La main de Thôt
ISSN : 2272-2653
Éditeur : Carole Filière

12 | 2024
Traduction et résistances

“To shew men and things in their true colours”: A radical translation of the *Révolutions de Paris* account of the ‘August Days’ for a British readership

Rachel Rogers

http://interfas.univ-tlse2.fr/lamaindethot/1325

Référence électronique
Rachel Rogers, « “To shew men and things in their true colours”: A radical translation of the *Révolutions de Paris* account of the ‘August Days’ for a British readership », *La main de Thôt* [En ligne], 12 | 2024, mis en ligne le 05 décembre 2024, consulté le 07 janvier 2025. URL : http://interfas.univ-tlse2.fr/lamaindethot/1325

“To shew men and things in their true colours”: A radical translation of the *Révolutions de Paris* account of the ‘August Days’ for a British readership

Rachel Rogers

PLAN

Introduction
The ‘August Days’ seen by the British
Authorship and the making of A *Circumstantial History*
Révolutions de Paris and a British readership?
Translating and mediating the *Révolutions de Paris* account of the August Days
Emphasising popular approval of the August Days
Mitigating contempt for the monarch and the Bourgeoisie
Attenuating popular vengeance, elevating the revolutionary leadership
Conclusion

TEXTE

Introduction

1 In September 1792, only a few weeks after the French king, Louis XVI, and the royal family had been placed under house arrest after the bloody confrontation between the Swiss Guards and popular militias at the Tuileries palace on 10th August, a written account of the events appeared under the title of A *Circumstantial History of the Transactions at Paris on the Tenth of August; plainly shewing the perfidy of Louis* XVI *and the general unanimity of the people in defence of their rights.*[1] Radical London publishers R. Thomson, R. Littlejohn and H. D. Symonds printed and sold this vehement defence of the overthrow of monarchy by the French citizenry for the price of one shilling a copy. Perhaps understandably, given the contentious nature of the arguments advanced, and the recent crackdown by the government on “wicked and seditious writings”, no author was credited on the title page.[2] Even the publishers themselves were taking a huge risk in

agreeing to print a text which could have been seen as contravening the terms set out in the royal proclamation on sedition, delivered by George III in May of the same year. [3]

2 The publication was, in all likelihood, the initiative of radical reformer, poet and revolutionary sympathiser, Robert Merry. Merry was an observer of the 'August Days' and one of a number of radical reformers whose stringent criticism of Britain's political system and admiration for 'French liberty' had led them to leave their home country – sometimes voluntarily, sometimes under threat of persecution – to observe the French Revolution at close hand. In their writings, correspondence, poetry and actions, British nationals such as Merry contributed to efforts to undercut the hostile reaction to the republican turn in revolutionary France within the British press and by those in authority and advance the case for fundamental radical reform at home.

3 The translation and publication of A *Circumstantial History* was a collective and meaningful act of resistance to official and mainstream discourse in Britain. In choosing an unequivocal vindication of the popular seizure of power as a source text, in the translation decisions, annotations and concern for immediate publication, Merry and his collaborators sought to influence domestic public opinion by providing a counter narrative aimed at a British audience steeped in 'Church and King' rhetoric. [4] It was also a contribution to the vibrant print culture which radical reformers forged in the revolutionary years. Such a culture was not only the expression of reformers' own resistance to prevailing assumptions in Britain about what it was to be loyal and patriotic, but was a way of inciting the British public in general to engage with ideas which held up governmental abuse and corruption to scrutiny. As Jon Mee has put it, popular radicalism implied "experiment, contestation, and performance, especially in its relations to the medium of print and the associational world that surrounded it" (MEE, 2016, 1). Merry's fellow reformer and compatriot in Paris, Sampson Perry wrote that to "humbly, but zealously to exert one's abilities, whatever they may be, in the cause of truth and of one's Country, is a situation to be envied" (PERRY, 1795, 4). [5] Radical reformers were a minority community in Britain in the late eighteenth century, as most scholars agree. However, their activism in print and publishing meant that their ideas could have a reach far

beyond the confines of the clubs and societies in which they gathered.

4 This article will shed further light on a text which originated in a foreign language press piece aimed at Parisian readers, and which was translated, altered and mediated for a broad British audience. Given that the original French version was published by the newspaper *Révolutions de Paris* and thus firmly anchored in, even productive of, the specific cultural, intellectual and political framework of the Revolution, it was, in itself, a very difficult text to translate for a non-French readership. There were also several audiences to be reached. Merry and his counterparts would have hoped that their counter portrait of the uprising against the king would be perused and discussed by ministers, reformers and the wider public alike.

5 A survey of the circumstances in which A *Circumstantial History* was published and the individuals who may have been involved in the enterprise will be followed by an examination of the translation itself. Particular attention will be paid to the language choices made, focusing on the alterations, omissions, additions and annotations which appeared in the English version of the *Révolutions de Paris* report. Such an investigation provides new insight into the determination of British and Irish revolutionary sympathisers on the ground in Paris to offer up immediate responses to the events they witnessed in France, for quick dispatch and circulation. Their intention was to counteract, with evidence, eloquence and eyewitness authority, what they saw as partial and inaccurate readings of the Revolution circulating at home. No doubt encouraged by friends and acquaintances within French revolutionary politics, with whom they collaborated on other editorial and publishing projects, but also consistent with their own embedded and often long-standing views, British radical writers used the medium of translation to frame the events of 10th August in a way that undermined the prevailing critical portraits widely circulating in the British press. In doing so, they also contributed to ongoing efforts to inform the wider British public about the merits of fundamental democratic change and forge a powerful counter-cultural radical movement on home soil.

The 'August Days' seen by the British

6 The confrontation between the royal guards and the popular militias at the Tuileries palace in early August 1792, was the culmination of months of mounting tension after the king's attempted flight from France in June 1791. Although Louis XVI had been halted at Varennes in the north, the episode had shaken what little faith was held in the monarch's commitment to revolutionary change. The king gave his reluctant royal assent to the constitutional settlement fashioned in the National Assembly in October 1791 but resisted other legislative attempts to curtail his power. Many in the Paris municipal authorities and local Section committees, increasingly frustrated by the stance of the sovereign, had begun to discuss the merits of republican government as early as mid-1791.[6] Yet it was over the course of early 1792 that anti-monarchical sentiment increased. With the outbreak of war with Austria and Prussia in April 1792, the French population endured increasing deprivation, and in May of the same year the king dismissed his Girondin ministers, a prelude to a mass march to the royal residence in June 1792. On 10th August, with rumours circulating that Louis XIV was again making plans to flee, the king was forced from power, leading to the end of the short-lived experiment in limited monarchy. Year One of the French republic was proclaimed on 21st September 1792.

7 The dismantling of kingship was denounced by the vast majority of observers in Britain. It even alienated Whig reformers who had been early supporters of the Revolution and who had seen the drive to curb royal power as the aping of Britain's own constitutional settlement enshrined in the 1688 'Glorious' Revolution.[7] Lurid accounts of the events of 10th August were published in the domestic press, depicting the bloodthirsty nature of the Paris crowd and their barbaric actions towards the king's guards. An account which appeared in the *Annual Register* noted the "savage" nature of the populace who, exacting revenge on the king's arrested Swiss guards, "murdered their helpless prisoners in cold blood."[8] It was reported that "the ferocious multitude, bursting through the ranks of the national guards, [...] were at no pains to repel or moderate their rage" and summed up the

situation by contending that "a general thirst of blood was excited, and raged like a contagious disease throughout Paris."[9] Such portraits of unbridled popular excess were corroborated visually in the graphic caricatures of artists such as Thomas Rowlandson and James Gillray.

8 Yet for many radical reformers in Britain, as well as those who had taken up residence in France by August 1792, the advent of popular sovereignty was a development to be lauded and celebrated.[10] A number of British nationals witnessed the clashes at the Tuileries gardens on 10th August. While the arrest of the king was not greeted among them with unanimous approval, many, often with strong connections to local revolutionary committees and involved in French politics, welcomed the republican turn. A group of British merchants helped to raise money for the widows and children of the men who had died fighting the king's armed forces. Robert Rayment, one of two British nationals who organised the subscription, described the fallen men as "the heroes of the *journée* of the 10th August". [11]And two more British residents of Paris, Sampson Perry and Helen Maria Williams, explained and vindicated the actions of the populace in later published works.[12] Perry's account was published by H. D. Symonds, who also co-published A *Circumstantial History*. Such accounts dwelled on the sacrifices made by the Parisian people in defying royal tyranny and downplayed the extent of the retributive violence exacted on the Swiss guards. John Oswald, a Scottish resident of Paris who fought and died for the republic in suppressing the royalist revolt in the Vendée, also published a tract, in both English and French, in 1793 in which he saw the advent of the republic as an opportunity for the implementation of a more direct democratic system of popular government.[13]

Authorship and the making of A *Circumstantial History*

9 Though billed in the press as a straightforward "account" of the downfall of monarchy, A *Circumstantial History* was in actual fact a rather more complex and composite offering that that. It comprised a thirteen-page address "to the public", a three-page letter to the ed-

itor of a "morning paper", dated 22nd August 1792, and finally a twenty-page annotated translation of a press report published in the early August issue of the newspaper *Révolutions de Paris*. In the foreword, the author laments the widespread opprobrium heaped on the actions of the French population on 10th August. The British press, from a lack of understanding of the circumstances in France, had portrayed the events "in the worst possible light", and it was the disingenuous determination of newspaper editors to "industrially suppress[ed] everything which might appear like a justification of the conduct of the people" that had prompted the author to submit an alternative version of events for print (*CH*, iv). The account would be a corrective to the misconceptions circulating in Britain about the advent of republican rule in France.

10 Although Robert Merry's name does not appear on the front page of *A Circumstantial History*, it seems likely both from the various press announcements on publication, but also from Merry's own political leanings, that he was the author of the tract.[14] Merry had intermittently resided in the French capital since just before the fall of the Bastille and had witnessed the confrontation at the Tuileries firsthand after his return to Paris in the summer of 1792. According to the *Monthly Magazine*, "R. Merry was in Paris on the memorable 10th of August, when the Parisians stormed the Royal Palace."[15] On 11th September, *The Times* advertised the publication of "A PARTICULAR ACCOUNT of the Rise, and also of the Fall of Despotism in Paris, on the 10th of August, and the Treasons of Royalty, anterior and subsequent to that period. By ROBERT MERRY, Esq".[16] It is highly probable that the publication announced in *The Times* and *A Circumstantial History* are one and the same text. It is unlikely, however, that Merry carried out the translation himself, given his mediocre French revealed in manuscript letters sent to the revolutionary authorities. In May 1793, he sent a plea from Calais, requesting safe passage out of France, via Dunkirk and Ostend, for himself, his wife and two servants.[17] In the petition, Merry's French is comprehensible, but strewn with spelling and grammar mistakes.

11 Merry had a number of other friends and acquaintances in Paris who could have carried out the translation for him or with him. Fellow British nationals in Paris such as John Hurford Stone and Helen Maria Williams were adept linguistics and professional translators. Williams

completed a number of literary translations which were published during her residence in the French capital and Stone himself may have worked for a time as a translator in the service of the French government.[18] Thomas Cooper, temporarily in Paris during this period, was, according to Patrick Leech, the translator of J. B. D'Aumont's account of the deposition of Louis XVI (LEECH, 2020). Initiatives such as these would have had the backing of acquaintances within French revolutionary politics, since it was a priority of the revolutionary administration to use the press to influence how foreign governments and their populations viewed the nascent republican regime.

12 Yet it appears most likely that the task of translating the *Révolutions de Paris* report was carried out by Irish national and bilingual resident of the capital, as well as seasoned translator, Nicholas Madgett. According to the *Monthly Magazine* obituary of Merry, Madgett, "a public translator of languages", had translated the British reformer's tract on republican government, written only two months after the fall of monarchy in late 1792, from English into French.[19] This is almost certainly a reference to Merry's *Réflexions politiques*. As an agent of the French government, and key member of the revolutionary translation bureau from 1793, Madgett added Merry's name to a list of loyal citizens that the republic could trust when foreign residents came under suspicion after the outbreak of war in February.[20] They clearly knew each other therefore, and Madgett must have seen Merry as a trusted ally in the revolutionary cause. Sylvie Kleinman provides compelling evidence that Madgett, and his nephew John Sullivan, were part of a dedicated translation service, working for the revolutionary government. The daily activities of the translators included "trawling through the English press, closely monitoring attitudes to France and the Revolution, and preparing relevant abstracts or translations into French" (KLEINMAN, 2017, 10). This bolsters the claim that at the turn of 1793 Madgett may have been involved in responding to negative press reports of the fall of monarchy. Kleinman also notes that three years later, in 1796, when Irish revolutionary Theobold Wolfe Tone arrived in Paris as an exile, Madgett was the one who translated his deposition "on the present state of Ireland" for the French Directory. Tone lamented the slowness of Madgett's progress, put down to his age (he was 46), illness (he had gout) and the fact that

he was "always hunting for maps and then he thinks he is making revolutions."[21] Given his proficiency in French and his ardent support for revolutionary change, Madgett would surely have been an ideal candidate to translate the *Révolutions de Paris* report.

13 If Nicholas Madgett was indeed the translator, it is another salient example of British and Irish residents of the capital collaborating on editorial projects during the early revolutionary years. English-speaking emigrants in Paris often worked together on writing initiatives, sometimes enforced by severe language difficulties, but on other occasions prompted by joint living arrangements or regular contact in emigrant society meetings. Shared status as foreign residents in a rapidly changing revolutionary context, and with an increasingly pressing need for urgency and clarity as suspicions about foreigners' intentions grew, made collaborative writing an attractive, and increasingly essential, practice (ROGERS, 2021).[22] Patrick Leech has noted how translators in the 'radical Enlightenment' rarely worked independently. Translation was often a "collaborative act" (LEECH, 2020, 67) and since translators worked in tandem with others, often part of a dissenting, radical culture, "the identification of a single translating subject may not be so important" (LEECH, 2020, 158). Merry and Madgett, if indeed they were partners in this initiative, turned to a well-known revolutionary newspaper in their hunt for an account of the August Days which tallied with their own political sensibilities and which would provide them with a suitable report from which to manufacture a quick translation for publication in Britain.

Révolutions de Paris and a British readership?

14 *Révolutions de Paris* was a weekly newspaper which first went to print on 12th July 1789, just before the fall of the Bastille, and ran until 28th February 1794, when key editorial staff were arrested by the revolutionary government. The newspaper was edited by Louis-Marie Prudhomme and contributors included Elisée Loustalot, Sylvain Maréchal, Pierre Gaspard Chaumette and Philippe Fabre d'Églantine, radical writers whose affinities lay squarely with the disaffected people of Paris and who devoted pages to the espousal of egalitarian

causes such as agrarian and social reform. *Révolutions de Paris* is considered to have been "one of the most influential and innovative revolutionary newspapers" of the time (ZIZEK, 2003, 624).[23] The paper's regular themes – the assertion of the moral superiority of the people, the right to resist monarchical oppression and the condemnation of the repression of the lower classes – feature predominantly in a lengthy front-page report into the events at the Tuileries on 10th August, published in issue 161. The king is held up as "cowardly and perfidious" (*RDP*, 233), his Swiss guards arrogant and duplicitous, bent on exacting excessive punishment on the people. The people, on the other hand, are justifiably enraged, yet they nevertheless refrain from immoral conduct such as looting, theft or excessive brutality. It is the Swiss guards who, in luring the militias into the palace only to massacre them, show baseness and cruelty.

15 The paper was considered more neutral than some contemporary publications, despite its severe judgement on aristocratic interests and unwavering support for the rectitude of the people and the justice of their claims to popular sovereignty. "The *Revolutions de Paris* attacked the same enemies as did the most virulent journals", writes Jack Censer, "but rather than ruthlessly denouncing or sarcastically assaulting an opponent, its journalists generally marshaled an overwhelming factual case, supported by what they considered to be universally accepted principles" (CENSER, 1976, 25). It was perhaps this reputation for reliable and facts-based news which prompted Merry and Madgett to select its report on the 10th August assault for translation. Censer claims that *Révolutions de Paris* was "assuredly the most widely read paper in Paris and throughout France" (CENSER, 1976, 22), espousing resolutely sans-culotte affinities. The close typesetting of the paper also allowed it to be sold relatively cheaply (LABROSSE & RÉTAT, 1989, 25).[24]

16 Newspapers such as these were often kept afloat by subscriptions taken out by revolutionary clubs and societies. British emigrants wrote of their habit of reading newspapers in each other's company in their weekly gatherings at White's hotel in central Paris in late 1792. It is likely then that a subscription may have been taken out with *Révolutions de Paris*, a popular newspaper among international readers, and it may have been during one of these evening meetings at Christopher and Anne White's hotel at 7 passage des petits pères, not

far from the Palais Royal, that the report on the August Days was perused, its translation and publication determined upon. Scottish resident of Paris John Oswald succeeded in publishing a translated version of his own tract on popular government at the *Révolutions de Paris* printing press at the turn of 1793, further evidence perhaps of close ties between British sympathisers of revolution, the newspaper and its editorial staff.

Translating and mediating the *Révolutions de Paris* account of the August Days

17 It was therefore an account published in a newspaper strongly committed to defending the right of the French people to assert their claim to popular sovereignty that was selected by Merry and Madgett for translation into English and publication in the British press in the days after the 10th August. What is certain is that the translation was required urgently, to maximise its impact on a newspaper market saturated with sensationalist reports of the "horrors at Paris".[25] Whoever was given the task of carrying it out would have had to work deftly and swiftly over a very short period. Time available for refining the translation would have been limited and efficiency would have been prioritised over perfection. Nevertheless, despite the time pressure exerted on the translator, a close examination of the English version reveals a relatively high degree of fidelity in the translation, even though French syntactic structures remain in place on occasions, and certain terms appear hastily chosen or mistranslated. The quality of the English expression used to convey the report's contents declines perceptibly in the final ten pages, consistent with the necessity of finalising the text for swift publication.[26]

18 Over and above the unpolished quality of the English version, what a comparative study of the two texts reveals, is that slight and subtle, but significant, alterations were made to the source text during the translation process consistent with a design to ensure some authorial input. As F. Oz-Salzberger contends "It was widely accepted [in Enlightenment translation] that a translator might take liberties in syntax, vocabulary and structure" in order to ensure the commercial

success of a text, render the "author's voice" more faithfully in the target language, or to comply with what they understood to be their readers' preferences and expectations" (OZ-SALZBERGER, 2006, 391-2). While late eighteenth-century translation certainly did place a premium on accuracy, it was rare for translators to seek "rigorous loyalty" to the text written in the origin-language (OZ-SALZBERGER, 2006, 392). While those involved in producing *A Circumstantial History* were not seeking commercial success, they certainly were mediating the text for an audience known to be sceptical towards anti-monarchism and doubtful of the merits of popular participation in politics. It was necessary to manage the expectations and reactions of the future readership to guard against blunt and outright rejection of the ideas contained within the text.

19 The alterations in the *Révolutions de Paris* translation – omissions, additions, and particular language choices –, which increase in number and significance towards the end of the English account, in tandem with a proliferation of relatively substantial authorial footnotes, fall into three main categories. Firstly, there are minor additions in the opening passages which reinforce the view that the Tuileries assault commanded broad popular support and was carried out in the public interest. Secondly, the English version omits key sections in the original-language report which display particular contempt towards the king and queen, the Swiss guards and the alarmed propertied classes of the capital. Finally, editing choices were made in the translation process to attenuate the portrait of gratuitous popular vengeance, openly and unapologetically included in the original French report, and to elevate the decision-making role of respectable revolutionary leadership figures from the Paris Commune. In sum, choices were made which ensured a more favourable portrait of the revolutionary Parisian population and on radical sans-culotte and Cordeliers politics while simultaneously undermining the legitimacy of the reigning monarch.[27] The changes point to the author, translator and publishers of *A Circumstantial History* working collaboratively to convey a reading of the August Days in keeping with their own support for the turn to popular sovereignty, but with amendments in the interest of making the account (and the events themselves) more palatable for a reforming readership in Britain. There

was also a need to ensure compatibility with publication restrictions imposed after the royal decree of May 1792.

Emphasising popular approval of the August Days

20 On the very first page of the translated account of the August Days, two notable additions are made in the English version. While the French text notes how the decision to acquit the Marquis de Lafayette of charges – levelled after the earlier *journée* on 20th June – of conspiracy to undermine the National Assembly had prompted "indignation" (*RdP*, 229), the English version suggests that the decision had "excited public indignation" (*CH*, 20). Emphasis in the latter is thus placed on the widespread *popular* disapproval of the decision taken by the assembly to clear the beleaguered general's name. Later in the same paragraph of the English account, the results of a recent inquiry into the king's conduct are described as having "not added to public confidence." In the French version, the investigation is simply said to have not "inspired confidence" (*RDP*, 230).[28] Again, the particular audience deemed unsatisfied is not detailed, while in the English translation the inclusion of the term "public" hints at a much more unanimous and widespread mistrust of royal scrutiny.

21 While it is conceivable that such additions were not conscious attempts to embellish the original text, it seems more likely that they constituted an attempt to reinforce the view that wider public opinion in France had turned away from the recently-established constitutional monarchy which the Marquis de Lafayette had played a pivotal part in establishing. This is all the more convincing when we remember that Merry and Madgett's own objective was to both shape public opinion on the republican turn back in Britain while also contributing to the forging of a radical public sphere on home soil which would serve as a powerful counterweight to ministerial narratives. This reading – of active and intentional enhancement of the origin-text – is corroborated by another decision taken by the translator. While the *Révolutions de Paris* report recounts shots being fired from street windows as volunteers from the town of Marseille marched through the capital on 10th August, the allusion to Parisian hostility to the arrival of popular militias is omitted in the English text (*CH*, 23).

Once again, a minor but crucial change is made which has the effect of emphasising, and perhaps exaggerating, the degree of unanimous public approbation for the actions of the popular militias.

Mitigating contempt for the monarch and the Bourgeoisie

22 When it comes to the portrait of the king and his court, the *Révolutions de Paris* report is scathing. The monarch is admonished for his cowardly behaviour in bribing the Swiss guards to fire on the popular militias while simultaneously appealing to the National Assembly for protection. The English version faithfully renders this excoriating portrait of Louis XVI and his royal entourage. Yet when the French version goes further, indulging in more bitter and vindictive invective on the king's hubris and moral failings, the translation is more measured. Reporting on the king's appearance at the bar of the National Assembly before the clashes took place, the *Révolutions de Paris* report has him declaring "*Je suis venu ici pour éviter un grand crime*", and derisively follows this up with the judgment "Le saint homme de roi !" (*RDP*, 233). In the English version, the mocking and dismissive verdict on the king's ineptitude is retained, but without any reference to his misplaced claim to sanctity. It simply reads, "I am come," said he, "to avoid a great crime. Conscientious man!" (*CH*, 27). In the same vein, a reference to Marie-Antoinette's vanity is also entirely omitted from the English version. [29]

23 In recalling how the king benefited from sanctuary in the National Assembly during the Tuileries assault, the French report reads: "À côté de cette scène d'horreur, Louis XVI, cause première de cet événement douleureux, comme un plat scélérat habitué au crime, assis à une table bien servie dans l'un des comités du corps législatif […]" (*RDP*, 239). This commentary, on the king's apparent enjoyment of the comforts of good dining while the population fell in the grounds of his palace, is included in the English version, but without the allusion to the sovereign as a "plain villain well-versed in criminality." [30] While *A Circumstantial History* does thus convey the severe criticism levelled at the monarch, the contemptuous tone employed in the original report is softened. One reason for this might be that the author or translator wanted to avoid sanction, censorship or even

prosecution for explicit and unmitigated contempt for a rightful king only a few months after King George III had issued a royal proclamation banning writing deemed 'seditious'.[31] While within radical circles, there was some interest in, and growing support for republicanism, it remained inconceivable to voice such sympathies in published works, even more so once the French king had been tried and executed the following January. Such a contemptuous verdict on the king may also have courted the disapproval of British readers committed to political and constitutional reform but broadly deferential to hereditary monarchy. The translators therefore attempted to overcome potential readerly resistance to the main thrust of the report's verdict on the king by replacing the scornful tone adopted in *Révolutions de Paris* by one which is more neutral, measured and factual.

24 As well as omitting some of the more scathing denunciations of Louis XVI's particular conduct, *A Circumstantial History* is also watchful in the way that it handles the far-reaching criticism of the age-old institution of hereditary monarchy itself, which was a significant element in the *Révolutions de Paris* account. Given the lack of sympathy for republicanism in Britain at the time beyond a minority of radical reformers, many of whom had emigrated to France, as well as the remit of the royal decree on seditious writings, the translators may again have chosen to alter the text to ensure its publication, avoid prosecution, as well as facilitate the reception of its key ideas. On two occasions, the French report compares the behaviour of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette to that of sixteenth-century sovereign, Charles IX, and his queen Elizabeth. One of these references is included in the English translation, with Louis XVI being described in both versions as even more "cowardly" than the king who oversaw the St Bartholomew's Day massacre of Protestants in 1572. The second comparison of Louis XVI to Charles IX is omitted however, as is a long section at the end of the French report which details the actions taken by the citizens of Paris to pull down "the statues of their former despots" (*RDP*, 240).[32] These decisions, along with the choice not to include any of the evocative engravings found in the original text which illustrate in eight different plates the toppling of statues of kings across the capital, focus the British reader's attention on a particular quarrel with one flawed monarch rather than on the more fundamental and

deep-seated resistance to the institution of monarchy itself, and the tyrannical exercise of regal power over the centuries, that is integral to the *Révolutions de Paris* report. [33]

25 In the final pages of the English version, a long, stand-alone passage which appears in the *Révolutions de Paris* piece is entirely omitted. It is a highly significant section of the report in that it constitutes a barely-veiled threat to the more wealthy, propertied residents of Paris whose support for popular actions was considered too tepid. Shopkeepers, accused of nay-saying in overheard conversations, are warned that if they fail to show their unwavering support for the efforts of the sans-culottes, they themselves might become the targets of popular vengeance. The language used is threatening and unadulterated: "bourgeois cowards" are harangued for the "ingratitude" towards those who had given their lives at the Tuileries and enjoined to "show more respect" to those who could – if such deference is not forthcoming – turn their legitimate wrath on them. [34] The *Révolutions de Paris* author adds that there was no need for the "humiliating order" to the ordinary people to leave private assets well alone since the popular militias acted according to a code of conduct which forbade them from attacking property. This entire passage, detailing the suspected hostility of bourgeois interests towards the actions of the people, is left out of the English version. Coming just over a decade after the propertied residents of London had been targeted in urban protests in what became known as the Gordon riots in June 1780, causing widespread anxiety, the author and translator of *A Circumstantial History* chose to focus on the sole quarrel with the reigning king rather than on underlying social tensions within French society. Reference to such tensions would certainly have caused unnecessary alarm, and overshadowed the portrait of righteous and legitimate French people struggling against tyranny. It was this portrait, of the population asserting their liberties and resisting a despotic sovereign, that the translators wanted to convey. It was also a portrait which confirmed radical reformers' own narrative about parliamentary corruption and the need for political change in Britain. As E. P. Thompson wrote, "radicalism was a generalized libertarian rhetoric, a running battle between the people and the unreformed House of Commons" (THOMPSON, [1963], 1968, 661). It is evident that Merry and Madgett had significant authorial input, altering the text in dif-

ferent ways to ensure that the ideas conveyed – filtered through the lens of their own political affinities – resonated fully with the audience they hoped to reach.

Attenuating popular vengeance, elevating the revolutionary leadership

26 If there was one particular reason motivating the translation of the *Révolutions de Paris* report for a British audience, then, as well as the probable desire to signal explicit public support for the new republic to French allies and acquaintances, it was to try to convince readers at home that, contrary to reports circulating widely, France had not descended into anarchy and dissolution in its experiment with popular sovereignty and that popular assertion of liberties was necessary and legitimate. In order to reinforce the portrait of a just and righteous people rising up against monarchical tyranny, as opposed to a barbarous multitude violating all rules of civilised society, the translators of A *Circumstantial History* made a number of further alterations to the original text in the final English-language version. In the closing pages of the French report, the author becomes more virulent in their support for the unforgiving actions of the popular militias and more openly willing to condone reported acts of retribution. Some of the more lyrical and vindictive passages of the French report are nuanced in the English version.[35] In A *Circumstantial History* the militias are described as "merciful" (*CH*, 27) towards the Swiss guards, while the French version simply uses the term "bonhomie" (*RDP*, 233) – good-natured cheerfulness – to describe the people's conduct. And in what is a telling and perhaps intentional oversight, the king's servants are said to have been treated by the people "with pity" (*CH*, 31), while in the French version the people are described as "merciless".[36] Royal soldiers killed by the popular militias "lay […] where they had fallen" (*CH*, 22) in the English version, while in the French they lay at their "place of execution" (*RDP*, 231). The palace was "tarnished with the blood of the Swiss and the King's valets" (*CH*, 31) in the English text, while in the French it was "tarnished with the blood […] and strewn with their corpses" (*RDP*, 235).[37] The translators move away

from the original text on a number of occasions in the interest of shaping readers' reaction to the assertion of popular sovereignty. Acts of gratuitous violence and retribution are attenuated, even entirely rewritten as acts of mercy and justice. The aim was not then to provide an accurate translation, but to use translation to shape and guide reader responses to the events discussed. Merry and Madgett were concerned to overcome entrenched opposition in Britain to the idea that the people, gathered in numbers, could reclaim rights and sovereignty and assume legitimate authority in the political sphere.

27 On page 33 of *A Circumstantial History*, three references to acts of reprisals committed by the militias on the king's guards are either shortened, glossed over or omitted entirely. While in the English version, the guards were "caught in the out-houses, and some in the kitchens, where all were put to death" (*CH*, 33), in the original French text, the author dwells on the indiscriminate targeting of those killed in the kitchen areas and the manner of their execution, writing "all were beaten to death, from the head chefs to the lowliest kitchen hand" (*RDP*, 236). [38]A reference to the people "killing [the Swiss guards] everywhere" is left out, and a description of the fate of the royal attendants who stood guard at the gates of the palace, is entirely revised. In French, the guards' throats were "slit in their lodges", a fair way, according to the author, of ensuring that they would share the same torturous fate as the other guards to whom they had provided knowing and willing assistance by opening the gates of the Carrousel to trap the popular militias.[39] The English version, on the other hand, condenses and sanitises the description, which results in: "Nor were the Swiss porters, who opened the gates for the massacre of the men of Marseilles, spared: the sanguinary act did but too deeply merit punishment" (*CH*, 33). On the following page, an account of the escape of a Swiss guard, a man called D'Affry, is included without the editorial comment in the French version stating "no doubt he will be brought to justice; we mustn't let this bloodthirsty old man out of our sights" (*RDP*, 236).[40] Finally, the reference to the king's velvet robes, adorned with gold and the royal insignia, being handed round for French militia men to sully their hands on ("s'en souiller les mains", *RDP*, 239) is not translated.[41] In the concluding pages of the translation therefore, as the French report itself becomes more virulent and ruthlessly partisan, distancing itself sub-

stantially from the informative and neutral reporting Jack Censer suggests was a hallmark of the newspaper, the translators of the English version made the decision to attenuate or edit out a significant number of these passages while still keeping the core message on the integrity and justice of popular actions.

28 In tandem with these more regular alterations to the source text towards the end of the English account, the number of explanatory footnotes also increases.[42] The authorial interjections corroborate the *Révolutions de Paris* account by providing eye-witness affirmation of the scenes described in the press account and personal recollections. For instance, after the description of the reprisals carried out on the Swiss guards stationed at the gates of the palace, the following footnote is inserted:

> I could not have conceived that it was possible, had I not witnessed it, that there could have been found men so prodigal of life, as those who first entered the garden; after breaking the gates with their cannon, exposed to rolling fire from the windows, without any protection on their parts, they advanced, and after standing the shock of the sortie, which they repelled, they entered the palace, and stormed the staircase, where the slaughter was dreadful. I saw the Swiss at length give way – about 100 first fled, but they were met at the Place Louis XV, and there fell under the bayonets and pikes of the mob (note 7, *CH*, 33).

29 Equally, in note 8, the author suggests that if any popular militia men did not "respect the national property" and stole items of value, they were chastised by their superiors. And in the next footnote, the author recounts observing the gardens after the assault, "filled with women and children, surveying, with an anxiety, the victims, dying and dead; some looking for a husband, brother or father, raising up their heads to recognize them, alternately rejoicing and lamenting their fate" (*CH*, 36). One women's plight to retrieve her husband's body is detailed in an explicit effort to show that those who took part in the assault were sentient men, with families, children, wives and mothers who grieved their dead relatives, victims of royal failings, not misguided and bloodthirsty insurgents. Merry's foreword to the translation reiterated this view. He wrote that the "horrors and cruel-

ties" he had witnessed as a bystander were "but the effects of a just and necessary self-defence on the part of the people." (*CH*, vii).

30 Yet despite elevating the ordinary citizens and their families who gave their lives or suffered loss during the siege of the Tuileries, the translators were nonetheless keen to portray the assault and the political aftermath of 10th August as under the control and management of responsible and respectable political figures from the Paris Commune. While the French text recounts the appointment of a new head of the National Guard by Section leaders, essentially ordinary citizens, the English version edits out this reference, making it appear by inference that the new head was appointed by more established municipal officials rather than by popular assent. Robert Merry was acquainted with Jérôme Pétion, the mayor of Paris, an early hero of the republic and the man who had been playing an intermediary role in negotiations with the Court. Pétion is heralded as a well-liked and upright leader in the French report, refusing to cede to the machinations and underhand tactics of the king's counsellors. In one footnote in the English version, Merry flags up his own intimacy with the mayor, explaining that he had met with Pétion on his arrival in Paris on 9th August. The mayor, with astute diplomacy and discretion had intimated that "a great event was approaching" but had revealed nothing of the revolutionary preparations afoot (*CH*, 20). Mindful of the alarm that might have been generated among British readers by what appeared to be a popular seizure of power laced with acts of violent retribution, and without any clear or established chain of command, translation choices made in the production of *A Circumstantial History* emphasise the commanding position of the revolutionary leadership, embodied by Pétion, while simultaneously filtering out contentious instances of popular decision-making or retribution included in the *Révolutions de Paris* report.

Conclusion

31 This translation initiative was one of a number of means by which British nationals residing in France, and with reforming, republican, even revolutionary, sympathies of their own, sought to resist and counter what they saw as ongoing and concerted efforts in the ministerial press to denigrate French efforts at establishing republican

liberty. It was also an initiative carried out by individuals who had direct contact with certain members of the revolutionary administration in Paris and who had collaborated with such figures in other political or publication projects. In its original version, the *Révolutions de Paris* report was a partisan reading of the advent of popular sovereignty which reflected the prevailing consensus among leading revolutionaries in August 1792 and which chimed with, and also shaped, broad popular opinion in France. For a British readership however – and for the authorities – it was a particularly radical and subversive account of events across the Channel.

32 The adjustments brought about in the process of translating the French report for an English-speaking audience were, I suggest here, for the most part intentional, calculated to portray the popular overthrow of power in the most favourable light, deflecting reticence or criticism that would have been anticipated from a British readership steeped in a monarchical tradition and increasingly targeted by loyalist written and visual propaganda. The author and translator remained sensitive to the frosty reception that might have been given to a report which unashamedly celebrated the sudden and brutal overthrow of monarchy. Alterations were made with a keen awareness of prevailing constitutional norms, expectations and prejudices which may have prevented the British public from embracing the popular turn in the French Revolution, namely ingrained and enforced deference to monarchy, a preference for reform rather than overt revolution, and entrenched anxiety within the propertied classes of large-scale popular revolt.

33 The changes made were marginal and nuanced. The translation remained broadly faithful to the spirit and language of an account which defended the advent of popular sovereignty, its publication intended to encourage broad approbation of this new phase of the Revolution. Yet the translators also had a wider aim, over and above the desire to influence British public opinion on the matter of the August Days and correct what they saw as the inaccurate and wildly exaggerated accounts circulating in the loyal press. Madgett and Merry were also acutely aware of the power of print, and the way in which an account of events in a foreign revolution could be mobilised and framed to convey the core message of the radical reform agenda in the 1790s: that the British people should resist the corruption and ab-

uses of illegitimate government and assert their long-standing rights and liberties. As Michael Scrivener has argued, after 1792, one of the only ways that reformers could convey reforming ideas in writing was by disguising them in allegory or in accounts which purported to be historical rather than contemporary (SCRIVENER, 2001). Radicals could also disguise their criticism of British affairs, and their calls for popular action, as commentary on foreign events, as Sampson Perry did, and as Merry and Madgett appear to have done in *A Circumstantial History*.

34 There was therefore a dual aim in this translation and publication exercise. On the one hand, it vindicated a republican departure in France which had been galvanised by popular activism and sacrifice and thus provided a robust counter-narrative to prevailing hostile portraits published in the British press in the wake of the August Days. Yet, *A Circumstantial History* was also a carefully crafted and reworked treatise which became a standalone text in its own right with a clear authorial viewpoint. The author-translators sought to bolster the argument in favour of fundamental democratic reform in Britain by reference to the popular assertion of rights in a foreign revolution, and to encourage the people to resist the dominant narrative, curated by campaigners and the government alike, of satisfaction with the status quo, and to assert their own rights rather than wait for those rights to be granted. It was this claim to participate in the political nation which underpinned reformers' convening of 'Conventions of the People' in Edinburgh in late 1792 and again in 1793, which sustained radicals through the subsequent treason and sedition trials, and which would provide the mainstay of the popular radical movement years later, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

ANON [MERRY, Robert?], 1792, *A Circumstantial History of the Transactions at Paris on the Tenth of August; plainly shewing the perfidy of Louis XVI and the general unanimity of the people in defence of their rights*, London, Thomson, Littlejohn and Symonds.

BARRELL, John, 2006, *The Spirit of Despotism: Invasions of Privacy in the 1790s*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

CENSER, Jack, 1976, *Prelude to Power: The Parisian Radical Press 1789-1791*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press.

CLAEYS, Gregory (ed.), 1995, *Political Writings of the 1790s*, 8 vols, London, Pickering and Chatto.

HAMMERSLEY, Rachel, 2005, *French Revolutionaries and English Republicans: The Cordeliers Club 1790-1794*, Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer.

HAYWOOD, Ian, 2004, *The Revolution in Popular Literature: Print, Politics and the People, 1790-1860*, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press.

HOWELL, T. B., 1818, A *Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and Other Crimes and Misdemeanours from the Earliest Period to the Year 1783, with Notes and Other Illustrations...and Continued from the Year 1793 to the Present Time*, vol. 25, London, G. G. and J. Robinson.

KLEINMAN, Sylvie, "Practice before policy: Translation and translators in French military strategy on Ireland 1792-1804", in *Parallèles*, 18-IV-2017, vol. 29, n°1, p. 5-18.

LABROSSE, Claude et Pierre Rétat, 1989, *Naissance du journal révolutionnaire* : 1789, Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon.

LEECH, Patrick, 2020, *Cosmopolitanism, Dissent, and Translation: Translating Radicals in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France*, Bologna, Bononia University Press.

LOUNISSI, Carine, 2018, *Thomas Paine and the French Revolution, New York, Palgrave Macmillan.*

McCALMAN, Iain, "Newgate in Revolution: Radical Enthusiasm and Romantic Counterculture", in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, II-1998, vol. 22, n°1, p. 95-110.

MEE, Jon, 2016, *Print, Publicity and Popular Radicalism in the 1790s: The Laurel of Liberty*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

MERRY, Robert, 1792, *Réflexions Politiques sur la nouvelle constitution qui se prépare en France adressées à la république*, Paris, Imprimerie de J. Reynier.

OSWALD, John, 1792, *The Government of the People, or a Sketch of a Constitution for the Universal Commonwealth*, Paris, The English Press.

OZ-SALZBERGER, Fania, "The Enlightenment in Translation: Regional and European Aspects", in *European Review of History*, 2006, vol. 13, n°3, p. 385-409.

PAINE, Thomas, 1791-1792, *Rights of Man*, London, J. Johnson.

PERRY, Sampson, 1795, *Oppression!!! The Appeal of Captain Perry to the People of England*, London, Citizen Lee.

PERRY, Sampson, 1796, *An Historical Sketch of the French Revolution: Commencing with Its Predisposing Causes, and Carried on to the Acceptation of the Constitution, in 1795*, London, H. D. Symonds.Bottom of FormTop of Form

Révolutions de Paris, dédiées à la nation et au district des Petits-Augustins, avec gravures et cartes des départements de France, 4 au 11 août 1792.

ROGERS, Rachel, "Self and community in radical defence in the French revolutionary era: the example of Oppression!!! The Appeal of Captain Perry to the People of England (1795)", in Baker, John, Leclair, Marion and Ingram, Allan (eds.), *Writing and Constructing the Self in Great Britain in the London Eighteenth Century*, 2019, Manchester, Manchester University Press, p. 228-247.

ROGERS, Rachel, 2021, *Friends of the Revolution: The British Radical Community in Early Republican Paris 1792-1794*, London, Breviary Stuff.

SCRIVENER, Michael, 2001, *Seditious Allegories: John Thelwall and Jacobin Writing*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania University Press.

STERN, Madeleine B., "The English Press in Paris and Its Successors, 1793-1852", in *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 1980, vol. 74, n°4, p. 307-359.

The Annual Register

The Caledonian Mercury

The Ipswich Journal

The Monthly Magazine

The Times

WILLIAMS, Helen Maria, 1793, *Letters from France: Containing A Great Variety of Interesting and Original Information concerning the most important events that have lately occurred in that country, and particularly respecting the campaign of 1792*, London, G. G. and J. Robinson.

WOODWARD, Lionel D., 1930, Une Anglaise amie de la révolution française, Paris, H. Champion.

ZIZEK, Joseph, "'Plume de fer': Louis-Marie Prudhomme Writes the French Revolution", in French Historical Studies, 2003, vol. 26, n°4, p. 619-660.

NOTES

1 An early version of this paper was shared at a *Revolutionary Translations* workshop, hosted by Sanja Perovic at King's College London in December 2020. Thank you to all of those whose comments on my paper helped me to refine the arguments found here, with particular thanks to Rachel Hammersley and Patrick Leech.

2 For the wording of the decree, see "By the King. A Proclamation", 21st May 1792; in Gregory Claeys ed., *Political Writings of the 1790s*, 8 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1995), vii.121-2. John Barrell discusses the proclamation in *The Spirit of Despotism: Invasions of Privacy in the 1790s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). He suggests that even conversations in private spaces became politicised in this era of heightened suspicion. Patrick Leech argues that translations of radical or revolutionary texts were often an-

onymous since their authors would have been exposing themselves to heightened threat of repression. See Patrick Leech, *Cosmopolitanism, Dissent, and Translation: Translating Radicals in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2020).

3 Symonds would eventually be imprisoned in Newgate jail for publishing writings deemed seditious. For a study of the "radical synergies" which were prompted by the incarceration of radical reformers together in Newgate prison in the 1790s, see, among his other work, Iain McCalman, "Newgate in Revolution: Radical Enthusiasm and Romantic Counterculture", *Eighteenth-Century Life*, Vol. 22, No.1, Feb 1998.

4 Many scholars have contributed to the discussion about the emergence of public opinion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in part with the development of radical print culture. See for example Ian Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature: Print, Politics and the People, 1790-1860* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and Jon Mee, *Print, Publicity and Popular Radicalism in the 1790s: The Laurel of Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

5 For a reading of this piece, see Rachel Rogers, "Self and community in radical defence in the French revolutionary era: the example of *Oppression!!! The Appeal of Captain Perry to the People of England* (1795)" in John Baker, Marion Leclair and Allan Ingram eds., *Writing and Constructing the Self in Great Britain in the London Eighteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019).

6 British radical reformer and revolutionary, Thomas Paine, collaborated with the Marquis de Condorcet on the newspaper *Le Républicain*. For more on Paine's republicanism in France see Carine Lounissi, *Thomas Paine and the French Revolution* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

7 By April 1793, the Whig reform society the Friends of the People had revoked its support for the republican turn in France.

8 *The Annual Register for the Year* 1792, 40; 44.

9 *The Annual Register for the Year* 1792, 44.

10 Such clubs included the radical London reform club, the London Corresponding Society, formed in January 1792, and both provincial and metropolitan constitutional societies which remained convinced that developments in France could provide inspiration and momentum for far-reaching constitutional and political reform in Britain. These societies were prosecuted over the course of 1793 and 1794 for what was seen as subversive, even

treasonable, actions in forming 'conventions of the people' to discuss the merits of radical change.

11 The fund-raising for the widows and children of those who fell at the Tuileries was organised by Robert Rayment and Thomas Marshall. See Archives Nationales F7 4774 88.

12 See Sampson Perry's *An Historical Sketch of the French Revolution: Commencing with Its Predisposing Causes, and Carried on to the Acceptation of the Constitution, in 1795* (London: Symonds, 1796)Bottom of FormTop of Form and Helen Maria Williams' *Letters from France: Containing A Great Variety of Interesting and Original Information concerning the most important events that have lately occurred in that country, and particularly respecting the campaign of 1792* (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1793).

13 John Oswald, *The Government of the People, or a Sketch of a Constitution for the Universal Commonwealth* (Paris: The English Press, 1792). It was translated into French under the title of *Le gouvernement du people, ou plan de constitution pour la république universelle* and published at the *Révolutions de Paris* printing press in 1793. No translator is noted on the title page.

14 Merry was the accredited author of another pro-republican tract, published in late 1792 or early 1793, and entitled *Réflexions Politiques sur la nouvelle constitution qui se prépare en France adressées à la république* (Paris: Imprimerie de J. Reynier). In this work, the author praised the advent of popular sovereignty in terms similar to those contained in *A Circumstantial History*.

15 *The Monthly Magazine*, April 1799, 257.

16 *The Times*, 11th September 1792. The *Caledonian Mercury* of 13th September and the *Ipswich Journal* of 15th September also advertised the publication.

17 Archives Nationales sous-série F7 4412. The petition was sent at a time when the protected status of British citizens had come under severe strain with the outbreak of war between Britain and France in February. From March onwards, the revolutionary government was active in monitoring foreign residents, whatever their political credentials, seeing them as liable to be agents of a hostile foreign regime.

18 For further details of John Hurford Stone's printing activities, see Madeleine B. Stern, "The English Press in Paris and Its Successors, 1793-1852." *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, vol. 74 (1980): 307-59.

Stone wrote to his brother William in 1793 asking him to speak to a certain Mr Gillet about "whether he cannot furnish us with the means of getting books of merit which may come out, to translate from the English into French." (T. B. Howell, *A Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and Other Crimes and Misdemeanours from the Earliest Period to the Year 1783, with Notes and Other Illustrations…and Continued from the Year 1793 to the Present Time*, vol. 25 (London: 1818) 223-24). Sylvie Kleinman also suggests that it may have been a condition of Helen Williams' release from the Luxembourg prison in 1794 that she produced an Englis translation of Louis-Antoine de Saint-Just's *Rapport sur les factions de l'étranger et sur la conjuration ourdie par elles dans la République française, pour détruire le gouvernement républicain par la corruption, & affamer Paris* delivered to the Convention on 13th March 1794. See Sylvie Kleinman, "Practice before policy: Translation and translators in French military strategy on Ireland 1792-1804", *Parallèles* vol. 29 no. 1 (April 2017) 10.

19 *The Monthly Magazine*, April 1799, 257. The obituary of Merry, printed following his death in Baltimore in December 1798, also suggests that Madgett had been a priest in France for two decades. Discussing his activities in Paris, the magazine reported that "while in that city, and under the invitation given by the French legislature to all foreigners, to favour them with their sentiments on the erecting of a free constitution; he wrote a short treatise in English, on the nature of free government. It was translated into French by Mr Madget, and presented in the same manner as the Laurel of Liberty to the Convention Nationale: "honorable mention" being made of it in their journals."

20 The list was drawn up on 22nd March 1793. Archives Diplomatiques, Affaires Étrangères, Correspondance Anglaise, vol. 587, folio 28. Quoted in Woodward, *Une Anglaise*, 102.

21 An extract from Theobold Wolfe Tone's diary quoted in Kleinman, "Practice before policy" 6.

22 See in particular chapters 4 and 5 on professional projects and British associational culture in Paris.

23 The account which was translated and then published in *A Circumstantial History* first came out in issue number 161 of *Révolutions de Paris, dédiées à la nation et au district des Petits-Augustins, avec gravures et cartes des départements de France.* Quatrième année de la liberté française. Treizième trimestre. 4 au 11 août 1792. The issue covered the week from 4th to 11th August and led with a fourteen-page report entitled 'Journée du 10

août 1792' complete with eight engravings of actions taken by the people on that day, including the toppling of major statues associated with France's monarchical past.

24 The authors suggest that the newspaper had a foreign readership and its creation coincided with Paris becoming a "hub of European news dissemination" (my translation), 8.

25 This term was used later in 1793 by John Hurford Stone in a letter to his brother William Stone See Howell, A *Complete Collection of State Trials* vol. 25, 1215. In it he describes evenings in the company of fellow British and American residents, reading the British press and marvelling at the exaggerated reporting contained in it.

26 Towards the end of the English version the translation appears to be a little less polished. Take for instance the following clumsy and grammatically erroneous sentence: "The cavalry of the national gend'armes, participating the glory of the day, which had otherwise been much more bloody for the patriot." We could also point to the questionable "Every appartment was searched for the discovery of traitors" (*CH* 31) chosen for "on pénétra partout pour découvrir les traîtres" (*RdP* 235).

27 For further details of local Paris politics in the period from 1791 to 1794, see the work of Rachel Hammersley on the Cordeliers Club.

28 In French the expression used is "n'avoit point rassuré".

29 "Médicis-Antoinette y avait étudiée trop longtemps l'air hypocrite qu'elle montrait en public" (*RdP* 237).

30 The English version simply states, "By the side of this scene of horror sat Louis XVI, the author of all these lamentable tragedies, at a well replenished table in the room of one of the committees of the National Assembly […]" (*CH* 38).

31 In May 1792 a royal proclamation against seditious writings was issued by the king George III making those who wrote, printed, circulated or sold texts deemed as undermining the constitutional settlement of the country liable to prosecution. Thomas Paine was indicted for the publication of Part Two of *Rights of Man* the day after the proclamation was promulgated.

32 The English reads, "These savages in black were posted there to make a diversion, and gain merit in the eyes of Antoinette and her king" (*CH* 34) while in the French version we find: "Ces bêtes féroces en habit noir s'étoient postées là pour faire diversion, &c pour se faire un mérite auprès

de Médicis-Antoinette & de son Charles IX. » (*RdP* 237). The reigning queen is dismissively referred to as "Médicis-Antoinette", a probable reference to the control exercised over the choice of a royal match by Charles IX's mother Catherine de Medici as well as Elizabeth's shared Austrian heritage with Marie-Antoinette.

33 Engravings in the *Révolutions de Paris* piece include those depicting the dismantling of the statues of Louis XV (Hôtel de Ville), Henri IV (Pont-neuf), Louis XIII (Place Royale) and Louis XIV (Place Vendôme and Place des Victoires).

34 "The full passage omitted is the following: "Nous avertissons les bourgeois qui fermèrent si exactement leurs magasins sur le passage des sans-culottes armés pour la cause commune, d'être à l'avenir plus circonspects dans leurs propos ; nous les prévenons que des sans-culottes les ont entendu dire dans plusieurs rues : Tous ces gens armés qui ont fait le siége du château des Tuileries, n'ont rien à perdre ; que risquent-ils ? – Cette horrible ingratitude a été sentie par eux ; bourgeois couards, respectez, honorez mieux des hommes à qui vous devez la tranquillité où vous êtes & ne les portez pas à pousser plus loin leurs réflexions à votre égard.

Le corps politique partage les mêmes préventions contre le peuple, dans un placard où il lui recommanda le respect pour les propriétés. Le peuple n'avait pas besoin de cette injonction humiliante ; s'il commit quelques dégâts au château des Tuileries & dans les bâtimens qui en dépendent, il ne s'y permit pas de bassesses" (237-238 *RdP*).

35 The French version reads "Les grenadiers plus prudens attendoient la pointe du jour pour s'évader, craignant de se trouver entre deux feux, c'est-à-dire entre les chevaliers du poignard et les sans-culottes. Les ci-devant envoyoient à chaque instant les émissaires dans les faubourgs pour en connoître le degré de température" (*RdP* 232). In A *Circumstantial History* this becomes "The grenadiers, more prudent, waited the break of day to escape, fearing to find themselves between two fires, and occasionally sent emissaries into the Fauxbourgs to gain intelligence" (*CH* 24).

36 The term used in French is "sans pitié" (*RdP* 236).

37 The French text adds "jonchés de leurs cadavres" (*RdP* 235).

38 "d'autres furent atteints dans les latrines, d'autres dans les cuisines, où l'on frappa de mort depuis les chefs d'office, jusqu'au dernier marmiton […]" (*RdP* 236).

39 "on porta la fureur jusqu'à égorger les Suisses de portes dans leurs loges ; ils devoient partager le sort de leurs camarades, puisqu'ils étoient d'intelligence avec eux. L'empressement des portiers du Carrousel à ouvrir au peuple, étoit un piège digne du dernier supplice" (*RdP* 236).

40 "Sans doute que justice lui sera faite ; il ne faut pas perdre de vue ce vieillard sanguinaire" (*RdP* 236).

41 "un pan de manteau royal, de velours fleurdelysé en or, distribué à qui voulait s'en souiller les mains" (*RdP* 239).

42 Four relatively short notes are included in the first eleven pages of the English version (*CH* 20-30) three of which contain personal observations – on the author's acquaintance with Jérôme Pétion, the mayor of Paris, on the general quietude of the streets before the assault, and on the author's exact viewpoint from the Pont Royal side of the palace. Six much longer explanatory footnotes are provided in the final nine pages (*CH* 31-39).

RÉSUMÉ

English

This article takes a fresh look at a little-known text published in Britain just after the fall of the French monarchy on 10th August 1792. A *Circumstantial History* provided an immediate account of the confrontation between Louis XVI's Swiss guards and the popular militias on that day for a British readership. The original source of the report on the 'August Days' is traced to the French revolutionary newspaper *Révolutions de Paris* and the article also examines in detail the context in which this commented translation was published, its probable author and translator and the choices made in the translation process itself. The conclusion reached is that, while they were reasonably faithful to the original French report, the author-translators made significant amendments in line with their own partial stance, as revolutionary sympathisers and radical reformers, and in anticipation of the reaction and resistance of British readers to the events depicted. Not only are the French people held up as legitimately claiming their rights in the face of monarchical injustice, but the portrait of violent reprisals meted out by popular militias and vindictive conduct towards the bourgeoisie is tangibly attenuated. Robert Merry and Nicholas Madgett, the probable collaborators behind this initiative, not only sought to provide an immediate counter-portrait of the popular seizure of power to contradict the critical representations circulating in the British press, they were also using the power of print, and an account of a foreign revolution, to convey the necessity of political and constitutional reform at home.

INDEX

Mots-clés
journée du 10 août 1792, Robert Merry, Nicholas Madgett, traduction radicale, chute de la monarchie

Keywords
August Days, Robert Merry, Nicholas Madgett, radical translation, fall of the monarchy

AUTEUR

Rachel Rogers
Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès
rachel.rogers@univ-tlse2.fr