

The Life and Times of Nicolas Dutot*

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I Introduction

Nicolas Dutot (1684-1741) belongs to the early history of economic thought, before Adam Smith and Quesnay, when the word “economist” didn’t exist. He was a close witness and exceptional historian of John Law’s System, which he chronicled extensively. In the course of his public debate with Jean-François Melon over the causes and consequences of inflation, he pushed forward monetary theory and pioneered the quantitative study of economic phenomena, carefully marshalling observations about prices to support his arguments. He was the first to use an unweighted index of prices, now called the “Dutot price index” (Walsh 1901, 188), and was the only authority cited by Hume (1752, 49) for the empirical statement of the non-neutrality of money, one of the core concepts of macroeconomics ever since (Lucas 1996).

Yet until recently, little was known about him, not even his first name.¹ Giraud (1974, 435) knew it to be Nicolas, but we do not know how.² Since the late 18th century it was known that he had worked for John Law’s Bank. His only published work, the *Réflexions politiques sur les finances et le commerce*, appeared in 1738. Harsin (1946) surmised from his unpublished manuscripts that he died in 1741 or 1742. The Norman pride he displayed in an extended footnote of the *Réflexions* (Dutot [1738] 1935, 1:270–271) led Mann (1936, 102) to suspect he was of Norman origin. And that was the extent of our knowledge until a few years ago.

In his preface to the first edition of another Dutot manuscript (Dutot 2000, xxv), Antoin Murphy identified the author as Nicolas Dutot, born in 1671 to another Nicolas Dutot, a Cherbourg merchant and minor tax official. The problem with this identification, which rests on a contemporary’s statement that Dutot was a native of Cherbourg (Réal de Curban 1764, 398), is that the Nicolas Dutot of Cherbourg had one surviving brother named Pierre; but we know from the after-death inventory of the author (cited in Murphy 2006) that his only heir was a brother named Jean Charles. The key to the correct identification is the author’s marriage cited in the same inventory: the original document in the Strasbourg archives identifies Nicolas Dutot as a native of Barneville

¹Even his last name has been the subject of some uncertainty, with Antoin Murphy (Murphy 1998, 2006, Dutot 2000, xvii) adopting the spelling “Du Tot.” Since spellings of last names in the 18th century were quite variable, especially where the use of the *particule* was concerned, I follow the rule that spells a name as its bearer did. The half-dozen examples of Dutot’s signature that I found, ranging from 1708 to 1739 (Figures 3 to 11), are quite consistent in this regard.

²Numismatists also knew his first name (Habrekorn 1971), although they did not explicitly connect the employee of the Banque Royale with the author.

in the diocese of Coutances. The parish registers of Barneville in turn allow the correct identity to be established beyond doubt.

From the inventory and other documents in the French archives, we can learn a great deal about the author's remarkable career. We will learn about his background, his friends, his family, the books he owned and even the clothes he wore. Although he still remains to some extent in the shadows, the path he took from a little coastal village of Normandy to near-fame in Paris will lead us backstage of the main financial events of his time. In particular, we will meet secondary figures of the world of public finance who (but for their connection to Dutot) would have remained completely obscure, and whose lives reveal much about the workings of French public finance.

2 Origins

2.1 Birthplace

Barneville, now Barneville-Carteret, is a village on the west coast of the Cotentin facing the Channel islands (Figure 1). It sits atop a small ridge facing the sea; below the estuary of the Gerfleur creates a shallow port protected by a sand bar. In the seventeenth century is numbered about a hundred and fifty hearths or about five hundred inhabitants. In the late nineteenth century a regular ferry to the Channel islands was established and recently a marina was created in the estuary. At the time, however, Barneville and Carteret were a port of call for the coasting trade as well as a small ship-building site. During the eighteenth century an average of ten coasting vessels were built every year, and the town counted a half-dozen carpenters and three caulkers (Barros 1991). The lordship of Barneville was in the hands of a branch of the du Saussey, a family of old Norman nobility scattered throughout the Cotentin.

The word “tot” is of Norse origin, meaning (and etymologically related to) toft.³ In Normandy le Tot is a common toponym, as is the patronymic Dutot, most typical of the Roumois and Caux regions near Rouen but also found throughout lower Normandy. Less than a mile west of Barneville, on the bank of the Gerfleur, is a hamlet of twenty houses called le Tôt, from which the Dutot of Barneville probably took their name.

Parish records in Barneville begin in the early seventeenth century.⁴ One Guillaume

³ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “toft”; Diderot’s *Encyclopédie*, s.v. “tot.”

⁴AD Manche, registers of Barneville: 20 Nov 1628, baptism of Jean Dutot; 26 Nov 1636, baptism of Gabriel Dutot; 6 June 1649 marriage of Jean Dutot; 14 Sep 1656 baptism of Adrian Dutot; 1 July 1664



Figure 1: Cassini's map of Barneville and surroundings (1757). The hamlet Dutot is visible right beneath the letter "v" of Barneville (see inset at lower left).

Dutot (d. 1670) had by Françoise Boudet two sons, Jean (1628-88) and Gabriel (1636-1706). Jean's surviving children were Adrian François (born 1656) and Élisabeth (1660-92), who married a local *laboureur*. Adrian married on 13 Feb 1681 Barbe Bessin, an eighteen-year old girl from Cherbourg who had been residing in Barneville for two years. Their first child was born less than two months later. The social status of Barbe's parents is not known, but the circumstances suggest that she may have served as a maid and was impregnated by the 24-year old Adrian.

Adrian and Barbe had six children. Of the two surviving sons, Nicolas was born on October 2, 1684 and baptized the following day with his maternal grandparents Nicolas Bessin and Catherine Doesnard serving as godparents. The other son Jean Charles was

marriage of Gabriel Dutot; 28 Aug 1668 marriage of Gabriel Dutot; 6 Feb 1670 burial of Guillaume Dutot; 13 Feb 1682 marriage of Adrian Dutot; 3 Oct 1684 baptism of Nicolas Dutot; 30 Apr 1686 marriage of Élisabeth Dutot; 8 Feb 1687 birth of Françoise Dutot; 20 Aug 1688 burial of Jean Dutot; 22 Jan 1689 baptism of Jean Charles Dutot; 2 Apr 1706 burial of Gabriel Dutot; 23 Feb 1713 marriage of Françoise Dutot. See also the transcriptions of these registers by Thierry Jambut, available on the website of Cercle généalogique de la Manche (www.CG50.org).

born on January 20, 1689.⁵ Two surviving daughters were Jeanne and Françoise, whose godparents were the lord of Barneville and his sister respectively.

What was Dutot's family background? His father Adrian was described as a ship-carpenter (*charpentier pour les bateaux*) on his marriage certificate. Adrian's uncle Gabriel was also described as a carpenter at his 1668 marriage, suggesting that this was the family trade. The burials of Guillaume and his two sons inside the local church (as opposed to the church-yard) are a sign of local prominence, as was perhaps the fact that the local lord's sister served as godmother to Adrian. We have an idea of the family's wealth from the terms of the marriage contract of Nicolas's sister Françoise. In February 1713 she married Laurent Lepigeon, by whom she already had a two-year old daughter. In the marriage contract her brother Jean Charles gave her 400 livres (part of it in the form of a dotal annuity at 7%) as her share in their parents' inheritance, which by the custom of Normandy was a third. Their wealth would therefore have been 1200 livres, yielding at 7% an income of 85 livres, a modest sum.⁶

The last bit of information we have on Dutot's family is that his grandfather Jean was involved in a curious transaction with the family of his lords du Saussey. René du Saussey, lord of Barneville (d. 1671) had two sons, Adrian and Jacques; the latter, who inherited the lordship of Le Mesnil and Portbail, died in 1679 leaving a minor Jean Antoine. In 1683 the lordship of Le Mesnil was sold off by court order, and purchased by Jean Dutot with Adrian as guarantor. A few months later, on 19 Feb 1684, Jean Dutot and Adrian du Saussey sold it to Robert Le Pigeon, sieur de Magneville, for 11,000 livres in order to pay off an old debt contracted by Adrian's uncle Thomas in 1608. What role the uneducated Jean Dutot played in this transaction, which he signed with a cross, is unclear.⁷

Dutot's inventory after death, discussed below, lists a number of tools and instruments, including a complete case of carpenter's mathematical instruments (*étuy d'instruments de mathématique complet à l'usage des charpentiers*). This modest tool lets us imagine how young Nicolas revealed his interest in numbers and talent for computation to his family. Obviously they decided to do something about it, and he

⁵This matches the given names of Dutot's brother on the first page of the inventory after death of 1741 (MC LIII/299, 25 Sep 1741). The parish records of Barneville, which have been completely transcribed, register only one other Nicolas Dutot, born in 1697, which is too late to be our author's birthdate.

⁶A mason in Paris would have earned twice as much (Baulant 1971).

⁷BN P.O. 1045; see also AD Manche, 5 E 670, September 1690, a follow-up contract between Adrian du Saussey and Robert Le Pigeon. I have not found a connection between this Le Pigeon and Nicolas Dutot's brother-in-law; any relation would be that of second cousins at best.

was given an education, even though the level of formal education was not high in the family. Neither Guillaume nor his two sons could sign their names, and at the next generation, Nicolas's aunt couldn't sign her name and his father Adrian signed, but hesitantly, at his marriage. Nicolas's mother couldn't sign, although her father could. A choice was thus made to invest in young Nicolas' education that was not made for his siblings Jean Charles and Françoise, neither of whom could sign when she married in 1713.

2.2 *Education*

Where was Dutot educated and where did he spend his youth?

In the last section of his *Réflexions*, Dutot attacked the French prejudice against occupations of trade, more useful to the State but less honored than the nobility. After citing Sully and examples of Antiquity, he singled out maritime trade for praise, particularly because, in wartime, privateering afforded opportunities to rival the nobility in gallantry. He then heaped praise on one particular city, extolling its captains, sailors, shipwrights, citing the “formidable machine, so celebrated, which was to reduce it to ashes” devised by its enemies, and recalling how much silver its traders brought from the South Sea in 1709: “What wonders have been done by the courageous inhabitants of that city, equally distinguished in its warlike and trading capacity, in defiance to all the efforts of the enemies to the Crown? . . . How would the Republicks of Greece and Rome have heap'd honours and rewards upon citizens so worthy of that name!” (Dutot 1739, 268–269)

The city is not named in the text, but in a footnote, Dutot added: “I shall take leave to remark here, that several of the privateers and seamen whom the city of St. Malo made use of during the course of the last wars were Normans. Among them who mann'd their ships, and distinguished themselves in fight, there were many from that province. At this day several Maloine families are natives thereof.”

The enthusiastic praise for the city of Saint-Malo and the footnote about Normans seem to strike a very personal note. I will sketch the following scenario.

The shipwright Adrian Dutot became aware that his son Nicolas deserved a better career than the family trade can offer. Through the coastal trade he had connections in Saint-Malo, the closest large port and a major trading center. As Dutot noted some of the great merchant families of Saint-Malo, such as the Danycan, came from the coast of the Cotentin. Adrian arranged to send his son to Saint-Malo to serve as apprentice

in the offices of one of these families (Lespagnol 1997, 58, 83, 114–17).⁸ This could have happened toward the end of the Nine Years War, when Saint-Malo was safe again from English attacks, and Nicolas would have been twelve or thirteen. But he would have heard many times the story of John Benbow’s ‘infernal machine,’ a fireship launched in vain against Saint-Malo on November 19, 1693. Did he serve on some privateer’s ship? That is not inconceivable: we find in his library more than a dozen books on sailing and ship-building, as well as two different editions of the memoirs of René Duguay-Trouin, the famous privateer from Saint-Malo.

It may also be during this hypothetical stay in Saint-Malo that Dutot formed relationships with several members of the merchant families of that city. This very tight-knit community of merchants, traders, and ship-owners played an important role in various French trading companies (Lespagnol 1997). Dutot’s after-death inventory reveals that for many years he collected in Paris the interest on perpetual rents owned by two residents of Saint-Malo. The first was Thomas Magon de la Chipaudière (1693–1756), whose father Nicolas had been very active merchant and whose brothers established a powerful bank in Cádiz. The other was another active merchant and privateer, Guillaume Moreau de La Primeraye (1644–1736). Dutot also maintained an active correspondence with Jacques Le Fer du Flachet, another Malouin whose cousin was in business with the Magon brothers in Cádiz.

3 Early days in Alsace (1708–15)

In 1708, we find Dutot, in his mid-twenties, starting a career working for *gens d'affaires* in Alsace. How did he go from Normandy to Alsace? To find clues and fully to appreciate the milieu in which he spent his formative years, we will have to become acquainted with a series of minor but fascinating characters. The common point linking them is a German cardinal and prince, the bishop of Strasbourg.

3.1 *The cardinal-bishop of Strasbourg*

The province of Alsace had been ceded by the German Empire to France at the peace of Westphalia in 1648 (Livet 1956). However, the vague terms of the treaty and the

⁸Dutot’s library contained just one beginner’s Latin grammar and his copies of the classics were all in translation, suggesting that he knew little or no Latin: this would preclude any formal schooling beyond the primary level.

complicated political fragmentation of the German Empire left the exact extent and nature of France's possessions in doubt. To resolve these doubts in his favor, Louis XIV waged a campaign of annexations in the 1680s. The imperial city of Strasbourg was taken in 1681, and the Roman Catholic bishop of Strasbourg, who had been residing in exile in Saverne since the Reformation, returned to the city. Now subject to the ultimate sovereignty of the king of France, the bishop of Strasbourg nevertheless remained a prince of the Holy Roman Empire with dominions east of the Rhine, and he was allowed to retain considerable territorial powers exercised through a "government" (*Regierung, régence*) based in Saverne. Along with these powers came revenues, not only from extensive land-holdings but also from taxes and monopolies, for example on the sale of salt. It was said that the bishopric of Strasbourg was the richest in France (Marion 1923, 60).

The bishop of Strasbourg was Franz Egon von Fürstenberg (1625-82), a German Catholic nobleman who had become an agent of France in 1658 and was appointed by the chapter in 1662 under pressure of Louis XIV (O'Connor 1967). His brother Wilhelm or Guillaume Egon (1629-1704) succeeded him in the see of Strasbourg in 1682 and was made a cardinal in 1686 (Braubach 1972). He was like many others an absentee bishop, serving as minister of the archbishop and Elector of Cologne, whom he hoped to succeed. His failure to be chosen as successor in July 1688 led to the French invasion of the electorate and the beginning of the Nine Years War. When the French were forced out in March 1689 the cardinal found refuge in France, where he stayed the rest of his life.

In exile, the cardinal could still count on the revenues of his bishopric west of the Rhine, but not on his family's estates on the other side of the river. Louis XIV was generous to his unfortunate protégé and, aside from 144,000 livres in pensions, gave him in January 1690 the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, thought to be worth 80,000 livres of annual income (Dangeau 3:50). But the cardinal's lavish lifestyle and mounting debts (Saint-Simon 1879-1930, 7:391-394, 467-479) forced him to look for new revenues and for men who could extract them.

3.2 Jacques Auber

We now meet Jacques Auber, born in 1645 in a small village 15 miles north of Rouen on the edge of the Caux region.⁹ Nothing more is known about his family. The name Auber is relatively common in the area; the small size of his home village suggests a very humble origin. I have no direct evidence on his early activities, but his later career makes it likely that he became an employee of small tax farms in his native region and rose through the ranks.

Tax collection at the time was characterized by the farming system, whereby a private entrepreneur or partnership pays a fixed sum for the right to collect a given tax, thereby assuming the risk. The *fermes générales* grouped at the time into a single contract the right to collect a variety of taxes across France (salt tax or *gabelles*, internal duties or *cinq grosses fermes*, excise taxes on beverages or *aides*, and domanial rights). The general farmers who signed the contract with the king then turned around and themselves entered into contracts with “sub-farmers” (*sous-fermiers*) for specific taxes in specific regions. Sub-contracting could continue one or more level. Thus, at the level of Auber’s native regions, there were a variety of small tax farms he could work for.

By the early 1680s, Auber is a high-level employee (cashier) in the *sous-ferme* for the *aides* taxes in Rouen, Arques, Caudebec and Montivilliers. He was also the manager of three small farms, one in charge of minor offices of salt retailers in Normandy, another in charge of the control of escrows (*contrôle des consignations*) in Caudebec, the last in charge of the royal domains, also in Caudebec.¹⁰ Throughout this period he resided in Paris in the home of Pierre Darie, receiver of the *tailles* for Caudebec.¹¹ Darie did not

⁹Baptismal certificate, MC xxxvi/265, 14 Mar 1690. He was born on March 22, 1645, son of Guillaume Auber and Catherine Le Roux in the village of Fresnay-le-Long, which had about 60 hearths at the time.

¹⁰MC xxxvi/243, 10 Dec 1682; 248, 23 Mar 1683; 251, 28 Feb 1684; 255, 9 Feb 1686.

¹¹Compare for example MC xxxvi/250, 4 Oct and 12 Oct 1683, in which both Auber and Darie reside rue du Mail; MC xxxvi/253, 12 Mar and 13 Mar 1685, in which both Auber and Darie’s son reside rue Royale; MC xxxvi/266, 30 May and 31 May 1690, in which Auber and Darie’s widow reside rue Neuve des Bons Enfants. Darie was clearly from the same region, since one of his daughters was a nun in Fécamp and a son was a monk at Saint-Victor-en-Caux, three miles north of Auber’s birthplace. I have not clarified the relation between Auber and the Darie family, which were quite close and lasting. After Darie’s death Auber and Barrangue managed to claim the assets of Darie’s first wife and then turn them over to his second wife and widow (MC xxxvi/266 31 May 1690; 284, 2 Jun 1696). In 1700, Auber was listed among the family friends at the emancipation of Darie’s children by his second wife (AN Y4090, fol. 401–402). In 1720, he was appointed subrogate tutor to the only daughter of Charles Darie, surely a relative, who lived next door to him (AN Z/2/3623, 13 Mar 1720), and this daughter made a brief appearance at the after-death inventory of Auber in 1730.

perform the duties of receiver himself, but had a lawyer in Caudebec do the work.¹²

In November 1686, Auber started his ascent from employee to financier. He purchased the offices of receiver of the *taille* from Darie shortly before the latter's death in March 1687, for the sum of 41,250L, and was formally invested soon after, leaving the actual duties to the same substitute in Caudebec.¹³

Auber, now styled *conseiller du Roy*, multiplied his activities, both in Normandy and elsewhere. He became a partner in a farm for the collection of *aides* taxes in Caudebec and Caux, and a little later in the farm of the domains in Caudebec and Montivilliers.¹⁴ He bought a house in Fécamp in 1688, purchased offices of notaries in Caudebec in 1689; he also became the manager of the affairs of the marquis de Montchevreuil, an important figure at the court because of his wife's close friendship with the King's wife, Madame de Maintenon (Montchevreuil was one of only two witnesses of the King's secret marriage in 1685).¹⁵ Montchevreuil was keeper of the royal forest of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, and Auber was able to bid for a contract to cut and sell wood on 354 *arpents* of the forest.¹⁶ On this contract, he partnered with François Jourdain and Antoine Barrangue; the latter, at the time Auber's colleague as receiver of the *tailles* in Pont-Audemer, was a more important financier (Dessert 1984, 526).

In 1691 and 1692, Auber entered with Barrangue in a multitude of partnerships to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the ongoing war. One such opportunity corresponded to the many creations of offices by Louis XIV which were sold off to raise funds. The actual sale of offices was contracted out, and Auber, already involved in a contract for the receivers of the *octrois* of Brittany (Dec 13, 1689) entered into another for the offices of treasurers in Provence (Apr 24, 1691). The war provided other opportunities. In June 1691 Auber and Barrangue bid for the farm of the taxes in the town of Mons in Hainaut, captured two months earlier. In April 1691 they secured a contract for the provisioning the hospitals of the armies in Italy, and in September 1692

¹²MC xxxvi/284, 2 Jun 1696.

¹³Covenant AN MC xxxvi/257, 17 Jan 1687; letters of provision, AN V/1/49, 27 Jan 1687 and V/1/53, 26 Jul 1688; power of attorney for Marin Capelet, MC xxxvi/260, 21 Jan 1688.

¹⁴MC xxxvi/266, 15 Jul 1690; MC xxxvi/271, 13 Mar 1692.

¹⁵MC xxxvi/261, 13 Jul 1688; 260, 11 Jun 1688 ; 266, 25 Jun 1690. On Montchevreuil, see Dangeau. The house in Fécamp belonged to Étienne Moulle (Dessert 1984, 657), one of the general farmers.

¹⁶MC xxxvi/259, 8 Dec 1687.

for the supplies for the troops in Italy.¹⁷

Barrangue was involved in the 1680s in the farm for the exploitation of the salt mines in Lorraine.¹⁸ One of his customers was the cardinal of Fürstenberg, who had the exclusive right to sell salt to his subjects in the bishopric of Strasbourg, and had the salt bought from the farmers in Lorraine. It may be through Barrangue that Auber came into contact with the cardinal.¹⁹ On Feb 9, 1691, Auber was appointed by the cardinal as his treasurer general. The cardinal hired not just a treasurer, but also a banker and a farmer: during the year 1691, Auber made a number of large loans to the cardinal, and in March 1692, he secured with Barrangue the farm for the distribution of salt in the bishopric of Strasbourg.²⁰ The following year, to pay his debts, the cardinal accepted Auber's proposition to introduce the sale of offices in the bishopric, following the pattern set by the French king. This proposal met with the opposition of the chapter and the officers of the bishopric, and lengthy negotiations ensued. The bishopric's debts were important, on the order of 1.2 million livres, and tax reforms introduced by Louis XIV were depriving the bishop of the authority to levy taxes to repay these debts. The chapter finally gave in, and signed a treaty with the bishop authorizing the sale. The bishop then signed a contract with Auber in May 1693.²¹

In the following years Auber induced the cardinal to farm more of his revenues to him. First was a lease for the incidental revenues of the abbey of Saint-Germain des Prés for three years, from October 1695 to the end of 1698, for the sum of 10,000 livres per year.²² Then came a lease for all the revenues of the abbey for five years from 1696 to 1700 for 60,000 livres per year,²³ and finally a lease for the revenues of the bishopric of Strasbourg on 23 Dec 1697 for 6 years.²⁴

Auber's activities, now chiefly centered on the cardinal's revenues, were not proving

¹⁷AN G/7/1494; MC xxxvi/271 16 Jan 1692; MC xxxvi/275, 10 mai 1693.

¹⁸MC xxxvi/266, 15 May 1690.

¹⁹Livet (1956, 837) says that Auber was the businessman of the duc de La Meilleraye, son of the governor of Alsace and a major landowner in Alsace, but does not provide a source, and I have found no corroborating evidence.

²⁰MC xxxvi/269 21 Jul 1691; MC xxxvi/271, 9 Mar 1692.

²¹AD Bas-Rhin, G2580; the contract with Auber is in MC xxxvi/275, 29 May 1693.

²²MC xxxvi/282, 5 Oct 1695.

²³MC xxxvi/283, 3 May 1696.

²⁴Cited in MC xxvii/17, 6 Sep 1699.

profitable enough and were forcing him to indebt himself to other financiers. In the year 1691 alone, his first in the service of the cardinal, he lent 204,492 livres to his employer on his own credit. This was a considerable sum for such a minor financier, and inevitably some of Auber's bills had to be endorsed by more prominent figures to make them liquid.²⁵ His most prominent creditor appears to have been Claude François Paparel, *trésorier général de l'ordinaire des guerres*.²⁶ Auber had already ceded an old debt to Paparel in 1689²⁷ and in 1692 Paparel, who had been financing Auber and Barrangue's ventures, bailed them out by acquiring some of their shares in the partnerships and further liens on their future revenues.²⁸ The sale of offices in Alsace did produce the expected sums, and Auber himself bought the newly created office of treasurer general of the bishopric for 8,000 livres.²⁹ But by 1693, as the sale of offices was about to start, the cardinal had drawn an additional 122,974 livres on the hapless Auber, who brought in partners with deeper pockets. In February 1690 Auber sold his offices of receiver in Caudebec to Paparel: while Auber remained vested in the office, Paparel received the income. This arrangement did not work well, and in 1695 Auber accepted to pay Paparel a flat sum of 12,000 livres per year in lieu of the income, and cede a debt of 101,184 livres owed to him by the cardinal.³⁰ In May 1699, the farm of the revenues of the abbey of Saint-Germain passed to Barrangue, the latter's associate Cyr Monmerqué (on whom more later), and another associate named Jacques Lenormand.³¹

In spite of these setbacks, Auber continued his activities. The Nine Years War ended with the peace of Ryswick in September 1697, and peace meant fewer opportunities for a financier. Consequently, Auber diversified his investment in several directions.

One form of investment was offices. In 1697 he had bought the office of *contrôleur ordinaire des guerres* for 10,500 livres, which carried with it the honorary style of

²⁵MC xxxvi/275, 29 May 1693.

²⁶This financier has surprisingly escaped the attention of Dessert (1984).

²⁷MC xxxvi/263, 11 May 1689. One of the partners in a farm which Auber served as cashier could not meet his obligations and ceded his share to Auber.

²⁸MC xxxvi/270, 14 janvier 1692.

²⁹AD Bas-Rhin, G404, n. 85.

³⁰MC xxxvi/282, 20 Dec 1695; the debt was paid off in 1698.

³¹AN V/7/379, Barrangue succession. Lenormand is listed as *receveur des amendes* and taxed at 14,700 livres in 1700 (AN G/7/1496, n. 223).

écuyer reserved for noblemen.³² In 1701 he bought two offices of receiver of taxes in Colmar under the name of his nephew Robert Fallet for 86,000 livres.³³ Other areas of diversification included real estate development and long-distance trade. Auber's associates Barrangue and Monmerqué had purchased some land to develop in the north-east of Paris.³⁴ Probably on Auber's advice, the cardinal decided in 1699 to develop part of the enclosure of the abbey and sell 1200 *toises* (about 50,000 square feet) of land to build: this development resulted in the present-day rues de Furstenberg and rue Cardinale, near the still-standing abbatial palace. Auber borrowed 30,000 livres from the cardinal and bought 123 *toises* (about 460 square meters) to build five houses on the rue de Furstenberg, now numbers 2 and 4.³⁵ In another venture far from his core competencies, Auber invested 24,000 livres in a society to exploit a trading monopoly with the town of Salé in Morocco. This venture was led by Jean Jourdan de Grouée (1667–1725), an active entrepreneur who was hoping to leverage the friendship he had formed with the ambassador of the king of Morocco, but the venture was not successful and was bankrupt by 1703.³⁶

Peacetime brought not only fewer new business opportunities, but also lower returns on old ones. This traditionally came about through “pursuits” or “inquisitions” against war profiteers and financiers, who were forced to return some of their “excess” gains. In June 1700, a somewhat milder form was chosen, that of a renegotiation (Dessert 1984, 229–232). The government established a list of 382 financiers, and invited each one to pay a specific sum which would protect them from further inquiries. The list provides a snapshot of the world of finance in 1700. Barrangue was taxed at 180,431 livres, which placed him in the tenth percentile of the financiers. Monmerqué was taxed

³²MC xxxi/14, 4 Nov 1697; V/1/123A, 7 Nov 1697.

³³MC xxvii/24, 10 Jan 1701. Robert Fallet was born on Sep 14, 1671 (AN V/1/148, 23 Jan 1701), the son of Pierre Fallet and Marie Auber, married in November 1670 in La Houssaye-Béranger, near Auber's home. Fallet also served as Auber's main employee in Strasbourg, along with Jean-Baptiste Germain Beziel, another Norman.

³⁴Barrangue and Monmerqué had formed in 1698 a partnership to build on a plot near the intersection of the rue Boucherat, now rue de Turenne, and the rue des Filles du Calvaire (AN V/7/379). In another example of diversification, Barrangue founded in 1698 a textile manufacture (Markovitch 1976, 255).

³⁵Saint-Simon (1879–1930, 7:475); MC xxvii/24, 31 Jan 1701 (lease of a shop to a hat-maker), 26 Feb 1701; MC xxvii/29, 2 May 1702 (lease of an apartment to a *contrôleur des rentes*). The ground floors of the houses had shops; such shops were desirable for craftsmen because the special jurisdiction of the abbey allowed them to escape the regulations of the Paris guilds.

³⁶MC xxxvi/298, 20 Jan 1700; Salmi (1953).

at 30,131 livres, at the thirtieth percentile. Auber was assessed at 23,292 livres, at the 33d percentile, ranking 127th.³⁷

Auber could well have done without this kind of distinction. By 1701, he was in over his head. He found himself unable to sell the grains and wine collected in the bishopric because of low prices and slackening demand in Alsace after the end of the war, and he owed about 34,000 livres to the cardinal. The fund he invested in the Salé trading company was borrowed from two financiers, Claude Miotte and Thomas Charlière (Dessert 1984, 556, 649); Auber also borrowed an additional 50,000 livres from them and had to cede to them half of the farm of Strasbourg.³⁸ He owed over 27,000 livres to the contractors who built his houses rue de Furstenberg. One of the offices of receiver in Colmar was pledged to Miotte and Charlière, the other was pledged in January 1702 to Monmerqué who had lent him 23,000 livres for their acquisition.³⁹

His creditors, including Paparel and now Barrangue, were now placing liens on his assets, including the wine and grains held in warehouses in Alsace. The cardinal in turn placed liens on the wine and grains to protect his income. Caught between Paparel, Barrangue, and the cardinal, Auber had no choice but to share in his main venture, the Alsace farm. Fortunately, the cardinal remained well disposed toward Auber, partly in consideration of his past services. In May 1701 he granted Auber a lifetime pension of 3000 livres and lodgings inside the enclosure of the abbey of Saint-Germain, a precious favor since the abbey was under special jurisdiction which protected Auber's person and possessions from seizure by his creditors, as long as he stayed inside the enclosure.⁴⁰

The cardinal also intervened to reach an arrangement with Paparel and Barrangue. The lease on the revenues of Strasbourg was rescinded and a new one was signed on September 30, 1701, for 128,000 livres instead of 100,000 livres, with Barrangue and Monmerqué as new partners for a total share of a quarter. Barrangue and Monmerqué lent to Auber his share in the financing of the farm, and Auber in return pledged to

³⁷AN G/7/1496, n. 223.

³⁸On Aug 26, 1699 he ceded his rights to the 1697 lease to his nephew Fallet, and on 6 Sept 1699 he signed a new lease for 9 years (from 1700 to 1708) with the cardinal (MC xxvii/17). The original lease was for 165,000L in Strasbourg currency, the new one for 180,000L in the same currency. The involvement of Miotte and Charlière is mentioned in MC xxvii/29, 2 May 1702.

³⁹MC xxvii/29, 2 May 1702; AN G/7/81, n. 37. The sale to Monmerqué, at half the real price of the office, was no doubt a way to put the office out of reach of the creditors. The contract contained an option for Auber to buy back the office.

⁴⁰AN G/7/81, n. 52, 86; the contract of 22 May 1701 granting Auber a lifetime pension of 3000 livres and lodgings inside the abbey is mentioned in Auber's after-death inventory (AN Z/2/3623).

his new partners a sum of 50,000 livres from the sale of the seized stocks of wine and grains in the bishopric; Paparel dropped his claims in exchange for 12,000 livres for the next six years, to be paid out of the increase in the farm's lease. The partners did not share equally in the profits. Normally, the excess income above the lease price of 128,000 would be shared between them in proportion to their equity in the venture; instead, Barrangue and Monmerqué were to receive their share in the income above 110,000 livres; the payment to Paparel was to come solely out of Auber's share. Both Paparel and the cardinal lifted their liens. The details of the wine and grain sale were arranged a month later, with Barrangue receiving an additional 23,000 livres and lifting his liens. It is interesting to note that Paparel was taking a debt position in the farm while Barrangue took an equity position.⁴¹

But Auber's difficulties with his numerous creditors accumulated. He and Fallet had been issuing bills which were endorsed by Auber's former partner François Jourdain and another financier named Jean Ludet (Dessert 1984, 638), his letters of exchange were not being honored, and the creditors were suing him and seizing his assets. In March 1702 his houses on the rue de Furstenberg were seized and on April 2 a creditor seized the offices of receivers in Colmar.⁴²

On May 2, 1702 he came to an arrangement with part of his creditors, mostly bankers and brokers (it is noteworthy that none of his financier creditors joined the others). The sentences they had obtained against him were preventing him from putting his affairs in order. He acknowledged that he owed about 300,000 livres, and gave his creditors a list of his assets with their potential value. The grains and wine could produce 300,000 livres, although he had already pledged 50,000 livres to Barrangue and Monmerqué, and another 33,000 livres to Miotte and Charlière. The offices of receivers in Colmar could produce 14,000 livres annually, and once the liens were paid off they could be worth 100,000 livres. The office of receiver general of Strasbourg was worth 80,000 livres, although it too was pledged to Monmerqué for 8,000 livres. The office of receiver in Caudebec produced 12,000 livres in income and was worth 120,000 livres, although it too was still encumbered. The houses in the rue de Furstenberg could produce 5,000 or 6,000 livres and were worth 90,000 livres or more. In the end, Auber estimated that, after paying off the liens on his assets, he would still have 200,000 livres left to pay off his creditors.

⁴¹MC xcix/358, 30 Sep 1701 (lease); MC xxxvi/303, 30 Nov 1701 (sale of grains); MC xxvii/29, 2 May 1702 (*acte de société*).

⁴²MC xxvii/29, 2 May 1702; AN G/7/81, n. 37.

The creditors agreed to suspend their pursuits against Auber for a year from June 1, 1702. Five creditors were chosen to serve as directors of the interests of the group, and they appointed a representative to go with Auber to Alsace sell the grains and wine of the years 1699, 1700, and 1701. From the proceeds the cardinal would be paid the 34,000 livres that was owed to him from the previous lease; then a sum of 33,936 livres to Miotte and Charlière, then 23,000 livres to Monmerqué, then the 50,000 livres to Barrangue and Monmerqué. The remaining sums, as well as Auber's share in the future revenues of the farm, were pledged to the creditors to distribute among themselves until complete discharge of Auber's debts, for which he also pledged all his assets and their income.⁴³

But only part of the creditors had signed on to the settlement, and it was Auber's responsibility to get a court order (*homologation*) and impose the settlement on the other creditors. Auber filed in the the tax court, the *Cour des Aides*. But the remaining creditors balked at the seniority given to the cardinal and to Monmerqué, and a second agreement was reached in October 1703: Auber was given one year to pay a quarter of his debts and another four years to pay the rest. He then requested another delay of one year which the court granted, but the creditors appealed and demanded that Auber be declared bankrupt as of September 1699 when he had, according to them, entered into dealings with a Strasbourg banker named Dietrich to protect his grains from seizure.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, in 1703 Paparel exercised his right to sell the offices of receivers in Caudebec, and two replacements were appointed in Auber's place. Auber was also compelled to sell his office of *contrôleur des guerres* back to the previous owner and that of receiver general of the bishopric of Strasbourg to Monmerqué.⁴⁵

In April 1706 the court ordered the sale of the seized grains and wine to pay off the creditors, and the enforcement of the 1702 agreement, with protection from his creditors for one year. Auber nevertheless appealed to the finance minister directly to obtain writs of *supersedeas* (*arrêt de surséance*), in January 1709 for one year, renewed in May 1710 and again in June 1711 for six months, each time citing the need to travel safely to Alsace to settle the accounts of the farm and alleging that his difficulties were

⁴³MC xxvii/29, 2 May 1702.

⁴⁴Auber settled his accounts with Dietrich in 1714 (AD Bas-Rhin, 6 E 41/37, 25 May 1714).

⁴⁵AN V/1/159, 4 Feb 1703 and 3 Apr 1703; V/1/156, 19 Aug 1703; AD Bas-Rhin, G2580. Auber left some debts which had to be paid by his successors (AN E* 730A, 3 Mar 1703), one of whom was Jean-Roland Malet, better known as the first historian of French finances (Bonney 1991). The letters of provision of Malet give his hitherto unknown birthdate as April 24, 1672 in Paris, parish of St. Paul.

due in part to the King's delay in paying debts to him.⁴⁶ Finally another arrangement was reached in May 1713, endorsed by the King's council in October 1713, although he obtained in January 1714 another writ for six months. Auber was given two years to pay a quarter of his debts and another three years to pay the rest.⁴⁷

There is a little evidence of Auber's financial activities in these later years. He appears to have been a silent partner in some of his successors' ventures in army provisioning (on which more below): he certainly claimed to be a partner in a 1708 contract when asking for writs, but the intendant of Alsace who was asked for his opinion could not see evidence of Auber's involvement. The intendant's opinion was overruled, most likely through the close relation between Monmerqué and the finance minister.⁴⁸ In 1713 and 1714 Auber appears a number of times in the accounts of his successor in the farm, as a partner for 12.5% in a provisioning contract, as a borrower, and in other transactions.⁴⁹

Auber's involvement may to some extent have been a favor on the part of his colleagues to help him find his footing. He completely escaped the Chamber of Justice of 1716, a clear sign that his role, if any, was too minor for the court to worry about. His career as a financier was clearly over. All he could do was to try and to settle his debts with the few assets he had left. In 1719, he settled his account with Jean Coulombier, cashier of the post-office farm, by ceding his claims on the Strasbourg revenues farm of 1704–08, a very dubious asset.⁵⁰ As late as 1729, he intervened in the bankruptcy proceedings against his successor in the Strasbourg farm. A receiver of the bishopric had been found in debt to the farmers, and his heirs were required to discharge it: Auber demanded his share of the payment.⁵¹

The last chapter of Auber's life presents a surprising twist. From financier, Auber turned into a reformer. As early as 1714, even as he was pleading for writs to escape his creditors, he submitted to Desmarets a printed memorandum on the assessment

⁴⁶AN G/7/82, n. 92–96; G/7/1722, n.14; G/7/1723, n. 5, n. 341. The intendant in Alsace recommended against these writs (G/7/82, n. 82).

⁴⁷AN G/7/1723, n. 338, 340.

⁴⁸G/7/82, n. 82, letter of La Houssaye of 24 Dec 1711. See G/7/1721, n. 192, on a plea by Auber the minister wrote: "M. Monmerqué, let him speak to me promptly."

⁴⁹AD Bas-Rhin, G2561, fol. 15, 30, 62, 155, 169.

⁵⁰MC C1/206, 11 Jan 1719. The same document indicates that he was involved at some point in the 1710s in a venture for the sale of offices of *contrôleurs des droits de greffes* in La Rochelle.

⁵¹AN V/7/36 n. 60; Auber ceded his claims to Valentin-Gilles Damiens.

and collection of the *taille*.⁵² During the Regency, when efforts were made to reform the collection of the *taille* (Touzery 1994) the text was noticed. On 23 Feb 1718, Auber was appointed as commissioner in an attempt at implementing a reform of the *taille* in a group of twenty parishes northwest of Beauvais.⁵³ Auber eventually published a pamphlet on the deficiencies in the allocation of the *taille* (Auber 1721): it was reviewed in the *Journal des Sçavans* (February 1722) and in the *Journal de Trévoux* (May 1722, p. 867). Auber's main proposal was to change the basis for the assessment of the *taille*, which at the time was simply the personal knowledge of the assessor appointed every year. Auber recommended requiring taxpayers to report publicly their income; since the total amount owed by a parish would be independent of the reports, each taxpayer had an incentive to correct under-reporting by another taxpayer. Another famous Norman, the abbé de Saint-Pierre, was also interested in reforming the *taille*, and Auber's proposals were similar (Marion 1901, 70). It is interesting to note that Dutot owned a copy of this pamphlet in his library.

Auber died on March 27, 1730 in his apartment in the enclosure of the abbey of Saint-Germain des Prés. No heirs or relatives came forward, and his after-death inventory reveals that he had no assets. The sale of his belongings yielded 665 livres, almost all consumed by the expenses of the inventory and funeral.⁵⁴

3.3 *Cyr Monmerqué and Edme Boudard*

In February 1701, the same year in which Auber's affairs collapsed, a successor was appointed to the cardinal of Fürstenberg in the see of Strasbourg. Following an entertaining intrigue (Saint-Simon 1879–1930, 7:99–109) Armand-Gaston de Rohan (1674–1749), younger son of the prince de Soubise, was elected as coadjutor. The same day as new arrangements were made for the revenues of Strasbourg, on September 30, the cardinal gave his coadjutor power of attorney to manage the affairs, both spiritual and temporal, of the bishopric.⁵⁵ This inaugurated the long reign of the Rohan family

⁵²G/7/82, n. 172. This is probably the *Mémoire sur les tailles* by Auber in Dutot's library. I have not found any copy in French libraries.

⁵³In the same year he also wrote a criticism of Vauban's plan for a royal tithe (Archives des Affaires étrangères, Mémoires et Documents France 1233; see Touzery 1994, 52).

⁵⁴AN Z/2/3623.

⁵⁵MC xcix/358, 30 Sep 1701. The terms of the lease for the revenues specified that the lease would remain valid in case of death of the sitting bishop.

in Strasbourg, down to the cardinal-bishop of necklace fame.

With the new regime came new management. As I mentioned above, Auber had to cede a quarter of the interest in the Strasbourg farm to Barrangue and Monmerqué, the latter serving as cashier. While Auber continued to bear the title of farmer of the revenues of Strasbourg, his involvement must have been limited. As for Barrangue, he may have quickly ceded his share to Monmerqué, for he ceases to appear in the documents.⁵⁶

Cyr Monmerqué was a prominent *traitant* (Dessert 1984, 651). Monmerqué's father, son of a notary in Dammartin, made a brilliant career in finances through the protection of Colbert's son the marquis de Croissy. Cyr was himself close to Colbert's nephew Desmarests, at the time the main adviser of the finance minister and his successor from 1708 to 1715; Monmerqué was the farmer of Desmarests' marquessate of Maillebois.⁵⁷ He had a connection to eastern France, as he had worked for the farm that collected the salt tax in that region in 1680, and in the 1690s he served as cashier for one of Barrangue's ventures.⁵⁸ He was involved in a variety of contracts with the government (39, more than any other *traitant* of the time according to Dessert), and was a farmer-general from 1710 to his death in 1717.

But although Monmerqué replaced Auber in the office of receiver general of the bishopric of Strasbourg, he does not seem to have been closely involved in the management of the farm. His surrogate, and the man who became Dutot's direct employer, was Edme Boudard, born in 1671 or 1672 in Vermenton, near Auxerre (Burgundy), a small village on the southern edge of the Chablis wine region.⁵⁹ He belonged to a line of notaries: Gilles Boudard, notary in Vermenton in 1671, was rector of the local parish school, and *procureur du roi* in 1680.⁶⁰ Edme's older brother Jean succeeded his father a royal notary as early as 1679, was mayor of the village in 1697, and rector of the local parish school from 1677 to 1695 and again in 1701–02.⁶¹ Jean's successor as notary

⁵⁶AN V/7/36, n. 90, f 120v.

⁵⁷MC cxiii/229, 13 Mar 1710.

⁵⁸BN NAF 20533, P.O. 1998; Favre-Lejeune (1986, 978, 1178); MC xxxvi/271, 16 Jan 1692.

⁵⁹AD Bas-Rhin, burial register, Molsheim, 14 Mar 1722. The text (difficult to read) suggests he was aged 53. See Challe (1853, 353–55) on Vermenton in the late 17th century.

⁶⁰MC xxxvi/283, 2 Mar 1696; XXXVI/285, 20 Dec 1696; Quantin (1875, 160)

⁶¹ Quantin (1875, 160). Jean is identified as Edme's brother in AN V/7/36, n. 227, n. 88 fol. 118. Jean had married Marie Guingat and had at least three daughters, Edmée (b. 1692), Ursule, and Marie.

at his death, possibly his son, was another Edme Boudard born in 1702 appointed in November 1727.⁶² Edme Boudard's early history is unknown. We know that he married Geneviève Mercier in 1693⁶³. and we find him in Paris in 1696, living in the same street as Auber and Barrangue, which may be a coincidence.⁶⁴

The first connection between Boudard and Monmerqué occurs in 1701, in the settlement of some dispute between Boudard on one side, a cobbler tenant of Monmerqué and Barrangue on the other.⁶⁵

Boudard became the employee of Monmerqué in the Strasbourg ferme in 1702, arriving from Lagrasse near Carcassonne (Languedoc), where he may have worked for the abbot of Notre-Dame de Lagrasse.⁶⁶ In 1708, the lease for the revenues of the bishopric was coming up for renewal. On March 10, a new lease was signed to run from 1715 to 1720, for 120,000 livres per year. Auber's share was taken up in part by Monmerqué, whose own interest in the farm increased to 50%, and in part by Monmerqué's son-in-law Noël Hyacinthe Roslin de Fourolles whose share was 1/6. The rest, a third, went to Boudard. In addition, Boudard was given direct authority by the bishop to collect all revenues on his behalf.⁶⁷

Boudard was doing well for himself so far. He had moved up from being an employee to partner in the farm. Like Auber before him, he started investing in offices. When a series of offices in the management of forests and rivers were created by edict of March 1708, the sale of the offices was entrusted to a group of *traitants* which included Monmerqué, and Boudard was their subcontractor in Alsace. Boudard himself bought the office of *contrôleur général des eaux et forêts* in Burgundy, Franche-Comté

⁶²V/1/270, n. 448. The writer Rétif de La Bretonne, born nearby, was related by marriage (Rétif de La Bretonne 1788, 1:216).

⁶³Marriage contract of 27 Oct 1693 cited in V/7/36, n. 70 (n.108).

⁶⁴The occasion is a transfer and sale of rents from Jean Boudard to his brother, in connection with the estate of the deceased Gilles Boudard and Marguerite Durand.

⁶⁵MC XIII/141, 6 Jul 1701 and 7 Jul 1701. The cobbler lived on the rue Boucherat, where Barrangue and Monmerqué had bought land. Boudard may have been a tenant of the cobbler, since in the course of the dispute the cobbler seized Boudard's belongings and, in turn, Barrangue seized the cobbler's belongings. In the agreement both sides (Monmerqué standing in for Boudard) desisted and stopped all actions.

⁶⁶AD Bas-Rhin, G2560. A lengthy stay in Languedoc would account for this Bourguignon's otherwise inexplicable taste for Rivesaltes wine.

⁶⁷AD Bas-Rhin, 6 E 41/35, 10 Mar 1708.

and Alsace.⁶⁸ In November 1709 he acquired from a man named Garnier the office of receiver general of the revenues of the bishopric, the position previously held by Auber and Monmerqué.⁶⁹

In 1710 he bought a house in Saverne, where the government of the bishopric resided. In addition, he purchased the office of director of the mint in Strasbourg, under the name of Valentin Beyerlé whom he appointed to do the work.⁷⁰ In 1711, he married two of his nieces: Ursule, daughter of Jean Boudard, was married to Vincent Gloquet or Loquet from Rouen, an employee in the bishopric farm.⁷¹ Loquet was Boudard's chief employee in the farm of the bishopric, and served as his treasurer in Alsace for all his financial activities. Another niece Marie was married by contract of 13 Feb 1711 to a cousin, Edme Boudard des Varennes, styled warehouse-keeper of military provisions (*garde-magasin des vivres*).⁷² Boudard des Varennes was later put in charge of collecting the revenues from the salt monopoly in Saverne from 1712 to 1715,⁷³ and in 1711 he bought the office of receiver general from his uncle.⁷⁴ Both nieces received 3,000 livres as dowry from their rich uncle.

3.4 *The provisioning activities*

In Alsace, many rents were still paid in kind (Hoffmann and Ingold 1906–07, 1:207), mostly wine and grains. As a result, a good portion of the bishop's revenues consisted in large quantities of foodstuffs. In 1711, the revenues amounted to 167,073L in cash,

⁶⁸AN G/7/1370, n. 179; V/7/36, , n. 153, n. 90 f. 121r. An example of a sale of an office by Boudard is in AD Bas-Rhin, 6 E 41/36, 28 Jun 1713.

⁶⁹AN V/7/36, n. 153; n. 181, n. 204, n. 207 fol. 18v; n. 23, n. 227 fol. 33r.

⁷⁰AN V/7/36, n. 148; n. 181; n. 207, fol. 18v. Beyerlé appears in 1722 as tutor for Boudard's niece.

⁷¹Marriage contract between Vincent Gloquet and Ursule Boudard daughter of Jean Boudard and Marie Guingat (AD Bas-Rhin, 6 E 41/18, 3 May 1711). Curiously, in this document Loquet was named, and signed, Gloquet, son of Guillaume Gloquet of Rouen and Marie Fromager, but the marriage record of the latter (18 Nov 1663, Rouen, Saint-Godard) spells his name as Loquet.

⁷²MC xxxviii/96, 22 Apr 1711, last will (written in 1710) of Marguerite Bousons wife of Edme Boudard des Varennes, titled *garde-magasin des vivres des armées du Roy*. She names Edme Boudard "her cousin and good friend."

⁷³MC cv1/673 contains the accounts of the salts extracted from the salt mines of Dieuze and sold in Saverne and Kochersberg between 1712 to 1715; submitted and signed by Boudard des Varennes, approved and signed by Edme Boudard.

⁷⁴AD Bas-Rhin, 6 E 41/36, 4 Feb 1711.

and 602 *foudres* of wine, 1562 *rézaux* of wheat, 3962 *rézaux* of rye, 2601 *rézaux* of barley, 3020 *rézaux* of oats: at 1701 prices, the revenues in kind represented 110,000 livres.⁷⁵ The leases signed by the bishop's farmers were paid in current money, so the farmers were also to some extent in the grain and wine wholesale business. Thus, when the wars of Louis XIV resumed and fighting took place in the Low Countries and in Germany, it was natural for these farmers to enter into another activity, the provisioning of troops, which was also carried out by private entrepreneurs under contract with the Secretary of War (Sturgill 1975, Germain-Martin 1973, Lung 1983, Corvisier 1992–94, Lynn 1997).

Auber, trying to sell his stocks of grain in accordance with the arrangement he had made with his creditors, made a proposal to the intendant of Alsace in 1702 but it was rejected as too expensive (Livet 1956, 608; Lung 1983, 121). From 1706, however, the farmers were provisioning the troops and continued until the end of the fighting in 1714. Boudard (referring to himself in the third person) explained how it happened: “since the revenue of the bishopric of Strasbourg which he handled provided itself a great quantity of grains, hay, oats and wine, and gave him a great deal of credit not only in Alsace but in nearby provinces, he was often called upon in the most pressing times, and he was delighted to lend at times grains to make bread for the troops which would have otherwise gone without, at times hay and oats to replenish the king's warehouses, and at times wine and also hay and oats for the *étapes* which also would have been deprived, and in the end the general contractors seeing that he could provide them great services asked him to contract with them, as he did in fact from 1706 to the year 1714 in which he provided almost all the supplies that were needed.”⁷⁶

The bishop's farmers mostly dealt directly with the *intendant* in Alsace (Le Pelletier de La Houssaye from 1701 to 1715), or else as subcontractors to the *entrepreneurs* or *munitionnaires généraux des vivres* for the armies of Flanders and Germany. One example is a contract between Nicolas Darche and the intendant in Alsace to supply 30,000 sacks of oats in the king's warehouses in Sélestat, Brisach and Strasbourg dated July 5, 1708. The sacks were delivered in two batches, 25,000 sacks in November 1708, for which the Secretary of War signed a payment order in March 1709, and another batch of 4,000 sacks in May 1709 for which another order was issued September 1709.⁷⁷

⁷⁵AD Bas-Rhin, G 2564; prices from MC xxxvi/303, 30 Nov 1701. The *rézal* represented $\frac{2}{3}$ setier or about 110 hl, the *foudre* about 1000l (Livet 1956, 507, 577).

⁷⁶AN V/7/36, n. 178.

⁷⁷AN V/7/36, n. 125; G/7/82, n. 6–12, n. 84, which includes copy of the contract and delivery receipts. Nicolas Darche de Tromcourt (d. 1728), later master of ironworks, is the only contractor named in the

Securing these contracts was relatively easy for the farmers of the bishop of Strasbourg, since Monmerqué was also one of the munitionnaires. For example, during winter quarters of 1709–10 and the campaign of 1710, he was one of the *munitionnaires généraux des vivres* for Flanders and Germany.⁷⁸ In January 1710, Boudard and Beyerlé signed a contract with one of the intendant's subordinates, the sub-délégué Baudouin, for delivery of 4000 rézoux of barley at market prices, out of the stocks of the bishopric. The delivery came at a crucial time when wheat stocks for the army were low, and allowed considerable savings by mixing the barley with wheat to make the troops' bread. Boudard remained very active in the following years, contracting to deliver 50,000 sacks of wheat and barley for the campaign of 1711.⁷⁹

3.5 *Dutot employee of Boudard*

Some of the distribution of salt, on which the bishop had a monopoly, was subcontracted by Boudard: for the bailiwicks of Benfeld to Joseph and Isaac Kahn in 1710, for the bailiwick of Dachstein to Baruch Weil in November 1708.⁸⁰ It is as witness to the last contract that Dutot first appears in Alsace, at the age of 24. He also appears three years later, with the qualification of *employé dans les affaires du Roy*, as witness to another contract by which Boudard sold a minor office in the *eaux et forêts*.⁸¹

We left Dutot as the bright son of a shipwright in the Cotentin, whose sharp mind and talent for numbers had been noticed by his family. How, then, did he leave his native Normandy? Without definite proof, I can offer two possible paths, both through Auber.

The first path starts from Saint-Malo. We know that Dutot was acquainted with, and trusted by, members of the Magon and Moreau families. Nicolas Magon de la Chipaudière and Guillaume Moreau de La Primeraye were both active in the South Sea trade (Dahlgren 1909) for which a company was formed in 1698, the *Compagnie de la Mer du Sud* founded in 1698 (Lévy 1980, 1:124–130). The prime mover of the new company was Jean Jourdan de Grouée, and among the shareholders, next to Magon

contract, but the correspondance makes clear that Boudard was his partner.

⁷⁸V/7/93, n. 549.

⁷⁹G/7/81, n. 275; G/7/82, n. 37–39, 82.

⁸⁰AD Bas-Rhin, 6 E 41/35, 29 Dec 1710, 29 Nov 1708.

⁸¹AD Bas-Rhin, 6 E 41/36, 12 Oct 1711.

de la Chipaudière, we recognize the names of Antoine Barrangue and that of Charles Boulanger, treasurer of the Estates of Brittany, who was, along with Auber and Jourdan, a shareholder of the *Compagnie de Salé*. Thus from Magon in Saint-Malo, whom Dutot knew, through Jourdan and Barrangue, we have a link to Auber. Dutot may even have found clerical employment in one or the other company, which would account for the impressive collection of books on travels in his library.

The other path is patterned on that taken by Auber himself. From an even smaller Norman village Auber rose through the ranks of the local salt and excise tax farms.⁸² And once he had made it to partner, he took care of his own: he brought to Alsace his nephew Fallet and Germain Bezuel, clearly another Norman. Although Dutot came from lower Normandy, it is still conceivable that a regional connection took him to Alsace.

The notion that Dutot began his career in the tax farms of Normandy finds some support in the contents of Dutot's library which I analyze below. The most common French imprint is Paris (787 titles), followed by Lyon (51 titles). Third comes Rouen with 39 titles, then Strasbourg with 7; the remaining 66 French imprints are scattered between 39 other towns. Some Rouen imprints can be explained: Vauban's treatise on the *dîme royale* happened to have been printed there. Others are a matter of regional content: no surprise in finding *Conquests and Trophies of French Normans* on Dutot's bookshelf. But what of a simple textbook, *Instructions de l'arithmétique* by Jacques Chauvet (1640, and another edition of 1686)? Dutot owned ten other books on arithmetic printed elsewhere. It is likely that these copies were bought in his youth, before he left Normandy. Another Rouen imprint is suggestive: *Exercice des Aydes en Normandie* (1674), a sort of field manual for employees of the excise tax farms (Stourm 1895, 38). Dutot also owned copies of the leases of the General Farms of 1664 and 1668, and the leases for the *gabelles* of 1674 and 1680. One might argue that this reflected his general interest in public finance, but he did not have copies of any later leases, in particular from the period that he studied in his works. It is more likely that these copies date from time he may have spent in the tax farms of Normandy.

However Dutot came to Alsace, he is in 1708 employed by Boudard, probably as an accountant or secretary.⁸³ Aside from the superb, notarial signature he adds as a

⁸²The case of André Haudry is an example of a remarkably quick rise through the farms: this fermier général was one of many children of a baker, put out to service to the local director of the *aides* who noticed his abilities and employed him in tax collection (Moufle d'Angerville 1781, 1:297; Durand 1971, 239).

⁸³Aside from a few bills of exchange drawn on him in 1715, Dutot never appears in the hundreds

witness to Boudard's leases (Figure 3), we find more clues on his duties in a remarkable document, the journal of Boudard's expenses from October 1712 to December 1714.⁸⁴ The diary begins with a trip from Strasbourg to Paris: Boudard and his wife were accompanied by Dutot and two other employees named Marthe and Du Hangest. The purpose of the trip was to secure provisioning contracts. Soon after their arrival, Boudard went to Versailles and bought Dutot an expensive black dress (150 livres), no doubt to make him presentable. Not long after, Boudard reimbursed Madame Monge, his lodger, for the purchase of a bed for Dutot: Boudard needed to have Dutot close by.

During the next six months Boudard made several trips to Versailles to negotiate contracts with the munitionnaires. On December 15 he secured a contract to deliver 50,000 sacks of wheat in Alsace. He apparently was sole contractor initially, with the advocate Charles-Henri Adam serving as cashier.⁸⁵ He then took Adam as a partner for a 30% share, and later ceded part of the contract for 15,000 sacks to Auber and an associate named Louis Bernard,⁸⁶ with the guarantee of the banker Pierre Romet the younger; later Auber and Bernard ceded their share to Nicolas Darche. Then, on May 23 he secures another contract with Fargès to deliver 20,000 sacks of oats and 30,000 quintaux of hay.⁸⁷ During this period he pays a total of 150 livres to Dutot, and also reimburses him for miscellaneous toiletry supplies. Boudard leaves Paris to return to Strasbourg with Dutot on June 10, and gives another 250 livres to Dutot "for his affairs." Dutot was rewarded handsomely for his services.

Five days after securing the contract for 50,000 sacks we see Boudard drawing 200,000 livres in bills of exchange on his banker Romet. On his return to Alsace,

of documents related to Boudard's affairs that I have seen or seen described. That he worked as an accountant is made likely by his subsequent career in Law's Bank, and by the presence of a manuscript attributed to him in the catalogue of his library, titled *le Devoir des Comptables*. Other manuscripts listed in the catalogue (*Projet des Comptes, Journal, Mémorial, Facture, Échéance des Traités & Livres de Caisse du Grand Livre, Grand Livre de Claude Dumont & Compagnie*) appear to be ledgers for a business I have not identified.

⁸⁴AD Bas-Rhin, G2561.

⁸⁵Adam, born on Jan 27, 1667 in Châlons-sur-Marne, the son of a lawyer. He was received as *avocat aux conseils du Roi* in Paris on March 1, 1704 (AN V/1/161). He married in 1703 Anne Marguerite Mignard, a great-niece of the famous painter Pierre Mignard, and died in Paris on Oct 24, 1729 (MC L1/869, 8 Nov 1729).

⁸⁶In September 1714 he is described in Boudard's journal as "the associate of Auber" (AD Bas-Rhin, G2561, fol. 151).

⁸⁷AD Bas-Rhin, G2561, fol. 7; V/7/36, n. 207 fol. 12r and 22r; V/7/36, n. 90, n. 69 fol. 138v and end, n.210.

Boudard busily financed his activities and settled the accounts of the various receivers of the revenues of the bishopric. Suddenly, on August 4, in the palace of the bishop in Saverne, Boudard was arrested on orders of “the minister” (of War?). The extravagant sum he paid for a special courier to send letters to his protectors, the bishop and the maréchal de Villars, suggest the concern Boudard must have felt. Boudard was freed the next day, went briefly to Lorraine and spent a month in Strasbourg. He returned to Paris in January 1714.

3.6 *Dutot’s marriage*

It is during the month of August 1713, under these stressful circumstances, that Dutot got married. The marriage contract was signed on August 16, and the ceremony took place on August 20 in a side chapel of the cathedral of Strasbourg called Saint-Laurent that served as parish church.⁸⁸ The bride was Marie Anne or Marianne⁸⁹ Marchand, daughter of Étienne Marchand, designated as a merchant (*négociant*) of Strasbourg, and Marguerite Bagrée. The bride’s father, who lived at the corner of the rue des Juifs and the rue du Dôme, just 150 feet north of the cathedral, may have come from Goussancourt (Aisne).⁹⁰ He was a barber by trade, and had spent in 1693 550 livres to purchase one of twelve newly created positions of barber in the city of Strasbourg.⁹¹ The profession of barber, whig-maker and bath-keeper (*barbier baigneur étuviste et perruquier*) had only been recently separated from that of surgeon, and organized into its own corporation, with a limit of the number of positions in each city. To raise funds, Louis XIV frequently sold off such positions; in the case of the barbers outside Paris, by edict of November 1691. We know a bit more about Marchand’s milieu and social position from the marriage contract of his younger daughter Anne Marie with Jean Maupinot, son of a draper of Reims.⁹² At this contract, the witnesses for the

⁸⁸AD Bas-Rhin, 6 E 41/36; registre paroissial, Saint-Laurent, 1713 (5 Mi 482/176). Dutot lived in the parish of Saint-Étienne, in the north-east corner of the city, not far away.

⁸⁹She indifferently signed “Marie” or “Marianne”.

⁹⁰When he died in 1720, his widow obtained wardship over their underage children in Goussancourt (MC LXXXVIII/484, 5 Aug 1723). He also owned real estate there and had a half-brother living in Goussancourt. Marguerite Bagrée’s background is unknown; she signed the marriage contract with a cross.

⁹¹AN V/1/83B, letters of 23 May 1693. The position was hereditary.

⁹²AD Bas-Rhin, 6 E 41/39, 24 Oct 1717. The other siblings were Marguerite Suzanne, who married François Polisse; Jean Philippe, born c1703; Jean Nicolas François, born c1706, died before 1741; and

bride were her cousin Pierre Marchand, barber, Maréchal also barber, Marc Pellicier a publican, and Claude La Croix *maître d'exercices* or training master. The groom's witnesses included a wine merchant, a legal clerk, and a tailor. The social milieu on the bride's side was that of small businesses and craftsmen, less impressive than that of the groom.

The dowry of Dutot's bride was 2,000 livres, payable half in cash and half within a year. Dutot brought his bride 1,000 livres for her jewelry. This suggests a quite reasonable establishment for the young couple, but it proved to be a strain on Marchand's means: he could only provide half of the dowry in cash and gave a promissory note for the rest. Moreover, when the younger daughter married in 1717 her parents felt compelled to provide an equal dowry, but did so with an inventory of housewares, a promise to pay the groom's rent for a year, and a further promise to buy more housewares for the young couple in the future.

The witnesses of the contract and at the marriage ceremony reveal that Dutot was by now an important employee in Boudard's affairs. On the marriage contract he bears the impressive title of *contrôleur général* of the revenues of the bishopric of Strasbourg. The contract, probably drafted in advance, named Boudard as witness but he did not sign. Another witness on both occasions is Vincent Loquet, styled *directeur* of the revenues of the bishopric. At the ceremony, Loquet was joined by Denis Garand, a prominent bread-maker who served as senator of Strasbourg for the community of bread-makers from 1706 to 1731, and had dealings with Boudard since he later appeared as one of his creditors for 26,400L.⁹³ Edme Boudard des Varennes added his signature on the marriage record.

Dutot's role in Alsace remains obscure. In spite of his title as controller, his name appears nowhere in the documents and accounts of the farms that I have seen. He does not seem to have been involved in any revenue collection. We do know that when Boudard left Alsace in late 1713, Dutot accompanied him to Nancy where Boudard entrusted him with 20,000 livres in letters of exchange that he had obtained, and unspecified orders.⁹⁴ We later find Dutot in July 1715 accepting letters of exchange drawn on him by Boudard and endorsed to a Jewish banker from Metz, Isaac Spir Levy,

Catherine Reine, born in 1709 or 1710, who married by contract of 16 May 1732 in Strasbourg Arnoult de la Gardelle, *entrepreneur des bâtiments du Roi* (AN Y4373, Y13092).

⁹³V/7/36, 173.

⁹⁴AD Bas-Rhin, G2561, fol. 61. These letters were later ceded to Monmerqué (MC xxxviii/142, 29 Jul 1715).

although this acceptance was apparently purely a convenience.⁹⁵ His position thus remained that of a clerk or an accountant based in Alsace.

3.7 *The collapse of Boudard's career*

Boudard continued the provisioning activities despite his brief arrest in August 1713. He arrived in Paris with his wife on December 20, 1713, and prepared himself for a nice life. The months of January and February 1714 were consumed in a shopping spree of furniture and housewares, and in October he settled rue Michel-le-Comte in a house he had bought.⁹⁶ At the same time he purchased a country house in Rungis, and hired an architect and a garden designer.⁹⁷ On Feb 7, 1714, after a dinner in the rue du Temple, a partnership was formed between Adam, Valentin-Gilles Damiens, Jean-Baptiste de Lagarde and Nicolas Darche to supply foodstuffs as subcontractors to the provisioning enterprise of Fargès; the cashier of the partnership was Loquet.⁹⁸ Soon after, on May 25, 1714, the bishop of Strasbourg signed a new 6-year lease of his revenues with Boudard and Monmerqué, the former remaining the bishop's procurator for the collection of revenues.⁹⁹

On November 21, 1714 Boudard bought a copy of the peace treaty that put an end to fourteen miserable war years.¹⁰⁰ The war been good to Boudard, but his climb on the ladder of the finance world had not reached the top rung. Peace meant that he would have to find other ventures, as Auber had done in 1700. In February 1715, he won at auction the right to cut down and sell wood belonging to the royal abbey of Lagny.¹⁰¹ He bought plots of land in Alsace, near the Bruche river, to establish a paper mill.¹⁰² As a side business, he also brought wine from his native country to Paris for

⁹⁵AN V/7/94, n. 905; see below.

⁹⁶(V/7/36, n. 158; AD Bas-Rhin, G2561, fol. 156.

⁹⁷AN V/7/36, n. 228.

⁹⁸V/7/36, n. 207, fol 12r ; see V/7/94, n.956. Damiens's role is unclear: by another deed dated of the same day he disclaimed any interest in the partnership. In 1718 Loquet claimed to be owed 344,213 livres by the partnership.

⁹⁹AD Bas-Rhin, G451.

¹⁰⁰AD Bas-Rhin, G2561, fol. 175.

¹⁰¹AN V/7/36, n. 76. Valentin Gilles Damiens was his surety.

¹⁰²In July 1712 and May 1714 he bought pieces of land and in the second half of 1714 had the paper-mill

various acquaintances such as Monmerqué as his son-in-law Fourolles.¹⁰³

Boudard's partnership with Monmerqué, who was well protected by the finance minister Desmarests, should have given him high hopes. But he was a prudent man, and in June and July 1715 he began dispersing the securities he owned in the hands of various associates as collateral for loans, fictitious or real.¹⁰⁴ This was in vain: Louis XIV died in September 1715, Desmarests was dismissed soon after, and within months Boudard suffered two blows. The first was the declaration of December 1715, which subjected all the debts arising from the provisioning of troops during the recent wars to a visa, in order to reduce them. The second was the creation of the Chamber of Justice created by edict of March 1716 to purge the accounts of Louis XIV's last two wars and pursue malfeasance among financiers and war profiteers.¹⁰⁵

This Chamber, modeled on similar ones established in 1607, 1624, and 1661, was a special court established in Paris, with the power to impose civil and criminal penalties up to and including death. The court sat from March 12, 1716 until its abolition on March 22, 1717. The first proceedings produced some spectacular sentences. Among the victims of the Chamber who made the headlines we recognize some names. In March 1716 Barrangue and Lenormand were accused of having forged a decree of the king's council; Barrangue, as a *secrétaire du Roi*, had authenticated a copy. Barrangue was found to have been an unwitting victim and only fined 10,000 livres in alms, but Lenormand was given a life sentence in the galleys. Then in May, Paparel was accused of having stolen 1,200,000 livres. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to death, although the Regent commuted the sentence to life in prison (Ravel 1928, 73–80).

After this shot across the bow, the government offered the financiers a way out in September 1716. The King's council, based on financial statements made by the suspects, drew up lists of names and taxes assessed on each. Those who paid the tax would be cleared. The names were published and widely publicized (Buvat 1865, 1:188–190, 197–227).

On December 12, 1716 Boudard was assessed at one million livres.¹⁰⁶ This was an

with three mills built (AN V/7/36, n. 225, 57).

¹⁰³AD Bas-Rhin, G2561 fol. 48, 71.

¹⁰⁴AN V/7/36, n. 125.

¹⁰⁵Boudard's own account of his misfortunes, AN V/7/36, n. 178. On the chambre de justice, see Mazarine 2347–48; BN Fr 7584–92; NAF 332, 245, 8442–46; AN U/2506; G/7/1837; Ravel (1928).

¹⁰⁶BN Fr 7587.

enormous sum: it ranked fifteenth among the taxes imposed by that date, and was three times the average tax imposed by the Chambre. Boudard's tax was far larger than those imposed on a number of more important financiers such as the farmers general. His associate Monmerqué was only taxed at 480,000 livres, later reduced to 180,000 livres.¹⁰⁷ Adam was only taxed at 10,000 livres, Romet at 15,000 livres (Lüthy 1959–1961, 1:286). Since the statements made by Boudard have not survived, there is no way to know why his tax was so high. We only know the general method for assessing the tax: it was based on the reported wealth and the degree of favor to be shown to the individual, based on his characteristics. For those who declared between one and two millions, those favorably treated were left with 500,000 livres, those unfavorably treated with 200,000 livres.¹⁰⁸ Also, the main purpose of the taxes was not to recover cash, but to find legal ways of reducing the government's floating debt to its wartime suppliers of credit and goods; hence individuals who declared large amounts of government debt were more likely to be taxed heavily.

It immediately became apparent that Boudard's affairs were too complex to allow him to make the payment, because many of his assets were pledged in the hands of creditors. This, according to Boudard, was a consequence of the king's refusal to pay his debts, which forced him to pledge his assets, oftentimes at a high ratio to the value of the loan because of their heavily discounted market value, in order to raise cash and meet his commitments as farmer of the bishopric of Strasbourg. According to government officials, these loans were fictitious and merely designed to park Boudard's assets out of the government's reach.¹⁰⁹ A commission of the King's Council was created on January 19, 1717 in effect to carry out bankruptcy proceedings.¹¹⁰ The following years were spent in a game of hide-and-seek. Boudard on March 15 deposited a few assets (mainly evidences of the government's debts to him) and receipts from various individuals who had received his other securities. The commission summoned these individuals to surrender the securities, which they did slowly over time. Meanwhile, Boudard's creditors signed in September 1718 a contract to act together and appoint a few of their number as directors of their interests. Adam and Romet, who had declared themselves as creditors, were designated to assist the directors. Later, in 1726, Damiens

¹⁰⁷Arrêt du conseil Apr 18, 1719 (AN E2005, fol. 516).

¹⁰⁸AN G/7/1837, n. 91.

¹⁰⁹AN V/7/36, n. 178: Boudard's version, n. 217 the government's version.

¹¹⁰The minutes of the commission (AN V/7/36) is a main source of information on Boudard's career.

was appointed as director of the creditors.

Boudard died on March 14, 1722 in Molsheim, where he had moved in May 1721 in a house rented from Loquet. The burial certificate was signed by Loquet and Destouches, another employee.¹¹¹ Boudard's brothers Jean and François, and the tutor of his niece Geneviève Lenoir (who was his former associate Beyerlé) renounced their rights to the succession and instead declared themselves creditors. A curator was appointed to the estate, and the proceedings continued. Boudard's assets, both real and personal, were sold off as they came into the commission's hands. All the creditors' claims were inventoried. A final judgment was handed down in 1736, determining the order in which the creditors, including the king, were to be paid off from the liquidation of the estate, but it is unlikely the king's treasury obtained much, since the sale of his few assets did not bring much cash. The house in Saverne was sold for 6000L in 1727, the house in Rungis for 2300L in 1725, the office of director of the Strasbourg mint for 15,000L in 1725.¹¹²

Dutot makes a brief appearance during these proceedings, on the occasion of one transaction in which he was involved. On July 28, 1715 Boudard had drawn bills of exchange on Dutot in Metz to the amount of 22,400 livres, payable to Bruillard, another employee of Boudard, who immediately endorsed them to the Jewish banker Isaac Spir Levy. Levy had sued Dutot in Metz and obtained a sentence against him, but Dutot claimed that the letters were drawn on him only for business purposes and that recent legislation (a decree of December 4, 1717) discharged the employees of the contractors of any personal obligation.¹¹³ Dutot filed a request before the commission through the office of Boudard's old partner, the advocate Adam; the commission found in his favor and he was discharged.

4 The Chamber of Justice of 1716–17

We do not know when Dutot left his position in Strasbourg, although we know that he was still employed in July 1715 when he accepted the letters of exchange. By 1717, however, we find him working as a chief clerk (*directeur*) of the Chamber of Justice. The skills he had acquired as an employee of Boudard made him well suited for this

¹¹¹AD Bas-Rhin, parish registers, Molsheim, 1722; AN V/7/36, n. 227, after-death inventory.

¹¹²AN V/7/36, n. 11, 47, 16.

¹¹³AN V/7/94, n. 905; the decree is in AN E 1993, fol. 234-239. Among Romet's papers was a letter from Boudard asking him to draw 30,000 to 40,000L on Dutot in Metz (AN MC xxxiii/485, 19 Jul 1740).

job: he knew where the bodies were buried. Unfortunately for Dutot, it seems that he succumbed the temptation of bribery.

Shortly after the abolition of the Chamber, on April 20, 1717, King's orders were given for the arrest of one Robert Ciceron, curator (*procureur fiscal*) of one of the possessions of the archbishop of Bordeaux in Languedoc. Ciceron must have been an old acquaintance of Boudard: he was a notary in Lagrasse, whose abbot was the bishop of Bordeaux, and we know that Boudard had been in Lagrasse in 1702. Moreover, Ciceron had borrowed 7088L from Boudard in 1704 and 1706.¹¹⁴ Ciceron was arrested on the evening of April 21 and imprisoned in the Bastille, and interrogated on April 24 by the *lieutenant de police*, Marc-René Le Voyer d'Argenson.¹¹⁵ Another accomplice was arrested by orders of April 20, namely Charles-Damien Foucault, a prominent notary who had served as alderman (*échevin*) of Paris; I have not found a direct link to Boudard, but we may note that Foucault was the successor of the notary Robillard who had notarized the lease of the revenues of Strasbourg in 1701. Foucault was freed a few days later on April 28.¹¹⁶

Another order, for the arrest of "Dutaut", was issued on April 23, but he was not apprehended before April 27, for unknown reasons.¹¹⁷ When he arrived at the Bastille the contents of his pockets were inventoried: he had 210L in gold coins, 22.45L in silver and small coins, a case of instruments, a silver corkscrew, glasses, a silver watch, a silver seal, a clasp-knife, eight small keys and some papers.¹¹⁸

The reason given for the arrest was that the accomplices had formed an association to solicit bribes in exchange for reducing taxes imposed by the Chamber of Justice. The notary's role was to hold the monies.¹¹⁹ The personal involvement of the *lieutenant-général de police* suggests how serious the matter was. But the police files are suspiciously empty, as if they had been purged at a later date: aside from imprisonment orders nothing remains, in particular the interrogations are missing. Did Dutot actually reduce

¹¹⁴AN V/7/36, n. 165; Blaquièrre (1945, 26).

¹¹⁵AN Y14638; Arsenal 10629, n. 67.

¹¹⁶Arsenal 10630, n. 202 and 203.

¹¹⁷Arsenal 10629, n. 391. Although the name was misspelled on the warrant, the individual is clearly identified in the police file as "Nicolas Dutot, clerk of M Boudard receiver of the bishopric of Strasbourg and since one of the directors of the Chamber of Justice, originally from Barneville in the diocese of Coutances" (A a/6, Bastille, III 692-693).

¹¹⁸Arsenal, Bastille 12479, fol. 29.

¹¹⁹Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris, A a/6, Bastille, III 692-693.

the assessed taxes? If so, was it out of friendship for his former employees such as Boudard, or was it out of greed as alleged? Since there was no trial, we cannot say for sure.

After staying in the Bastille for five months¹²⁰ Dutot was freed on September 8, 1717, but ordered to remain in his home (*son pays*) Barneville. He was allowed to return to Paris (Feb 23, 1718) for a period of three months. The permission was extended twice, on May 24 and August 19, after which point the affair appears to end.¹²¹ But we may believe that this brush with the law had a lasting impact on him. Of the very few paintings listed in his after-death inventory, one represents Saint Peter leaving his jail.

5 Dutot and Law's Bank (1720–23)

The next known stage in Dutot's career, aside from the dealings with Levy, is his involvement in John Law's Bank in 1720. How he got the job is unknown. Even the exact nature of his duties has been the subject of confusion. In a later text defending his management of the Bank and Company, Law incidentally mentioned Dutot as a "commis de la Compagnie qui tenoit la correspondance avec les directeurs des monnoies de provinces" (Law 1790, 417). On a manuscript copy of this text by Dutot, Murphy found a marginal note in which Dutot rejected this identification as incorrect and claimed to have been the under-treasurer and to have handled all the duties of the general treasury of the Bank. Elsewhere, Dutot elaborated that this under-treasurer had been appointed on January 30, 1720 by the treasurer Bourgeois who did not wish to burden himself any longer with the detail of his position, and that this under-treasurer produced all bank notes and delivered them to the bank's various cashiers (Dutot 2000, xxv–xxvii, 370).

5.1 *Dutot's role in the Bank*

Whatever Dutot's claims about his role, the surviving documents do not assign him any function other than having been "chargé par le sieur Bourgeois trésorier de la Banque de

¹²⁰Voltaire, who arrived two weeks after Dutot for having suggested that the Regent had committed incest, stayed nearly a year.

¹²¹AN, O/1/61 fol 136; O/1/62 fol. 32, 112, 176. It was during this period that he returned to Paris and filed his petition before the commission to be discharged of his debt to the Jewish banker from Metz.

la recette et distribution générale des billets de Banque timbrez du mot de division.”¹²²

The notes stamped “division” were small denomination notes of 10L and 100L (and later 50L), issued from June 26, 1720 for exchange against large-denomination notes of 1,000L and 10,000L. At the time confidence in Law’s System was already collapsing, and the last thing Law wanted was to be seen to increase the supply of notes. Hence the orders were that these “division” notes were not to increase the total, but be used only to retire existing notes, which were then burned. The initial issue of 100 million L was supplemented three times, on September 2, 19, and October 13, for a total of 246.84 million L, a little less than 10% of all notes issued (Dutot 2000, 372).

This operation seems quite straightforward, and Dutot’s account ought to have been simple enough to give: on one hand the small denomination notes printed, sealed, and issued; on the other the large denomination notes canceled and burned. But Law’s text, and Dutot’s marginal note, reveal that there was more.

In the summer of 1720, while John Law’s System was collapsing, the Regent approved a plan to buy back shares of the Company on the market using bank notes. The logic of the proposal was that shares were supposed to earn about 4 or 5% while notes were convertible into 2% bonds, so retiring shares reduced expenses. This, however, ran against the official policy of reducing the amount of notes in circulation. The operation was not publicized, but entrusted to Noël Danycan de Landivisiau (1686–1730), a government official who had been appointed with two others to supervise the Bank and the Company on June 20, 1720. Landivisiau happened to be the son of Noël Danycan de L’Espine, a prominent merchant of Saint-Malo and co-founder of the *Compagnie de la Mer du Sud* with Jean Jourdan.

5.2 *Dutot’s quarrel with his manager*

As part of the liquidation of Law’s System, the king created on April 7, 1721 a commission to inventory the papers of the Compagnie des Indes and the Bank. The minutes of the commission’s proceedings, which worked from April 18, 1721 to March 18, 1723, show the commissioners walking through every department of the Bank and the Indies Company, being met by the chief clerk of each office.

On April 23, the commissioners made a first visit to the Bank, where they entered “the place formerly known as the Treasury” and were met by Dutot. He presented

¹²²AN V/7/235, fol. 16r. Dutot reappears several times in the document and is given no other title or function, except as clerk (*commis*) of the treasurer Bourgeois.

his ledger, the minutes of the destruction of the exchanged notes. He also presented three bundles of vouchers and a handwritten list of orders signed by Law which he had turned over in December 1720 to one of the directors of the Company to be approved by the Regent, and which had not been returned to him. Dutot later obtained the documents (not without some difficulty), but upon checking the contents of the folder he found that one was missing. He submitted the rest to the commissioners on May 16: they consisted in orders dated from September 20 to December 12, 1720, and he assured them that they could find trace of the missing order in other registers. A month later, he returned to the commissioners with a rather bizarre story. A capuchin monk, brother Ange Marie, librarian of the Paris convent, had contacted one of the cashiers of the Company seeking Dutot's address to see him on a matter "of the greatest import." The monk brought Dutot the missing order, which Dutot now provided to the commissioners, along with a statement by the monk verifying this cloak-and-dagger story. The missing document was an order by Law to purchase thirty shares from the bearer for 240,000 livres, dated December 11, 1720, three days before Law left France.¹²³

The commissioners returned to Dutot's office on May 8 and spent five days on a detailed inventory of these documents, as well as bundles of large-denomination notes that had been exchanged but not yet burned.¹²⁴ On May 13 an extraordinary dispute arose in the presence of the commissioners. Dutot was presenting two bundles each of eight 1000L canceled notes, which the treasurer Bourgeois declared to be counterfeits. Dutot protested that he could not be held responsible for the loss, and went on to explain the procedure used at the Bank to exchange worn notes from the public: it turns out that the notes were not compared with the registers until after they had been exchanged, and he had been ordered to continue in this fashion when he was assigned to the exchange of large for small notes. Bourgeois replied that it was not his responsibility to examine the contents of Dutot's account. Dutot then proclaimed that "he had never carried out any operation but under the eyes and on the orders of Mr. Bourgeois whose clerk he was" (*il n'a jamais fait aucune opération que sous les yeux et les ordres du Sr Bourgeois dont il estoit commis*). Bourgeois then boldly denied having ever given Dutot any order or having put him in charge of that account; on this note the dispute ended and the commissioners recorded the statements. Bourgeois' statement seems incredible. It remains that, in the presence of the King's commissioners, Dutot

¹²³AN V/7/235, fol. 55v-73v, 70v-73v, 105r-106r.

¹²⁴On August 28, he presented again the same documents as well as a bundle of 223 vouchers for his accounts (AN V/7/235, fol. 15v-17v, 55v-68r, 160v-161v).

was not eager to claim the great responsibilities he would assign himself many years later when presenting his position as a knowledgeable insider of the Bank.

The dispute between Dutot and Bourgeois continued with another bizarre episode. On September 14, 1721 the Regent had allocated the buildings formerly used by the Bank to the King's Library (Balayé 1988, 185). It was necessary to immediately vacate the premises, and for this purpose Bourgeois, accompanied by the Bank's former inspector Fenellon and controller du Revest, went on a Sunday morning to move papers and documents from certain rooms. Later that day, they summoned a police inspector to the Bank and told him the following story. As he sat down at a desk to write, he noticed something hidden under the cloth cover, and found a dozen or more orders from Landivisiau to the clerks of the bureau in charge of division notes, to issue small notes to specified individuals. He thought they would be very useful in his dispute with Dutot and, having shown them to du Revest, left them on the table and went home to fetch some documents. Meanwhile, Dutot arrived to join in the work, and when asked to open the chests of his office he showed that they were empty, because he had moved all his papers to his home, for which the inspector took him to task. Then, without a word to anyone, he took the orders on the table, locked them up in one of his chests, and left. When Bourgeois returned and asked where the papers were he was told what happened: furious, he sent a lackey to summon Dutot, but the lackey returned having found only Dutot's wife and left word with her. Having waited in vain, they summoned the inspector and filed a complaint. They also recalled that, a few weeks earlier, Dutot had asked du Revest for access to these rooms and shown displeasure when the controller replied that he could only do so in the presence of Bourgeois and Fenellon. Dutot, they thought, had been trying to lay his hands on the papers.¹²⁵

What makes this strange tale even more curious is that, a few days later, Bourgeois and du Revest delivered the orders to the commissioners, but made no mention whatsoever of Dutot. Instead, they said that on Monday around noon, they went to the Bank along with the king's architect, the marquis de Lambert (who had an apartment in the building), and the janitor who, they now said, was the one who found the papers and showed them to du Revest. The papers were inventoried and kept by the commissioners: they consisted in twenty-two orders dated between July 9 and August 27, 1720, totalling a little over 6.3 million L.¹²⁶

¹²⁵AN Y10975B, 5 Oct 1721.

¹²⁶AN V/7/235, fol. 184v–187v. There is a discrepancy between the description of the papers made to the police inspector: twelve or fifteen orders to Dutot, Petiot, Lesueur and Tocquigny, and the papers given

What can we make of this story? The account by Bourgeois to the police inspector does not make complete sense (if he thought the papers important, why did he leave them on a table? If Dutot said nothing to anyone, how did du Revest know what had happened to the papers?), and the discrepancy with the account to the commissioners is hard to explain. Nor is it clear why Dutot would want to steal papers that he needed to submit with his accounts.

There is no further trace of the dispute between Bourgeois and Dutot. Bourgeois retired a wealthy man, and Dutot's remark that Bourgeois had appointed him "in order to give himself the leisure of finding ways to preserve his fortune" (Dutot 2000, 370; my translation) betrays a lingering bitterness.

5.3 *Dutot saved*

After explaining the share purchase program, Dutot added that it had later been an obstacle to closing his accounts, but that it had been removed without any move on his part, and his account closed as he had presented it. The note leaves one with the impression that Dutot was completely vindicated. Dutot's accounts were closed, but it took considerable effort, if not on his part.

A better understanding of Dutot's awkward position can be garnered from a series of memoranda by the Paris brothers in which they detailed the manner in which they tried to save the Company from assuming the liabilities of the Bank and going bankrupt.¹²⁷ A total of 260 million small denomination "division" notes had been authorized, of which 246 millions were printed and sealed. To account for them, Dutot had proof that 100 millions large-denomination notes had been burned, and he held another 45 millions duly canceled but not yet burned. That left 101 millions unaccounted for. These notes, as we know, had been used to purchase shares on the open market. Also, Dutot had been ordered in September 1720 to take 68.43 millions in notes retired in exchange for bank accounts. These notes were also used, on Law's orders and under the supervision of Landivisiau, to purchase shares. Both operations were perfectly illegal, in direct contravention of the decrees that created the division notes and the bank accounts; and Dutot was now technically accountable for 156,900,500 livres representing the capital losses incurred on the shares which were now worth much less than the face value he

to the commissioners. The orders are preserved in the same box.

¹²⁷AN M1025, *premier recueil*, p. 8, 21, 73, 74.

had paid out in banknotes (another 18.5 millions had been directly handed over to the Indies Company).

The Paris brothers, whose job was to salvage the Indies company which had been saddled with the Bank's liabilities, were not interested in putting the blame on clerks: their goal was to find a clean way to paper over the loss and allow the Indies Company to disentangle itself from the Bank and continue as a going concern. They finally arranged for the Company to issue a receipt to Dutot for the amount in question which Dutot could submit to Bourgeois to render his account, and the receipt was folded into the 500 million loss owed by the Company to the Crown on account of the Bank, ultimately written off by the Crown in 1725. On July 10, 1723 a series of orders were approved by the Regent instructing various clerks to turn over all their accounts and documents to the Company's archivist and officially discharging them of their liability. Dutot's own order, dated July 20, was among the papers inventoried at his death. This precious discharge closed that chapter of his life without any detrimental consequences. It is not clear whether Dutot knew how much he owed to the man he would later bitterly debate, Paris-Duverney.¹²⁸

5.4 *Dutot and Law*

The d'Argenson archives in Poitiers contain a lengthy manuscript by Dutot which, on internal evidence, dates from April or May 1720.¹²⁹ Titled *Réflexions sur le nouveau Système des finances*, it is an enthusiastic apology for Law: "I know that I am blamed for having as maxim carefully to praise what is praiseworthy in the present government, to excuse what can be excused, and to say also what could be added to make it more perfect." It was clearly a first draft, since he expected comments from friends, but he argued that confidence in the System must be shored up right away and its transitory inconveniences looked over in view of the long-term benefits it would ultimately provide. He fully endorses Law's views that money creation will stimulate the economy, that paper money is preferable to metallic money which should be banned, and that shares are a superior form of money since they pay dividends. Lack of confidence would disappear when Frenchmen become used to paper money. He explained away

¹²⁸They may well have known each other, having been in the same line of business: Paris-Duverney worked for the *munitionnaires* of the armies of Germany and stopped several times in Strasbourg during the War of Spanish Succession.

¹²⁹Bibliothèque universitaire de Poitiers - Fonds d'Argenson, P18/II. Some passages appear verbatim in his later manuscript (Dutot 2000, 223–224).

incipient inflation by special factors such as the influx of foreigners in Paris or the bad harvests of 1719, and argued that increased prosperity will more than compensate for the rise in prices which would be limited by competition. He was not concerned by the revolutionary aspects of the System: change is not always bad, the general good must be preferred over private interests. Caution is advisable when conflicting interests need to be reconciled, but when authority is concentrated there is no reason to delay.

The text clearly shows how fully Dutot embraced the program of Law, without reservations. Dutot was 35 years old at the time, young enough to be durably impressed by this “genius of the first order” as he calls him. It was only with hindsight that Dutot came to be more critical of Law.

6 Later life

6.1 *Investments*

The aftermath of Law’s System had, for Dutot as well as for hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen, direct consequences. Part of Law’s scheme had been to convert the national debt into shares of the Indies Company; the scheme began to unravel in June 1720, and the government issued new perpetual annuities to begin absorbing the mass of notes and bonds issued by Law, followed by life annuities in August 1720. The subscription to these annuities remained open until January 1721, when the process was halted. Rather than repudiate the debt, the government decided to implement a plan devised by the Paris brothers: all holders of the liabilities of the System were to submit claims to a Visa, or inspection, at the end of which they would either be issued certificates convertible into annuities, or else their existing annuities would be reduced. The rate of conversion or reduction depended on the size of the holdings and the way in which they had been acquired (Velde 2008).

Dutot invested in government annuities in late October and early November 1720. On October 20, he spent 50,000 livres to purchase 1250 livres in perpetual annuities. He did this through an intermediary named Jacques Houarnet, who the same day stated that true owners of the sum were Dutot and his wife.¹³⁰ Then, on October 21 and November 14, his wife bought four life annuities of 1000 livres each, for a total price of 100,000 livres.¹³¹ Both the life and the perpetual annuities were submitted to the

¹³⁰MC LXXXVIII/477, 30 June 1721.

¹³¹The life annuities were formally contracted on the life of Marianne Marchand and the perpetual

Visa and reduced in October 1722 by half. The life annuities were further reduced, like all others, in May 1727 by 1/6.¹³² This left Dutot and his wife with 1,667 livres in life annuities and 625 livres in perpetual annuities, providing him with sufficient income to live comfortably.

This sum of 150,000 livres is sizeable. We also know from his inventory that on March 12, 1721 Dutot deposited 100,000 livres in bank notes with his friend the banker Pierre Romet (Boudard's former banker), acknowledging that the real value of these notes was only 13,960 livres. The market value of notes on that date was about 7% of face value, so it is likely that the deposit was actually made at earlier, at the end of November 1720 when notes were worth around 14%.¹³³ But by March 1721 it was too late to invest the notes in annuities, the subscription having closed in January. presumably, Dutot was anxious not to be found holding this large sum in cash, and the banker Romet could more easily account for it by the nature of his business.

How did Dutot acquire 250,000 livres in cash? The fact that the perpetual and life annuities were reduced by half in 1722 indicates that they fell in one of two categories defined by the rules of the Visa. The 150,000 livres that Dutot used to purchase them came either from real estate (land, houses or offices) sold after September 1719, or from sale of personal estate, shop inventories, repayments on bills of exchange or debt reimbursements made before 1719, or finally specie brought to the Bank or the Mints during 1720, a rather vague category for which no documentation was needed, and which was used by many who could not otherwise account for their wealth.¹³⁴ We can't tell under which category Dutot declared his assets, but one cannot escape the feeling that Dutot somehow did well for himself as employee of the Bank. When he replied to Paris-Duverney that "if cashiers and clerks of the Bank have enriched themselves as you say, it was by means permitted and authorized by the government, none were found guilty of corruption in court" (Dutot [1738] 1935, 2:246), it seems that he is speaking on his own behalf. Dutot did well by Law's System.

Dutot's financial activities did not end in 1721. In January and September 1725,

annuity under the name of Jacques Houarnet (MC LXXXVIII/983, 5 Feb 1721; MC LXXXVIII/977, 5 Apr 1721).

¹³²AN MC LXXXVIII/983, 5 Feb 1721.

¹³³In 1725 Dutot tried to collect on this debt but was unable to have court rulings against Romet enforced. Pierre Romet died in debtor's prison on March 30, 1740; Dutot made his claim known but was unable to collect anything (AN Y14526, 31 Mar 1740; MC xxxiii/485, 19 Jul 1740).

¹³⁴*Lettres sur le Visa*, musée Dubois-Corneau, Brunoy, mss 731, fol. 181.

Dutot lent to a German merchant named André Firnkranz (Fürnkranz) 17 shares of the Indies Company until March 1727. Firnkranz, who had been involved in provisioning activities for the French armies and was in Paris to settle his accounts, needed them to satisfy an obligation he had toward a man named Lagrange. In March 1726 Firnkranz handed to Dutot as collateral a bill for 15,000 livres signed Taxis and 9430L 10s in *billets des vivres*. Firnkranz failed to return the shares and Dutot sued him in March 1728 before the special commission created in 1719 to handle all litigation related to shares. The commission found for Dutot and declared Firnkranz liable for 24,225 livres (the value of the shares and dividends), and ordered that the bills that Dutot held as securities be sold on the market. Firnkranz appealed twice but without success.¹³⁵

In his last writings Dutot declared that he owned only government annuities, and no shares.¹³⁶ This was not quite strictly accurate. Aside from the life annuity, he owned a small life annuity of 55 livres obtained through the Indies Company's lottery of March 1725.¹³⁷ He also owned a few debts that were probably uncollectable but give an inkling of his dealings in the 1720s. For example, he held a bill for 40,670 livres on the bankers Hogguer and Studer (Lüthy 1959–1961, 1:175, 240) from 1723 and 1724, and another for 1496 livres on the banker Abraham Worms dated 1722, both of which remained uncollected in spite of sentences against the debtors. It also appears that he entered into a partnership with Horutner, a linen dealer in Rouen (Dardel 1966, 153, 214).

6.2 *Friends and Acquaintances*

When Dutot's father-in-law died around October 1720, his widow was appointed ward for their underage children on October 26, and she moved to Paris in Dutot's lodgings. She died there on July 6, 1723, leaving little wealth aside from a share in the Indies Company, of which she owned seven eighths and her son-in-law one eighth. Since several siblings of Dutot's wife were still minors, Dutot was appointed to be their ward on the advice of family and friends.¹³⁸

¹³⁵AN V/7/220, 22 Jun 1728, 14 Dec 1728, 11 Jan 1729. Fürnkranz was originally from Ulm (Lüthy 1959–1961, 2:163), where a Sigismund Fürnkranz (1695–1765) was merchant and city alderman (Schmidbauer 1963, 198).

¹³⁶“je déclare ici sincèrement que je n'ay pas une action et que je ne possède aucun autre bien que des rentes sur la ville” (Dutot [1738] 1935, 2:236).

¹³⁷MC LXVIII/490, 20 Mar 1725.

¹³⁸MC LXXXVIII/484, 5 Aug 1723, *inventaire après décès*; AN Y4373, sentence du 20 juillet 1723. Two friends of the family I have not identified are Philippe Regnard, who was appointed substitute ward (who may

The document reveals that, as of 1723, Dutot's main acquaintances belonged to the crowd of associates of Boudard. Among the family friends were Boudard's partners Valentin Gilles Damiens and Charles-Henri Adam (who, as we saw, was also his lawyer), and Boudard's banker Pierre Romet. We also find a man named François-Marie Chautart with whom Boudard parked 5093L in various bills on May 15, 1713 and retrieved them on Oct 10, 1716.¹³⁹

The list of family friends also includes Claude Groux, a banker who later became *receveur des consignations*, *payeur des rentes*, and treasurer of the duchess of Orléans (widow of the Regent).¹⁴⁰ Since Groux lent 300 livres to Dutot's widow to cover household expenses after Dutot's death, he must have been a close acquaintance of the couple.

The list of Dutot's debts at his death also reveals a number of acquaintances. We know from Dutot's only surviving letter (see below) that he counted as a friend Simon MÉRARD (he described him as "homme aussi prudent que sage et sur l'amitié duquel je compte beaucoup"). They must have known each other for a long time, since MÉRARD had been employed by the Indies Company since at least 1721.¹⁴¹ At his death on Feb. 1, 1751, he was one of three cashiers of the Indies Company under the cashier general, in charge of cash operations (*caissier du comptant*), the others being in charge of dividends and interest. He had done quite well for himself, and in 1737 he acquired the office of *trésorier payeur des gages de la chancellerie du parlement de Rouen*. In the 1740s, he took part in a number of tax farms and army supply enterprises, like those of Auber and Boudard. Shortly before his death, in July 1750, he bought the lordship of Saint-Just near Beauvais; his son Simon-Pierre (c1741-1812) took the name MÉRARD de Saint-Just and, living off the family fortune, earned a brief reputation as a bibliophile and writer of light and licentious verse.¹⁴²

Dutot also owed money to the bankers Labhard and Vernet,¹⁴³ and to François-

be the "marchand" who lived rue de la Monnaie, AN Z/1j/545, 7 dec 1720) and François Joachim Gilbert, both residents of Paris.

¹³⁹AN V/7/36, n. 207, fol. 12v.

¹⁴⁰He was born on Nov 30, 1687 and died in Paris on March 8, 1748 (AN V/1/274, n. 263; Y14073; the records of the notary who inventoried his estate are lost). Originally a banker, he married Jeanne Charlotte de Lafaulche, daughter of a *payeur des rentes* whose office he inherited in 1728.

¹⁴¹AN V/7/235, fol. 195r.

¹⁴²AN MC XLVIII/97, 6 Feb 1751.

¹⁴³See Lüthy (1959–1961, 2:214–228) on Labhard and Vernet; the debt must have been recent because the

Adam d'Holbach (d. 1753), a prominent *agent de change* and famous *mississipien*, that is, a speculator enriched during Law's System, closely tied to Strasbourg banking circles; his nephew and adopted son would become the famous atheist philosopher Paul Tiry d'Holbach (Lüthy 1959–1961, 1:340–342, 2:326).

The common thread through almost all of Dutot's creditors is d'Holbach. He began his Parisian career in the offices of the banker Labhard. We find him among the creditors of Claude Groux at his death. MÉRARD and d'Holbach were linked in various ways. MÉRARD was a partner in tax farms with Nicolas Daine, husband of d'Holbach's niece (it was Daine who appeared at the inventory of Dutot to present d'Holbach's claims); and in 1739 we find d'Holbach and MÉRARD investing together in the Spanish fleet through the Malouin bankers Magon frères and Le Fer of Cádiz.¹⁴⁴ Finally, let us note that d'Holbach's *notaire* and family friend (he was a witness to the marriage of d'Holbach's nephew the philosopher) was none other than Charles-Damien Foucault, Dutot's accomplice in the Chamber of Justice affair.

Dutot also remained physically close to these people. In 1721 he lived rue Gaillon; in 1722 and 1723 rue du Temple, and in 1725 he had moved to what would be his final dwelling rue Croix des Petits-Champs; all these addresses were in the financial district (MÉRARD lived rent-free in the building of the Indies Company, around the corner on the rue Neuve des Petits-Champs).

Taken together, these scraps of evidence suggest that Dutot was still engaging in commercial and financial speculation through the mid-1720s, and remained in close contacts with the banking milieu if not the financier milieu.

6.2.1 Dutot and the “gens d'affaires”

Paris-Duverney, Harsin (Dutot [1738] 1935, 1:xxv–xxvi) and Murphy (Dutot 2000, lii–lvii) have posed Dutot as a fierce critic of the *ancienne finance*, a term which seems to include essentially all those who lent to the government or derived their income from their role in public finance. The debate between Dutot and Paris-Duverney was but a battle between the traditional finance and the innovative methods of Law. There are indeed many passages where Dutot contrasts commerce and *finance*. It is therefore surprising to discover that Dutot spent his formative years working in the midst of the

banking partnership started around 1739.

¹⁴⁴MC XLVIII/98, 20 March 1751. The only other creditor of Dutot (aside from his landlord and various providers of bread, wine and firewood) was an attorney named Léger de Beaupoil.

ancienne finance, ran in with the law while (allegedly) trying to help financiers avoid the king's justice, and even not surprising to find that, after becoming a disciple of Law, he remained closely tied to that milieu. Perhaps we should revisit Dutot's views.

In fact Dutot explicitly rejected the idea that he held special animosity against financiers (Dutot [1738] 1935, 2:290–292). He also strongly condemned the visas and special courts that targeted them (and for which he once worked) because “there is a manifest injustice to attempt . . . to take back goods which were only acquired by consent, and in virtue of contracts made with the King himself” (Dutot 1739, 41–42). In his unpublished response to Paris-Duverney, he added that “jealousy and animosity against those who have made quick fortunes are more in play here than actual usefulness: special courts of justice and visas have none, it was much less a matter of avenging past ills than finding a solution for present ones and such inquisitions were never solutions, they cause much ill and can do no good” (Dutot [1738] 1935, 2:245; my translation). Financiers cannot be blamed for the gains they made legally, and it is only envy at their rapid fortune that motivates these operations.

Dutot's views on financiers are in fact rather nuanced, if we look beyond the standard rhetoric. In an extended passage, he explains that “the French have a happy genius for trade; but they apply it to the false branches thereof.” They would engage in trade “if the alluring prospect of gain which flows faster and in greater plenty in posts belonging to the Finances, did not divert from this pursuit most of those whose genius is proper for it. Every man, who is capable of canvassing and concluding an affair of interest, and in whom this genius well regulated prevails, is a trader or merchant born, and may succeed in trade; but if this genius turns irregular; if the desire of an immense fortune leads him to be a farmer of the revenues, and vanity to be a magistrate (which sometimes is the case) this is to deprive trade of the Men and Money that were proper for it, and in a manner destin'd to it by nature. In the mean time, trade can only extend itself in proportion to the forces which it receives ; and where it is not supplied with these forces, there must necessarily be a gap” (Dutot 1739, 262)

Financiers are thus no worse than any other sort of man: if anything, they have a special talent, what we might call today entrepreneurial or managerial skill. Dutot certainly condemned the system of finance that diverted them from more socially productive activities. But as someone who would have probably followed the same path as Auber and Boudard were it not for the events of 1716 and 1720, he hardly viewed them as harshly as was once thought.

6.2.2 The Société des Arts

One curious item in Dutot's library is a copy of the bylaws of the *Société des Arts*, dated 1730.

This short-lived society resulted from the association between two mathematicians, Jean-Baptiste Clairaut and his brilliant son Alexis (1713-65), the clockmaker Le Roy and the instrument-maker Jacques Le Maire.¹⁴⁵ Its purpose was to bring together scientists and craftsmen, and promote the application of mathematics and physics to the mechanical arts. Dutot's library, which holds the works of a few members (Bélibidior's *Cours d'architecture*, de Gua's *Usage de l'Analyse de Descartes*), perfectly reflects this confluence of interests.

It was formally organized in November 1728, with different grades of membership. Dutot, giving his address as rue Croix des Petits-Champs, was admitted as a "free associate" on December 8, 1728: at that time, he curiously described himself to the society as a "mechanic" (*mécanicien*). The surviving minutes of the society indicate that he took an active role in 1729 and 1730, participating in a committee to vet applicants and searching for a new meeting place. The society's activities did not last beyond 1736. One can nevertheless imagine that Dutot was well apprised of the great scientific expedition which took place that year in Lapland to measure the Earth's circumference: led by René Moreau de Maupertuis, nephew of Dutot's acquaintance Moreau de La Primeraye, and counting two members of the Society (Alexis Clairaut and the Swedish scientist Anders Celsius), it was an admirable example of scientific advances through high-precision measurement.¹⁴⁶

On a personal level, it is worthy of note that Dutot, who had a translation of William Derham's treatise on clock-making in his library, owned several time-pieces, all made by members of the society. His inventory lists "a small clock with an enamel face made by Le Roy in Paris, in its box, with pedestal of inlaid wood with copper ornaments," "a copper clock with enamel face, with chimes, dials marking minutes and seconds, made by Dutertre in Paris in its box and with pedestal of inlaid wood with copper ornaments, appraised 250 livres," and "a small watch with enamel face, marking minutes and seconds, made by Dutertre in Paris, in its casing with silver key and green silk ribbon." Dutertre also appeared as a creditor of Dutot's estate for 500 livres due on

¹⁴⁵See Birembaut (1966), Hahn (1981), Passeron and Courcelle (2002). I thank Olivier Courcelle for his help on the Société.

¹⁴⁶

a *répétiteur d'or* (repeating circle in gold) delivered on November 4, 1737. Finally, the appraisal of Dutot's mathematical instruments was made by Jacques Lemaire, another member of the society.¹⁴⁷

It is particularly interesting to note that François Quesnay was admitted into the Society in February 1730. The physician's interests in economics are believed to have begun in 1756, when he laid the foundations of physiocracy. This discovery nevertheless provides an intriguing living link between Dutot and the flowering of French economic theory in the second half of the eighteenth century.

This association shows that Dutot was no hermit. If he did not participate in the kind of brilliant society where he might have enjoyed the lively witticism he seemed to appreciate in print, he had found a way to meet with kindred spirits, analytical minds and connoisseurs of careful craftsmanship and exquisite mechanics.

6.3 *Writings*

By the late 1720s, Dutot was retired. The inventory of his papers yield no evidence of any employment or active investment. Having lost his shares in the Indies company to Firnkranz, he did not replace them, leaving his financial wealth was in government annuities. He did not remain idle, but set to work on writing a history of the System and its aftermath.

The scope of his project is apparent from a provisional title he scribbled on a sheet:¹⁴⁸ "Recherches, Réflexions, Considérations politiques sur les opérations de finances faites en France pendant le système de M Law qui ne commencent à proprement parler que le 10 avril 1717, et sur leurs influences (sur les effets produits par ces opérations) sur le change étranger et conséquemment sur notre commerce, poussées jusques à la fabrication des monnoyes ordonnée par édit du mois d'aoust 1723, ainsi elles contiennent six années trois mois et quelques jours." The lengthy title gives both the time-frame he was considering (April 1717 to August 1723) and the narrative device he intended to use, namely the course of foreign exchange which he called "the true barometer of trade" (Dutot 2000, 399). The starting point was defined by the time when the notes of John Law's Bank became legal tender for public dues. The end point was the recoinage

¹⁴⁷AN Y 13092, 12 Sep 1741. It is interesting to note that Dutot and Jean-François Melon had in common an interest in fine clocks and acquaintance with Maupertuis. Melon, who died in the arms of Maupertuis, left him an expensive long-case clock in memory of their "good friendship" (Maupertuis 1756, 3:416; MC I 387, 25 Jan 1738).

¹⁴⁸Bibliothèque universitaire de Poitiers - Fonds d'Argenson, P18/II.

of August 1723, soon after the end of the Visa and the Indies Company's exit from receivership.

Dutot never quite finished this history. The manuscript ends somewhat abruptly in December 1720, which is more or less when he ceased to be a close observer of events. A partial copy, ending in September 1720, was found in Douai by Mann (1936) and abundantly used by Faure (1977). Earl Hamilton found a more complete copy which Murphy tracked down and published (Dutot 2000) under the title "Histoire du Système de John Law." It is likely that Dutot was diverted from his opus by the famous controversy with Melon and Paris-Duverney.

In 1734, Jean-François Melon (1675-1738) published his *Considérations politiques sur le commerce* (an enlarged edition appeared in 1736). Melon had served as an advisor of Law and later of the duc d'Orléans and the duc de Bourbon who served as prime ministers from 1723 to 1726. In his book, which is partly based on memos he wrote during his service, he presented a defense of monetary mutations, arguing that inflation favored debtors over creditors, to whom they should be preferred. Dutot disagreed and Melon, learning of it, asked him to put his objections in writing. Dutot wrote three letters to Melon in early September 1735, which he enlarged in early 1736 and ultimately published as a book, *Réflexions politiques sur les finances et le commerce*. Dutot arranged himself the printing with Vaillant and Prévost, publishers of French Protestant extraction established in The Hague, and contracted with the bookseller Rollin fils for the sale. In February 1738 (a few days after Melon's death) Dutot delivered to Rollin 987 copies on premium paper and 529 copies on regular paper. Rollin was to pay Dutot 5L for each copy sold. There was a second edition by Van Dole in the Hague in 1740, but the 420 copies found in Dutot's apartment at his death seem to belong to the first edition.¹⁴⁹

The book, published anonymously, was immediately noticed. Guyot-Desfontaines (1738, 12:241-264, 13:49-72) reviewed it in two letters dated March 13 and April 19 (and approvingly remarked on the native pride of his fellow Norman). The *Journal de Trévoux* announced reviewed it at length and with much praise (May 1738, p. 895-932; June 1738, p. 1029). Voltaire published his commentary in *Le Pour et Contre* (15:296-317). The *Journal des Sçavans* summarized the book in its August 1738 issue (471-481). All reviews named the author.

While rejecting Melon's views on inflation, Dutot included various developments

¹⁴⁹The 420 copies form lot 144 of the library's inventory; lot 144 of the printed catalogue consists of 25 copies of the 1738 edition. Rollin's receipts of the books are listed in Dutot's inventory.

on John Law's System and the periods before and after. He used the same "barometer", namely the course of foreign exchange, but only from 1709 to March 1717 and again from August 1723 to June 1726: clearly he intended to leave room for the publication of the *Recherches sur les opérations de finance* from 1717 to 1723 he had been writing. Nevertheless, he commented extensively not only on Law's System, but also on the policies that were followed in the aftermath, namely the recreation of the public debt during the Visa of 1721–22 and the reductions in the nominal value of the coinage from 1723 to 1724. In doing so he severely criticized the work of the Paris brothers, who had been the advisers of the government of the duc de Bourbon until the latter's fall in June 1726.

The Paris brothers were also historians of themselves, extensively documenting their activities (Velde 2008). Paris-Duverney had prepared an apology of the Visa which he never published.¹⁵⁰ But Dutot's direct attack could not remain unanswered, especially since Duverney had returned in favor with the government; indeed, Voltaire's review already announced that a rejoinder was forthcoming. Written by François-Michel Chrestien-Deschamps, it came out in August 1740. In a rather acerbic tone, it followed Dutot's book page by page and disputed many specific facts and figures, as well as the general apology of Law's System. Dutot was soon hard at work composing a response, which he intended to be final, but death prevented him from having it published. The manuscript, left complete, was found by Harsin and published in 1935 (Dutot [1738] 1935, vol. 2).

6.4 *The trip to London*

Nothing else is known of his activities, except for his trip to London in 1739 and 1740. The trip has been known by a letter from Dutot to an unnamed correspondent dated from London, Dec. 31, 1739, and published by Mann (1935).¹⁵¹ Murphy also uncovered further evidence of this London residency in the Foreign Ministry archives, confirming that Dutot had been entertained and even lodged by the French ambassador for several weeks (Dutot 2000, xxx-xxxiii). One reason for the trip was the publication in late 1739 of a translation of Dutot's book, which was reviewed by several newspapers. One review, in *the Craftsman*, was deemed of sufficient importance to be translated and sent to the cardinal Fleury and the ministers of foreign affairs and the navy, but mostly because

¹⁵⁰See Dutot ([1738] 1935, 2:246); the manuscript is in the Musée Dubois-Corneau, Brunoy, France.

¹⁵¹Arsenal 4745, fol. 89-90.

of the reviewer's reaction to Dutot's proposal to build a military port at La Hougue, a direct military threat to Britain.

But Dutot, who spent at least several months in London, had other motives. We know from the letter that his stay was longer than he had expected, but that finding knowledge so useful for his purposes, he wished to make a store of them before leaving. From the dozens of English-language books he brought back to his library, we surmise that he was eagerly collecting information on the state of Great Britain, with particular regard to the state of its trade and finances, just as it was engaged in war against Spain (the War of Jenkins's ear, which broke out in October 1739, and which France would join in 1741). A letter of the French ambassador in London confirms these interests (Dutot 2000, xxxiii).

Dutot was also interested in the past. Documents in the d'Argenson archives show that he called on Law's daughter and her husband Lord Wallingford: there is a slip of paper in English stating "Lord Walingford lives in the middle of Grosvenor Street at the two round lamps."¹⁵² During this visit, Dutot was allowed to make copies of Law's correspondence after 1721.¹⁵³ He also probably acquired copies of Law's early writings: he quoted them extensively (and without attribution) in his manuscript response to Duverney written after the trip, whereas the *Réflexions politiques* only cited published works of Law.¹⁵⁴ The French ambassador died in February, and Lord Wallingford died abruptly on June 6, 1740. We do not know for sure when Dutot returned to Paris, but probably not before April.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵²Bibliothèque universitaire de Poitiers - Fonds d'Argenson, P18/X.

¹⁵³See in particular Dutot's note: "c'est ce que j'ay vu et lu dans une lettre écrite par M Law à SAS Mgr le duc de Bourbon, le 25 août 1724. Cette lettre écrite de la main du fils de M. Law, est entre les mains de Mylord Walingford à Londres, lequel a épousé Mlle Law, et qui a bien voulu me communiquer cette lettre ainsi que les suivantes." Some texts correspond to Law (1934, 3:236–281), others are unpublished.

¹⁵⁴It may well be that Dutot also obtained the fragments of Law's memoranda of 1715 corrected in Law's own hand which can be found in the Argenson archives alongside Dutot's manuscript history of the *Système* (Bibliothèque universitaire de Poitiers - Fonds d'Argenson, P18/III). These memoranda are precisely those that Dutot plagiarized (Dutot [1738] 1935, 2:37ff).

¹⁵⁵He sent his brother-in-law François Polisse to file his claim on Pierre Romet's estate on April 22, 1740 (AN Y14526).

6.5 *At home*

Three documents provide a fascinating snapshot of Dutot's later life and his household: the account of the affixing of seals on his belongings the day he died, the inventory of the contents of his house taken two weeks later, and the catalogue of the sale of his books.¹⁵⁶ Together, they allow us to wander through the rooms, inspect the furniture, rummage through his wardrobe, and peruse at length the contents of his library. This is as close to the man as we will ever come.

6.5.1 The lodgings

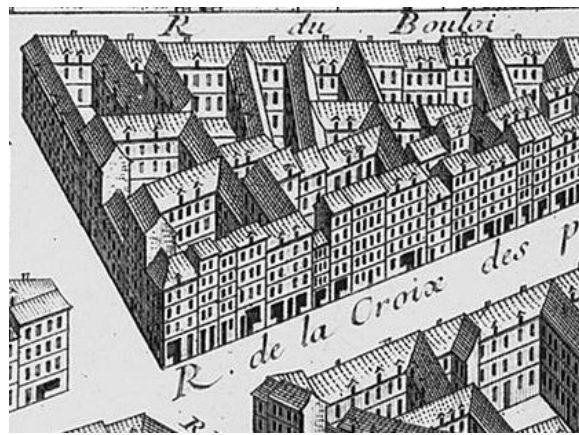


Figure 2: Rue Croix des Petits-Champs in Turgot's map of Paris (1734–39). Dutot's house was the fifth from the left, starting at the intersection.

Dutot lived in a wing of the Hôtel de Lussan, a 16th century building rebuilt in the 1670s.¹⁵⁷ It was perhaps not the choicest living quarters, but Dutot rented a whole wing of the building looking onto the inner courtyard for 600 livres, and his 2,750 livres in annual income from his annuities allowed him to make his life quite cosy. Indeed, the

¹⁵⁶AN Y13092, 12 Sep 1741; AN MC LIII/299, 25 Sep 1741; and see below for the catalogue. When a person died either without direct heirs or with some heirs absent, a public official could be summoned to carry out a rapid inventory of the moveable estate and affix seals on rooms or furniture containing valuables or important papers. A more thorough inventory was carried out by a notary, with estimation of all moveable estate by a *huissier* and specialized experts as needed (Pardailhé-Galabrun 1988).

¹⁵⁷See Dumolin (1929–31, 2:358). Its location is now 38, rue Croix des Petits-Champs and judging by its present appearance, it was rebuilt in the mid-19th century.

presence of Audiger's *La Maison réglée et l' Art de diriger la maison d'un grand seigneur* in his library suggests that he intended to live well.

There were two small cellars in the basement and a kitchen on the ground floor. Off the stairs above the kitchen was a small room that may have served as a guest room, decorated with a genre painting, the portrait of a man, and the only religious image in the house, St Peter led from his prison. The second and third floors consisted of a room with one window followed by two rooms with two windows each, in enfilade. The dimensions given for the tapestries decking the walls suggests that each floor was about 1000 square feet, and ceiling height about 10 feet.

On the second floor we enter the dining room, hanged with a tapestry of leaves and birds and heated by a stove: it was large enough for a large dining table and a dozen chairs, a sideboard, and a washstand. The sideboard contained blue Dutch faience tableware and enough silverware to entertain eight guests. The cellar contained only red wine. A cupboard contained fruit preserves and liqueurs, and there was a tea-pot and a coffee-pot. Moving to the large parlor decked with a Flemish-style verdure tapestry one found a settee and six armchairs, two mirrors on the walls, a marble-top table with a clock by the Paris clockmaker Dutertre. Time after dinner could be spent at the card-table, or listening to music played on the expensive harpsichord made by Blanchet, a prominent maker of the time who counted Couperin among his clients (Sadie 1984, 239). Then came the bedroom: the walls, the twin beds and the six armchairs were crimson-colored. A wardrobe next to the chimney contained the clothes.

On the 3d floor, the first room was divided into a storage room (with cupboards, chests, suitcases, and a commode) and a dressing room, the latter decorated with a map of the diocese of Coutances.¹⁵⁸ The next two rooms, filled with books, served as library and office. The first, heated by a stove, had in the center a desk with drawers covered in black leather, two tables, three armchairs, and a clock made by Le Roy placed on a console table with Campan marble top. Two mirrors covered the walls where bookshelves didn't. The back room partly decked in green also contained books and served as a study, with a writing table, four armchairs upholstered in leather, decorative faience vases on the chimney mantle, and on the walls a landscape and two portraits of Dutot and his wife painted on canvas. On the top floor, next to the attic and the maid's room (her name was Nicole Denizet, and her wages were 100 livres per annum), Dutot

¹⁵⁸Barneville is in the diocese of Coutances. In his *Réflexions*, Dutot concluded his outburst of Norman pride by noting that "we might place at the head of the achievements of the Normans their conquest of England, anno 1066, and that of the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily made anno 1070 by the Lords of Houteville, of the Diocese of Coutances" (Dutot 1739, 282).

had a small laboratory where Dutot kept his collection of mathematical and optical instruments, and turning tools: a terrestrial and a celestial globes made by de L'Isle, models of the Copernican and Ptolemaic systems, an equatorial machine (*machine parallaxique*) and a plane table with its compass all made by Chapotot, a prominent maker of instruments; three microscopes, rulers and compasses; tools for grinding and polishing lenses; and turning tools.

6.5.2 Dutot's wealth

The total value of the moveable estate was estimated at about 12,000 livres, of which 5,000L in books, 2,000L in silverware and the rest in furniture and clothing (the instruments were only valued at 350 livres). Among the books were 420 copies of Dutot's work, unbound and ready for sale, valued at 1 livre each.¹⁵⁹

The value of the financial wealth is a little harder to estimate. We have seen that he owned 1,667 livres in life annuities and 625 livres in perpetual annuities. The latter can be valued at 40% of face value, or 10,000 livres.¹⁶⁰ The life annuity on a 45-year old woman, using Deparcieux' mortality tables and the discount rate implicit in the price of the perpetual annuity, would be worth 18,600 livres. This puts Dutot's financial wealth at 28,600 livres. Dutot owned no real estate.

6.5.3 The wardrobe

The inventory suggests small but comfortable and well-appointed lodgings and a peaceful life of intellectual enquiries and cultivated relaxation among friends. The harpsichord in the drawing-room, although expensive, might have been for show; but in his private study Dutot kept a viol in its case, and among his books we find Jean Rousseau's classic *Traité de la viole*. There is no printed music in Dutot's library; there is a manuscript collection of dance music, and several editions of Feuillet's *Recueils*, famous for the so-called Beauchamps-Feuillet notation of dance steps and movements, written so that "everyone can easily learn them without help from any dance master". These publications are used today by performers trying to recreate Baroque-era choreography.

¹⁵⁹Dutot's contract of February 1738 with the bookseller Roslin stipulated that Roslin would account for 987 copies on fine paper and 529 on common paper, at the price of 5 livres each. Another contract of March 1741 added 71 copies. Although the inventory lists 420 copies, only 11 ordinary copies and 13 presentation copies were included in the sale of Dutot's library.

¹⁶⁰Price notations in the *Gazette d'Amsterdam* of 1732 price the perpetual annuities at 40%. In 1746, they stood at the same value and rose as high as 52% by 1756 Velde and Weir (1992).

Perhaps Dutot had been trying to teach himself how to dance as well as how to play the viol.

Dutot's sartorial tastes, however, were not bookish. As we browse through his wardrobe, we find eight different coats with assorted vests and breeches. There is a worsted coat lined with silk with one broché waistcoat and another crimson silk waistcoat lined with gold gaze; there is a dun-colored coat of Vanrobais cloth, the finest French woollen of the time, with assorted pairs of breeches and a green velvet waistcoat; a cinnamon-colored wool coat lined with silk with three matching pairs of breeches and a striped velvet waistcoat. Dutot wore only silk stockings and kept two fashionable chestnut-colored wigs, one knotted and the other "à la brigadière" (he paid 50 livres per year to a barber). To complete this stylish wardrobe, we find a gentleman's sword with branch guard, hilt and pommel in chiseled silver, a walking cane with gold pommel, and a mourning sword. Surprisingly, Dutot also owned two pairs of cavalry pistols mounted in steel and ornamented with brass, made in Charleville and Sedan, a powder-horn and a pouch, and a small pocket pistol (we should note that Dutot owned three books on dueling).

6.6 *The library*

Dutot's books were sold by auction from Dec. 29 1741 to January 18, 1742 by Jean Boudot, the bookseller who had inventoried them after his death and published the catalogue.¹⁶¹ An extensive analysis of the contents gives us a clear view of his interests.

The library contained 1662 distinct titles, for a total of 3479 volumes, appraised at 5000L.¹⁶² This is a sizeable library, especially in relation to Dutot's wealth (5000L out of 12,000L of personal estate). Marion (1978, 118), for the period 1750–59, found that 237 Parisian libraries in after-death inventories averaged 1084 volumes and 1700L in value. But we can compare the number of volumes and appraised value with that of his two public rivals. Jean-François Melon left 448 volumes valued at 1163 livres, while

¹⁶¹See (Bléchet 1991, 107). There are copies at the Bibliothèque nationale (Δ 1441 and Δ 48681, the latter with a few price notations), the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal (8° H 25349/1, with complete price notations), and the Bibliothèque de l'Institut (8° AA 1975). Boudot arranged the books by format, starting with folios, and grouped them into 145 lots which were identified in the inventory by the first title and the number of titles, along with an appraised value for each lot. The catalogue followed the inventory's classification. I have sorted books by subjects for my analysis.

¹⁶²Boudot also collected miscellaneous unbound books, pamphlets, periodicals and manuscripts into 13 additional packets.

Chrestien-Deschamps's library contained 1365 volumes appraised at 1700 livres.¹⁶³ The philosopher d'Holbach, nephew of Dutot's acquaintance but much richer than Dutot, had his library appraised in January 1756 at 8500L for nearly 3000 volumes. Finally, the books which have been traced to Adam Smith's library represent 1580 titles (Mizuta 1967, xi).

Seventeen titles are manuscripts, the rest are printed. Most of the books were either folios (15%), quartos (19%), octavos (24%) or duodecimos (41%). Thirty-one titles are noted as printed on large paper. About 16% of the books in the library were bound in more expensive morocco (2.4%) or fawn calf (13.1%). The proportion of fine bindings is roughly the same across formats and across subjects, perhaps slightly higher for history books, and lower for political economy and science books. The proportion also varies with the age of the books, being higher for both older books (before 1600) and more recent books (after 1720). This clearly reflects an income effect: both categories of books would have been purchased later in life. Sales prices confirm that fine bindings were more expensive: volumes bound in morocco sold for 50% more than the average.

There were very few books in foreign languages: a handful of books in Latin which were not available in French translation, four books in Dutch and German, one in Italian. There was a Latin dictionary and grammar, and a German grammar. The only substantial collection of foreign-language books, grouped into one lot by the bookseller, were fifty English titles, most likely bought during Dutot's London visit.

A place of publication can be identified for all but 15 titles. French imprints represent 61% of all locations, while the Netherlands account for 26%, Germany and England 4% each, and the rest scattered between the Spanish or Austrian Netherlands, border states (Trévoux in Dombes, Charleville, Sedan), Switzerland, Spain and Italy. Of course, for French-language books the Dutch and German imprints (particularly Cologne) can be highly misleading. We do know that Dutot bought books directly from a librarian in The Hague named Pierre Gosse; but it is also well known that a false imprint on a French book was a way to avoid censorship, at the cost of losing copyright protection. The proportion of foreign imprints is in fact roughly constant across the broad categories of subject matter (history, religion, literature): thus the Dutch and German imprint are less an indication of interest in foreign subjects than a sign that much of Dutot's reading came from unauthorized sources.

Table 1 shows the composition of Dutot's library by subject matter. The categories I

¹⁶³Inventories after the death of Melon on Jan 25, 1738 (AN MC 1/387, 28 Feb 1738) and the death of Chrestien-Deschamps on Nov 11, 1747 (AN MC LXXXII/982, 24 Nov 1747).

<i>subject</i>	<i>number</i>	<i>share (%)</i>	
		unweighted	weighted
religion	59	3.5	2.8
law	21	1.3	1.5
philosophy	76	4.5	1.9
politics	68	4.1	2.4
economics	102	6.1	3.9
mathematics & sciences	124	7.4	7.7
music & fine arts	16	1.0	0.8
literature	200	11.9	13.2
history	1009	60.2	65.8
all titles	1675		
<i>History:</i>			
general	18	1.8	2.3
religious	114	11.3	10.6
ancient	70	6.9	7.6
Italy	22	2.2	1.1
France	435	43.1	41.2
Spain & Portugal	24	2.4	1.3
British Isles	69	6.8	4.2
Low Countries	37	3.7	2.8
Germany	30	3.0	1.3
Northern Europe	21	2.1	1.0
rest of world	44	4.4	3.9
geography	114	11.3	11.7
periodicals	11	1.1	11.0

Table 1: Composition of Dutot's library by subject matter. Because of the variety in the number of volumes and book sizes across titles, the third column weighs titles by number of volumes and by format.

have used are roughly compatible with those used by librarians of the time.¹⁶⁴

The majority of his books concerned history and geography. In history, we find reference works such as the dictionaries of Bayle and Moréri, and the world histories of Bossuet and Pufendorf. He had the classic works of Greek and Roman history up to the 6th century (Byzantine history had no appeal for him): Herodotus, Thucydides,

¹⁶⁴Economics covers political economy, trade, banking, public finance (which was usually be included in history), and accounting. I put theoretical physics, astronomy, optics and measurement in sciences, along with mechanics, military and maritime art, natural history, medicine, other "arts" except music and fine arts which I counted separately. Philosophy includes ethics and what was at the time called "economics" (household management and child-rearing). I put works of literary biography and history in literature rather than in history (about 20 works).

Xenophon, Diodorus, Appian, Plutarch, Livy, Polybius, Caesar, Suetonius, Dio Cassius, Procope, Jornandes, all translated (a few were bilingual editions). He did not have many modern works on ancient history, aside two copies of Le Nain de Tillemont. The main focus, not surprisingly, is French history, ranging from Grégoire de Tours to the *Mémoires de la Régence* published in 1736. There were 38 books on the later Middle Ages (to 1500), 15 books on the first half of the 16th century, 52 books on the second half, which covers the Wars of Religion. The reigns of the first three Bourbon kings are covered by 165 titles, with 21 titles for the War of Spanish Succession alone.

Dutot's collection of French histories followed the path of French historiography from Étienne Pasquier to André Duchesne, Eudes de Mézeray (the *Histoire* and three copies of the abridged version), Gabriel Daniel, Louis Le Gendre and the manuscript works of Boulainvilliers (Leffler 1985). He found it important to read original sources: contemporary chronicles, memoirs and letters, chronologies, pamphlets, collections of original documents (*recueil de pièces*). He was not, however, a pure antiquarian, in spite a volume on the Benedictines of Saint-Maur, and must have been receptive to the so-called "historical Pyrrhonism" of Vallemont, Johann Burchard Mencke, and Bayle, whose works he owned.

The Wars of Religion (down to the siege of La Rochelle) clearly fascinated him, and he had accounts and sources from all sides. By the mid-seventeenth century, the focus of his books turns to European politics and the wars of Louis XIV. Here again, we see in Dutot a very eclectic approach, as shown by his two copies of the Protestant Isaac de Larrey's *Histoire du Règne de Louis XIV*. The titles of some pamphlets he owned are striking: *la France démasquée* (The Hague, 1671), *Histoires des Promesses Illusoires* (Cologne, 1684), *La France sans bornes* (Cologne, 1684), *L'Esprit de la France et les intrigues de Louis XIV découvertes* (1691), *Les Soupirs de la France esclave qui aspire après la liberté* (Amsterdam, 1691) *La France ruinée sous le Règne de Louis XIV* (1696) *l'Europe Esclave* (Cologne, 1698). Dutot was an avid collector of the anti-French pamphlets (some of which were prohibited in France) churned out of the Netherlands to denounce Louis XIV's expansionist foreign policy.

Dutot's religious history section is sizeable. We find several volumes of ecclesiastical history by Jesuits (Pétau, Labbé, Maimbourg who was expelled from the order for Gallicanism), but also a Protestant (Jacques Basnage). A dozen works on French dioceses includes two collections of pamphlets on the claims of the archbishop of Rouen to primacy over Lyon, another amusing trace of Dutot's Norman pride. The works on monastic orders, aside from a hagiographical work on the knights of Malta, are somewhat prurient accounts of monastic misbehavior, such as the *Toilette de l'Archevêque*

de Sens, Factum pour les Religieuses de Provins, and the *Le Moine Sécularisé*. There are three books of anecdotes and intrigues in the court of Rome. The selection betrays something of an anti-clerical bent.

Nor was Dutot a friend of the Jesuits: next to lives of Loyola and Francis Borgia is a collection of pamphlets related to the attempts by the University of Paris to have the Jesuits expelled in 1595, and the satire *La Monarchie des Solipses* by Inchofer.

The rest of religious history deals with the Reformation, the counter-Reformation, and the internal debates of the French church over Gallicanism and Jansenism (ten titles each). This does not seem surprising given the focus of the historical section on the Wars of Religion and their aftermath. On closer look, however, we find that while the history of Protestantism was covered by twenty titles, nearly half of the books on religion (twenty-seven books) were apologetic works, mostly from the Protestant side: along with Calvin's *Institutions* we see Pierre Jurieu, Jacques Abbadie, Isaac Papin, Isaac d'Huisseau, and English writers such as Burnett, Locke, Sherlock, and Thomas Brown. In fact, the Catholic side is represented only by Houtteville and the Jansenist Arnauld. Polemical works of the time of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes are present as well. It is striking to see that 52% of the titles on religion had imprints from the Low Countries or Germany, compared with 26% for the library as a whole.

The focus on the history of the French wars of religion and on Protestantism is intriguing. Did Dutot have Protestant sympathies? Of course, the fact that all of his family's baptisms and burials appears in the local parish registers indicates that they were Catholics in good standing. But there were Protestant communities in lower Normandy, including nearby La Haye du Puits and Glatigny (Cauvin 1968). The local lord of Barneville, Adrien du Saussey, who was godfather of Dutot's sister, was baptized at age 23, which may indicate a conversion.

The list of works on French regional history (65 titles) is less illuminating. Dutot collected almost dutifully one or two general works on each French province, with the exception of the Auvergne. Only one region elicits a spark of interest: Normandy, not surprisingly, with two different histories, a book on Caen and another on Évreux. Curiously, there are only two books on Alsace, neither historical: one is a purely functional listing of Strasbourg magistrates in 1715, in German, and the other is a volume of illustrations on Alsace of 1706.

In foreign history, the largest section covers England. There is nothing before Henry VII (the Hundred Years War did not attract his attention either). Aside from a few works on the Tudors, the bulk concerns the events of the Civil War and the Glorious Revolution. The Low Countries and United Provinces are very well covered,

the other countries reasonably so. Dutot also owned thirty books on genealogy, nobility, and heraldry.

Geography and travel are also well covered: we find several atlases, including the famous Blaeu atlas of 1661, and a portfolio of 102 maps by de L'Isle. As with French regional history, Dutot systematically collected sample descriptions of European countries. The collection is much deeper when it comes to the Indies, both East and West, with about thirty titles for each. Dutot's writings make clear his strong interest in trade and colonization, which he considered essential for economic growth.

The next large group includes literature and philosophy. Here, in contrast to history, Dutot showed little interest in the classics: he had neither Homer nor Virgil's Aeneid, though he did have Horace, Petronius, Terence, Cicero. He had the standard French dictionaries (Académie, Furetière, Richelet), several grammars and books on style and rhetoric, and a good collection of the French classics: Rabelais, Marot, Malherbe, Agrippa d'Aubigné, Balzac, Voiture, Boileau, La Fontaine, the Corneille brothers, Molière, Racine; but each represented by one title of collected works (sometimes duplicated, as for Marot, La Fontaine and Boileau). This is another stretch of Dutot's collection where his mind does not seem fully engaged. Among the (now) lesser-known writers of the seventeenth century, Dutot showed a strong affinity for independent minds: Guillaume du Vair, La Mothe le Vayer, Naudé, Patin, Richard Simon. We find also several Norman authors: three books of Saint-Évremond (whose birthplace was less than 40 miles away from Barneville), Segrais, Jean-François Sarasin. There is some literary criticism and polemic, such as the dispute between Madame Dacier and de La Motte, the works by Adrien Baillet and the replies they provoked from Ménage and from Le Tellier, etc. There is almost no poetry outside of the collected works cited above, and we can venture that he did not attend theater much.

Moving to lighter fare, we encounter a large collection of witticisms and bons mots, the so-called "Ana" which abounded in the second half of the seventeenth century in imitation of the *Scaligeriana*: Segraisiana, Carpenteriana, Naudaeana, Patiniana, Perro-niana, Thuana, Menagiana, Saint-Evremoniana, Santeuillana, Parrhasiana, Fureteriana. Novels are few: the medieval *Histoire d'Huon de Bordeaux*, the *Histoire de Francion*, a few historical novels, Fénelon's *Télémaque*. Instead, he had a particular taste for fables, tales and satires: starting with Aesop, Ovid, Apuleus and Heliodore, we then find the late-medieval *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, Boccaccio, Rabelais, des Perriers, Entropel, Angoulevant, Tabourot, Straparola, and three works by Beroald de Verville (including the obscene *Moyen de parvenir*). The only contemporary works in this whimsical or satirical vein were Moncrif's *Les Chats* and Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*. His collection betrays

a fondness for a certain ribald humor, and one is not surprised to find a collection of documents related to the lawsuit for impotence brought by the marquise de Gesvres against her husband in 1726.

In philosophy as in literature, we find few classics: only Plato, Marcus Aurelius and Sextus Empiricus. Among modern philosophers, Dutot's favorite was Descartes, with six distinct titles; one also finds Malebranche, Bacon, Locke, Pascal, Bayle, a volume of Leibnitz and Newton, several works by the Protestant pastor Crousaz. Spinoza's works are absent but there was a biography of him, alongside biographies of Descartes and Edmond Richer (both by Baillet). Moralists and essayists are well represented, with several editions of Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, and Gracián. Dutot's philosophical tastes, not surprisingly, were analytical and moral rather than purely metaphysical, with a strong tinge of criticism and empiricism.

A small group of books on child-rearing make a puzzling appearance in the library: we find works by Fénelon, Goussault, Guillaume Le Roy, representative of the views on education of the late 17th century, but also copies of more recent and innovative works by the Swiss protestant theologian Jean-Pierre de Crousaz (1718) and by the marquise de Lambert (1729). Dutot's widow declared at the affixing of seals that there were no children of the marriage. Since the statement does not rule out that there ever were, we may imagine that they had children who died young, but there is another explanation. When his mother-in-law died in 1723 Dutot was made ward of his wife's siblings, the youngest of whom was thirteen. He may have found some guidance useful in taking care of his wards.

The collection of books on politics is extensive: Machiavelli, Balthasar Gracián, Guillaume de la Perrière, François de Rosières, Giovanni Botero, Louis de Mayerne Turquet, Jean de Marnix, Emeric Crucé, Georges de Scudéry, Hobbes, Naudé (including his *Bibliographie politique*), Lipsius, Noodt, Pufendorf, Locke, Andrew Ramsay. There were several books on the education of princes by Budé, Erasmus, Antoine Varillas; treatises on ambassadors, ministers, courtiers. Recent works included La Jonchère's *Système d'un Nouveau Gouvernement* and several works by his fellow Norman Charles Irénée Castel de Saint-Pierre (which straddle politics and economics). The collection was completed with various works on the French monarchy and the king's rights by Seyssel, Fromenteau, Quesnel, Senault, Saumaize, the Dupuy brothers, and Denis Godefroy. This list of titles reflects indirectly Dutot's interest for the Wars of Religion, since many of these works were concerned with grounding the king's authority as a bulwark against civil strife.

Given Dutot's role in the history of economic thought, the books on economics

deserve particular attention. The collection might seem relatively thin, but (setting aside the books in English purchased late in his life) his readings were restricted to texts in French and publishing of economics was still limited (Théré 1998). Of what could be properly called political economy, there are two copies of Montchrétien's *Traité de l'économie politique*, a 1700 translation of Thomas Mun's *Treasure by Foreign Trade*, Jean Le Pelletier's *Mémoires pour le rétablissement du commerce en France* (1701), the French translation of Law's *Money and Trade Considered* (1720) and Melon's *Essay politique sur le Commerce* (1734). It is rather surprising not to find a copy of Paris-Duverney's *Examen* of Dutot's book, given that Dutot's manuscript reply follows his "censor's" text page by page. Another missing work is Bodin's response to Malestroit, which Dutot did cite in his publication (Dutot [1738] 1935, 1:117).

In public finance, we find *Le Secret des Finances de France* by Nicolas Fromenteau (1581), *Le Denier Royal* by Scipion de Gramont (1620), *Le Guidon des finances* by Vincent Geslée (1644), Vauban's *Projet d'une Dixme Royale* and the commentaries by Guérin de Rademont (1715) and Pottier de La Hestroye (1716): all of which he mined for quantitative information on France's population and income in his *Réflexions*. Dutot had a printed copy of Jacques Auber's *Mémoire sur les tailles* (probably the one he sent to Desmarests in 1714) and the *Mémoires concernant les tailles* he published in 1721. The books on coinage begin with Budel's classic collection of tracts on money (1591), a summary of the medieval thought, continue with the Nicolas de Coquerel's *Conférence des Monnoyes de France* (1619) which tracks the changes in the nominal value of gold and silver and describes "the damage to the realm from the increase in their price." The *Traité des Monnoyes* by Henry Poullain ([1620] 1709) contains analyses of monetary questions from the same time period, also opposed to monetary manipulations. The treatises by Le Blanc (1680; two copies) and Boizard (1714) are reference works without analysis, but he used them as primary sources for his *Réflexions*, like the copies of the mint ordinances of 1566 and 1577 and several tables of coinage. There was also a packet of pamphlets on public finance and another on coinage, whose contents were unfortunately not described.

Practical books on foreign exchange and banking were numerous: Savary's *Parfait Négociant* (but not the *Dictionnaire universel de commerce*), Ricard, Damoreau (two copies, from 1727), Irson, Barrême, Matthieu La Porte, as well as a couple of theologians' tracts on foreign exchange by Le Correur and Carrel, and on lotteries by Pierre de Joncourt and Jean de La Placette.

Related to economics, we find a few titles that hint at Dutot's interest in data collection. One is a manuscript titled *État des Grains vendus à Paris en 1724, 1725, 1726*

1727. This is easily recognized as a copy of a manuscript compilation of bi-weekly market prices which Dutot cited in his rejoinder to Paris-Duverney (Dutot [1738] 1935, 2:78) and called by Kaplan (1984, 295) the “Delalande registers”. They survive in Bibliothèque de l’Institut, Paris, mss. 513-521, although the year 1724 is now missing, and the series continues to 1733. These data were an important source for him as he tried to demonstrate the impact (or lack thereof) of monetary manipulations on the price level (Velde 2007) by computing a price index as an unweighted average of prices. Bishop Fleetwood’s *Chronicon Preciosum* (1707), an early attempt at collecting prices for various commodities over long periods of time, was probably purchased during Dutot’s London visit in 1739.¹⁶⁵ We also note the *Cours des Changes et effets commercables qui se sont négociés à la Bourse pendant l’année 1730 et 1731* (2 volumes 12mo), a tantalizing title since we presently do not have reliable sources for foreign exchange and bond market prices before 1745 (Velde and Weir 1992). Dutot’s interest in foreign exchange quotations and securities prices is amply demonstrated in his writings, which provide an unparalleled source on foreign exchange in the early years of the 18th century. It is also evident from his writings that Dutot had either Giraudeau’s compilation of securities prices during the System or another similar compilation, but there is no trace of it in the catalogue. Another interesting manuscript titled *État de baptêmes et mariages de la ville de Paris* probably contained the data that appears in various surviving manuscripts (see Charlot and Dupâquier 1967), and recalls two English-language books in the library, Petty’s *Essays in Political Arithmetick* (1699) and John Graunt’s *Natural and political observations made upon the bills of mortality* (1676).

The mathematical section contains two copies of Euclid and several 16th century works on arithmetic (Jacques Pelletier, Jacques Chauvet, Jean Abraham), alongside more recent but very elementary texts (*Arithmétique rendue facile à la pouvoir apprendre sans maître*) or practical works (Le Gendre, Bourmon, Barrême, all three writing for bankers). But the collection goes beyond these basics into Cartesian geometry, algebra and analysis. Dutot had works by leading French mathematicians, such as the Oratorians Bernard

¹⁶⁵Fleetwood is often credited with first computing a price index; although he does assert that £5 in 1460 would represent as much wealth in 1460 as £20 in 1707 if either sum purchased the same basket of 5 quarters of wheat, 4 hogsheads of beer, and 6 yards of cloth, he adds: “I do not mean hereby to pre-judge this to be the proportion” and in fact does not attempt to compute such a weighted price index, since his only purpose was to show that £5 was worth *less* in 1707 than in 1460. To compare prices over long periods of time, Fleetwood computed 20-year averages of commodities prices and noted that the growth rates of prices varied across commodities, but he did not attempt to aggregate them (Fleetwood 1707, 61, 167). By contrast, Dutot valued a basket of goods at two different dates and took the ratio to deflate in real terms the French king’s revenues (Dutot [1738] 1935, 1:135).

Lamy and Charles Reyneau (two works each), Michel Rolle's treatise on algebra, Louis Carré's *Méthode pour la mesure des surfaces*, one of the first works on integral calculus, L'Hôpital's *Traité des Sections coniques* and *Analyse des infiniment petits*, and Rémond de Montmort's text on probability. He was clearly keeping abreast of the most recent developments in mathematics of the time.

Scientific books, outside of mathematics, are limited in scope. Aside from works by Rohault and Pardies, there is little in physics except on fluid dynamics (Dampier, Mariotte, Varignon, Georges Fournier). Astronomy interests him along with gnomonics (six titles), measurement of surfaces, optics, and mechanics. Applied sciences are limited to a few books on warfare and fortifications, and almost twenty works on navigation and shipbuilding (including four copies of Jean Bernoulli's *Théorie de la Manœuvre des Vaisseaux*). To the end, Dutot remained a Norman raised on the shores of the sea by a shipwright, fascinated by navigation.

Dutot's collection of periodicals was remarkable, totaling nearly 680 volumes. He had a complete run of the *Gazette de France* from 1631 to 1722, *La Connaissance des Temps*, *La Clef des temps*, the *Mercurie François*, the *Lettres historiques*, *La Clef du Cabinet des Princes*. He had Bayle's *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres*, the *Journal de Trévoux*, *Le Journal Littéraire*, *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, and the literary periodicals of Le Clerc, Basnage and de La Roche. He also had the *Journal des Sçavans*, *L'Europe Sçavante*, and the *Mémoires* of the Academy of Sciences. Curiously, we do not find the *Gazette d'Amsterdam* or any other Dutch periodical mentioned by name, although the bookseller Boudot collected 14 volumes of miscellaneous gazettes into a packet without detailing the contents.

Boudot collected together the foreign-language books, almost fifty titles nearly all in English: works by John Locke, Josias Child, William Petty, John Graunt, Francis Brewster, Thomas Baston, William Wood; works on the history of English coinage by Charles Arbuthnot, Martin Folkes and William Fleetwood; books from the time of the recoinage of 1695 by Locke and Lowndes, and half a dozen titles by Charles Davenant. There are also fifteen works published between 1735 and 1740, and dealing with the current situation of Great Britain and the war with Spain that broke out in 1739. It is very likely that all these English titles were acquired when Dutot visited to London that very year. It is worth noting that he cited Thomas Mun (which he owned in a French translation) in the *Réflexions politiques* published before the trip, but cited Petty and Davenant (which he owned in the original English) at the end of the response to

Duverney written after the trip.¹⁶⁶

Aside from the works in English, there are very few books with imprints after 1730 (4%). The exceptions include Melon's work and historical works related to the period of John Law's System.

Dutot was clearly a bibliophile. We find a copy of Naudé's *Avis pour dresser une Bibliothèque*, whose encyclopedic approach is reflected in the fields that interested Dutot. He owned eighteen catalogues of private collections, starting with the library of Jean de Cordes which was bought by Gabriel Naudé for the cardinal Mazarin in 1643, all the way to the most recent sale the collection of the Maréchal d'Estrées in 1740. Some sales he may well have attended, since they were held in Paris (such as the books of the former finance minister Nicolas Desmarests, sold by Jean Boudot, the same bookseller, in 1721); but other sales took place in The Hague. He also owned catalogues were not sales catalogues (the library of the abbey of St. Geneviève, or the library of the comte de Toulouse). He clearly sought to build a rather comprehensive library, on the model of the great private libraries of the time, which is what makes the gaps in his collection so revealing.

Dutot's collection is also interesting for what it does not contain.

The religion section is rather sparse. Aside from Dutot's interest in religious history and Protestant apologetics discussed above, we find little metaphysics, theology, or piety.¹⁶⁷ We find only one copy of the New Testament in French, and another in English which he bought in London. What little he had in theology did not come from the most orthodox writers. On scriptures we only find pamphlets from contemporary scholarly controversies. The book on patristics by Louis Ellies Dupin, a staunch Gallican who ran afoul of Bossuet (whose attack on Dupin was in the library), was prohibited, and the Adrien Baillet's works on hagiography were condemned by the Vatican. The inspirational literature is a scant and odd assortment: La Vallière's *Réflexions sur la Miséricorde de Dieu*, the Jansenist Du Guet's *Traité de la prière publique*, and a translation of the Anglican Richard Allestree's *The Whole Duty of Man*.

Dutot had no interest in law. The presence of classics of international law such as Pufendorf and Grotius is explained by his interest in European politics, and the handful of other volumes had purely utilitarian value: a treatise on civil law by Domar,

¹⁶⁶The discussion of Locke's monetary writings in the *Réflexions* does not reflect direct knowledge, but is in fact copied verbatim from Le Clerc's biographical notice on Locke included in the *Œuvres diverses* (Rotterdam, 1710) which Dutot owned (Dutot [1738] 1935, 1:53–54, 2:9, 2:311).

¹⁶⁷Boudard's journal, in contrast, records his purchase of the ubiquitous *Imitation de Jésus-Christ* and the sermons of Bourdaloue for 40 livres (AD Bas-Rhin, G2561, fol. 25, 153).

the customary law of Normandy by Basnage, commercial law (Colbert's ordinance of 1673), books on civil and notarial procedure (*Le nouveau Praticien François* by Lange, *La Science des Notaires* by Ferrières).

Natural history held little appeal, aside from bibliophily: we only find sixteenth-century works of Belon and Rondelet and Merian's exquisite book on the insects of Surinam. The library is almost empty of books on agriculture or medicine. A thin veneer of knowledge in fine arts could be sought in two copies of Félibien's books on painting and sculpture. The handful of books on architecture is once again explainable by his other interest in applied mathematics.

The contents of Dutot's library is compared with some other contemporary libraries in Table 2. Dutot owned the catalogues of the Du Fay, Dubois, and Estrées sales. Charles-Jérôme de Cisternay du Fay was a retired army officer and famed bibliophile. Cardinal Dubois was minister of foreign affairs during the Regency and then Prime Minister. The duc d'Estrées was an admiral, minister of the Regent, and a director of the Indies Company. Marc-Antoine Turgot de Saint-Clair was an intendant. Crozat de Tugny was the son of of the financier Crozat and a collector.¹⁶⁸ The library of Louis XVI's minister Turgot de l'Aulne (a relative of Turgot de Saint-Clair) is posterior but of interest because he was an economist in his own right. Finally, we can compare Dutot's library with the proportions found for 10,000 titles listed in the inventories of 237 Parisian libraries between 1750 and 1759 (Marion 1978, 135).¹⁶⁹ Dutot's library is smaller, but probably of comparable quality: the Turgot de St Clair library sold for 42,000 livres (Bléchet 1991, 114), or 7.8 livres per title compared to Dutot's 5.8 livres per title.

In comparison with those of his contemporaries, Dutot's library is heavily biased toward history and sciences and arts, at the expense of religion and law mostly and literature partly. Within the category of history, the share of religious history is in fact in line with other libraries; that of ancient history is rather low, French history, British history, and geography are markedly higher.

The sale of Dutot's library brought 9725 livres, more than twice the 4500 livres estimated in the inventory (excluding the copies of the *Réflexions*), but not far above

¹⁶⁸Information retrieved Feb 24, 2009 from the "Esprit des livres" database of the École des Chartes (<http://elec.enc.sorbonne.fr/cataloguevente/>).

¹⁶⁹Inventories, including Dutot's, only cited one title per lot, so Marion's calculation is based on a partial sample (roughly four titles for every hundred volumes). How representative would such a sample be for Dutot's library? The proportions of Dutot's library computed using only the titles listed in his inventory are respectively 3%, 2%, 15%, 14% and 66%, which would yield the same qualitative conclusions.

	Dutot (1741)	Du Fay (1725)	Dubois (1725)	Estrées (1740)	Turgot de St Clair (1744)	Crozat de Tugny (1751)	Turgot (1780)	Parisian libraries (1750s)
<i>share (%)</i> :								
Religion	4	20	28	14	14	6	9	22
Law	1	3	12	6	4	3	17	13
Sciences, Arts	23	11	16	26	12	10	20	9
<i>politics</i>	10	1	2	2	1	1	3	
Literature	12	33	15	15	32	46	27	21
History	60	34	29	39	37	35	28	35
<i>number of titles</i>	1675	4234	26504	20047	5384	5040	4652	
History								
<i>share (%)</i> :								
general	1.8	3.5	3.2	3.0	1.8	3.0	4.3	
religious	11.3	11.0	44.1	13.0	9.1	11.3	9.3	
ancient	6.9	18.5	11.5	7.8	7.7	12.0	12.3	
Italy	2.2	3.4	3.8	10.0	6.1	4.2	2.7	
France	43.1	18.6	12.0	26.1	28.5	30.2	30.9	
Spain, Portugal	2.4	1.7	1.1	5.7	2.3	1.7	1.3	
British Isles	6.8	4.2	1.9	4.3	4.1	3.9	7.3	
Low Countries	3.7	1.6	1.7	3.5	1.1	2.9	1.6	
rest of Europe	5.1	4.5	3.0	8.2	3.4	4.7	4.6	
rest of world	4.4	3.6	4.5	4.3	3.1	4.4	8.9	
geography	11.3	6.6	2.9	4.6	3.7	8.3	7.1	
<i>number of titles</i>	1009	1438	7592	7818	2016	1781	1280	

Table 2: Composition of Dutot's library compared to other libraries, based on sales catalogues (columns 2 to 6), Tsuda (1974–75) (column 7) and Marion (1978, 135) (column 8).

the estimates in the catalogue totaling 8200 livres. By far the most expensive item, sold for 902 livres, was a copy of Joan Blaeu's famous *Atlas Maior* in 12 volumes (Amsterdam 1661), followed by another atlas, that of Guillaume de L'Isle with 102 maps, for 155 livres. These two titles alone account for 10% of the value of the library. Other publications by Blaeu (French translations of the *Theatrum* series on France, Savoy and Piedmont, and Italy) fetched between 20 and 30 livres per volume. Among the priciest volumes Mézeray's *Histoire de France* in 4 volumes stands out at 127 livres, as does an edition of La Fontaine's *Contes* (Amsterdam, 1685, morocco binding, for 24 livres).¹⁷⁰

The average volume (excluding Blaeu's Atlas) sold for 2.1 livres. But the relation

¹⁷⁰The inventory of Melon's library is too sparse to compare, but it is interesting to note that Melon owned many of the same books, including the Mézeray and a volume of maps by de L'Isle.

between the average price of a volume and its format is almost linear, and an average octavo volume sold for 1.6 livres. Adjusting for format the more expensive volumes (excluding Blaeu and de L'Isle) were on religion, law, bibliography, general history, and the fine arts. The cheapest books were those on economics and politics, and the periodicals.

6.6.1 Libertine, pedant or “honnête homme”?

Although judging a man by his books is tricky, the temptation is too strong to resist. This is the portrait of the man I infer from his library.

Dutot was a man of the seventeenth century: eighty percent of Dutot's books (excluding periodicals) were printed before the death of Louis XIV, and seventy percent between 1610 and 1715. It is true that the periodicals kept him abreast of current developments in literature and science, but the runs of titles peter out in the 1720s, as if he had lost interest. The intellectual affinities he reveals through his choice of books, particularly multiple copies of the same work or multiple titles of the same author, are with the French intellectuals of the Grand Siècle. But that century had many aspects. To which was he the closest?

The ideal of the “honnête homme” was expounded among others by Claude Fleury and René Rapin, whose works he owned. The deliberate attempts at owning surveys in various fields, broad enough to include the known world in history and geography, the marked taste for the products of witty society and conversation, the interest in aristocratic activities like horse-riding and dueling, the choice of classical authors do point in the direction of this model. But in other respects Dutot had something of the pedant in him: this tendency is most apparent in the historical section, where his relentless pursuit of original documents, his taste for controversies and sometimes obscure polemics are most apparent. When Dutot became embroiled in a public controversy of his own with Melon and Paris-Duverney, for all his books on wit and rhetoric he plodded doggedly from point to point, buttressing his long-winded arguments with punctilious recitations of facts, numbers, and calculations. He admitted as much in the last words of his manuscript reply to his contradictor: of his text lacking brilliance, “I'll admit it readily, as I do not pride myself on it. As for him, I will say to his credit that he appears to me brilliant everywhere, but this talent is not the most essential in the subject we have treated” (Dutot [1738] 1935, 2:320).

But the most accurate characterization would probably be that of the libertine, in the seventeenth century sense of the word: a free thinker casting a critical look,

yet hoping that truth might be attained through reasoned argument. His intellectual realm of choice was the society of learned men that spanned boundaries and engaged in scholarly debate between Paris and Amsterdam.

He was no doubt a patriot, very attached to his country, but without illusions about the motivations and costs of Louis XIV's policies. The intellectual journey that his books follow is that of the Frenchman traumatized by the civil wars of the sixteenth century, a man perhaps sympathetic to Protestantism (more than Jansenism), or at any rate rejecting ultramontanism and skeptical of absolutism, torn between supporting the monarchy as bulwark against civil disorder and trying to impose norms of rational government on the sovereign. His obvious fascination with England's glorious revolution and his late attempt at collecting information on the foundations of England's rising supremacy in the conflicts of the eighteenth century betray the same tension. He was undoubtedly asking himself the question that would continue to bedevil France until 1789: how to reform the monarchy and maintain her position against England and the Netherlands.

What kind of a man was Dutot, then? Clearly an intellectual, but neither a dreamer nor an artist; a man inclined to speculation but of the rationalizing sort, an analytical and theorizing mind, very much attuned to the real world and to quantifiable phenomena. He found certainty in numbers, yet he loved history and what we now call social sciences. He wanted to improve welfare, and find a rational basis for policy, but had a disabused although not cynical view of mankind and society. He enjoyed brilliant wit, but was not himself a wit.

That such a product of the French *Grand Siècle* could have been so seduced by John Law is intriguing, and emblematic at the same time. One of the many puzzles of John Law's story is how he could have seduced a whole country and be given a free rein to experiment as boldly as he did with the institutions of a tradition-bound society scarred by the turmoils of the previous centuries. To do this, Law had to seduce not just the Regent, but also men like Dutot, who were not only his assistants but also his defenders and followers. Perhaps the key to this mystery lies in the books of Dutot's library: in those books, perhaps, are the questions to which Law seemed to provide long-awaited answers.

6.7 *Final illness*

Dutot's final manuscript shows that he was still working on it in May 1741 (Dutot [1738] 1935, 2:168). His final illness must have been long and painful, involving medication and

surgery, judging by the debts due to the physician Dumolin, probably Jacques Molin or Dumoulin (1667-1755), consulting physician to the king (État de la France 1736, 1:353), “for the calls he made to the deceased during his final illness”; to the apothecary Rissoan for his prescriptions; and to Gilles-Bertrand Pibrac (1693-1771), at the time surgeon to the duke of Orléans (État de la France 1736, 2:396) and later chief surgeon of the Royal Military School and director of the Academy of Surgery. Dutot clearly could afford as good medical care as one could get in Paris at the time.

Dutot died in the morning of September 12, 1741, three weeks short of his 57th birthday. Around 130pm an official of the Châtelet de Paris came to the apartment of the rue Croix des Petits-Champs, at Marianne Marchand’s request, was shown the body still on the deathbed, and began the inventory. Two weeks later, the seals were removed and a complete inventory of the contents of Dutot’s lodging was carried out by notaries, in the presence of the widow and of Thomas Gueullette, a famous attorney of the time (Gueullette 1938), representing Dutot’s only surviving heir, his brother Jean-Charles, residing in Cherbourg. The inventory took two weeks to complete: sorting and listing the books alone took the bookseller Jean Boudot four days. The costs of Dutot’s funeral were advanced by his brother-in-law François Polisse. Dutot left no will: it is possible that his brother inherited his assets, while his wife claimed her dotage, a paltry sum of 1000 livres according to the marriage contract. I have no found no information about the fate of Dutot’s wife or brother.¹⁷¹

6.8 *The slide into semi-oblivion*

Dutot’s fame, such as it was, became partly anonymous.

After Dutot’s death, his *Réflexions* were published several times: in 1743, with his name for the first time; in 1754–5; and in 1760. The controversy remained a reference for a generation, but lost its importance because of the progress of economic thought, and also because decades of monetary stability had made the main debate between Melon and Dutot moot. The other value of Dutot’s work as historian of Law’s System was intermittently recognized: Thiers (1826, 80) called his observations “undoubtedly the most profound there is on Law’s System and the causes of its fall” and (Levasseur 1854) cited him abundantly. Nevertheless, by the time Eugène Daire brought Dutot out of

¹⁷¹In 1780 Dutot’s perpetual annuity was owned by one Jacques Villemot (MC LXXXVIII/977, 4 Apr 1721) on whom I have found no further information. Annuities could be sold, so he may have no direct connection to Dutot.

obscurity in 1843 with a partial reprint of the *Réflexions* in his collection of economists, he could only admit complete ignorance of any particulars about the author.

Even Dutot's first name was lost to posterity, which allowed a strange confusion to develop with Charles Ferrare, son of Pierre Ferrare of Italian origin, and a member of the Parlement of Rouen who died in 1694.¹⁷² This Charles Ferrare had bought a fief called Le Tot in the Norman parish of Gonfreville-la-Caillet in 1659, and was therefore known as the sieur du Tot or Charles Ferrare du Tot.¹⁷³ The obituary of this man of letters in the *Journal de Trévoux* (July 1702, p. 40–44) attributes to him a description of the papal court published in 1663 under the pseudonym of Angelo Corraro. Probably out of confusion, the bibliographer Quérard (1826–1842, 3:111) also attributed to him Dutot's *Réflexions Politiques*, even though it had been published 75 years later. The confusion propagated into reference works and into the catalogues of the British Museum and the French Bibliothèque nationale. At some point “Ferrare” was assumed to be a second given name and the author of the *Réflexions* was identified as Charles Dutot. Harsin, in his introduction to the works of Dutot (Dutot [1738] 1935, 1:xi) noted the identification with bemusement, but had no means to refute it. Although the confusion has since been purged from the catalogues of the British Library and Bibliothèque nationale, it persists in the literature to this day.

7 Conclusion

This examination of the life of Dutot has led me to investigate the careers of two other individuals, Auber and Boudard. They shed light on Dutot's own trajectory, but are also very revealing in of themselves.

The work of Dessert (1984) concentrated on the top echelon of financiers, by necessity: even limiting himself to the foremost financiers, Dessert had to study the lives of hundreds of individuals. The story of Auber and Boudard tells us a lot about the second ranks of financiers. Both careers show strong similarities. Auber was of obscure origins, Boudard came from a family of notaries. Both were from the provinces, but rose into the world of finance, first as employees of tax farmers. They must have

¹⁷²See de Frondeville and Monville (1960–64, 4:248), L'Estourmy (1999, 576).

¹⁷³In L'Estourmy (1999, 576) he is called “sieur du Tot-Gonfreville.” He gave homage for the fief of Gonfreville in 1687 (AN PP* 26/2499). From the 14th to the 17th centuries Gonfreville belonged to a noble family called du Tot. The place is called “le Tot Ferare” on Cassini's map of 1757, and is now called “la ferme du Tot” (Beaurepaire 1982–84, 980).

demonstrated enough skills in their positions as cashiers to earn the trust of their employers, and to accumulate some funds of their own: with their own money and with some credit, they were able to become partners. They invested immediately into offices, which carried some security as well as prestige. Auber's activities were first located in his home region of Normandy, but he multiplied his ventures, and probably extended himself too far. Both men took advantages of the opportunities offered by the times. During wartime, they ventured into sales of offices, one of the main sources of revenues for the king, but also into provisioning of the armies. In the brief period of peace between 1697 and 1700, Auber did not remain inactive, and turned to long-distance trade and real estate development. Likewise, Boudard bought houses and invested in a paper-mill in Alsace. Thus, the *affaires du Roi* did not exclude ventures into economic activity. Both men brought in their relatives into their dealings: Auber took his nephew Fallet, Boudard employed his cousin Boudard des Varennes.

The careers of Boudard and Auber also demonstrate how risky the world of finance was. Neither man could rely on family connections for capital. They took risks, borrowed abundantly from bankers and other financiers. They were therefore highly leveraged, and their creditors were unwilling to display much forbearance: as Auber's travails show, liens, repossessions and warrants against the debtor's person quickly prevented him from carrying on his work. Yet the very nature of the financier's work was to take on the risk that the King did not want to bear: risk in the yield of taxes, risk in the price of supplies to the army. There was another risk, as well: Auber was taxed by the Edict of June 1700, and Boudard was taxed by the Chamber of Justice. Ultimately, both careers crashed, although Auber, within the safety of the abbey of Saint-Germain des Prés, reached a ripe old age and had time to convert some of his accumulated wisdom into policy advice. Boudard, even in the relative safety of Alsace, was cut down by an untimely death, his relatives dispersed into obscurity and his meager assets sold off.

Dutot was considerably younger than either man: almost 40 years younger than Auber, and 15 years younger than Boudard. His career in the world of finance was cut short by the collapse of his employer Boudard, and took an interesting turn as he went to work for the Chamber of Justice. We know, however, that his circle of friends remained the same, and the opinions he expressed about the Chamber of Justice make clear where his sympathies laid: with his friends the financiers, victims of repression, rather than with the king. Would he have followed a similar path? Possibly, although one has to wonder whether his temperament was well-suited. He was clearly skilled and trained in accounting and banking, and the collapse of Law's System left him with

a comfortable amount of cash which he invested as best he could: yet even then, we see traces of more financial and commercial ventures in the 1720s. But was he as manically active, as risk-taking as his two mentors? He might have tried, but would he have succeeded?

The 1720s and 1730s were relatively peaceful and uneventful times in France, by the standards of the previous decades. Men whose “genius was proper for” commerce could devote their talent to it. Dutot probably realized that he was not one of them, but more of an intellectual, and in the relative comfort of his apartment he devoted himself to reading, writing, and mechanical hobbies.

8 Appendix: Dutot’s signatures (1708–39)

I gather here samples of Dutot’s signatures. The first one I saw, and until now the only one known (Mann 1935), was the last (Figure 11), dating from 1739. It is in the same handwriting as the text of the letter (note in particular the distinctive τ -shaped letter “t”, which appears throughout the text). The handwriting is also the same as that of the Arsenal manuscript published by Harsin and the Poitiers manuscript published by Murphy.

The next one I found (Figure 6) was so different that I suspected that they came from different hands. It is clearly the same as Figures 3, 4, 7 through 9, all of which are absolutely authenticated. Even the much simpler one in Figure 5 could plausibly be by the same hand (note the movement of the pen in the initial “D”), and one can easily imagine that upon entering the dreaded Bastille an intimidated Dutot shed the flourishes in which he usually indulged. But the belated discovery of Figure 10 made me think that, after all, Dutot’s signature probably changed markedly in his later years, and I now accept that the Arsenal and Poitiers manuscripts are autographs.

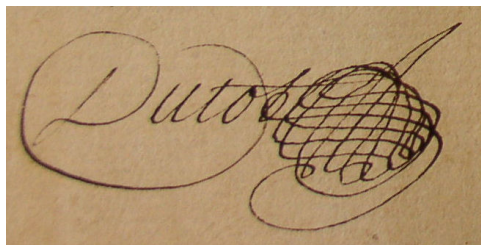


Figure 3: Signature as witness to a lease, Nov 29, 1708 (AD Bas-Rhin, 6 E 41/35).

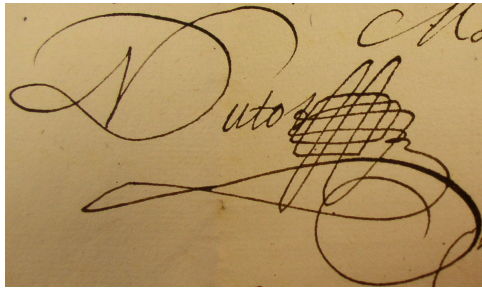


Figure 4: Signature on his marriage contract, Aug 16, 1713 (AD Bas-Rhin, 6 E 41/36). Note the letter N inside the initial D.

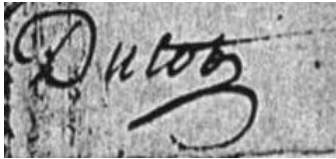


Figure 5: Signature in the Bastille prisoners' registry, April 29, 1717 (Arsenal 12479, fol. 29).



Figure 6: Signature as clerk of the Royal Bank, May 17, 1721 (AN V/7/235, fol. 68r).

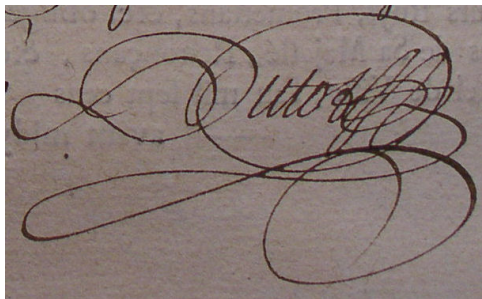


Figure 7: Signature on a rent contract, Oct 12, 1722 (AN MC LXXXVIII/983).

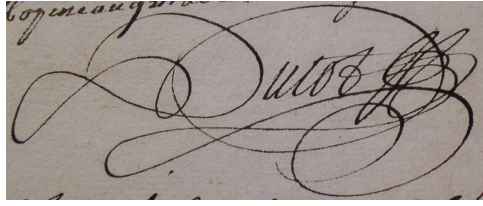


Figure 8: Signature on his mother-in-law's inventory, Aug 5, 1723 (AN MC LXXXVIII/484).

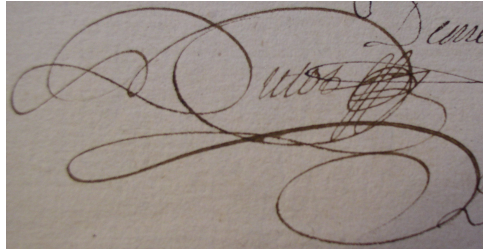


Figure 9: Signature on a life annuity contract, Mar 10, 1725 (AN MC LXXXVIII/484, 5 Aug 1723).

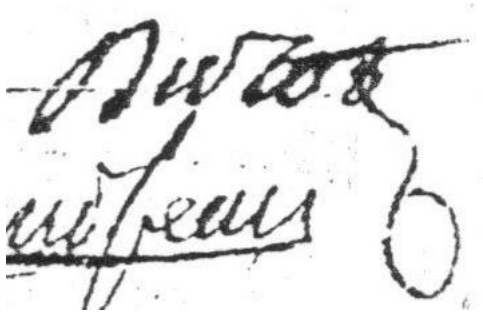


Figure 10: Signature on the minutes of the Société des Arts, Jul 17, 1729 (Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, J 1750; courtesy of Olivier Courcelle).

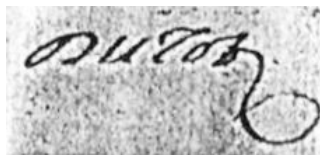


Figure 11: Signature on a letter of Dec 31, 1739 (Arsenal, ms. 4745, fol. 90).

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Minutier central

I/387; XIII/141; XXVII/17, 24, 29; XXXI/14; XXXIII/485; XXXVI/243, 250, 253, 257, 259, 260, 261, 263, 265, 266, 269, 270, 271, 275, 282, 283, 284, 298, 303; XXXVIII/96, 142; XLVIII/97, 98; LI/869; LIII/299; LXVIII/490; LXXXII/982; LXXXVIII/477, 484, 977, 983; XCIX/358; CI/206; CVI/673; CXIII/229

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