

The Saint-Aubin *Livre de caricatures*
Drawing satire in eighteenth-century Paris

Edited by

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and

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Cover illustration: Detail from 'Emmailloté qui emmaillotte. Le Cardinal de Bernis', and 'La plaisanterie n'est pas sans fondement', from Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, *Livre de caricatures tant bonnes que mauvaises*. Waddesdon, The Rothschild Collection (The National Trust), acc. no. 675.280 and 675.281.



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4. War, diplomacy and faction

JOHN SHOVLIN

Like many of his contemporaries, Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin sustained a lively interest in international affairs, and in the fortunes of French arms and diplomacy. Over a dozen images in the *Livre de caricatures* refer to such themes, running from the late 1740s through to the early 1760s. While a number of these images are obscure to the point of inscrutability, others comment discernibly on some of the principal events and personalities shaping the external politics of the French monarchy. These representations cluster into two linked groupings, one focusing on the end of the War of Austrian Succession (1741-1748), and the second on the era of the Seven Years War (1756-1763).

It is difficult to be sure whether Charles-Germain is the author of all these drawings. The representations tied to events in the late 1740s are in 'Style A', which differs from those linked to the diplomacy and warfare of the later period.¹ The former are cruder in execution and aesthetic, more burlesque in their themes. The images that refer to the Seven Years War era are lighter in outline, more subtle in coloration, and, politically, more acerbic in tone. The captioning further complicates questions of authorship and meaning. Captions were added to many images by Charles-Germain, though not necessarily at the time a drawing was created. The inscriptions attributable to Pierre-Antoine Tardieu, obviously, were added much later, while other, unknown hands also participated in captioning images, probably while the *Livre* was still in Charles-Germain's possession. One can imagine the book being passed from hand to hand with readers enriching or complicating its many jokes by adding their own commentaries, or perhaps even by altering images. New purposes, or meanings, were almost certainly conferred on drawings by such later inscriptions or additions. Yet with all the complexity of these questions of authorship and meaning, I will argue, the *Livre de caricatures* articulates a consistent point of view on military and diplomatic affairs.

It is hardly surprising that the author or authors of the *Livre* should have been concerned with such themes. War, diplomacy and inter-

1. See the discussion on Style A in the article by Colin Jones and Emily Richardson in the present volume, and also on issues of authorship, esp. p.32-36, 43-44, 49-52.

national affairs were central topics of interest for literate eighteenth-century Parisians, who had plenty of opportunity to read about and engage with such weighty matters. The monarchy produced propaganda to justify its foreign policies or to criticise its international rivals. In the run-up to the Seven Years War, for example, the Foreign Ministry sponsored the publication of materials to persuade a domestic and European public of the justice of French pretensions in America.² International affairs made up a prominent portion of the news recounted by the *Gazette de France*, and by the francophone journals produced in the Low Countries, which kept affluent Parisians politically informed.³ In wartime especially, rumours, *bons mots* and songs dealing with the successes and failures of generals and ministers circulated continuously in the streets and cafés of the city.⁴ While there is much in the *Livre de caricatures* that is idiosyncratic, at least some of its commentary on foreign and military affairs channels ideas, language and symbols that were widely shared.

Much of this gossipy material emanated directly from Versailles, where courtiers disseminated it as a weapon in the factional competition for favour, patronage and power that defined the politics of the court.⁵ I will make the case that such factionalism shaped the perspective on military and diplomatic affairs offered in the *Livre*. Its author and his collaborators offer a mordant commentary on particular alignments influential in the making of French policy between the late 1740s and the period of the Seven Years War. Factions at court and in the administration were not completely stable groupings, but formed and re-formed over time. It was thus a shifting cast of characters that were the butt of the *Livre's* wit. A series of images pillory Maurice de Saxe, the most successful general of the late 1740s, together with his associates the Pâris brothers, major financiers and war contractors. A Pâris protégé, Jeanne-Antoinette d'Etiolles, marquise de Pompadour, became the mistress of Louis XV

2. David A. Bell, 'Jumonville's death: war propaganda and national identity in eighteenth-century France', in *The Age of cultural revolutions: Britain and France, 1750-1820*, ed. Colin Jones and Dror Wahrman (Berkeley, CA, 2002), p.33-61; John Shovlin, 'Selling American empire on the eve of the Seven Years War: the French propaganda campaign of 1755-1756', *Past and present* 206 (2010), p.121-49.
3. Christophe Cave and Denis Reynaud, 'L'année 1748 dans la *Gazette de France*', in *1748, l'année de l'Esprit des lois*, ed. Catherine Larrère (Paris, 1999), p.19-30; Jeremy D. Popkin, 'The *Gazette de Leyde* under Louis XVI', in *Press and politics in pre-revolutionary France*, ed. Jack R. Censer and Jeremy D. Popkin (Berkeley, CA, 1987), p.75-132.
4. Tabettha L. Ewing, 'Rumor and foreign politics in Louis XV's Paris during the War of Austrian Succession', doctoral dissertation, Princeton University, 2005; Arlette Farge, *Subversive words: public opinion in eighteenth-century France* (University Park, PA, 1995), p.153-61.
5. J. Popkin, 'Pamphlet journalism at the end of the Old Regime', *Eighteenth-century studies* 22 (1989), p.351-67.

in the mid-1740s, helping to cement the influence of her protectors and that of Saxe. By the outbreak of the Seven Years War, she had emerged as the most important power broker at court, the centre of a remodelled faction that included ministers, generals and courtiers. This grouping and its handling of military and diplomatic business was the main target of Saint-Aubin's derision in his commentaries on the Seven Years War.⁶ To read Saint-Aubin's representation of foreign affairs as an echo of factional politics is not, of course, to exhaust the significance of these complex images. The visual and verbal repertoire on which he draws emanates not from the court but from that unique urban, familial and artistic milieu in which he developed as an artist. But it is his choice of targets, and the potential significance of such choices, that will principally concern us here.

The range of subjects treated in the volume bolsters the case for a factional reading of the outlook it expressed. A number of historians have argued recently that an emergent national consciousness shaped the way literate French men and women viewed foreign affairs in the 1750s and 1760s.⁷ The French public viewed the Seven Years War, in particular, as a struggle engaging the rights and interests of the nation, and calling for the patriotic participation of 'citizens' in the war effort. Such a patriotic consciousness is absent from the *Livre*; the nation does not figure as a category in Charles-Germain's vision. Moreover, though it sometimes draws on currents of popular imagery or speech, the *Livre* cannot simply be read as a commentary on subjects preoccupying public opinion. It does not even touch on the themes that generated the most public interest in the 1740s and 1750s: the expulsion of Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1748, as a condition of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle; the successful French invasion of Minorca in 1756; or the controversy over the killing of the French officer Joseph Coulon de Jumonville by British-American troops in the Ohio territory in 1754.⁸ In this respect, the *Livre* says as much by its silences and omissions as it does by its sardonic representations.

To interpret the *Livre* as an articulation of a pointedly factional politics is to assume that Charles-Germain was close enough to the world

6. On Mme de Pompadour, see the article by Humphrey Wine in the present volume.
7. D. A. Bell, *The Cult of the nation in France: inventing nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, MA, 2001); Edmond Dziembowski, *Un Nouveau Patriotisme français, 1750-1770: la France face à la puissance anglaise à l'époque de la Guerre de Sept Ans*, SVEC 365 (1998).
8. On Bonnie Prince Charlie, see Thomas E. Kaiser, 'The drama of Charles Edward Stuart: Jacobite propaganda and French political protest, 1745-1750', *Eighteenth-century studies* 30 (1997), p.365-81. Many of the materials produced to celebrate the conquest of Minorca were reproduced in *Recueil général des pièces, chansons et fêtes données à l'occasion de la prise du Port-Mahon, précédé du Journal historique de la conquête de Minorque* (n.p., 1757). On the Jumonville theme, see Bell, 'Jumonville's death'.

of Versailles both to understand its divisions and to be engaged by them. The first proposition is easier to substantiate than the second. As a successful embroiderer, Saint-Aubin lived and worked in close proximity to the court. On his death in 1786, he was owed money for designs he had created by, among others, the comtesse de La Marck, the duchesse de Fronsac, the duchesse de Fitz-James, the baronne de Montboissier and the marquise de Feuquières.⁹ He was patronised both by Pompadour and the queen in the 1750s. Links tying the Saint-Aubin family to the aristocratic world were long-standing. From 1692 until his death in 1734, Charles-Germain's grandfather had been part of the household of the Hôtel de Lesdiguières, serving as concierge and embroiderer first to the duchesse de Lesdiguières (niece of the cardinal de Retz), and subsequently to the duc de Villeroy.¹⁰ Saint-Aubin was close enough to the world of the court to be aware of its struggles; he was sophisticated enough to understand how policy was really made. But it is unlikely that he was actually part of any faction – he was too marginal to the world of high politics to have occupied such a role. I suggest, rather, that he was a spectator to the politics of faction, and that his vision, and sympathies, were coloured by what he saw.

Where military and diplomatic affairs are concerned, in terms of factional alignments, there are three ways to explain the *Livre's* choice of targets. First, one might argue that hostility to the marquise de Pompadour and her following is the defining feature of the album's political vision. She after all is the common figure in the two factions that are ridiculed. However, Pompadour does not appear in any explicit way to be a butt of the caricatures dealing with the end of the War of Austrian Succession. Moreover, though she comes in for a good deal of ribbing in the images dealing with the later period, the *Livre* is rarely as vitriolic about her as it is about some of her allies.¹¹ A second option is that Charles-Germain was sympathetic to the faction of the day that centred on the queen, the dauphin and the comte d'Argenson. But for reasons I will touch on below, I consider this unlikely. Putting to one side the possibility that he was, as John Rogister argues in this volume,¹² simply anti-establishment, this leaves as a preferred option that Charles-Germain was broadly sympathetic to the claims of a third faction, that of Louis-François de Bourbon, prince de Conti. Conti was locked in rivalry with Maurice de Saxe in the late 1740s, and was the major loser in the ascent of Pompadour's party in the 1750s. There is thus some

9. Advielle, *Renseignements intimes*, p.21.

10. K. de Beaumont, 'Reconsidering Gabriel de Saint-Aubin: the biographical context for his scenes of Paris', in *Gabriel de Saint-Aubin* (exhibition catalogue), p.19-47 (20).

11. As Humphrey Wine also notes in his chapter in the present volume, p.190.

12. See above, p.65.

resonance between his factional position and the perspective of the *Livre*. Still, any conclusion that Saint-Aubin actively supported Conti's party must remain tentative, as only the choice of targets, rather than any more direct evidence, points in this direction.

The late 1740s

The first international event on which the album comments is the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, signed in 1748, which brought to an end the War of Austrian Succession. In the course of the conflict, early French successes had turned to dust. Colonial reverses, and military stalemate in Italy and Germany, marked the middle years of the war. It was only in the last phase, in the Austrian Low Countries, that French arms, under the leadership of Maurice de Saxe, scored a series of major victories, gaining complete control of a territory even Louis XIV had not conquered, and threatening to overwhelm the Dutch Republic into the bargain. Coming on the heels of such impressive successes, the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle proved a bitter disappointment. Under the terms of the treaty, Louis XV renounced all the territories his armies had overrun in the Low Countries. He agreed to expel the son of the exiled pretender to the British throne, Charles Edward Stuart, who was regarded as a hero in France. The only tangible benefit Louis secured in exchange was the return of Cape Breton Island, and the great fortress of Louisbourg, which had been lost to British-American forces in 1745. The treaty catalysed a flood of domestic criticism. 'De toutes les puissances belligérantes, nous aurons le moins gagné à cette guerre qui nous coûte des sommes immenses et la perte de trois à quatre cent mille hommes', complained the Parisian lawyer and diarist Edmond-Jean-François Barbier. He reported that the expression 'bête comme la paix' was current in Paris. Historians see the treaty as a critical turning point in the fortunes of the monarchy, when for the first time Louis XV became genuinely and widely unpopular.¹³

The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle is almost certainly the subject of paired images at 675.138 and 675.139 of the Saint-Aubin volume (see fig.4.1, p.101). Labelled 'Propositions de paix', the figure at 675.138, wearing a green jacket and breeches lowered to reveal his backside, looks cheekily

13. Edmond-Jean-François Barbier, *Chronique de la Régence et du règne de Louis XV (1718-1763), ou Journal de Barbier*, 8 vols (Paris, 1857-1866), vol.4, p.309, 350. Reactions to the peace are explored in Suzanne Cornand, 'La fin de la Guerre de Succession d'Autriche: le témoignage de Barbier', in *1748, l'année de l'Esprit des lois*, ed. C. Larrère, p.31-39; R. Darnton, 'Policing writers in Paris circa 1750', *Representations* 5 (1984), p.1-31; Ewing, 'Rumor and foreign politics in Louis XV's Paris'; Farge, *Subversive words*, p.153-61; Kaiser, 'The drama of Charles Edward Stuart'.

over his shoulder at the character on the facing page. Standing slightly stooped, he gestures towards his bare buttocks. The facing image, identified in Charles-Germain's hand as the 'Statouder des Païs Bas', is a cartoonish seventeenth-century Calvinist, attired almost entirely in black, wearing a high, broad-brimmed puritan hat and a white *rabat*. The stadholder sports prominent spectacles and carries a clyster syringe, as if preparing to deliver an enema to his counterpart on the opposite page. Taken together, the images offer a visual quotation from a print by the celebrated seventeenth-century Lorraine artist Jacques Callot in which two grotesque fairground dancers confront one another in nearly identical poses.¹⁴ (That the artist was familiar with the Callot print is further suggested by another figure in the *Livre de caricatures*, a farting man at 675.198 in a stance virtually identical to one of the two Callot characters and reminiscent of the green-clad man at 675.138.) The figure on the left in the Callot print is a soldier, suggesting a similar identification for the figure at 675.138. The evocation of Callot may also be intended to call to mind the celebrated *Grandes misères de la guerre*, a series of eighteen prints Callot published in 1633 offering an anti-heroic vision of military life. Either way, the Callot subtext points to the theme of war, a conclusion the captions bear out.

The stadholder figure is presumably intended to caricature William IV of Orange, who was swept to power in the United Provinces in a popular reaction to the French invasion of 1747. The stadholderate, which embodied both military command and some of the powers of a civilian executive, had been in abeyance in most of the Dutch provinces for forty-five years, since the death of William III. Orangists hoped that the re-establishment of the office would rescue the republic, but William IV was not a ruler in the mould of his great ancestors, and the demoralised and financially exhausted Dutch had to sue for peace the following year. A figure strikingly similar to the stadholder appears earlier in the *Livre* at 675.88, this time as the travesty of a knight, riding a donkey, and offering his heart and a dish of pears (or oranges?) to a lady on the facing page (see fig.4.2, p.101). The said lady, with her large hands and rough features, might even be a man in drag. If one had to speculate on a political subtext, the image might refer to William IV's political courtship of George II. The future stadholder married the British king's daughter,

14. The print in question is no.20 from Callot's *Balli di Sfessania*, a series of twenty-four prints widely reproduced in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. See Donald Posner, 'Jacques Callot and the dances called Sfessania', *Art bulletin* 59 (1977), p.203-216. I owe this insight to the work of Juliet Carey, Colin Jones and Emily Richardson on the electronic catalogue of the *Livre de caricatures* at the Waddesdon Manor website, <http://waddesdon.org.uk/collection/special-projects/st.-aubin>.



Figure 4.1: Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, *Livre de caricatures tant bonnes que mauvaises*, 'Propositions de paix', 1748?, and 'Statouder des Païs Bas', 1748?. Both watercolour, ink and graphite, 18.7 × 13.2cm (675.138 and 675.139).



Figure 4.2: Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, *Livre de caricatures tant bonnes que mauvaises*, 'Valet de chambre du Jour de l'an', c.1740-c.1775, and 'L'évantai', c.1740-c.1775. Both watercolour, ink and graphite, 18.7 × 13.2cm (675.88 and 675.89).

Anne, cementing a political alliance between the Orangist party and the British Crown.¹⁵

If the stadholder figure at 675.139 represents William IV of Orange, as Charles-Germain suggests, one way to read the green-clad character to his left is as a cocksure *maréchal de Saxe*, whose confidence that he can dictate humiliating peace terms to the Dutch turns out to be misplaced. The 'peace proposals' represented in the figure's gesture towards his own bare buttocks are void of substance, indeed deliberately insolent. Saxe, for his part, offered no terms to the Dutch, representing the threat of continued warfare rather than a negotiated end to the conflict. Taken together, the pair of images may be read as capturing a reversal whereby it is the weak and ridiculous stadholder who turns out to have the last laugh at Saxe's expense. The *maréchal* had envisioned establishing the Austrian Low Countries as a principality for Louis XV's daughter, Mme Elisabeth, and her husband Don Felipe, a denouement that would have redounded to his own glory. Instead, Louis XV renounced all of Saxe's hard-won conquests, returning the Low Countries to Austrian sovereignty at Aix-la-Chapelle.¹⁶ In the final analysis, the only real beneficiary of Saxe's efforts was William IV. It was the triumph of French arms, and the panic it incited in the Dutch Republic, that brought him to power in 1747.

A series of other representations in the *Livre de caricatures* may be connected to Maurice de Saxe and to the aftermath of the War of Austrian Succession. The *maréchal's* death in December 1750 may be the subject of 675.217, which depicts two bizarre pall-bearers carrying a bust crowned with laurels, mounted on a pole above an armoured breastplate. The image probably evokes Maurice Quentin de La Tour's famous 1747 portrait of Saxe, in which the general is depicted wearing such a breastplate. Flames lick at the feet of the pall-bearers, perhaps suggesting that Saxe is bound for hell.¹⁷ The images immediately following the Saxe-stadholder pairing present, on facing pages, a figure carrying a tray covered with hot cakes or loaves, and a homely fellow seated in front of a barrel, a pipe in one hand, and a tankard in the other (675.140-675.141, see fig.4.3, p.104). Visually, both figures recall the 'cris de Paris' pictorial genre – popular representations depicting street traders. Underneath the first, in an unknown hand, is the inscription 'Il devint ministre des

15. It is also possible that the visual links between 675.88 and the image at 675.139 once pointed towards a different, apolitical conjuncture between the two representations, which a subsequent redesignation of 675.139 as the stadholder of the Netherlands disrupted.

16. Jean-Pierre Bois, *Maurice de Saxe* (Paris, 1992), p.397-98.

17. I am here following the suggestions in the curatorial commentary at <http://waddesdon.org.uk/collection/special-projects/st-aubin>.

affaires étrangères'. Below, in another hand, is inscribed the name Menzikof, a reference to Alexandr Menshikov (1673-1727), the favourite of Peter the Great who by some accounts came to the tsar's notice while selling pies on the streets of Moscow. I suspect that the Menzikof reading is a later interpolation, possibly inspired by Voltaire's *Histoire de la Russie sous Pierre le Grand*, or by François de La Harpe's 1775 theatre production, *Menzikoff, ou les Exilés*. An alternative reading of these images, given their placement, is that they represent the famous Pâris brothers, the great war contractors of the Austrian Succession conflict, and suppliers of credit, munitions and victuals to the armies of Louis XV. (Images 675.191 and 675.344 may also target the Pâris.) They can plausibly be seen as the power behind the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1748. It was through their influence that René-Louis de Voyer, marquis d'Argenson, was replaced as Foreign Minister in 1747; the new minister, Louis-Philogène de Brulart, marquis de Puyzieulx, was reputed to be their candidate.¹⁸ The figure on the right in 675.141, with his tankard, pipe and barrel, evokes an innkeeper – by common notoriety the social background of the Pâris brothers. The Pâris were closely linked to the marquise de Pompadour: her father had worked in their financial empire, her mother had once been the lover of Pâris de Montmartel, and their influence reached its apogee when she became the royal mistress. The Pâris, together with the maréchal de Saxe and Pompadour, formed the core of a party contending against factions led by the prince de Conti (Saxe's main competitor for military command during the war) and a second group linked to queen Maria Leszczyńska and the dauphin.¹⁹

The image immediately preceding the 'Propositions de paix', together with a series of linked figures, may also evoke Maurice de Saxe and the immediate aftermath of the war. Titled by an unknown hand 'Il ne fut pas toujours si bien monté', the image (675.137, fig.2.3, p.60) depicts a vaguely Ottoman figure riding an ostrich-like bird while beating kettle drums. He wears an exotic red, green and white tunic, and a hat trimmed with white fur; a long narrow moustache graces his upper lip. (A later hand identifies the figure as Marc-René de Voyer, comte d'Argenson, Minister of War from 1743 to 1757, but this may be a later interpolation, as I suggest below.) Similar figures riding large birds, also dressed in red and green, recur throughout the first third of the *Livre*. A case can be made that this odd parade of riders references, in burlesque fashion, the personal regiment of the maréchal de Saxe, the Saxe-Volontaires.

18. Bois, *Maurice de Saxe*, p.396.

19. Bois, *Maurice de Saxe*, p.394; Bernard Hours, *Louis XV et sa cour: le roi, l'étiquette et le courtisan* (Paris, 2002), p.210-14.



Figure 4.3: Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, *Livre de caricatures tant bonnes que mauvaises*, 'Il devint ministre des affaires étrangères', c.1740-c.1775, and 'Troquons de fumée', c.1740-c.1775. Both watercolour and ink, 18.7 × 13.2cm (675.140 and 675.141).



Figure 4.4: Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, *Livre de caricatures tant bonnes que mauvaises*, 'L'exterminateur qui fut envoyé en l'an ... pour chasser Heliodore du temple &c', c.1740-c.1775. Watercolour, ink and graphite, 18.7 × 13.2cm (675.12).

Created in 1743, the unit was composed half of uhlans, half of dragoons, and modelled on light-cavalry regiments of Polish and Hungarian origin that Saxe had seen and admired in eastern Europe. With a view to making the regiment as visually striking as possible, Saxe recruited troops from central and south-eastern Europe (the lieutenant colonel was a Muslim), together with a large number of black soldiers from Africa and the Caribbean. The chief colours worn by the regiment were green and red. The dragoons wore helmets trimmed with white fur, while the uhlans wore white turbans. All of Paris had an opportunity to view the Saxe-Volontaires at a grand military parade and exercises held on 28 November 1748 on open fields east of the Bois de Boulogne to honour the *maréchal de Saxe*. This kind of military review was unusual in the capital, where only the Swiss guards and the Gardes françaises were typically stationed (and inspected once a year by the king on the *plaine des Sablons*). An immense crowd turned out to view what must have been a spectacular civic occasion.²⁰

At the risk of an over-literal reading of these images, I would suggest that the grotesque riders of ostriches, pigs and diminutive horses – most clad in green and red – are a parodic gesture towards the fierce and magnificent Saxe-Volontaires. They would certainly have elicited such a comparison for many Parisians in the late 1740s. Take the image at 675.12 (see fig.4.4, p.104), which depicts a figure with a black face and a moustache, clad in a green tunic with red skirts and a furry hat with red trim and a feather. He rides a pig, and the parasol, broom and ladle he wields parody the lances, sabres and pistols of the uhlans and dragoons. The mustachioed rider of a pig at 675.32, clad in red and green, an odd furry hat atop his head and carrying a bow and arrows, might also parodically refer to one of Saxe's troops. His companion on the facing page, again in red and green, wears a black and yellow striped hat – a pattern prominent in the *maréchal's* coat of arms. A black-faced ostrich rider wearing red, sitting on top of a herald dressed in green (675.69, fig.16.9b, p.371), or a vaguely Turkish red-and-green-clad rider (675.84) may also be viewed as gestures towards the Saxe-Volontaires.

The reaction to the closing of the War of Austrian Succession and the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle embodied in these images is not the typical one of patriotic disappointment and exasperation at Louis XV, uncovered by historians who have examined the popular response to these events. The stance the artist takes is mock-heroic; the tribulations of Saxe are a subject for ridicule rather than sympathy; and the *maréchal's* splendid honour guard is travestied as a parade of pygmies and buffoons. It is

20. Bois, *Maurice de Saxe*, p.423-24, 430-35; René Chartrand, *Louis XV's army*, vol.4: *Light troops and specialists* (Oxford, 1997), p.16. For other comment on 675.137, see above, p.59.

tempting to interpret all this in factional terms. As I have noted, Saxe was at the heart of a party at the French court in 1747-1748 that stood in opposition to the queen's party and the Conti faction. The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had been a particularly bitter pill for the former because of their strong sympathies for the Stuarts (Charles Edward's mother was a countrywoman and friend of the queen).²¹ Conti, on the other hand, was inveterately hostile to his military rival, Saxe, and to the politics of rapprochement between France and Saxony that the *maréchal* stood for politically. Conti hoped to use Louis XV's influence to have himself installed as elective king of Poland when the throne next became vacant. But the marriage between the dauphin and Marie-Josèphe of Saxony – an alliance Saxe helped to broker – could be expected to win French support for keeping the throne of Poland in the family of the elector of Saxony, the dauphine's father and Maurice's half-brother.

That the sympathies of the author(s) of the Saint-Aubin *Livre* lay with the faction of the queen, the dauphin and the comte d'Argenson seems unlikely. Charles-Germain's religious politics were radically at variance with those of the queen's party, which were coloured by sympathy for *dévo*t positions in the struggles between the Parlement of Paris and the Catholic hierarchy over the rights of Jansenists to receive the sacraments, and subsequently in the battle between the Parlement and the Jesuits. The sensibility of the *Livre* is the very reverse of *dévo*t orthodoxy. In one irreverent swipe at both the Church and the pious dauphin, the artist comments on the death of the prince in a drawing of a priest with donkey ears delivering a funeral oration while sitting astride a large dolphin (675.375, fig.5.13, p.145). (Note that, although the representation of d'Argenson as a boot cleaner in 675.121, fig.2.2, p.60, might seem to clinch the case for a non-*dévo*t reading, I am sceptical about the identification of the Minister of War both here and at 675.137, fig.2.3, p.60. Charles-Germain's captioning of the image at 675.121 – 'Pitagorre dit de fort belles choses sur les nombres' and 'Il decrotoit a la porte d'un ministre' – are enigmatic to say the least. The image most likely did not originally represent d'Argenson, but assumed this meaning with the addition of a figure of a kneeling *parlementaire*, probably at the moment the Parlement was exiled by *lettres de cachet* in 1753. The caption suggesting that the ostrich-riding figure at 675.137 is d'Argenson – 'et maintenant il est Ministre de la Guerre 1753' – is likely based on the reinterpretation of 675.121, and on the *renvoi* originally linking the two images. It is unlikely, in my view, that the figure at 675.137 was intended to represent d'Argenson at the outset.²²

21. Kaiser, 'The drama of Charles Edward Stuart'.

22. See John Rogister's discussion of these lined images in the present volume, p.59.

The 1756 alliance

Maurice de Saxe died in 1750 and, by the time the next war loomed, it was the marquise de Pompadour who had emerged as Conti's chief rival.²³ In the early 1750s, the prince served as an unofficial advisor to Louis XV on foreign affairs, and with the monarch's approval directed a secret diplomatic network aimed at placing himself on the Polish throne.²⁴ From 1751, Pompadour, too, increasingly sought a role in the making of foreign policy. If she could make herself indispensable in this arena, she would secure her position at court, made vulnerable by the cessation of her physical relationship with the king in the early 1750s. By 1755 the marquise had achieved her goal; all the ambassadors, except the papal nuncio and the Prussian minister, paid her court.²⁵ The influence both Pompadour and Conti had acquired over foreign policy, and the competition between them for the king's ear, was recognised by foreign courts. When Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz, the Austrian Foreign Minister, wished to open negotiations for an alliance with France in 1755, he directed his ambassador, Georg-Adam von Starhemberg, to approach either Conti or the marquise, as he saw fit. Starhemberg believed Pompadour was in the better position to be helpful, and the Franco-Austrian alliance negotiated by him and Pompadour's protégé, François-Joachim de Pierre, abbé de Bernis, carried her imprimatur and copper-fastened her position at Versailles. Conti was kept in the dark about the negotiations with Austria. Such a pact might be expected to undercut the diplomatic arrangements elaborated to advance his candidature to the Polish throne. According to the comte de Broglie, a close ally of Conti, the new alliance 'détruisait en un jour son travail de douze années'.²⁶ He became estranged from the king in the months following the signing of the new treaty, embraced the side of the Parlement of Paris in a constitutional conflict with the Crown, and perhaps even fomented rebellion against his royal cousin.²⁷ His final break with Louis occurred

23. On the enmity between Pompadour and Conti, see René-Louis de Voyer de Paulmy, marquis d'Argenson, *Journal et mémoires du marquis d'Argenson*, ed. E. J. B. Rathery, 9 vols (Paris, 1859-1867), vol.9, p.194. Bernis testifies that there was 'open war' between Pompadour and Conti. François-Joachim de Pierre, cardinal de Bernis, *Mémoires du cardinal de Bernis*, ed. Philippe Bonnet (Paris, 1980), p.205.

24. *Correspondance secrète du comte de Broglie avec Louis XV (1756-1774)*, ed. Michel Antoine and Didier Ozanam, 2 vols (1956-1961), vol.1, p.xvii-xxx.

25. J. J. Dufort de Cheverny, *Mémoires: la cour de Louis XV*, ed. Jean-Pierre Guicciardi (Paris, 1990), p.97.

26. Charles-François, comte de Broglie, 'Extrait d'un mémoire envoyé par le comte de Broglie à Louis XVI', in *Politique de tous les cabinets de l'Europe pendant les règnes de Louis XV et de Louis XVI*, ed. comte de Ségur, 4th edn, 3 vols (Brussels, 1825), vol.1, p.36.

27. John D. Woodbridge, *Revolt in prerevolutionary France: the prince de Conti's conspiracy against Louis XV, 1755-1757* (Baltimore, MD, 1995); Argenson, *Journal et mémoires*, vol.9, p.218.

over the question of military commands. When he was passed over as general of the French forces in Germany, Conti retreated into self-imposed and permanent exile from the court in November 1756.

The alliance of 1756, which sidelined Conti and exalted Pompadour, is commented upon in several images in the *Livre de caricatures*.²⁸ Pompadour's critical role in forging the alliance is captured in an image in which she is depicted climbing a ladder to enjoy the caresses of the Austrian ambassador (675.286, see fig.4.5, p.109). Charles-Germain captioned the image 'L'alliance de ... faite en may 1756 par l'abbé de Bernis'. It is Tardieu who identifies the two figures as Pompadour and Starhemberg, but the identification of Pompadour, at least, must be considered well founded. The lady in question is attired as François Boucher represented the marquise in a well-known portrait of 1756 – wearing an emerald-green dress with prominent pink bows at the neck and the elbows. All of Paris had seen Pompadour so depicted when the portrait was displayed at the Salon of 1757, an event captured for posterity in a drawing by Charles-Germain's brother, Gabriel.²⁹ The image of Pompadour climbing a ladder is a visual pun on the word 'échelon' – a rung or, figuratively, a rank. Pompadour was a notorious social climber. Elevated into the ranks of the nobility only by her marriage to a tax farmer, and the marquise conferred on her by the king, she had been born simply Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, the daughter of a functionary in the Pâris financial empire. Pompadour had already usurped the position of *maîtresse en titre* – usually the lot of aristocratic ladies – and by brokering the Austrian alliance she symbolically ascended even further above her station.³⁰

The Austrian alliance is almost certainly also the subject of the image at 675.322 titled 'Alliance forcée, qui quitte périt' (see fig.4.6, p.109). The drawing depicts a man and woman in court dress standing on a tiny islet surrounded by stormy seas. With their toes touching, both figures lean backwards, the outstretched hands of each clasping those of the other at the fingertips. Tardieu's inscription identifies the two as Pompadour and Starhemberg, and his linking of the image to the Austro-French alliance of 1756 seems apt. The notion of a 'forced alliance' in which the partners keep one another at arm's length, yet remain mutually dependent, is emblematic of the relationship between Versailles and Vienna during the Seven Years War. The Franco-Austrian alliance could never be

28. C. Jones, *Madame de Pompadour: images of a mistress* (London, 2002), p.119-20.

29. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, 'View of the Salon of 1757', illustration for Du Perron, *Discours sur la peinture et sur l'architecture* (fig.3.4, p.70).

30. At several other points in the album, Charles-Germain takes swipes at Pompadour's *roture* origins, depicting her as a large fish (a play on her family name, Poisson) at 675.328 (fig.9.6, p.226) and perhaps 675.235 (fig.7.2, p.181).



Figure 4.5: Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, *Livre de caricatures tant bonnes que mauvaises*, 'L'alliance de ... faite en may 1756 par l'abbé de Bernis', 1756. Watercolour, ink and graphite, 18.7 × 13.2cm (675.286).

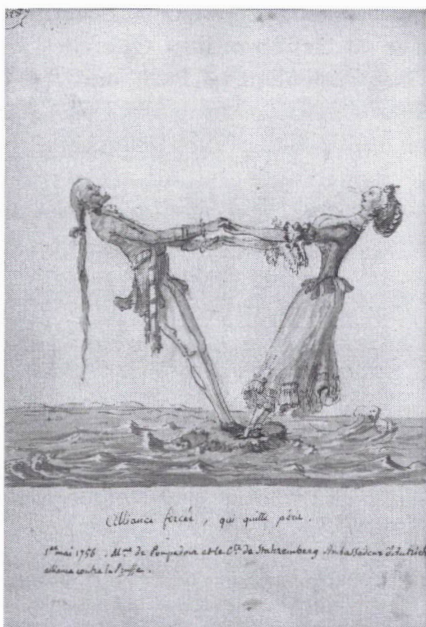


Figure 4.6: Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, *Livre de caricatures tant bonnes que mauvaises*, 'Alliance forcée, qui quitte périt', 1756. Watercolour, ink and graphite, 18.7 × 13.2cm (675.322).

described as a love match. After centuries of rivalry, a great deal of mistrust persisted between the two powers.³¹ In a very real sense the alliance with France was forced on the Austrians. Vienna had emerged from the War of Austrian Succession viewing Frederick II of Prussia as its chief nemesis. Austria's traditional allies, Britain and the Dutch Republic, seemed unwilling to assist in the recovery of Silesia, seized by Frederick in 1741. Moreover, as colonial frictions drew the British and French towards war in 1755, the Austrian ministry feared being dragged into a struggle in which France might invade the Austrian Netherlands, as it had in the previous war. These pressures pushed Maria-Theresa to seek an accommodation with Louis XV. From the French point of view, the Austrian partnership looked at the time (and has seemed to many historians since) to be a response to the diplomatic isolation of France following the defection of Prussia to the British in January 1756.³² The new alliance secured Austrian neutrality in France's war against Britain, while Versailles guaranteed Vienna against further Prussian predation.

A further subtext to the 'Alliance forcée' emerges from its pairing with the representation on the recto of the same sheet (675.321, see fig.4.7, p.111). This depicts two black-clad, bespectacled figures, standing back to back, leaning towards one another at a precarious angle. On the ground between them lie a crown and sceptre. In an unknown hand, the image is captioned 'Si l'un des deux cede garre la couronne'. Below, Tardieu identifies the image as representing 'Querelles des Jesuites et du Parlement 1760'. The Parlement of Paris and the Jesuit Order were engaged in a bitter struggle in the early 1760s – a legacy of their conflict over Jansenism. The implication of the two images taken together is that the position of the monarchy is perilous. In a troubled international environment it has become dependent on a doubtful alliance with Austria; at home, fierce contention between the Parlement and the Church leaves the authority of the king exposed. As Keith Baker has remarked, 'the absolute monarchy, unable to impose peace upon the church hierarchy and the parlements [...] suddenly found the very nature of its own authority at issue in the new patterns of political contestation to which the quarrel over the refusal of sacraments gave rise.'³³

31. Mistrust that persisted through the whole long history of the alliance. See T. E. Kaiser, 'From the Austrian committee to the foreign plot: Marie-Antoinette, Austrophobia, and the Terror', *French historical studies* 26 (2003), p.579-617.

32. In fact, the best recent scholarship suggests that the Austrian alliance was a partnership of choice for Versailles rather than a response to isolation. See, for example, Daniel A. Baugh, 'Withdrawing from Europe: Anglo-French maritime geopolitics, 1750-1800', *International history review* 20 (1998), p.1-32; Jonathan R. Dull, *The French navy and the Seven Years War* (Lincoln, NE, 2005), p.64-67.

33. K. M. Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, p.169: 'Public opinion as political invention'.



Figure 4.7: Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, *Livre de caricatures tant bonnes que mauvaises*, 'Si l'un des deux cede garre la couronne', 1760. Watercolour, ink and graphite, 18.7 × 13.2cm (675.321).



Figure 4.8: Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, *Livre de caricatures tant bonnes que mauvaises*, 'Le maréchal de Belle-Isle', 1758-1761, and 'Tronchin', 1757. Both watercolour, ink and graphite, 18.7 × 13.2cm (675.318 and 675.319).

The conduct of war

The Austrian alliance was intended to keep France out of a continental war in the 1750s and to allow the monarchy to focus on its naval and colonial struggle with Britain. Ironically, it had the opposite effect, dragging France into a European war when Prussia invaded Austrian territory in 1756. The *Livre* excoriates Mme de Pompadour and her friends for the long series of blunders committed by French leaders in the course of the conflict. Three commanders – Richelieu, Soubise and Clermont, whose promotions were widely ascribed to Pompadour's influence – draw the particular ire of Charles-Germain. A temporary recruit to the party of the marquise, the maréchal de Richelieu, for example, is the subject of one of its most cutting representations – as a monkey (675.300, fig.6.10, p.171).³⁴ Richelieu's triumph as leader of the French invasion of Minorca receives no attention; it is his less honourable role in Germany that Charles-Germain chooses to highlight. In the summer of 1757, Louis XV sent a French army across the Rhine commanded by the maréchal d'Estrées, which defeated Hanoverian forces led by the duke of Cumberland at the Battle of Hastenbeck on 26 July. A few days later, however, d'Estrées was relieved of his command, and replaced by Richelieu. A satirical print described by Barbier depicted d'Estrées whipping Cumberland with a laurel branch while Richelieu picked up the leaves.³⁵ The Saint-Aubin image may gesture towards the same print: here the simian Richelieu is depicted pulling on large boots stuffed with what appear to be leaves. The inscription points us in a slightly different direction. It reads 'Il part pour Hanovre', and below, 'L'histoire nous aprit par la suite qu'il revint avec du foin dans ses bottes'. To put hay in one's boots was a colloquial expression which meant to amass wealth, to feather one's nest. It was said at the time that Richelieu enriched himself through the plunder of Hanover. Some of his enemies even spread rumours that he had taken money from the duke of Cumberland to sign a truce known as the capitulation of Kloster-Seven, which later proved inimical to French interests.

Another figure drawn, like Richelieu, from the circle of the marquise, and lampooned in the *Livre de caricatures*, was War Minister Charles-Louis-Auguste Fouquet, maréchal-duc de Belle-Isle.³⁶ In the image at

34. For full discussion of the similarly cutting images of Soubise and Clermont, see below, p.140 and 175.

35. Barbier, *Chronique*, vol.6, p.550-52. The identification of the figure with the maréchal de Richelieu is in Tardieu's hand. It is consistent with the image at 675.254, titled 'Operations de la campagne année 1757', where a monkey with a marshal's baton is identified by an unknown hand as Richelieu.

36. Belle-Isle became War Minister in March 1758, though he had been a member of the *conseil d'en haut* for nearly two years at this point. He died in office in January 1761.

675.318 (see fig.4.8a, p.111) he is pictured, broom in hand, sweeping up papers which appear to have fallen from cartons that Charles-Germain labels 'Artillerie', 'Génie', and 'Extraordinaire des guerres'. To his left a squirrel holds his marshal's baton, a reference to the heraldic device of his family. The broom may be a pun on a figurative meaning of the verb 'to sweep', as in the phrase 'to sweep the enemy from the field'.³⁷ If so, the image is probably meant to ridicule as, during Belle-Isle's tenure as War Minister, no enemy was put to flight. In this reading, the minister is cast as a glorified domestic, pushing paper around and achieving nothing. Another possibility, which points to a more sympathetic attitude, would read Belle-Isle as 'a new broom' attempting to impose order on the chaos of the War Ministry. A third interpretation of the image would link it to the figure on the facing page (675.319, see fig.4.8b, p.111), which mocks the Genevan physician Théodore Tronchin, who famously prescribed light exercise, including sweeping, to preserve good health.³⁸ Whatever the original thrust of the image, a derisory inscription in an unknown hand lends it a sharply critical tone. The inscription records a series of scandalous couplets, perhaps circulating in the period, in which the minister's efforts and tribulations received scant sympathy, and which represented him as Pompadour's toady ('[II] baisa le cul de la marquise').

A final image dating to the Seven Years War that seems pointedly partisan is the allegory 'Etat de la marine 1755' at 675.296 (see fig.4.9, p.114), captioned in Charles-Germain's hand. At the centre of the image stands an anchor, with a boat hook, gaffs, a broken spar and a shattered oar, all attached to the anchor's shank by a frayed hawser. Several large cobwebs stretch over the whole apparatus completing the impression of neglect and dereliction. But the transparent implication that Louis XV's navy was in a disastrous state of desuetude in 1755 is belied by the facts. From 1748 to 1756, the Ministry of the Navy conducted one of the most impressive bursts of sustained naval rearmament in the history of the French monarchy, launching thirty-seven warships between 1749 and 1755.³⁹ While the British eventually established naval dominance following the Battle of Quiberon Bay in 1759, in the early stages of the war the French held their own, winning the first major naval battle, an action off Minorca in 1756, when the Mediterranean squadron under Roland Michel Barrin de La Galissonnière defeated a British force led by John Byng. Is it possible that Charles-Germain was unaware of the massive efforts undertaken in the years after 1748 to reconstruct the French

37. *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 5th edn (Paris, 1798).

38. See the discussion on 675.318 and 675.319 at <http://waddesdon.org.uk/collection/special-projects/st.-aubin>.

39. Jan Glete, *Navies and nations: warships, navies and state building in Europe and America, 1500-1860*, 2 vols (Stockholm, 1993), vol.1, p.265.

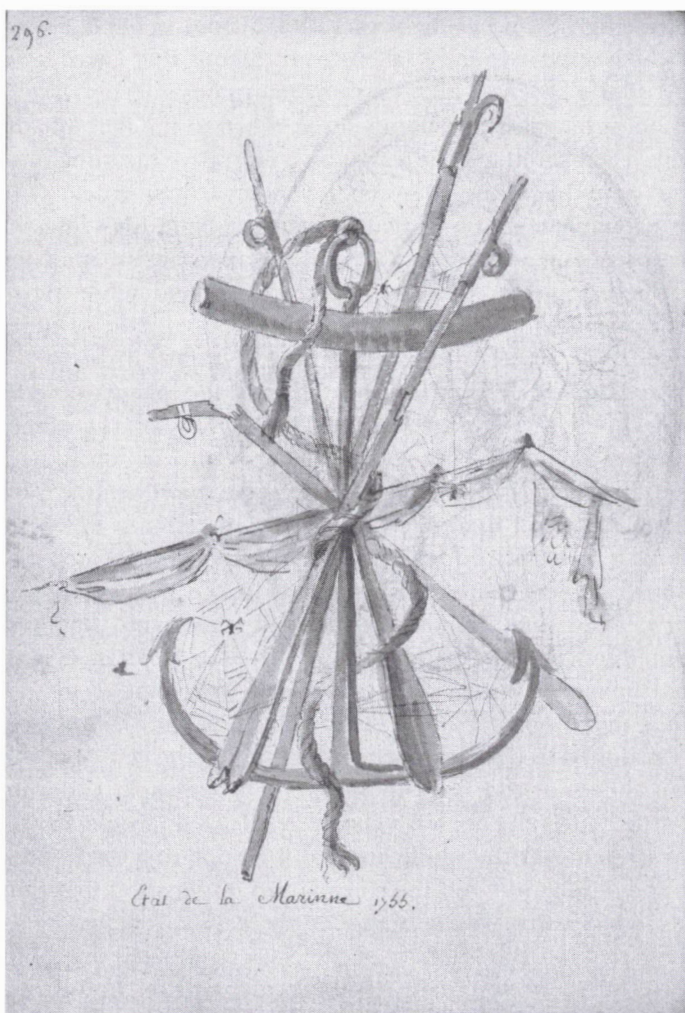


Figure 4.9: Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, *Livre de caricatures tant bonnes que mauvaises*, 'Etat de la marine 1755', 1755? Watercolour, ink and graphite, 18.7 × 13.2cm (675.296).

navy? Perhaps when he drafted the 'Etat de la marine' he was projecting a post-Quiberon cynicism back onto the earlier period.

But a factional reading of the image is just as plausible. The representation of the navy as neglected and ruined in 1755 might be seen as an attack on the Ministry of the Navy, dominated since the dismissal of the comte de Maurepas in 1749 by ministers closely associated with Pompadour. Maurepas had been tied by friendship and political alliance to Conti, though he also had links to the party of the queen and the dauphin.⁴⁰ His dismissal was attributed to his hostility towards the favourite. The late 1740s saw an outpouring of *poissonnades* – scurrilous verses and *bon mots* attacking the marquise. Maurepas was thought to be behind some of this anti-Pompadour propaganda, or at least was blamed for failing to stem its flow. Pompadour became so hostile towards the Navy Minister that, reportedly, she feared he might be trying to poison her.⁴¹ In 1749, Maurepas was dismissed from his offices and exiled from the court. He was replaced at first by Antoine-Louis Rouillé, and then in August 1754 by Jean-Baptiste de Machault d'Arnouville, both important players in Pompadour's faction.⁴² The allegory slating the state of the navy in 1755 might be viewed as a pointed critique of their stewardship, or as an oblique vote of sympathy for the comte de Maurepas.

Conclusion

In this article I have sought to make sense of a series of images in the *Livre de caricatures* that touch on the management of war and diplomacy from the late 1740s to the early 1760s. The main thrust of the argument has been to read these images against the background of factional politics so far as these engaged the management of the French monarchy's external affairs. The position of the *Livre* is one of hostility first to the Saxe-Pâris-Pompadour axis of the late 1740s, and subsequently to the grouping linked to the marquise during the Seven Years War, including ministers Rouillé, Machault and Belle-Isle, and courtier-generals Clermont, Soubise and Richelieu. Such a reading of Charles-Germain's politics assumes that he had a fairly sophisticated understanding of the intrigues of Versailles, and regular access to its gossip – assumptions that seem plausible given his professional acquaintanceship with the court. A factional reading is justified both by the partiality of Saint-Aubin's representations, and by the fact that the *Livre* offers no alternative

40. Hours, *Louis XV et sa cour*, p.211.

41. Henri Carré, *La Marquise de Pompadour: le règne d'une favorite* (Paris, 1937), p.111-13; Etienne-François, duc de Choiseul, *Mémoires du duc de Choiseul*, ed. Jean-Pierre Guicciardi and Philippe Bonnet (Paris, 1983), p.86-87.

42. Hours, *Louis XV et sa cour*, p.239, 245.

political framework – a national, or patriotic, point of view, for example – within which to interpret its derisive representations. I have speculated that Charles-Germain articulates a sympathy for the Conti faction – the principal loser in the competition for influence over foreign policy in the mid-1750s. But any conclusion on this point must remain tentative, as the only definite evidence tying Saint-Aubin and his circle to a pro-Conti viewpoint is the *Livre's* selection of subjects to lampoon, and the fact that a *dévo*t reading of its political sympathies seems far-fetched.

What is the broader significance of the *Livre de caricatures* in its commentaries on war and diplomacy? Most obviously, it affirms what many scholars have argued recently: that the external politics of the monarchy were a source of lively, indeed intense, interest for some of Louis XV's subjects. The sheer effort expended on producing its many representations of military and diplomatic subjects suggests a strong and sustained investment in these topics. The *Livre* also, evidently, serves as an illustration of the way in which the politics of faction could spill out from Versailles to inform the political vision of individuals who lived in a world straddling the court and the café. The *Livre* is a work that is collective in some important sense, yet manifestly not public. It points to the existence of subversive opinions in the private sphere of family and friends, a secret rather than a public opinion. Yet we must be careful not to read too much into the existence of such a critical consciousness. Seditious, iconoclastic, insolent the *Livre* may be, but it offers no alternative framework for politics, no call to arms. As resonant of the 1790s as its sensibility sometimes appears to be, it is the product of a different political universe – more carnival than *carmagnole*, more Rabelais than Robespierre.