ingrate'.³⁰ Yet he was able to overcome these difficulties: 'Mais si la nature lui avait refusé cette délicatesse d'organes qu'elle prodigue inutilement à d'autres hommes, elle lui avait donné en revanche une tête forte, une sagacité prodigieuse, une constance sur-tout dans le travail, qui le faisait arriver à tout par la persévérance'. Someone who came to know him well portrayed the child quite differently.³¹ Describing him as 'doué d'un esprit actif & précoce, d'une conception prompte, d'une forte imagination, d'un jugement juste, d'un discernement exquis, & d'une merveilleuse sagacité', he declared that by the age of twelve the young Court de Gébelin was considered a prodigy: he had learned several languages, possessed a broad knowledge of international geography, was well-versed in the history of many nations, and had mastered music, calligraphy, drawing, and engraving. A more neutral reading of the situation came from the pen of a eulogist: 'Le courage, la patience, l'opiniâtreté de Gébelin applanissoient devant lui les obstacles qui rendent la science d'un accès si difficile'.³² Whatever his natural talents, Court engaged the daughter of a former member of the military who was part of his circle to teach his son.³³ This was Louise de Vignolles de La Valette, who

would later marry Charles de Manoël de Végobre, an important Protestant lawyer whom we shall encounter later. She tutored her pupil with the help of maps, spheres, and globes. Soon he was able to work quite independently. He had an insatiable desire to learn. Thus, he would regularly work sixteen or eighteen hours a day in his youth without any fatigue.³⁴ And he frequently would stay up all night to observe the stars, which propelled him into a state of near ecstasy.³⁵ His favourite pastime was reading, his only toys during his childhood were his books, and the pleasure which he found in their pages was such that it was an act of violence to remove them from him. He had other teachers, who were astonished by most of his questions, so informed were they by reason, order, and subtlety.

Served as secretary to his father perhaps from 1743.³⁶ This was an enormous task since Court had established an action committee of which he was the heart and soul. The work involved a vast correspondence. On 8 November 1761 Court de Gébelin reported that in five weeks he had written letters which consisted of more than 400 pages. Eventually, the post evolved into a more independent one in which he answered missives on his own without consulting his father and in which correspondents addressed their queries and concerns to him directly. In this way he was in regular contact with Protestants in Geneva, Holland, and France.

Confirmed in a public ceremony in the church of Saint-François in Lausanne in 1745.³⁷ Antoine-Noé de Polier de Bottens presided. He was the pastor who would contribute nine audacious articles to Diderot's thirty-five-volume *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris, 1751-1780).³⁸

Employed by Charles-Guillaume-Loys de Bochat as an assistant in the preparation of his three-volume *Mémoires critiques pour servir d'éclaircissements sur divers points de l'histoire ancienne de la Suisse* (Lausanne, 1747-1749).³⁹ A friend wrote of the position: 'Notre jeune homme y fut occupé par lui comme un secrétaire utile, mit au net les manuscrits du professeur et dressa les cartes qui devoient être jointes à l'ouvrage'. It was a formative experience during which Court de Gébelin became acquainted with Celtic: 'Le jeune Court apprit par là à connoître cette langue, et commença à prendre du goût pour les objets qui regardent les antiquités et les origines des langues et des choses'.

Undertook theological studies in Lausanne.⁴⁰ His father had organised a seminary to educate young Frenchmen for the ministry. Instead of enrolling there, Court de Gébelin chose the more prestigious Académie, a school of theology. In order to register he was naturalised. The records of that institution contain this entry dated 17 July 1752: 'Les lettres de naturalisation de Court ont été exhibées; en conséquence de quoi il sera inscrit dans le catalogue comme sujet du pays, avec le nom de bourgeoisie'.⁴¹

Belonged to the Société de l'étoile (or the Ordre de

109. *Crébillon, Prosper Jolyot de*
(dit *Crébillon père*)

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BIRTH AND PARENTS

Baptised in the parish church of Saint-Philibert in Dijon on 15 January 1674.¹ In a letter dated 29 January 1761 Crébillon himself asserted that he had been born at seven o'clock in the evening of 13 January 1674.² As will be seen, the letter in question contains a number of important inaccuracies. Several contemporaries opted for 13 February 1674 as his date of birth.³

Father: Melchior Jolyot (or Joliot). He was a royal notary at the time of Crébillon's christening. In this connection, his papers in the notarial archives in Dijon cover the period from 1673 until 1692.⁴ Crébillon wrote that his father had been born in Nuits to an *officier* of the bailliage.⁵ It is possible that he was the son of Marguerite Germain and Oudin Jolyot, a notary in Nuits from 1632 to 1643 and *huissier* in the Chambre des comptes de Bourgogne et Bresse in Dijon.⁶ In a document which was written between 20 and 23 February 1688 he was said to be approximately thirty-eight years old.⁷ He would have been born then in 1649 or 1650. But on 25 December 1707 his age was recorded as being about sixty.⁸ Should that figure be accurate, he would have been born in 1646 or 1647. By *lettres de provision* of 19 August 1685 Melchior was named *maître clerc en chef et ancien* and *commis greffier* of the Chambre des comptes in Dijon.⁹ On 18 March 1695 he was appointed *greffier en chef ancien, alternatif et triennal* in the same institution, a position which he assumed on 24 July of that year. His death certificate indicates that he was also a *conseiller du roi*.¹⁰ Upon the death of Crébillon's mother his father wed Jeanne Duneau, the daughter of Benigne Duneau of Noyers and Marguerite Moreau, in the parish church of Saint-Philibert in Dijon.¹¹ Undated, in the register the marriage certificate is placed between two documents which bear the dates 20 and 23 February 1688 respectively. He died in Dijon on 24 December 1707 and was buried on the following day in the church in which his second marriage had taken place.¹² Though at one time very rich, he had been reduced to a state of poverty according to a later police report, which claimed that he had been a *greffier au Parlement de Dijon*.¹³ He is identified as Melchior-Marie-Bernard in the baptismal certificates of his children Jean-Baptiste and Marie-Marguerite.

Mother: Henriette Gagnard. The daughter of Hugues Gagnard, a *conseiller du roi* and a *lieutenant général* in Beaune, and Geneviève Bretagne, she was baptised in the parish church of Saint-Pierre in that town on 13 April 1644.¹⁴ There exists a death certificate for a Geneviève Gagnard, wife of M. Jolyot, which reveals that she died on 12 July 1686 and was buried in the parish of Saint-Philibert

in Dijon on the following day.¹⁵ The forename may be erroneous: it appears that it was added later since it is on another hand. In this regard, we know that Henriette Gagnard died between 15 March 1685 and 14 November 1686 since on the first of those dates she was alive on the day of the christening of her daughter Marie-Marguerite and on the second the death certificate of that child asserts that her mother was deceased. No record of Henriette Gagnard's death is to be found in the tables of the archives in Dijon for the period from 1680 to 1689. It will be recalled that her husband remarried in 1688. Crébillon once wrote that he was unaware of the date of his parents' wedding.¹⁶

Crébillon's father is identified as Melchior Jolyot, sieur de Crébillon, in his second marriage certificate. He took the name from the property of Crébillon or Crais Billon, which he acquired on 3 October 1686 near Brochon (Côte-d'Or), a village located a short distance from Dijon.¹⁷ The first surviving document in which the future censor adds de Crébillon to his name may be one dated 15 February 1707.¹⁸ The second element is lacking in documents from as late as 31 January of that year. In the annual lists of censors published in the *Almanach royal* he appears as Crebillon from 1742 to 1746 and as De Crebillon from 1747 to 1762 with the accent lacking in all cases.

He had at least thirteen siblings, six brothers and seven sisters, all of whom were christened in Dijon.¹⁹ Unless otherwise stated their baptisms took place in the parish church of Saint-Philibert as follows: Jean-Baptiste on 20 May 1668; Marie on 12 May 1669; Anne on 17 January 1671; Mariane on 5 March 1672; Louis on 7 November 1675; Jean on 24 January 1677; Pierre-Jean on 27 May 1678; Guillaume in the parish church of Saint-Jean on 14 August 1679; his twin sister Claude in the same church on 14 August 1679; Ursule (following her provisional baptism administered in her home the previous day) on 19 January 1681 in the parish church of Saint-Jean in which her funeral was held two days later; Marie on 24 June 1682, only to be interred two days later; Melchior-François on 19 October 1683; and Marie-Marguerite on 15 March 1685, she being buried in the parish church of Saint-Jean on 14 November 1686. For whatever reason Crébillon wrote with considerable inaccuracy on 29 January 1761 that his mother had given birth to three daughters followed by seven sons of whom he was the last.²⁰ He added that all of his siblings had died without issue and 'sans avoir aucun titre qui pût les distinguer'.

CIVIL STATE

Married.

Spouse: Marie-Charlotte Péaget.²¹ She was born as her parents' first child in Paris on 24 December 1685 and was baptised three days later.²² Having died in the place Maubert on 12 February 1711, she was put to rest on the

following day in the vault of the church of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont in Paris in the presence of thirty priests.²³ She had suffered from a pulmonary condition for a considerable time.²⁴ According to one historian she had five siblings, who were born between January 1688 and February 1693.²⁵ Among them was Jeanne-Rosalie, who died in the parish of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet in Paris on 14 May 1775, leaving her nephew Claude-Prospere Jolyot de Crébillon as her lone heir.²⁶ Of the other four at least one was a brother: Crébillon's death certificate was signed by his nephew, Léandre Péaget, a *docteur régent* in the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Paris and a former *médecin du roi*.²⁷

Father: Claude-François Péaget.²⁸ The son of Hughes Péaget and Estienne Pol, he was a *maître apothicaire* who lived in the place Maubert in Paris at the time of his daughter's wedding, having moved there from the rue de Bièvre. Crébillon declared that his father-in-law was from Dole (Jura).²⁹ Péaget's marriage certificate states that his deceased parents had lived in the parish of Saint-Roch in Paris.³⁰ It would appear to have been he who served as godfather to Crébillon's son on 14 February 1707: that figure was Claude-François Péaget, *maître apothicaire* and *juge consul*.

Mother: Anne-Claude Gamard.³¹ She was the daughter of Charles Gamard, also a *maître apothicaire*, and Anne Arnaut, both of whom had died by the time she married in the parish church of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont at an undetermined date. According to Crébillon she came from a very ancient family which was well-known in literature, medicine, and pharmacology.³²

The evidence concerning the banns is contradictory. The register of banns declares that they were read in the parish church of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont on 23 January 1707 while the marriage certificate states that they were published in the parishes of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont and Saint-Sulpice on 30 January 1707.³³ But both agree that a dispensation was secured for the two remaining banns, according to the first source on 24 January and according to the second on 30 January of that year. With the permission of the priest of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont the couple repaired to the country for their wedding. It took place in the parish church of La Villette on 31 January 1707.³⁴ It has been suggested that the reason was that the bride did not wish to marry in her own parish because she was more than eight months pregnant.³⁵ Indeed, she would give birth to their son fourteen days later. In a letter of 29 January 1761 Crébillon altered the date of both his marriage and the birth of his first son, advancing the one to 1705 and the other to 1706, presumably to render the situation more respectable.³⁶ If credence is to be lent to statements made following his death, he was passionately in love with his bride and still loved her tenderly at the time of her death.³⁷

Crébillon would never remarry despite the fact that he lived for more than fifty-one years after his wife's demise.

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C (Marine): Personnel.
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H: Administrations locales et comptabilités diverses.
LH: Grande Chancellerie de la Légion d'honneur.
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