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A passage to imprisonment

The British prisoners of war in Verdun
under the First French Empire

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Doctor of Philosophy in History

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Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>List of tables</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Declaration</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>Note to the reader</i>	<i>ix</i>

INTRODUCTION

A passage to imprisonment	Page 1
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1 A PLACE ABROAD

The 'motley assemblage' of captivity	32
<i>The oddity of a place</i>	34
<i>Dwelling-in-travelling</i>	40
<i>A 'wooden world' ashore</i>	57
<i>Unstable places</i>	67
<i>Conclusion</i>	74

2 VOLUNTARY CAPTIVES?

Women and gender in detention	75
<i>The 'social politics' of female hostages and followers</i>	77
<i>The correspondent: 'weak ties' and the power of the written word</i>	94
<i>Female embodiments: captive daughters and fictional women</i>	103
<i>Conclusion</i>	105

3 CHARITABLE CONNECTIONS

Transnational financial networks and captive relief	107
<i>A 'treatment'</i>	110
<i>Verdun and the Royal Exchange</i>	116
<i>'Proposita philanthropica': secular local subscriptions</i>	124
<i>An act of 'remembrance': religious fund-raising</i>	126
<i>Exclusive local solidarities</i>	129
<i>A gentlemen's mission? Reception and distribution of charity</i>	133
<i>Naval patronage and discipline</i>	142
<i>Conclusion</i>	145

4 TIES OF HONOUR	146
Relations with the locals and the French State	146
<i>The form of honour</i>	148
<i>Honourable means</i>	158
<i>Cosmopolitan ties: freemasonry and science</i>	164
<i>Everyday 'cultural transfers'</i>	169
<i>Severing ties: the boundaries of parole</i>	174
<i>Conclusion</i>	178
5 THE ENEMY WITHIN OR WITHOUT?	180
Catholicism in detention	180
<i>The 'Fête Dieu' and old convents: exploring a post- Revolutionary Catholic space</i>	184
<i>Heretics or eccentrics? Local opinion and interactions with Catholic scholars</i>	192
<i>Being a captive Catholic: the case of Charles Throckmorton</i>	201
<i>Othering faiths? Nonconformists and anti-Semitism</i>	217
<i>Conclusion</i>	222
6 HOMECOMINGS	223
The aftermath of captivity	223
<i>Returns to dust</i>	226
<i>The captivity of the heart</i>	233
<i>Captive childhoods</i>	250
<i>Unforged Britons? Othering and the British State</i>	257
<i>Verdun 'Ruins'</i>	262
<i>Conclusion</i>	265
7 THE 'CAPTIVE MUSE'	267
Creativity and life-writing	267
<i>Contemplations in miniature</i>	269
<i>'Writing in society': civilian records and naval 'enforced narrative'</i>	284
<i>Published ego-narrations and collective selves: reception, competition, oblivion</i>	295
<i>Conclusion: a muse 'in society'</i>	306
CONCLUSION	
The Verdun palimpsest	308

<i>Appendices</i>	319
A Frequency quantification of the occurrence of the terms ‘ <i>détenus</i> ’ and ‘Verdun’ in a large corpus of English texts	319
B Maps	320
C Transcription of the expenditures of Thomas Lavie in Verdun	325
D Quantification of the Protestant sacraments for prisoners in Verdun	325
E Members of the Charitable Committee at Verdun between 1804 and 1812	326
F Timeline	327
 <i>Bibliography</i>	 329

List of illustrations

Fig. 1	Gillray, <i>Maniac Ravings, or Little Boney in a Strong Fit</i> , 1803	Page 4
Fig. 2	Devilliers, <i>Verdun</i> , 1830	34
Fig. 3	Scharf, <i>Les Portes de la Citadelle de Verdun Dessinées d'Après Nature</i> , 1811	37
Fig. 4	Fécit, Map of Verdun-sur-Meuse, 1739	39
Fig. 5	<i>A Catalogue of Books Belonging to the British Subscription Library</i> , 1806	45
Fig. 6	Ball invitation card to Mademoiselle Picart and racing bill in French	51
Fig. 7	Reinagle, <i>Portrait of Lancelot Charles Lee</i> , 1814-1815	56
Fig. 8	Chess set used by William Hamilton whilst a prisoner at Verdun	63
Fig. 9	Langton, Sketch of captive midshipmen, 1836	72
Fig. 10	Forbes, <i>A View from the Ramparts of Verdun</i> , 1804	85
Fig. 11	An., 'With Downcast Eyes, and a Lovely Reverence Nerrissa Presented her Petition' in Giberne, <i>Detained in France</i> , 1870; and 'The Petition' in Cockton, <i>The Sisters, or England and France</i> , 1844	90
Fig. 12	Seal of the Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, 1803	116
Fig. 13	Rowlandson, <i>Lloyd's Subscription Room</i> , 1809	120
Fig. 14	Cary, <i>Map of Cornwall</i> , 1814	131
Fig. 15	Pre-filled permission to go out of the gates during the day, 1812	152
Fig. 16	O'Brien, Watercolour of his arrest by gendarmes, undated	161
Fig. 17	Seal of the masonic lodge 'Franche Amitié of Verdun	164
Fig. 18	Forbes, Watercolours of Verdun and Gujarat, 1804	174
Fig. 19	Forbes, <i>View of Verdun Taken from a Hill on the Road to Valenciennes</i> , 1804	181
Fig. 20	Maude (ed.), <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> , 1810	190
Fig. 21	Gayraud, <i>Chapelle des Anglais, Dessin à l'Encre</i> , undated	191
Fig. 22	Noyer, <i>Claude-François Denis</i> , 1806	197
Fig. 23	Botanical specimens collected and arranged by Charles Throckmorton at Verdun, 1811	210
Fig. 24	Cossé, <i>Charles Throckmorton</i> , 1820	213
Fig. 25	Catholic tomb of Revd Newenham with his French family at Verdun	232

Fig. 26	Portraits of Claudette Rebière and William Hamilton, 1810-1814	242
Fig. 27	Handkerchief, poem and song composed by William Hamilton for Claudette Rebière's birthdays	245
Fig. 28	Pink-edged writing paper with Cupid scenes and French inscriptions used by William Hamilton in his correspondence with Claudette Rebière	246
Fig. 29	Miniatures of Alexander and Claudette Hamilton, 1825	247
Fig. 30	Portrait of George Back and two of his watercolours produced in Canada	262
Fig. 31	Forbes, <i>Views of Verdun</i> , 1804	276
Fig. 32	Robinson, <i>A West View of the Town of Verdun in Lorraine from the Heights</i> , 1804	278
Fig. 33	Henry, <i>Vue du Pont Saint-Airy à Verdun</i> , 1805 and <i>Porte de France à Verdun</i> , 1815	279
Fig. 34	Ellison, <i>Prison Scenes</i> , 1838	281
Fig. 35	An., Illustration of a prison in Thackeray's <i>Barry Lyndon</i> , 1844	282
Fig. 36	An., <i>A Scale of Six Miles Around Verdun</i> , 1804-1814	283
Fig. 37	Sketches by Seacome Ellison, Maurice Hewson, and Richard Langton	284
Fig. 38	Otter, 'Map of Lat 49.34 Long. 9.010 N°3, 25-26 September 1805'; 'Statement of Occurrences on the 25 th and 26 th September 1805'	288
Fig. 39	Letter book of the Committee at Verdun for the Relief of British Prisoners of War in France	289
Fig. 40	An., <i>West View of Verdun</i> , 1805	292
Fig. 41	Charles Throckmorton's weather records in captivity	294
Fig. 42	Graffiti of early-nineteenth prisoners of war in the Verdun citadel	295
Fig. 43	Two editions of Dutton's <i>Captive Muse</i> , 1806 and 1814	304
Fig. 44	Illustrations to sentimental novels on captivity at Verdun penned by Balzac and Trevor	305
Fig. 45	Watch-stand made by a British marine prisoner in France between 1806 and 1814	313

List of tables

Table 1	Socio-professional categories of the British <i>détenus</i> , 1803-1814	Page 41
Table 2	Breakdown of the industries and trade of 197 British merchants, artisans and manufacturers sequestered as <i>détenus</i> , 1803-1804	42
Table 3	List of clubs organised by prisoners in Verdun	44
Table 4	Category and numbers of books of the British subscription at Verdun	47
Table 5	Formats of the books of the British subscription at Verdun	49
Table 6	Sample of plays attended and performed by prisoners in Verdun, 1804-1806	54
Table 7	Sociology of British male prisoners captured under arms and sequestered in Verdun, 1803-1814	58
Table 8	Arrivals of naval and marine officers captured under arms and sent to Verdun, 1803-1814	58
Table 9	Arrivals of army officers at Verdun, 1803-1814	67
Table 10	Number of male prisoners at Verdun from September 1804 to January 1814	69
Table 11	Chronology and familial status of British women travelling with French passports between Verdun and Britain, 1804-1811	82
Table 12	Banks contributing to the Patriotic Fund's subscriptions for the prisoners in Verdun, 1808-1812	121
Table 13	Correspondents of the committee at Verdun for the Relief of British prisoners of war in France, 1808-1809	136
Table 14	Quantification of the recipients of relief in 1812	140
Table 15	Commandants of the depot, 1804-1814	157
Table 16	Social backgrounds of French money lenders and British creditors at Verdun	163
Table 17	French members of the masonic lodge of Verdun, 1811	167
Table 18	Articles related to the British captives in the <i>Narrateur de la Meuse</i> , 1804	193
Table 19	Spaces of network: Charles Throckmorton's captive contacts in Verdun	204
Table 20	Weak and strong ties in Charles Throckmorton's botanical network in Verdun	206
Table 21	Timeline of Charles Throckmorton's networking activities in Verdun	208
Table 22	Number of civil marriages involving British prisoners	237
Table 23	Social backgrounds of spouses	239
Table 24	Average age of spouses	241
Table 25	Sociology of parents	252

Abbreviations

ADM-Bar	Archives Départementales de la Meuse, Bar-le-Duc
ADM	Admiralty Papers, TNA
AMV	Archives Municipales de Verdun
AN	Archives Nationales de France, Paris/Pierrefite
An.	Anonymous
BCA	Birmingham City Archives, Birmingham
BEV	Bibliothèque d'Etude, Verdun
BL	British Library, London
LAC	Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives, London
MCM	McCord Museum, Montreal
MPV	Musée de la Prinerie, Verdun
NAM	National Army Museum, London
NAS	National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh
NLI	National Library of Ireland, Dublin
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
NMM	National Maritime Museum, London
POW	Prisoner of War
QCL	Queen's College Library, Oxford
SHD	Service Historique de la Défense, Vincennes
TNA	The National Archives, London
WRO	Warwickshire County Record Office, Warwick

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Declaration

This thesis is the candidate's own work. It has not been submitted for a degree at any other university. A small amount of material from chapter two has been published in an edited collection (Rebecca Probert (ed.), *Catherine Exley's Diary: The Life and Times of an Army Wife in the Peninsular War*, 2014), but not in the same form as it appears here.

Elodie Duché

Abstract

This thesis explores parole detention as a site of transnational exchange through a case study of Verdun, a central depot for British civilian and military prisoners of war in Napoleonic France. By focusing on the interactions between captives and captors, this study throws into relief the ambiguities of nation-building and the totalisation of warfare, which kept these two countries at odds in the long eighteenth century. The main finding that has arisen from this work is the predominance of social dynamics over national, martial and religious antagonisms during this forced cohabitation, which nuances the truism of French and British identities forged against each other during the period. Furthermore, moving beyond the common assumption that the concept of honour lost its substance in France after 1789, I argue that parole detention in Verdun was based on gendered and *ad hoc* practices of internment, which syncretised old and revolutionary understandings of the notion. Whilst the situation of sequestered women has received little attention, this thesis makes the original claim that parole was in fact tailored to the presence of female ‘voluntary captives’ in Verdun.

Composed of seven thematic chapters, and drawing on a variety of sources (ego-documents, newspapers, botanical specimens, material and visual culture), this thesis intends to provide a fresh sociocultural and transnational contribution to the burgeoning field of POW studies. Beyond conventional and nation-centric ‘*histoire-batailles*’, which so frequently place the question of military captivity within the rigid frame of a three-staged ‘experience’ – a trope inspired by memoirs of captivity – this thesis re-considers the experience of detention as a liminal ‘passage’. By putting emphasis less on *being* than *becoming* a captive, this perspective situates military detention in a wider temporal framework, which includes the aftermath of 1814 and life-writing as part of the experience.

A note to the reader

All translations of French sources into English are my own, and have been incorporated into the main body of text of this thesis. The original versions have been placed in the footnotes and italicised. Whilst French expressions are italicised throughout this thesis, the reference to French archival repositories, folders, and folios feature in normal characters in the footnotes. On occasions, French socio-professional categories have not been translated, owing to a lack of equivalence in the English language. In these instances, and almost without exception, I have provided a justification for this within the chapters concerned, along with explanations of these categories and their linguistic significance.

The French Revolutionary calendar ceased to be used in 1806, with the Gregorian dating system being restored after that date. As a result, all the documents produced between 1803 and 1806 have been quoted in their original dating, and followed by a mention of their equivalent in the Gregorian calendar in brackets.

The French currencies mentioned in this thesis have not been subjected to a systematic attempt to provide an equivalent of their value in British sterling pound. This is owing to the fact that between 1795 and 1815, the French money underwent dramatic changes, which meant that the value of the new imperial *francs*, *sous* and the resurging *livres tournois* fluctuated greatly during the time of captivity, particularly as and when new countries were conquered, and new access to precious metals was secured. Contemporary exchange rates were always in favour of the British sterling pound, which was a more stable currency. Rough estimations have suggested that in 1799, one British pound equated to 24 *livres tournois* (0.29 gram of gold). When bimetalism began to be employed in French currency in 1803, the new '*franc germinal*' was worth 322 milligrams of gold and 5 grams of silver. On the other hand, in 1816, the value of the sterling pound was fixed at a higher worth of 7899 milligrams of pure gold.¹

¹ For further information, see Michael Bordo and Eugene White, 'A Tale of Two Currencies: British and French Finance During the Napoleonic Wars', *Journal of Economic History* 51:2 (1991), pp. 303-16.

INTRODUCTION

A passage to imprisonment

The lower part of Verdun, where we reside is pleasingly diversified with wood and water, fields and gardens ... a scene bearing resemblance to Dhirboy [Dabhoi] in the East Indies, where I so long resided among the peaceful Brahmins. Such is the place of our captivity.

Forbes, *Letters from France*, 1804

This is the first depiction James Forbes, a former East India Company serviceman, made of his detention place in North-East France.¹ Like some four hundred British excursionists, he was captured mid-Grand Tour with his wife and daughter, following Bonaparte's mandate on 22 May 1803 – known as the second *Prairial* decree – to detain all British subject on French soil, between the age of eighteen and sixty.² This mass arrest was the epilogue of a brief peace interlude, which had prompted many British visitors, of various social backgrounds, to cross the Channel in the hope of discovering a novel post-Revolutionary France and to resume trade connections.³ Detained before the official renewal of hostilities, these non-belligerents were declared '*détenus*' – hostages – and gathered in what were then called '*dépôts*' in Paris and the provinces. They were then sent to Verdun in the winter of 1804.⁴ There, civilians and later naval and army officers were put on their parole. In return for a pledge of honour not to escape or bear arms, they could live amongst the locals within a perimeter of two leagues and enjoy the 'paradoxical position of captives with privileges'.⁵

¹ James Forbes, *Letters from France, Written in the Years 1803 and 1804* (2 vols, London, 1806), II, p. 218. See maps of Verdun in appendices.

² ADM-Bar, 9R2, typed copy of the '2 Prairial an XI' decree, Paris, 23 May 1803.

³ The peace of Amiens lasted for fourteen months. On the heightened mobility across the Channel, see Renaud Morieux, 'An Inundation from Our Shores': Travelling Across the Channel around the Peace of Amiens', in Mark Philp (ed.), *Resisting Napoleon: the British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815* (London, 2006), pp. 217-40.

⁴ As will be discussed later, non-parole prisoners – mostly common soldiers and sailors – were dispersed in northern fortresses such as Arras, Valenciennes, Givet and the disciplinary depot of Bitche. ADM-Bar, 9R2, letter from the deputy-mayor to the mayor, Verdun, 26 *Frimaire* an XII (18 December 1803). See maps of the *dépôts* in the appendices.

⁵ Expression borrowed from Renaud Morieux, 'French Prisoners of War, Conflicts of Honour and Social Inversions in England, 1744-1783', *Historical Journal* 56:1 (2013), pp. 55-88.

During his detention, Forbes consistently associated the Verdun milieu and its inhabitants with Gujarat. He depicted them in letters to his sister, and in a series of watercolours compiled alongside his *Oriental Memoirs*.⁶ His vision of ‘Verdun Brahmins’ appears unusual, since the little Lorraine town has hardly ever been compared to India. Forbes’ outlook thus encapsulates what lies at the core of this thesis, namely the idea that parole captivity was a passage coloured by past travelling experiences, where perceptions and relations with the French enemy were challenged and reinvented by individual interactions in a space of forced cohabitation.

This cohabitation lasted for a decade, yet had different flavours for those who lived it. Redcoats and sailors of the royal and merchant navy, who were captured under arms in the various theatres of a global war, held diverse views once landlocked and divested from the socio-professional statuses they had enjoyed aboard ships, in regiments or at home. As a contemporary put it, the Verdun captives formed a ‘motley assemblage’, whose number oscillated between 500 and 1500 captives, owing to the stage of war.⁷ To this number, one should add approximately two hundred British women, children and servants, who made the ‘colony of captives’ constitute on average ten per cent of the town’s population.⁸ Simply obliged to sign a register once a day, parolees formed a visible community, interacting with the locals through diverse social activities including horse racing, theatricals, botany and medicine, until their liberation in 1814.

Despite its colourfulness, this detention has remained neglected by historians. Only mentioned in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anthologies, or more recently by historically inclined descendants and genealogists, this captivity deserves more critical attention.⁹ By providing a first focused study of this depot, this thesis intends to illuminate how parole detention epitomized the paradoxes of a transitory culture of warfare and a pivotal moment of nation-building.

⁶ His letters and watercolours are analysed in detail in chapter 4.

⁷ See chapter 1 for a quantitative analysis of their number year by year. Henry Raikes (ed.), *Memoir of Vice-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton* (London, 1846), p. 179.

⁸ The expression ‘colony of captives’ is borrowed from the local newspaper *Le Narrateur de la Meuse*. Verdun counted 9 060 inhabitants in 1793, 9 136 in 1800, 10 276 in 1806 with the arrival of British prisoners, and only 9 819 in 1821 after their departure. See INSEE demographic survey of Verdun [http://cassini.ehess.fr/cassini/fr/html/fiche.php?select_resultat=393] 83, accessed 20 October 2011]; *Le Narrateur de la Meuse*, 8 July 1805.

⁹ John Goldworth Alger, *Napoleon’s British Visitors and Captives (1801-1815)* (London, 1904); Roger Boutet de Monvel, *Les Anglais à Paris 1800-1850* (Paris, 1911); Letitia Elton, *Locks, Bolts and Bars: Stories of Prisoners in the French Wars 1759-1814* (London, 1945); Ludovic Fortolis, *Les Anglais en France: des Cachots de la Terre aux Géôles de l’Empire* (Paris, 1923); Edward Fraser, *Napoleon the Gaoler, Personal Experiences and Adventures of British Sailors and Soldiers during the Great Captivity* (London, 1914); Anne Morddel, ‘English Prisoners of War of the French First Empire’, *Genealogists’ Magazine* 30:5 (2011), pp. 153-60; Odette Viennet, ‘Les Anglais à Verdun ou Onze Ans d’Insouciance Captivité, d’après les Documents non Cotés des Archives Municipales et le Manuscrit 484 de la Bibliothèque de Verdun’, *Recueil de Travaux et Documents de la Revue de l’Institut Napoléon*, 4 (1944), pp. 36-43.

Parole detention in enlightened warfare

If, as Paul Gready observes, ‘to be a prisoner of war is to be written variously’, the Napoleonic Wars certainly revised what it meant to be a military captive.¹⁰ The category of the prisoner of war itself was redefined with the emergence of a new term for civilian hostages – ‘*détenu*’, which entered the English language in 1803.¹¹

The legality and context of this mass arrest has engendered many discussions. Bonaparte’s foreign policy had ‘ambiguous objectives’, yet the arrest responded to clear economic and imperial tensions over the control of Malta and continental ports.¹² The prisoners were taken as a ‘response to the potential capture of citizens of the Republic by the vessels or subjects of His Britannic Majesty’, a preventive measure following the seizure of French ships by the British fleet.¹³ The *Prairial* decree has, however, long been seen as an act of despotic fury and diplomatic folly, best captured by the pen of Gillray (Fig.1). The trope was employed by historians to affirm the pivotal nature of this measure.¹⁴ ‘It is reasonable to pin upon the First Consul the sole responsibility for ending for ever a whole phase in the history of war’, wrote the naval historian Michael Lewis.¹⁵ British civilians were detained on account of being liable for service in the militia, yet women and captives of younger and older ages were also sequestered, which led Lewis to conclude that the ‘militia argument’ was a ‘subterfuge’, the arrest arbitrary, and the subsequent ‘*détenus*’ the precursor of the internees and deportees of WW2.¹⁶

¹⁰ Paul Gready, ‘Autobiography and the “Power of Writing”’: Political Prison Writing in the Apartheid Era’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 9:3 (1993), p. 489.

¹¹ See quantitative analysis of the use of the word *détenu* in the appendices. ‘*détenu*, n.’, *Oxford English Dictionary Online* [<http://0-www.oed.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/Entry/51208?redirectedFrom=DETENU>, accessed 4 July 2014].

¹² Jean Pierre Jessenne, *Histoire de la France Révolution et Empire* (Paris, 2002), p. 21. See also Desmond Gregory, *Malta, Britain, and the European Powers, 1793-1815* (Cranbury and London, 1996); Michel Kerautret, ‘L’Angleterre et la Rupture du Traité d’Amiens’, *Revue du Souvenir Napoléonien* 447 (2003), pp. 13-25.

¹³ ‘*tous les Anglais enrôlés dans la milice ... seront immédiatement constitués prisonniers de guerre pour répondre des citoyens de la République qui auraient été arrêtés et faits prisonniers par les bâtiments ou sujets de S. M. britannique*’ ADM-Bar, 9R2, copy of the 2 *Prairial* decree.

¹⁴ See Henri Fauville, *La France de Bonaparte Vue par les Visiteurs Anglais* (Aix-en-provence, 1989).

¹⁵ Michael Arthur Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives* (London, 1962), p. 20

¹⁶ For a comparison with twentieth-century experiences of ‘deportation’, see also Jean René Aymes, *La Déportation Sous le Premier Empire. Les Espagnols en France (1808-1814)* (Paris, 1983).

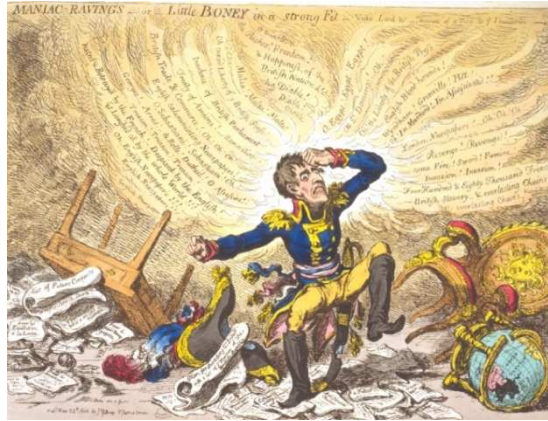


Fig.1: Gillray, *Maniac Ravings, or Little Boney in a Strong Fit*, 24 May 1803

‘We had no comparable officer depot, and no “*détenu*” depot, having no “*détenus*”’ wrote Lewis; ‘in the whole history of man there can have been very few prison-places like it. Verdun must be all but unique’.¹⁷ Parole prisoners have long been seen as ‘dwel[ling] in a world apart’, which has served to both assert and deny the significance of their detention.¹⁸ As this thesis will argue, Verdun should not be left aside as a historical anomaly: its ‘uniqueness’ was the fruit of the captives’ retrospective writing.¹⁹ An estimated 16000 British prisoners were corralled in a constellation of depots in North-East France.²⁰ Common sailors and soldiers endured more severe confinement in citadels, yet experienced a great mobility, which enabled the Verdun captives to maintain contacts, if not cohabitante, with them during transfers.²¹ Through patronage and charity provision, Verdun thus functioned as the metropolis of a captive diaspora. Moreover, French officers were equally held on parole in Britain during the period; the main difference being that they were dispersed in small communities, rather than assembled in one place. Finally, two precedents of mass arrest of civilians were recorded in 1746 and 1793, which invites us to relocate this captivity within a broader culture of war.²²

¹⁷ Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives*, pp. 22-3, 136.

¹⁸ This misrepresentation has been recently revised in Renaud Morieux, ‘French Prisoners of War, Conflicts of Honour and Social Inversions in England, 1744-1783’, *Historical Journal* 56:1 (2013), p. 58.

¹⁹ See chapter 7 on the ‘captive muse’.

²⁰ See map of Verdun amongst non-parole depots in the appendices.

²¹ See chapter 1 on mass transfers between depots.

²² Renaud Morieux, ‘Des Règles aux Pratiques Juridiques: le Droit des Etrangers en France et en Angleterre Pendant la Révolution Française (1792-1802)’, in Philippe Chassaing, Jean-Philippe Genet (eds), *Droit et Société en France et en Grande-Bretagne, 12^e-20^es.: Fonctions et Représentations* (Paris, 2003), p. 142; Paul Gerbod, ‘Résidents Britanniques dans le Paris Révolutionnaire’, in Michel Vovelle (ed.), *Paris et la Révolution: Actes du Colloque de Paris I, 14-16 Avril 1989* (Paris, 1989), p. 349.

Vasilis Vourkotiatis has offered a vast panorama of changing attitudes towards military captives in the West, from Antiquity to the twentieth-century.²³ During the eighteenth century, tacit laws of nations and bilateral treaties were increasingly inspired by the philosophical tenets that percolated through the republic of letters and publications by Montesquieu, Rousseau, Kant and Vattel.²⁴ Inspired by cosmopolitan views and Koranic precepts of brotherhood in detention, these texts advocated more humane treatments of captives, who were no longer to be ransomed, enslaved or brutalised.²⁵ Detention was theorised as a form of quarantine, limiting the rights of captors and preventing opponents from taking up arms until the end of hostilities. Along with ‘cartels’ – a system of exchange and repatriation named after the cargoes transporting prisoners – this aimed to reduce the cost, duration and scale of internment. This was based on a conceptualisation of ‘reciprocity’, which as Charles Walton has argued, developed during the period.²⁶ Humane internment became part of a shared code of ‘civilised’ conduct, which Vattel identified in an emerging Franco-British culture of captivity.²⁷

Towards the end of the century, this culture was extremely variable. Not only were official conventions flouted on the ground, but radically challenged by the Revolution of 1789.²⁸ Prisoners of war constituted ‘impossible citizens’ of the new Republic.²⁹ Whilst in 1793, the republican regime placed them under the authority of the national law, granting them the same rights to work as their French counterparts; in 1794, the French state decreed that ‘no British or Hanoverian troops were to be taken alive’ and captive Turks were executed in the siege of Jaffa during the Egyptian campaigns of 1799.³⁰ As Frédéric Jarousse has argued, revolutionary aspirations to universalism thus strongly

²³ Vasilis Vourkotiatis, *The Prisoners of War and German High Command: the British and American Experience* (Basingstoke and New York, 2003), pp. 11-36.

²⁴ Brian Richardson, ‘The Use of Vattel in the American Law of Nations’, *The American Journal of International Law* 106:3 (2012), pp. 547-71.

²⁵ On the influence of the Koran, see Benoît Cuvelier, ‘Le Régime Juridique des Prisonniers de Guerre’, *Etudes Internationales* 23:4 (1992), pp. 773-96; Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in Warfare: the Modern History of International Law of Armed Conflicts* (New York, 1980), pp. 31-74.

²⁶ Charles Walton, ‘Reciprocity and the French Revolution’ in Alex Fairfax-Cholmeley and Colin Jones (eds), *e-France: New Perspectives on the French Revolution* 4 (2013), pp.25-30, available at [http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/e-france/e-France_2013_vol_4_Charles_Walton_Reciprocity_and_the_French_Revolution.pdf], accessed 03 July 2014].

²⁷ Emerich de Vattel, *Le Droit des Gens* (3 vols, new ed., Paris, 1863), III, pp. 17-8, 23; Gary Brown, ‘Prisoner of War Parole: Ancient Concept, Modern Utility’ *Military Law Review* 156 (1998), pp. 200-23.

²⁸ Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 115.

²⁹ Expression borrowed from Sophie Wahnich, *L’Impossible Citoyen: l’Etranger dans le Discours de la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1997).

³⁰ Jean Tulard (ed.), *Le Dictionnaire Napoléon* (2 vols, Paris, 1999), p. 584.

collided with the actual treatment of captive foreigners.³¹ Equally, the National Convention rejected the custom of *parole d'honneur*, which had underpinned the repatriation mentioned above. Exchanges were still conducted, but the French prisoners who had been released by this means were ordered to disregard the promise made, and return to military service.³²

The Napoleonic Wars witnessed another turning point, as the regime softened Revolutionary practices of internment whilst reinventing traditions.³³ National differentiation continued, Verdun being solely for British detainees, whilst Spanish captives were employed on roadwork. Prussians captives were released in 1806. This exchange was exceptional, as the Napoleonic state ceased to organise systematic cartels, for practical and ideological reasons. On one hand, Britain did not have civilians to exchange against the *détenus*, and held ten times more French prisoners. On the other, reciprocity was vested with a new economic dimension, as Napoleon insisted that nations should pay for the cost of keeping and clothing the captives on their soil. Long-term internment subsequently became the norm, particularly as the *ancien régime* parole was given a new lease of life. The major change was the fact prisoners were no longer *released* but *detained* on their parole in Verdun. Indeed, whilst officers had before been allowed to return to their homeland based on the performative nature of their word of honour and on the condition that they should not return to active service during a set period of time, civilians and servicemen were now asked to sign a parole form to remain in the country of the captor.³⁴ Honour was redefined as a three-dimensional concept encompassing military, gendered and generational facets, as evidenced by the regulations of the depot, which stipulated that Verdun would gather 'English prisoners of advanced age or accompanied by women and children, and those vested with military rank'. The nature of the conflict nevertheless made Verdun less a privileged civilian and army depot, than a naval gathering. Shifting the laws of the sea onto the land, the *Second Prairial* decree gave to territorial detention a

³¹ Frédéric Jarousse, *Auvergnats Malgré Eux. Prisonniers de Guerre et Déserteurs Etrangers dans le Puy-de-Dôme pendant la Révolution Française (1794-1796)* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1998).

³² Gavin Daly, 'Napoleon's Lost Legions: French Prisoners of War in Britain, 1803-1841', *History* 89:295 (2004), p. 371.

³³ See Peter Wilon, 'Prisoners in Early Modern European Warfare', in Sibylle Scheipers (ed.), *Prisoners of War* (New York, 2010), pp. 39-56.

³⁴ 'Seront réunis dans la ville de Verdun les prisonniers anglais d'un âge avancé ou ayant avec eux des femmes et des enfants et ceux qui sont revêtus de grades'. ADM-Bar, 9R2, *gendarmerie* minute, Verdun, '1 Frimaire an XII' (23 November 1803). See chapter 4 on 'ties of honour' for a discussion of parole as a 'form'.

novel marine colour, as the war was increasingly waged afloat, and altered the social composition of the depot, which came to predominantly detain naval men.³⁵

Captivating ‘others’: national identities and total war

The parole depot of Verdun offers an opportunity to test two major and interconnected historical models about the changing nature of war and its cultural implications during the period, namely that of a Britishness forged against the perennial Gallic ‘other’, and the experience of the first total war, as theorised by Linda Colley and David Bell.³⁶

In *The First Total War*, Bell made the compelling argument that western attitudes towards war underwent major transformations between the mid-eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth, as conflicts ceased to be perceived as an ineluctable part of a life span. With the Napoleonic era, they became ‘entirely apart from the course of history’, ‘a war involving the complete mobilisation of society’s resources to achieve the absolute destruction of an enemy, with all distinction erased between combatants and non-combatants’.³⁷ This theory had been burgeoning since the 1960s, as an attempt to trace the precursors of the brutalising and all-encompassing international conflicts of the twentieth century. Jean-Yves Guiomar developed a similar argument by emphasizing the fusion of politics and war as characteristic of a ‘modern’ martial culture in Europe, where radically opposed ideologies collided, buttressed by a demonization of the opponent as an ‘other’ and the creation of the ‘citizen-soldiers’ bridging the gap between home and front.³⁸ This resulted in the enforcement of military values upon civilians, as exemplified by the Napoleonic regime and the professionalization of armed forces which has fractured, socially and culturally, the civil and the military spheres up to the present day.

This model has been questioned for confusing three problematic notions of totality, modernity and the ‘absolute war’ enunciated by Carl von Clausewitz at the twilight of the Napoleonic conflicts.³⁹ Catriona Kennedy has nuanced the theory of splintering civilian and military spheres,

³⁵ On the shift of the laws of the sea onto the land, see Louis Cros, *Condition et Traitement des Prisonniers de Guerre* (Montpellier, 1900).

³⁶ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven, 1992); David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon’s Europe and the Birth of Warfare As We Know It* (Boston and New York, 2007).

³⁷ Bell, *The First Total War*, p.6-7, 11.

³⁸ Jean-Yves Guiomar, *L’Invention de la Guerre Totale* (Paris, 2004).

³⁹ Eve Rosenhaft and Hannah Smith (eds), *Civilians and War in Europe 1615-1815: Reconsidering Total War* (Liverpool, 2012).

arguing for a re-appreciation of their loose contours.⁴⁰ Michael Broers has voiced a more severe critique. The war was not the first *total* conflict, but a process of total-isation. Whilst combats were expanded to nations at arms, the strategies and technologies employed were far from being revolutionary. Broers accused Bell of relying on ‘better established tendencies to accept the political rhetoric of the protagonists at face value’, hence failing to appreciate the *ad hoc* nature of fighting. For him, the conflicts do not mark ‘the beginning of a new era in European warfare, they are the end of something ... [they] are the last fought with early modern tactics’.⁴¹

Another critique that could be made is the absence of prisoners of war in Bell’s analysis. Yet, as this thesis argues, the study of captivity offers a precious insight into the ambivalence of the totalisation of warfare he identified. As will be discussed in chapter two, the presence of women amongst the victims of the 2nd *Prairial* decree certainly complicated the gendered definition of the prisoner of war, and blurred the line between the civilian and military spheres. However, whilst non-belligerents were arrested as potential agents of the militia and sequestered with their military counterparts, they never enjoyed the same political, diplomatic and financial status. The mere fact that a specific term – *détenu* – was employed to refer to their situation illuminates how capture tended to polarise civilian and military spheres.⁴² Furthermore, they did not receive any allowance from the French State, and the British government consistently refused to acknowledge them as lawfully detained captives.⁴³ But the main point of contention remains the nature of parole detention itself. Indeed, this ‘privileged’ form of captivity, which was also adopted for French prisoners in Britain, suggests that the concept of honour did not lose its substance with the Revolution and mass conscription, as is often assumed.⁴⁴ As Michèle Cohen has shown, the period witnessed a return to chivalric understandings of gentility, which complicates the claims of an ‘abandonment of the code of civilised restraint’ in Napoleonic warfare.⁴⁵ Ultimately, it appears significant that prisoners in France were placed under the double surveillance of the ministries of defence and police, which

⁴⁰ Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 4-6.

⁴¹ Michael Broers, ‘Changes in War: the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars’, in Hew Strachan and Sibylle Scheipers (eds), *The Changing Character of War* (Oxford, 2010), p.64

⁴² See chapter 7 on how civilians reclaimed the term *détenu* in opposition to military prisoners.

⁴³ See chapter 6 on the subject of debts, and chapter 3 on charity provision.

⁴⁴ See chapter 4 for a detailed analysis and engagement with this literature.

⁴⁵ Michèle Cohen. ‘Manners’ Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830’, *Journal of British Studies* 44:2 (2005), pp. 312-29.

paved the way for enduring ‘dual systems’, where prisoners were managed by civilian and military authorities until the First World War.⁴⁶

In *Stranded in the Present*, Peter Fritsche has beautifully described the ways in which the Napoleonic Wars shaped European perceptions of time and space. The conflicts and their ruins, he argued, allowed national characters and Romantic self-expressions to blossom.⁴⁷ Because of their scale and intensity, these wars thus delineated national consciousness from within and without. Tracing the roots of British national identity in the long eighteenth century, Linda Colley went further by claiming that:

Like a[n] ... unhappy couple, the British and the French had their teeth so sunk into each other ... that they could neither live together peacefully, nor ignore each other and live neutrally apart ... Time and time again, war with France brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales or Scotland or England, into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves collectively against it.⁴⁸

Drawing on anthropological models of identity in alterity, Linda Colley formulated a theory of Britishness as forged against Frenchness. In particular, she identified in Protestantism the unifying element of a pan-Britannic character fostered on religious and political dissonances with its neighbour’s Catholicism and absolutist monarchy. Since the Anglo-Scottish act of Union in 1707, pronounced anti-French sentiments emerged not only from the English metropolis, but throughout the British Isles, as a series of war exacerbated tensions between the two rival countries. According to Colley, this process culminated with the period 1793-1815, when mass conscription and the fear of invasion cemented national allegiances in formation. Britain, she claimed, was thus ‘an invention forged above all by war’, a society ‘that largely defined itself through fighting’.⁴⁹

Embedded in the ‘new British studies’, which intends to consider nations as ‘imagined communities’ rather than timeless and organic political bodies, *Britons* has nevertheless replicated a

⁴⁶ Heather Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain, France and Germany, 1914–1920* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 8

⁴⁷ Peter Fritsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (London and Cambridge, MA, 2004).

⁴⁸ Colley, *Britons*, pp. 1-2, 5.

⁴⁹ Colley, *Britons*, pp 5-9. Similar ideas appear in Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: a Cultural History, 1740-1830* (New York, 1987); Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (eds), *Becoming National: a Reader* (New York and Oxford, 1996).

long-lived truism of Franco-British ‘natural and necessary’ enmity.⁵⁰ As Renaud Morieux recently argued, the portraiture of France and Britain as irreconcilable foes has permeated an extensive body of work since the nineteenth century.⁵¹ Colley’s work has found many echoes amongst French political and diplomatic historians who have perpetuated – and continue to perpetuate – discourses of natural enmity, without appreciating the philosophical tenets that buttressed this rhetoric in the eighteenth century, namely ‘an essentialist belief in the natural character of competition between states’.⁵² Cultural investigations into *mentalités* have equally used this trope without analysing its social foundations.⁵³ Liah Greenfeld, for instance, argued that ‘the dislike of England forged the ideological foundations of the French national consciousness’.⁵⁴ Either employed rhetorically or analytically, this view of colliding Frenchness and Britishness has led to a plethora of studies of national prejudices during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, using pamphlets and the visual culture diffused by caricatures in the press as testaments to increasingly nationalistic sentiments in both countries.⁵⁵ Drawing heavily on metropolitan print cultures, these works have tended to reproduce, rather than deconstruct, eighteenth-century stereotypes to be found in economic and travel writings, as much as in propagandist literature.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York, 2003). The ‘new British studies’ emerged with the resurgence of nationalism in the last three decades of the twentieth century. The movement questioned the amalgamation of Britain and England as interchangeable terms to investigate how the components of the United Kingdom and its empire came to produce a British identity. John Greville Agard Pocock has distinguished two strands within this historiography: the ‘new British history’ which combined a study of Britain as ‘a changing population of interacting state-forms, nationalities, and indeed histories’, with ‘Atlantic histories’ focusing on relations with the United States, Canada and the Carribeans. John Greville Agard Pocock, ‘The New British History in Atlantic Perspective: An Antipodean Commentary’, *American Historical Review* 104:2 (1999), p. 490. The ‘four nations’ theory apprehends the question from a different perspective, by looking at the interactions between the four components of the United Kingdom. See Hugh Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations* (Cambridge, 1989), Linda Colley, ‘Britishness and Otherness: an Argument’, *Journal of British Studies* 31:4 (1992), pp. 312-315. See also Jeremy Black, *Natural and Necessary Enemies: Anglo-French Relations in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1986).

⁵¹ Morieux, Renaud, *Une Mer pour Deux Royaumes: La Manche, Frontière Franco-Anglaise (XVIIe-XVIIIe Siècles)* (Rennes, 2008), pp. 17-27.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁵³ Two other models of Frenchness have been formulated as constructed in solidarity against the Prussian or as forged through republicanism, its language, education, symbols and institutions. See Eugen Weber, *Peasants Into Frenchmen: the Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, 1976), Ernest Renan, *Qu’est-ce qu’Une Nation?* (Paris, 1882).

⁵⁴ [c’est] le ressentiment contre l’Angleterre qui a façonné les fondations idéologiques de la conscience nationale française’. Edmond Dziembowski also claimed that ‘la France reste bel et bien majoritairement anglophobe. Le sentiment d’aversion envers l’Angleterre dépasse largement la question des convictions politiques’. See Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Harvard, 1992), p. 180 quoted in Morieux, *Une mer*, p. 20; Edmond Dziembowski, *Un Nouveau Patriotisme Français, 1750-1770: la France Face à la Puissance Anglaise à l’Epoque de la Guerre de Sept Ans* (Oxford, 1998), p. 17 quoted in Morieux, *Une mer*, pp. 20-21.

⁵⁵ Morieux, *La Manche*, pp. 17-18; Michael Duffy, ‘The Noisic, Empty, Fluttering French: English Images of the French, 1689-1815’, *History Today* 32:9 (1982), pp. 21-6.

⁵⁶ Paul Gerbod, *Voyages au Pays des Mangeurs de Grenouilles: la France Vue par les Britanniques du XVIIIe Siècle à Nos Jours* (Paris, 1991); Michel Vion, *Perfide Albion! Douce Angleterre? L’Angleterre et les Anglais Vus par les Français du XVIe Siècle à l’An 2000* (Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire, 2002); Jean Guiffan, *Histoire de l’Anglophobie en France: de Jeanne d’Arc à la Vache Folle* (Rennes, 2004); Jean-Paul Bertaud, Alan Forrest, and Annie Jourdan (eds), *Napoléon, les Mots, et les Anglais: Guerre des Mots et des Images* (Paris, 2004); Robert Tombs and Isabelle Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: the British and the French from the Sun King to the Present* (London, 2006).

However, *Britons* has also prompted a growing literature that questions the core of its argument.⁵⁷ Since its first publication in 1992, historians have re-evaluated the congregational fissures of British Protestantism, along with the existence of sub-national patriotisms, which greatly complicate Colley's understanding of loyalism in the provinces. Her theory also falters about the 'peripheries', from which she purposely excluded Ireland, and the Jewish and Black communities.⁵⁸ Other historians have shown that anti-Gallicism was employed for various political ends. When expressed by radicals, Francophobia attested to anxieties about eroding liberties within the country and its cosmopolitan government, as much as feelings of external threat.⁵⁹ Colin Kidd has more specifically questioned the social components of anti-French sentiments in Georgian society. According to him, historians should not 'exaggerate the nature and degree of the gulf contemporaries perceived between free-born Britons and the benighted subjects of Catholic and absolutist France'.⁶⁰

Class distinctions should not be underestimated, says Kidd, since 'the elites of Britain did not regard the French with contempt'. Nor did the masses generally abhor them. Whilst the republic of letters operated as a vast and active network of industrial, scientific and artistic interests beyond national boundaries and war, merchants and sailors kept cordial relations with their Gallic counterparts.⁶¹ Moreover, whilst conservative discourses amalgamated Francophobia with anti-Jacobinism in Britain in the 1790s, France underwent dramatic changes with the Revolution, which led the country to divest itself from its traditional attributes by overturning monarchical and Catholic orders.⁶² As this thesis argues, British prisoners thus faced a Napoleonic society which was very different from the 'protracted cross-Channel feud' constructed in the previous decades⁶³ The

⁵⁷ Amongst these key studies, see Jonathan Charles Douglas Clark, 'Protestantism, Nationalism, and National Identity, 1660-1832', *Historical Journal* 43:1 (2000), pp. 249-276; Ian McBride and Tony Claydon, 'The Trials of the Chosen Peoples: Recent Interpretations of Protestantism in Britain and Ireland', in Ian McBride and Tony Claydon (eds), *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c. 1650-1850* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 3-32; Terry Brotherstone, Anna Clark and Kevin Whelan (eds), *These Fissured Isles: Ireland, Scotland and British history, 1798-1848* (Edinburgh, 2005); Stephen Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence* (Oxford, 2000); Stephen Conway, *War, State and Society in Mid Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2006); John Cookson, *The British Armed Nation, 1793-1815* (Basingstoke, 1997); Stuart Semmel, *Napoleon and the British* (New Haven and London, 2004).

⁵⁸ See Adam Chill, *Boundaries of Britishness: Boxing, Minorities, and Identity in Late-Georgian Britain* (Ann Arbor, 2007).

⁵⁹ Hugh Cunningham, 'The Language of Patriotism, 1750-1914', *History Workshop Journal* 12:1 (1981), pp. 8-33.

⁶⁰ Colin Kidd, 'Integration: Patriotism and Nationalism', in Harry T. Dickinson (ed.), *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 369-73.

⁶¹ See Lise Andries, Frédéric Ogé, John Dunkley and Darach Sanfey (eds), *Intellectual Journeys: the Translation of Ideas in Enlightenment England, France and Ireland* (Oxford, 2013); Peter Jones, 'Industrial Enlightenment in Practice: Visitors to the Soho Manufactory, 1765-1820', *Midland History* 33 (2008), pp. 68-96; Peter Jones, "'Fraternising with the Enemy': Problems of Identity during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars", in J. Kalman, I. Collier and H. Davies (eds), *French History and Civilisation. Papers from the George Rudé Seminar* (Melbourne, 2005), pp. 38-44.

⁶² See Stuart Semmel, *Napoleon and the British* (New Haven, 2004).

⁶³ Colley, *Britons*, p. 25.

boundaries of the French and British national characters were pliable and subject to change over time. Overall, it seems evident that British anti-Gallicism and French Britannophobia were more complex and dynamic than a paradigm of national self-awareness in alterity allows.

This has been emphasized by social and cultural historians investigating transnational commerce and spaces, who have recently redressed the lack of attention given to migrations and trade between the two countries at war. Renaud Morieux and Michael Rapport, amongst others, have shifted the lens of investigations by looking at exchanges between the two nations during the period.⁶⁴ Without disputing Colley's entire thesis, they have identified significant limitations in her model. Renaud Morieux, for instance, has convincingly demonstrated how it misleadingly represented Franco-British antagonisms as a *continuum* during what is often termed a 'Second Hundred Years' War', a period of protracted warfare which nonetheless included sixty-four years of peace between the two nation-states. Furthermore, by looking at contact-zones such as borders, the fluid frontier of the Channel in particular, a more complex picture emerges, where individual trajectories unravel a history of contacts rather than visceral hostility.⁶⁵

This thesis is aligned with these interpretations, along with alternative paradigms of identity formation. New studies have re-evaluated the inclusive nature of Englishness, the term appearing in 1805 as an attempt to introduce German romanticism to the British Isles.⁶⁶ Englishness served islanders to define themselves on the Continent and in the empire. As this thesis argues, most prisoners consequently referred to themselves as English, or *Anglais*, rather than British, irrespectively of geographical differentiations. Other historians have questioned 'otherness' as an analytical category for a study of religious discords during the period, since the prime other remained the non-Western colonies, the Indian prism Forbes employed to describe the new landscape of his captivity in France.⁶⁷ The language of otherness was, in fact, rarely used by prisoners regarding the French and only functioned as a comparative lens to be found elsewhere in

⁶⁴ Michael Rapport, 'Loyal Catholics and Revolutionary Patriots: National Identity and the Scots in Revolutionary Paris', *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies* 2:1 (2008), pp. 51-71; Michael Rapport, *Nationality and Citizenship in Revolutionary France: the Treatment of Foreigners 1789-1799* (London, 2000).

⁶⁵ 'Les contacts entre les populations des deux rives de la Manche ne se limitent pas à des relations dictées par le contexte de rivalité entre les Etats, comme le montre la persistance de logiques d'échange ou de circulation que les conflits n'interrompent jamais totalement.' Morieux, *La Manche*, p. 170.

⁶⁶ Paul Langford, *Englishness Identified: Manners and Character, 1650-1850* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 1-2.

⁶⁷ Conceptualising identity in 'otherness' emerged with the pioneering work of Edward Said. See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978); Jonathan Charles Douglas Clark, 'Protestantism, Nationalism, and National Identity, 1660-1832', *Historical Journal* 43:1 (2000), pp. 249-76.

travel-writing.⁶⁸ Furthermore, Colley's and myriad other studies of pamphlets, newspapers and caricatures have illuminated political visions of nations; yet it remains to be determined to what extent individuals espoused and internationalised these public views. Marxist historians, such as Eric Hobsbawm and Pierre Vilar, suggested long ago the importance of approaching the 'nation from below', but the focus remains very much on governments and elites rather than the ordinary people.⁶⁹

'Othering' is problematic. As Carolyn Steedman argues, it results from a process by which 'experience shaped the sense of self and nationhood' and implies 'a particular model of the human mind and a [twentieth-century post-Freudian] paradigm of psychological explanation'.⁷⁰ It is an experiential and subjective construction that involved not only the *outside*, but the *inside*. She demonstrated that Benedict Anderson's contention that nations function as 'imagined communities' invites us to consider another model of 'incorporation, appropriation, interiority and sameness'.⁷¹ National consciousness can be initiated from within, a sense of interiority derived from childhood, which manifested itself most vividly in the 'little things' we keep, wear, cherish throughout life – a collection that makes us and connect us to others, may they be real or fictional. This more positive and performative model has inspired the analysis carried in this thesis of prisoners' objects such as chess sets, clothes, books and herbariums, which enabled expressions of their own singularity and socio-professional belongings as much as they allowed transnational exchanges.

Equally, since the 1990s, military studies have embraced a cultural turn, leading to new understandings of war itself.⁷² Bottom-up approaches to the battlefield have revealed that war blurred, rather than crystallised, identities forged from above. The Napoleonic conflicts in particular

⁶⁸ Adela Pinch, *Thinking About Other People in Nineteenth-Century British Writing* (Cambridge, 2010); Elina Theodorou Staikou, *Metaphors of Travel and Writing: Deconstruction of the 'At-Home' and the Promise of the Other* (Phd thesis, University of Warwick, 2002); Mary Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (Ithaca, 1991).

⁶⁹ The work of Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm have proven extremely influential in revealing how political figured 'invented' traditions and made claims about the timeless nature of nation for political reasons. The idea that nations were 'imagined' was first formulated by Benedict Anderson, who opened new cultural avenues to investigate the mutable nature of nation-building over time. Pierre Vilar, *La Catalogne dans l'Espagne Moderne: Recherches sur les Fondements Economiques des Structures Nationales* (Paris, 1962); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge, 1990); see also Morieux, *Une mer*, pp. 19-20.

⁷⁰ Carolyn Steedman, 'Inside, Outside, Other: Accounts of National Identity in the Nineteenth Century', *History of the Human Sciences* 8:4 (1995), pp. 59-76, 60.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 61. See also Carolyn Steedman, 'Englishness, Clothes, and Little Things' in Christopher Breward, Becky Conekin, and Caroline Cox (eds), *The Englishness of English Dress* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 29-44.

⁷² On the cultural turn in war studies and its limits, see John Shy, 'The Cultural Approach to the History of War', *The Journal of Military History* 57:5 (1993), pp.13-26; Patrick Porter, 'Good Anthropology, Bad History: the Cultural Turn in Studying War' *Parameters* 37:2 (2007), pp.45-58.

were an ‘an arena for heightened human mobility’, which blurred the line between enmity and amity.⁷³ This buttressed the claim made by the German historian Ute Frevert that

Wars – normally seen as markers of national policies and identities – turn out to be transnational events both in the realm of images and ideas and as direct, personal experience. In war, people of different nationalities came face to face with one another, and although this confrontation was mostly negative and often lethal, it offered some opportunities for positive bonding and reflection.⁷⁴

Although destructive, conflicts offer a space of malleable and kaleidoscopic identities, which allow fraternisation and transfers to occur.⁷⁵ In the words of James Clifford, they reveal that ‘the making and remaking of identities take place in the contact zones’.⁷⁶ Verdun was a ‘contact zone’ as postcolonial theorists defined it in the 1990s, namely a ‘social space where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination’.⁷⁷ The privation of liberty, and the transnational encounter it induced in Verdun, resulted in multifaceted socio-cultural, economic and bodily interactions, which resonate with current revaluations of imperial ‘collisions of cultures’.

Overall, this thesis intends to further these novel and more positive paradigms, by exploring parole detention as a site of exchange, an interface in the midst of warfare. By looking at individual experiences of detention, the study elucidates the ‘paradoxical link emerging from the experience of detention’ between captives and captors.⁷⁸ Whilst Colley privileged those who ‘were able to savour military glory ... free from ... brutal imperatives’ at home, over what she considered as minor and unconventional ‘dissenting voices’, it is my contention that British prisoners of war, who experienced displacement, defeat and martial constraints at first hand, are not to be disregarded as a

⁷³ Natalia Griffon de Pleineville, ‘Les Ennemis Frères: la Fraternisation Franco-Anglaise Pendant la Guerre de la Péninsule’, *Revue du Souvenir Napoléonien* 486 (2011), available at [http://www.napoleon.org/fr/salle_lecture/articles/files/479155.asp, accessed 04 July 2013] ; Kennedy, *Narratives*, p. 7.

⁷⁴ Ute Frevert, ‘Europeanizing German History’ *GHI Bulletin* 36 (2005), p. 15.

⁷⁵ Frevert, ‘Europeanizing German History’, pp. 9-24.

⁷⁶ See James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Harvard, 1997), p. 7; Friedman, Jonathan, ‘From Roots to Routes. Tropes for Trippers’, *Anthropological Theory*, 2:1 (2002), pp. 21-36.

⁷⁷ See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992), p. 4.

⁷⁸ Expression borrowed from Sylvie Caucanas, Rémy Cazals, Pascal Payen and Odon Abbal (eds), *Les Prisonniers de Guerre dans l'Histoire: Contacts Entre Peuples et Cultures* (Paris, 2003).

marginal group. Their captivity and return home offer a precious insight into how these individuals and their kin, but also their French hosts, negotiated forced displacement.

Moving prisoners from margins to focus appears essential, since depots were at the core of the Napoleonic conflicts. The indicative timeline in the appendices aims to highlight the position of Verdun within this series of concomitant international conflicts, by identifying the military and political events which affected the captives' everyday and that of their kin.⁷⁹ The depot lasted for almost the whole length of the Napoleonic Wars, from July 1803 to January 1814, when the retreat of the French Army from the East, following the Russian campaigns, led to a hasty redistribution of prisoners towards the South-West before Napoleon's first abdication in April 1814. Within this period, the territory of France witnessed an unprecedented expansion towards Holland, Italy, Poland and the Iberian Peninsula, which led to novel road infrastructures and means of communication.⁸⁰ News travelled fast and wide, and marching troops made distant theatres of war a tangible reality in localities. Placed on a decisive military axis between Paris and Mainz, Verdun was four times traversed by Napoleon and his *Grande Armée*. The sight of his legions was a source of much concern and discussion amongst the prisoners and the local administrators who feared the removal of the depot to another town.

Living conditions in captivity were never a *fait accompli*. Correspondence routes were disrupted with the Continental blockade in 1806, which banned the transmission of letters, objects and money between prisoners and their families at home. The depot was based on a constant flux of military captives, the majority of whom were taken aboard vessels in the Channel, the Mediterranean Sea, and in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. It was only in the second half of the period, between 1808 and 1814, that redcoats were captured in Portugal and Spain. These individuals brought with them visions of various fronts, which reached Verdun and were discussed with the locals. They thus formed communities of knowledge which challenged the contemporary propagandist discourses on

⁷⁹ See the timeline in the appendices.

⁸⁰ The telegraph was installed in Verdun in 1805. See Forbes's watercolour in chapter 4.

the conduct of war, revealing, for instance, the British victory of Trafalgar to the French public in 1805.⁸¹

Overall, through the use of sociology and cultural studies – especially the concept of ‘cultural transfers’ and social network analysis – my thesis offers a fresh contribution by arguing that prisoners developed more amicable relations with their French counterparts than is often assumed.⁸² Indeed, the main finding that has arisen from this work is the predominance of social dynamics over national, religious and martial antagonisms during this forced cohabitation, which nuances the truism of colliding French and British identities during the period. In this respect, POW studies open up new socio-cultural avenues for a history of war that complicates traditional narratives.

‘A missing paradigm’

In the words of the Hungarian historian Károly Eszláry, prisoners of war have long been seen as collateral damages of lesser importance than the ‘outbreak of hostilities, the sequence of conflicts or the new political constellations which emerged in the wake of victory or defeat’.⁸³ In 2008, Heather Jones described captivity as a ‘missing paradigm’ in WW1 studies. Her plea to incorporate detention in the field has since been extrapolated to historical studies in general, leading military detention to emerge as a subject of investigation in its own right, known as POW studies.⁸⁴

It was only in the 1990s and 2000s that captivity shifted from a ‘Cinderella subject’ to a coherent research theme with an increasingly socio-cultural focus. Studies have flourished in Europe, America and South Africa as part of a broader literature on military violence in the twentieth century. Annette Becker, Odon Abbal, Alon Rachamimov produced ground-breaking studies of captivity during the First World War, whilst Bob Moore and Remi Cazals, amongst many others, have highlighted the influence of captivity in labour management, trade unions and educational

⁸¹ Roy Adkins, *Trafalgar: The Biography of a Battle* (London, 2004); Marc Sorlot, *La Vie en Meuse au Temps de Napoléon Ier* (Metz, 1998), p.8.

⁸² Methodological issues discussed about these approaches will be further discussed later in the thesis. On ‘culturel transfers’, see Michel Espagne, *Les Transferts Culturels Franco-Allemands* (Paris, 1999); Michel Espagne and Michaël Werner (eds), *Transferts: les Relations Interculturelles dans l’Espace Franco-Allemand (XVIIIe et XIXe Siècles)* (Paris, 1988).

⁸³ ‘L’éclatement des hostilités, le déroulement des combats et les nouvelles constellations politiques, issues de la victoire ou de la défaite’. Károly Eszláry, *Les Français en Hongrie Pendant les Guerres Napoléoniennes et Mondiales* (Paris, 1966), p.5.

⁸⁴ Heather Jones, ‘A Missing Paradigm? Military Captivity and the Prisoner of War, 1914-18’, *Immigrants & Minorities*, 26:1-2 (2008), pp. 19-48.

policies during the Second World War.⁸⁵ Emerging POW studies now form a conceptually vibrant and innovative field encompassing a vast array of methodologies, from political to gender and race studies, and a variety of spaces from the local to the global.⁸⁶ It is inherently interdisciplinary in gathering together researchers in sociology, law, psychology, archaeology, medicine along with studies of music, theatre and life-writing.⁸⁷

Conducted on a variety of conceptual fronts, POW studies are however often fettered to the twentieth century. Military captivity has received comparatively little attention in early modern studies. Yet there is a growing interest in pre-1914 forms of detention, which could significantly contribute to questioning the teleological narratives of a more humane treatment of POW culminating in the Geneva Conventions. Recent works on medieval cultures of ransoming and post-detention mourning throw into relief fluctuations in how captivity was conceived and lived within a wide temporal and spatial framework.⁸⁸ Furthermore, captivity has increasingly been explored across the Atlantic, with a focus on English and Spanish imperialisms, and the emergence of a Native American literature of detention as a gendered 'genre'.⁸⁹ Literary scholars have preceded historians in exploring this 'low literature' and colonial experiences of detention involving both settlers and first nations.⁹⁰ Along with works on captivity during the war of 1812 and the Civil War, they have highlighted forms of kinship emerging from enforced cohabitation and the act of writing, hence

⁸⁵ Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre: Humanitaire et Culture de Guerre, 1914-1918: Populations Occupées, Déportés Civils, Prisonniers de Guerre* (Paris, 1998); Bob Moore and Barbara Hatley-Broad (eds), *Prisoners of War, Prisoners of Peace: Captivity, Homecoming and Memory in World War II* (Oxford, 2005); Bob Moore and Kent Federovvikh (eds) *Prisoners of War and their Captors in World War II* (Oxford, 1996).

⁸⁶ Anne-Marie Pathé and Fabien Théofilakis (eds) *La Captivité de Guerre au XXe Siècle: des Archives, des Histoires, des Mémoires* (Paris, 2012); Sibylle Scheipers (ed.) *Prisoners in War* (Oxford, 2010); Neville Wylie, *Barbed Wire Diplomacy: Britain, Germany, and the Politics of Prisoners of War, 1939-1945* (Oxford, 2010); Sibylle Scheipers (ed.) *Prisoners in War* (New York, 2010).

⁸⁷ Amongst these, the work of Gilly Carr on captives' visual and material cultures has greatly enhanced this thesis, and inspired its final chapter on the 'captive muse'. See Gilly Carr, and Harold Mytum (eds), *Prisoners of War: Archaeology, Memory, and Heritage of 19th- and 20th-Century Mass Internment* (London, 2013); Gilly Carr and Harold Mytum (eds), *Cultural Heritage and Prisoners of War: Creativity Behind Barbed Wire* (London, 2012).

⁸⁸ Megan Cassidy-Welch, 'Prisoners of War After Agincourt: Gender, Mourning and Cultures of Captivity in Fifteenth-Century France', *Lilith: a Feminist History Journal* 12 (2003), pp. 9-22.

⁸⁹ Amongst others, see Benjamin Mark Allen (ed.), *Captivity Past and Present: a Compendium of Observations and Interpretations* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2010); Benjamin Mark Allen, *Naked and Alone in a Strange World: Early Modern Captivity and its Mythos* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2009); James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, 2002); Ben Crewe, *The Prisoner Society: Power, Adaptation and Social Life in an English Prison* (Oxford, 2009); John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: a Family Story from Early America* (New York, 1994); Kathryn Zabelle Derouian-Stadola and James Arthur Levernier, *The Indian Captivity Narrative, 1550-1900* (New York, 1993); Kathryn Zabelle Derouian-Stadola and James Arthur Levernier, *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives* (New York, 1998); Gary Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Post-Modern Images of Indian Captivity* (Charlottesville, 1995); Dahia Messara, 'The Competing Voices of "Narrator", "Author" and "Publisher" in Women's Captivity Narratives', in Thomas Austenfeld and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet (eds) *Writing American Women* (Tübingen, 2009), pp. 47-62; Fernando Operé, *Indian Captivity in Spanish America*, trans. Gustavo Pellon (Charlottesville, 2008); Richard VanDerBeets, *The Indian Captivity Narrative: an American Genre* (Lanham, 1984); Lisa Voigt, *Writing Captivity in the Early Modern Atlantic: Circulations of Knowledge and Authority in the Iberian and English Imperial Worlds* (Chapel Hill, 2009).

⁹⁰ Linda Colley, 'Perceiving Low Literature: the Captivity Narrative', *Essays in Criticism* 3 (2003) pp. 199-217; Linda Colley, 'Going Native, Telling Tales: Captivity, Collaborations and Empire', *Past and Present* 168:1 (2000), pp. 170-93.

revealing the role of text in American nation-building. In Britain, the current work of Erica Charters on colonial medicine and humanitarianism towards military captives in the Seven Years War and that of Renaud Morieux on French prisoners in the British Isles and its empire suggest that eighteenth-century experiences of military captivity are the object of novel interests.⁹¹

Revolutionary and Napoleonic experiences of detention, in particular, are under new scholarly scrutiny, yet they are often treated as one temporal block.⁹² There is a renewed interest in a field first explored at the end of nineteenth century by historians of tourism, who compiled, annotated and translated anthologies of memoirs of captivity as forms of travel-writing.⁹³ This impetus was reinigorated with the First World War and fascination with Napoleon as the ‘Gaoler of Europe’.⁹⁴ In the 1980s, novel studies of prison ships were propelled by the seminal work of maritime historians such as Alain Cabantous, Charles Ruellan and Michael Lewis.⁹⁵ Yet, despite these pioneering works, Jean Tulard noted in 1995 that the fate of Napoleonic captives was little documented, owing partly to a lack of attention to ego-documents in their original languages.⁹⁶ French, German, British and Rumanian historians have since responded to his call to research their experience.⁹⁷ Most of them have mused on the diplomatic negotiations surrounding prisoners, particularly focusing on cartels and the legality of arresting civilians.⁹⁸ In a similar vein, recent works have highlighted the tensions between revolutionary discourses of universalism and the living

⁹¹ Erica Charters, Eve Rosenhaft and Hannah Smith (eds), *Civilians and War in Europe 1615-1815: Reconsidering Total War* (Liverpool, 2012); Renaud Morieux, ‘French Prisoners of War, Conflicts of Honour and Social Inversions in England, 1744-1783’, *Historical Journal*, 56:1 (2013), pp. 55-88.

⁹² Clive Lloyd amalgamated them with American wars; see Clive Lloyd, *A History of Napoleonic and American prisoners of War. Hulk, Depot and Parole* (London, 2007).

⁹³ Albert Babeau, *Les Anglais en France après la Paix d'Amiens* (Paris, 1898), Roger Boutet de Monvel, *Les Anglais à Paris 1800-1850* (Paris, 191); John Goldworth Alger, *Napoleon's British Visitors and Captives (1801-1815)* (London, 1904).

⁹⁴ Edward Fraser, *Napoleon the Gaoler, Personal Experiences and Adventures of British Sailors and Soldiers during the Great Captivity* (London, 1914).

⁹⁵ Alain Cabantous, ‘Gens de Mer, Guerre et Prison : la Captivité des Gens de Mer au XVIIIe Siècle’, *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 28 (1981), pp. 246-65; Philippe Henwood, ‘Les Prisonniers de Guerre Anglais en Bretagne au XVIIIe Siècle’, *Actes du Colloque d'Histoire Maritime de Rochefort ‘Guerres et paix 1660-1815’* (Vincennes, 1987), pp. 73-91; Charles Ruellan, ‘Prisonniers de Guerre Français et Anglais au XVIIIe Siècle’, *Revue de la Défense Nationale* (1946), pp. 646-58; Paul Chamberlain, *Hell Upon Water: Prisoners of War in Britain 1793-1815* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2008); Philippe Masson, *Les Sépulcres Flottants* (Rennes, 1987).

⁹⁶ ‘*Tout n'est pas connu dans le fonctionnement de la Grande Armée, notamment ... le sort des prisonniers*’. Jean Tulard, *La France de la Révolution et de l'Empire* (Paris, 1995), p. 157; Jean Tulard (ed.), *Dictionnaire Napoléon*, II, p.584. See also François Buttner, *Les Compagnies de Reserves Départementales 1805-1814*, 1987; Ion Georgescu, ‘Prisonniers Français au Sud-Est de l'Europe’, *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* (1976), pp. 509-52; Stanislaw Kirkor, ‘Les Prisonniers en Grande-Bretagne’, *Revue de l'Institut Napoléon* 138 (1982), pp. 3-38.

⁹⁷ Gavin Daly, ‘Napoleon's Lost Legions: French Prisoners of War in Britain, 1803–1814’, *History*, 89:295 (2004), pp. 361-80; Edna Lemay, ‘A Propos des Recherches Faites sur le Sort des Prisonniers de Guerre Français Pendant les Guerres Européennes (1792-1815)’, *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, 312 (1998), pp. 229-44; Larry Lowenthal, *Hell on the East River: British Prison Ships in the American Revolution* (New York, 2009); Lutz Voigtländer, *Vom Leben und Überleben in Gefangenschaft: Selbstzeugnisse von Kriegsgefangenen 1757 bis 1814* (Freiburg in Breisgau, 2005).

⁹⁸ Bob Sutcliffe, ‘Politics Surrounding Prisoners of War, 1793 to 1815’, Institute of Historical Research seminar, 28 January 2018; Roy Adkins, *The War for All the Oceans* (London, 2006).

conditions of Italian, Prussian and Spanish captives.⁹⁹ This coincided with an assessment of the ‘reality and myths of anti-English discourses’ of administrative authorities in Northern France where non-parole prisoners were sequestered, an approach with which this doctoral thesis is aligned.¹⁰⁰ Others have investigated the industrial strategies of captive labour, its numerical importance and mortality.¹⁰¹ Overall, there is an emphasis on political and economic managements of prisoners, which tends to obscure the captives’ interactions with the local population. There is also a discrepancy between the works on French captives in Britain and prisoners of other nationalities in Napoleonic France. This is the result of another disparity: the number of French prisoners in Britain was ten times greater than that of the British in France.¹⁰² But it is also the fruit of asymmetrical arguments about the systems of imprisonment developed by the two countries at war.

Indeed, partisan perspectives have strongly coloured debates about late eighteenth-century detention. Charles Ruellan insisted that ‘prisoners of war have always been well-treated in France’, whilst Didier Houmeau has contrasted captivity in Napoleonic France with the xenophobic mistreatments perpetrated against the French in Britain during the Revolution.¹⁰³ The language of these studies is marked by an *ipse*-identity, connecting the author with the historical protagonists through the pronoun ‘we’. ‘We always held something like five Frenchmen ... to every Briton held in France’, wrote Clive Lloyd.¹⁰⁴ Equally, Michael Lewis employed a martial terminology derived from the sources he aimed to analyse, referring to the ‘pseudo-gentility’ and the ‘pollution’ of 1789, taking pride in British escapes by quoting Horace’s ‘*vixere fortes ante Agamemnona*’.¹⁰⁵ Dual narratives between sufferers and perpetrators of imprisonment led many historians to embody nations competing for the most humanitarian gestures. Such partisan discourses are, however, not

⁹⁹ Frédéric Jarrousse, *Auvergnats Malgré Eux: Prisonniers de Guerre et Déserteurs Etrangers dans le Puy-de-Dôme pendant la Révolution Française (1794-1796)* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1999); Nicole Gotteri, ‘L’Intégration des Prisonniers Ibériques dans la Société Française après 1814, d’Après les Demandes de Naturalisations’, in Caucanas, Cazals, Payen (eds), *Les Prisonniers de Guerre dans l’Histoire*, pp. 245-255.

¹⁰⁰ Annie Crépin, and Vincent Cuvilliers, ‘Le Discours Anti-Anglais des Autorités: Mythes et Réalité dans les Départements Septentrionaux’, in Philp, *Resisting Napoleon*, pp. 205-16.

¹⁰¹ Margarete Audin, ‘British Hostages in Napoleonic France: the Evidence with Particular Reference to Manufacturers and Artisans’ (M.A. dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1988); Patrick Le Carvèse, ‘Les Prisonniers Français en Grande-Bretagne de 1803 à 1814’, *Napoleonica. La Revue*, 2:8 (2010), pp. 3-29.

¹⁰² Approximately 130.000 French prisoners were sequestered in Britain.

¹⁰³ Charles Ruellan, ‘Prisonniers de Guerre Français et Anglais au XVIIIe Siècle’, *Revue de la Défense Nationale* (1946), p.646; Didier Houmeau, ‘Les Prisonniers Britanniques de Napoléon 1^{er}, 1803-1814’ (PhD thesis, Université de Tours, 2011), p. 13.

¹⁰⁴ Lloyd, *A History of Napoleonic and American prisoners*, p. 317.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Many brave men lived before Agamemnon; but all of them, unwept and unknown, are overwhelmed in endless night, because they are without a sacred bard to sing their praises’ Lewis, *Napoleon’s British captives*, pp. 15, 18, 202-54.

specific to the Napoleonic conflicts: Heather Jones noted the same tensions in her study of captivity during WW1.¹⁰⁶

Ultimately, these binary views reduce captives to being the passive victims of martial violence, which, as Felicia Yap has observed, is a problematic assumption.¹⁰⁷ Rather, she argues for a re-evaluation of the agency displayed by prisoners in shaping their detention through mutual aid and cultural activities. By revealing the captive's position as an active agent of an entangled history rather than the 'sports of war' – a trope used in memoirs to justify escapes – this thesis provides an original contribution by positioning captives as complex, living individuals in a variety of family settings. It considers captivity as an internal and external panopticon: namely a prison space that was both internalised by the captives, and externalised by the relations they maintained with their kin at home through migrations, correspondence and other forms of life-writing. This forms the basis of an appreciation of the *ad hoc* nature of detention, rather than the well-studied politics of prisoner management. As Heather Jones has argued, only such a perspective combined with a transnational approach can preclude the nation-centric and partisan pitfalls that have long tainted the study of captivity.

Transnational trajectories: methodology and sources

Despite their inherent cosmopolitan dimension, the Napoleonic Wars are often viewed through two prisms: either biographical portraits of national heroes or accounts of their campaigns.¹⁰⁸ Though valuable, these depict only one facet of a complex experience, often fettered by a 'litany of Napoleon's battles ... retell[ing] a story that has been told over and over again'.¹⁰⁹ Analysing the fate of prisoners of war can transcend these limitations by highlighting cross-national encounters during these conflicts.

Transnational history is not new; yet in the past two decades, researchers have given a new zest of life to this approach and made it shift from an 'unconnected' trend to a coherent 'establishment'

¹⁰⁶ Heather Jones, 'International or Transnational? Humanitarian Action during the First World War', *European Review of History* 16:5 (2009), pp. 697-713.

¹⁰⁷ Felicia Yap, 'Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees of the Japanese in British Asia: the Similarities and Contrasts of Experience', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 47:2 (2012), pp. 317-46.

¹⁰⁸ William Nester, *The First Global War: Britain, France, and the Fate of North America, 1756-1775* (Westport, 2000).

¹⁰⁹ Charles Esdaile, *Napoleon's Wars: an International History, 1803-1815* (London, 2008), p.xiv.

in social sciences and humanities in France, Britain, Germany and North America.¹¹⁰ Transnational history is often broadly defined as

an umbrella perspective that encompasses a number of well-established tools ... [brought together by] the conviction that historical and social processes cannot be apprehended and understood exclusively within customary, delineated spaces or containers ... [It stresses] the importance of the interaction and circulation of ideas, people, institutions or technologies across state or national boundaries and thus the entanglement and mutual influence of states, societies or cultures.¹¹¹

Without negating the concept of nation, this ‘perspective’ emerged from the limits of both methodological nationalism and comparative history.¹¹² The latter was critiqued, particularly by the proponents of ‘*histoire croisée*’ (entangled history) for a structural defect: they obscured the fact that the entities compared – peoples, societies, states – are often ‘in a state of interrelationship’ and even ‘modify one another reciprocally as a result of a relationship’.¹¹³ The space of transnational investigations has oscillated between micro- and macro-history, yet it seems that smaller scales are now favoured to differentiate the field from global history.¹¹⁴ In this thesis, I argue that these are not mutually exclusive. As a zone of forced contact, Verdun was an inclusive transnational site, which did not simply involve a Franco-British binary, but formed a nexus of local and global dynamics. Forbes’ letters are a powerful reminder that one cannot write a history of eighteenth-century Britain

¹¹⁰ Bernhard Struck, Kate Ferris and Jacques Revel, ‘Introduction: Space and Scale in Transnational History’, *The International History Review* 33:4 (2011), p. 573; Michael Miller, ‘Comparative and Cross-National History: Approaches, Differences, Problems’ in Deborah Cohen and Maura O’Connor (eds), *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (New York, 2004), pp. 115-32.

¹¹¹ ‘Transnational history is a perspective of study; it does not claim to be a specific method’. Struck, Ferris, Revel, ‘Introduction’, p. 573. This assertion does not preclude the existence of different currents, if not conflicting views, within the ‘perspective’.

¹¹² Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, ‘Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences’, *Global Networks* 2:4 (2002), pp. 301-34.

¹¹³ Dean Kostantaras, ‘Culture, Structure and Reciprocity: *Histoire Croisée* and Its Uses for the Conceptualization of the Rise and Spread of National Movements in Europe and the Atlantic World during the Age of Revolutions’, *European review of history* 20:3 (2013), pp. 385; Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, ‘Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity’, *History and Theory* 45:1 (2006), pp. 30-50.

¹¹⁴ Struck, Ferris, Revel, ‘Introduction’, p. 579; C. A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol, and Patricia Seed, ‘AHR Conversation: On Transnational History’, *American Historical Review*, 111:5 (2006), pp. 1440-64; Patricia Clavin, ‘Time, Manner, Place: Writing Modern European History in Global, Transnational and International Contexts’, *European History Quarterly* 40:4 (2010), pp. 624-40.

and France – two ‘globophagic’ powers as Gillray portrayed them – without considering their empires, and the migrations and imaginations they generated.¹¹⁵

As a recent study has shown, one of the reasons why transnational history is emerging now, in the 2010s, is ‘the fact that a generation of students, graduate students and younger historians ... is by its very training, its often multi-linguistic capabilities and through international exchanges in a way far more transnational than any generation or cohort ever before’.¹¹⁶ Living a transnational life is not new, but novel technologies make the experience ‘more immediate’: French archives are only a few hours away from a British university, and sometimes accessible from the power of a click as documents can now be perused in a digital format. Proponents of ‘*ego-histoire*’ have shown the importance of contextualising the historian’s intellectual journey and its influence on his or her writing.¹¹⁷ If the prisoner of war ‘is to be written variously’, my study offers one narrative, out of many possibilities. As a former Erasmus student, I am very much conscious that I am the product of a European system of academic exchange, which underpins my vision of history, as a discipline and as a practice. Marrying two historiographies is entrenched in my own historical perspective, which is perceptible in the sources that have been selected and used for this thesis.

This thesis draws upon a variety of manuscript and published texts, along with material and visual artefacts kept by the Verdun captives. These are now dispersed in national, local and familial collections throughout France, Britain and Canada. By considering an eclectic corpus of sources, I aim to engage with the one-sided studies mentioned above, which have relied heavily on published memoirs, state records of the country of the author and, at best, translations of those of the other nation concerned.¹¹⁸ Only Margaret Audin has attempted to compare French and British military records, yet at the cost of neglecting valuable personal and material documents.¹¹⁹ Underpinning this thesis is the assumption that it is vital to consider French and British documents in their original language, with an eye to their producers and their linguistic status, and inform their consultation with

¹¹⁵ James Gillray, ‘Plumb Pudding in Danger’ (1805). This cartoon represented Napoleon and William Pitt as dividing the world ‘pudding’ between them.

¹¹⁶ Struck, Ferris and Revel, ‘Introduction’, p. 575.

¹¹⁷ Pierre Nora (ed.) *Essais d'Ego-Histoire* (Paris, 1987).

¹¹⁸ Didier Houmeau attempted to revise Michael Lewis’s work by producing a study that only relied on French sources. The section ‘foreign sources’ in his thesis’ bibliography only contain two published items held at the British Library. Houmeau, ‘Prisonniers Britanniques de Napoléon’, pp.375-76.

¹¹⁹ Margarete Audin, ‘British Hostages in Napoleonic France: the Evidence with Particular Reference to Manufacturers and Artisans’ (M.A. dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1988).

'methodological individualism'. The precept was, for the social sciences, the result of an epistemic schism from holism, and advocated a greater attention to individual agents as instigating and reflecting broader social phenomena.¹²⁰ I used it here to highlight that captives and captors did not form monolithic or hermetically sealed groups. Rather, parole captivity constituted a 'social laboratory' where boundaries were constantly redefined by individual interactions within and between these groups.¹²¹ In the words of Peter Marshall, it is important to evade the 'historical chimera' of typicality, and it appears clear, in this thesis, that there is no such thing as a typical captive or captor.¹²² These varied documents furnished a series of connected perspectives on these individual interactions, and appreciate not only the benefits but also the limitations of each type of sources used.

Numerous official documents on Verdun are held in French and British national record offices. These archives were founded following the Revolution of 1789.¹²³ In France, documents were collated and concentrated in the Parisian *hotel de Soubise* by order of Napoleon, who transformed the building into a state repository in 1808. It is thus hardly surprising that police records on captives feature in these collections.¹²⁴ For this study, I used the F7 police series, which I read alongside published records of the French secret police and Napoleon's correspondence.¹²⁵ These provided a precious insight into the surveillance of captives and their living conditions, yet they express the bureaucratic views of subalterns obliged to report to national authorities. Their descriptions might sometimes be the fruit of interrogations, from which their captive interlocutor has been evicted. Major silences permeate these texts: corruption is tentatively hidden, and escapes are reluctantly mentioned by local commandants who fear for their career at the depot.¹²⁶ Specific files on British

¹²⁰ Geoffrey M. Hodgson, 'Meanings of Methodological Individualism', *Journal of Economic Methodology* 14:2 (2007), pp. 211-26.

¹²¹ Renaud Morieux, 'French Prisoners of War, Conflicts of Honour and Social Inversions in England, 1744-1783', *Historical Journal* 56:1 (2013), pp. 55-88.

¹²² Peter Marshall and Geoffrey Scott, *Catholic Gentry in English Society: The Throckmortons of Coughton from Reformation to Emancipation* (London, 2009), p.6.

¹²³ See Steedman, *Dust*, p. 69 ; Régis Lapasin, Sabine Meuleau, *Archives Nationales. Le Quadrilatère du Marais* (Paris, 2013) ; Claire Béchu (ed.), *Les Archives Nationales. Des Lieux pour l'Histoire de France. Bicentenaire d'Une Installation, 1808-2008* (Paris, 2008).

¹²⁴ I consulted the documents in the *hotel de Soubise* at the CARAN before the move to Pierrefitte.

¹²⁵ Ernest d'Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire, Bulletins Quotidiens Adressés par Fouché à l'Empereur, 1804-1807* (3 vols, Paris, 1908-1922) ; Ernest d'Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire, Bulletins Quotidiens Adressés par Fouché à l'Empereur, 1808-1810*, (2 vols, Paris, 1963-1964) ; Nicole Gotteri, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire, Bulletins Quotidiens Adressés par Savary à l'Empereur, 1810-1814* (7 vols, Paris, 1997).

¹²⁶ I say tentatively, because certain records, particularly account books were burnt by one of the commandants of the *dépot*, following accusations of corruption. See a letter by Massin : 'commandant Courselles a exigé de moi que je brûle un registre et autres papiers qui auraient fait connaître le montant des sommes retenues indument aux Anglais ainsi que l'emploi qu'elles ont eu', ADM-Bar, 9R2, 'Lettre trouvée au domicile de Massin, écrite et signée de sa main', Verdun, 13 July 1811.

captives and fragments of lists are also available at the military archives in Vincennes, which bears witness to a civil-military POW management. The latter stood in stark contrast with Britain's placing of military captives under the naval authority of the Transport Board, which explains the presence of other official records in the Admiralty papers held in London.¹²⁷

The Verdun municipal archives and the *archives départementales* in Bar-le-Duc contain specific boxes on the British captives, which include the depot's regulations, administrative documents, intercepted letters, bills and other donations made by landlords and descendants.¹²⁸ These were collated between the 1820s and the 1930s by the local administration and historians to glean evidence of the 3.5 million francs debt left by captives in 1814 and which contributed to diplomatic tensions until 1914. The motley nature of the collections is emblematic of the paradox of any archival system, which is 'made from selected and consciously chosen documentation from the past and also from the mad fragmentations that no one intended to preserve and that just ended up there'.¹²⁹ Outside these pre-established corpuses, I consulted the *état civil*, parish and judiciary records. There, I found stories of inter-faith marriage, birth and death. The dissolution of monasteries in the 1790s led to the creation of French municipal libraries. In Verdun, former Benedictine monks were in charge of the transition during the time of detention, and the *bibliothèque d'étude* at the episcopal palace now contains testaments of their interactions with British prisoners. Particularly, they reveal that captives borrowed books from the developing library and contributed to its inventory.¹³⁰

Local archives also hold 'ego-documents': captives' diaries, letter-books, account-books, along with copies of lists, registers, pamphlets, plays, and other textual ephemera such as ball invitations, horse race programmes and bills of exchange.¹³¹ Most of these documents travelled with prisoners following their liberation. This was the case of lists of captives which ended in the Admiralty records in London. The fact that these are in French and English suggests two things: first naval men

¹²⁷ Amongst other, see NMM, JOD/202, JOD/224/1, LES/6/7/4, WDR6, ADM 354/222/285,412; BL, MS. 15,496.20, 'A Colored Plan of the Battle of Trafalgar, Presented to Captain Gower by Capt. Dillon, Verdun, Dec. 1805', Add MS 45691-45692 Stephen Wilson correspondence at Verdun, 1803- 1830; TNA, PROB 11/1546/51, 1550/409, 1515/323, wills of prisoners of war at Verdun (1810-1813), PRO/ADM/103/468, Captain Fane, 'List of navy and Army officers, Masters of Merchant Vessels, and Detenus, 17 July 1811', ADM 30/63/13, pay lists of British prisoners of war, Verdun, 1806-1807.

¹²⁸ ADM-Bar, 9R2; AMV, uncatalogued box entitled 'Les Anglais à Verdun'.

¹²⁹ Steedman, *Dust*, p. 68.

¹³⁰ BEV, 422-2; *Catalogue of the Books Belonging to the British Subscription Library, Place de la Cathédrale* (Verdun, 1806).

¹³¹ Expression coined by Jacob Presser, see Rudolf Dekker (ed.), *Ego-Documents and History: Autobiographical Writing in Its Social Context Since the Middle Ages* (Rotterdam, 2002), pp.7-20.

smuggled registers as intelligence to bring home, secondly they wrote their own lists. The number of captives itself was an object of propaganda and dispute – the French State claiming to have more prisoners than they actually had, which led prisoners to make their own estimates. As discussed in this thesis, this was also a type of ‘writing in society’, namely a social and professional practice of listing that naval men continued ashore.¹³² I subsequently decided to read these lists as ego-documents, in unison with ships logs and manuscript diaries.

The historian is always the ‘unintended reader’ of such documents, yet this perspective nourished reflections not only about their content – *what* happened – but also the *form* and *act* of writing in detention.¹³³ As many literary scholars and historians have observed, diaries are not intentionless repositories of truth.¹³⁴ In Verdun, they had an instrumental purpose. This is suggested by the fact that capture caused a rupture to their rhythm. Moving from travel-writing and introspection, Charles Throckmorton’s journal became a socialite’s notebook, an ever-growing list of captive acquaintances and botanical notes, whilst John Maude copied and translated information from French newspapers.¹³⁵ I apprehended them differently: the first served a social network analysis, whilst the latter offered a qualitative reflection on fugitive readings. In any case, the diary was utilised by captives to make sense of detention, order its everyday and occupy time. Female voices rarely appear in these diaries, yet they feature in poems and songs penned by their male counterparts, and, most importantly, in epistolary documents.

Captives’ letters are scattered in myriad record offices in Britain. They encompass intelligence to the Admiralty and domestic correspondence with their kin at home. There is a well-studied element of performance in letter-writing, and in the case of the Verdun captives, this performance was threefold: they acted for themselves (individually and for the prisoners’ community), their addressees at home and their captors (letters could be intercepted or needed approval).¹³⁶ But this performance is now fragmentary, as the historian deals with incomplete exchanges. For instance, the Tweeddale papers at the National Library of Scotland contain the letters sent by a captive couple to

¹³² See Williams, Raymond, *Writing in Society* (London and New York, 1983).

¹³³ Steedman, *Dust*, p.74.

¹³⁴ There is a vast literature on the topic. The studies that have influenced this thesis feature in the bibliography.

¹³⁵ See chapter 5.

¹³⁶ See Rebecca Earle (ed.), *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945* (London, 1999). On letter-writing, see also Liz Stanley, *Documents of Life Revisited: Narrative and Biographical Methodology for Twenty-First Century Critical Humanism* (Aldershot, 2013).

Edinburgh, not the ones they received.¹³⁷ It is a partial, if not a one-way dialogue that reminds us that some voices have been lost. The intimacy of letter-opening observed by Terry Eagleton is incomplete and frustrating.¹³⁸ It also reminds us of the problematic nature of the place of the archives itself. As Carolyn Steedman argued, it is an oneiric space where the lone researcher visualise what is no more. Yet, in her words, ‘you find nothing in the Archive but stories caught half way through: the middle of things; discontinuities’.¹³⁹

Research is ‘a lived process’ that invites us to think outside the archival box.¹⁴⁰ During this doctoral research, I acted as a *flâneuse* and explored the streets of Verdun in search of a lost captivity. This led me to discover the existence of prisoners’ graffiti in the citadel, along with enthusiastic descendants and genealogists who hold diaries, letters and objects of Verdun detainees. Some have lately been donated to the *Musée de la Princerie*, which, by acquiring Forbes’ watercolours at recent auctions, has led me to develop a holistic analysis of prisoners’ production. Indeed, the last chapter of this thesis considers captives’ life-writing in unison with the visual and material cultures that impinged their perspective before, during and after detention. This is an original way of exploring the whole process of recording and constructing the captive experience through items such as drawings, watercolours, maps, and herbariums. Identifying the influence of these visual and material tropes upon the captives’ imaginations has enabled me to contextualise other printed materials on captivity and nuance their patriotic intentions.

With the development of postal communications and journalism, the Napoleonic Wars had a ‘heavily mediated character’ which brought the conflict home.¹⁴¹ In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising to find that the Verdun captives featured and reported, more or less directly, in the French and British press. Articles on the depot have been used in a threefold manner: first to assess the efficacy of the Continental blockade in isolating the prisoners from home (their correspondence still reached British shores through female migrations and the complicity of the locals to find new routes); secondly, to evaluate the diffusion and internalisation of patriotic tropes amongst prisoners. The *Argus*, a propagandist newspaper designed by the French government for the captives, certainly

¹³⁷ NLS, Tweeddale papers, MS. 14527/233-235.

¹³⁸ Steedman, *Dust*, p. 74

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45

¹⁴⁰ Gesa E. Kirsch and Liz Rohan (eds), *Beyond the Archives: Research As a Lived Process* (Carbondale, 2008).

¹⁴¹ Kennedy, *Narratives*, p. 7.

displeased the ‘nation of readers’ forced to display them in their captive clubs, and revealed the ideological nature of ‘a war of words and images’.¹⁴² Nevertheless, the study of a local newspaper, *Le Narrateur de la Meuse*, provides a different picture, as it offered a space of dialogue between captives and locals, and revealed a mutual curiosity beyond religious antagonisms. The mere fact that its editor had to explain the meaning of ‘John Bull’ to its readers suggests that the anti-British caricatures and pamphlets diffused in Paris in the previous decades had found little resonance at a local level.¹⁴³

Numerous memoirs – also named narratives of captivity – were published during the war and its immediate aftermath, following the eighteenth-century vogue of travel-writing.¹⁴⁴ Yet, these were writings of a particular kind, crossing the ‘military-literary divide’ to inscribe the self in war and romantic visions of History.¹⁴⁵ Their authors were mostly male civilians or naval servicemen of various ranks. Rare accounts were penned by redcoats, and only officers published their work.¹⁴⁶ Plays and pamphlets were also written by others involved in this detention, including the Verdun inhabitants and *gendarmes*. Most of these texts were partly written or completed during the time of detention, yet these documents raise the question of retrospective re-writing for publication, and the impact of editors and circulating libraries in creating a genre, that of the Napoleonic narrative of captivity and escape. Re-editions show how avidly these texts were read in Britain: Charles Sturt’s narrative, first published in 1810, was re-edited six times by the end of the year.¹⁴⁷ There was a market for these texts, which led to two editorial waves between the 1810s and 1830s and the later (re)collections of relatives until the twentieth century. The latter suggest the strong impact of readers in shaping narrations of detention, particularly as captives read each other, forging their own oblivion through intertextuality and a sentimentalisation of their Verdun lives.

A vast scholarship has highlighted the paradoxes of memoirs, a genre which utilises the *vera et pura narratio* trope for a structured and fictionalised account to pre-empt accusations from its intended readers. This is evident in captive’s narratives which aimed to justify escapes or debonair

¹⁴² Expression borrowed from Bertaud, Forrest, and Jourdan, *Napoléon, les Mots, et les Anglais*, p. 1.

¹⁴³ *Le Narrateur de la Meuse*, 3 June 1810.

¹⁴⁴ See Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing: the Self and the World* (London, 2012).

¹⁴⁵ Bell, *First Total War*, p. 29.

¹⁴⁶ This is mainly owing to the fact that they were a minority at the depot.

¹⁴⁷ Charles Sturt, *The Real State of France, in the Year 1809; with an Account of the Treatment of the Prisoners of War, and Persons Otherwise Detained in France* (London, 1810).

lives in confinement. Published memoirs are thus a different ‘confessional tool’ from the manuscript diaries.¹⁴⁸ They utilise discourses of enmity, internalise law and philosophical treaties and follow a different temporal structure.¹⁴⁹ Here, the simple yet insightful question posed by the French theorist Philippe Lejeune springs to mind: when does a diary begin and end?¹⁵⁰ In the case of published narratives of captivity, the rhythm is certainly particular: detention is rarely placed in the wider context of a life span, as is often the case with manuscripts. Rather, it commences with the pivotal moment of capture, as both a beginning and an end.¹⁵¹

As Pauline Turner Strong argues, works on POWs have ‘tended to be similar in literary form and ideological function to the narratives of captivity they interpret’.¹⁵² They have replicated the ‘event-scenarios’ Robert Doyle has identified as a central element of captive writing, through a tripartite sequence of capture, resistance and escape.¹⁵³ This resulted in the effacement of the scholarly discourse under the authority of memoirs written and published by the protagonists of the detention, thus postponing the emergence of the POW studies to the last twenty years or so.¹⁵⁴ To disentangle the study of internment from its traditional narratives, this thesis not only draws upon diverse sources but employs an eclectic thematic structure based on a metaphorical tool: the passage.

A passage

‘I don’t paint being, I paint the passage’, famously wrote Montaigne as a premise to his autobiography, inviting his readers to think of human beings less as *formed* than *forming* entities.¹⁵⁵

History – *histoire* which also includes stories in French – should thus emulate the movement of the clock if it aspires to ring true. It would be naive to conceive history in the vein of *Ulysses*, and

¹⁴⁸ There is a vast literature on the difference between memoir and diary. Here I will restrain myself to the excellent reflection on the diversity of ‘confessional tools’ in Chloë Taylor, *The Culture of Confession from Augustine to Foucault: a Genealogy of the ‘Confessing Animal’* (New York and London, 2009).

¹⁴⁹ Sometimes under the request of publishers, see chapter 7.

¹⁵⁰ Philippe Lejeune and Catherine Bogaert, *Le Journal Intime. Histoire et Anthologie* (Paris, 2003).

¹⁵¹ Alon Rachaminov, *Captivity on the Eastern Front* (Oxford and New York, 2002), p. 44-5, 146.

¹⁵² Pauline Turner Strong, *Captive Selves, Captivating Others: the Politics and Poetics of Colonial American Captivity Narratives* (Boulder, 2000), p.9.

¹⁵³ Robert Doyle, *Voices From Captivity: Interpreting the American POW Narrative* (Westbrooke, 1994).

¹⁵⁴ As Vasilis Vourkoutiotis points out, ‘the first major task of the student of ... prisoner-of-war history ... is to separate the popular [and autobiographical] works from the far fewer attempts to apply more rigorous historical assessments of the past detention.’ Vourkoutiotis, *The Prisoners of War and German High Command*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁵⁵ ‘Je ne puis assurer mon objet: il va trouble et chancelant, d’une ivresse naturelle. Je le prends en ce point, comme il est, en l’instant que je m’amuse à lui. Je ne peins pas l’être, je peins le passage: non un passage d’âge en autre, ou comme dit le peuple, de sept en sept ans, mais de jour en jour, de minute en minute. Il faut accommoder mon histoire à l’heure.’ Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, (1580) *Essais* (3 vols, Paris, 1998), III, p. 43.

attempt to replicate the evanescent seconds of human lives. The past is not there to be retrieved. As many historians have noted, this belief is entrenched in an archival ‘romance’, if not ‘fever’.¹⁵⁶ Yet, Montaigne’s comment invites us to reconsider the ‘experience’ of detention in its materiality, temporarily, spatiality, and the influences it had on the varying identities of those who lived it. By exploring the implications of past experiences for detention and its aftermath, it seems that, although periodised, captivity should not to be considered as a fixed segment of time nor a static condition.

As Joan Scott argued, the ‘evidence of experience’, as a form of knowledge gained through visual insight into a situation, is often used by historians to affirm or infirm narratives of the past, a reality beyond a contextualised praxis.¹⁵⁷ Captives *saw* detention in Verdun, and they saw its end in 1814. This makes captivity a constructed category with clear temporal contours (capture versus liberation). Yet, as Remy Cazals observed, detention is based on tensions between the ‘event’— ‘limited in time, with the war, the battle, the life or survival of the individual’, their liberation – and the *durée* – the lives and subjectivities of individuals, themselves bearers of collective memories through mind, body and language.¹⁵⁸ Historians should thus investigate this dual phenomenon, instead of leaving captives’ testimonies and their ideological tenets unquestioned.

This thesis is composed of seven chapters, which intend to deconstruct traditional narratives of captivity which so frequently describe detention as a three-staged experience (capture, confinement, liberation) by exploring neglected aspects of this imprisonment, whilst keeping tally of its chronological developments. By putting emphasis less on *being* than *becoming* a captive, this thesis situates military detention in a wider temporal framework, which includes the aftermath of 1814 and life-writing as being part of the experience. After presenting the ‘place’ of Verdun, the first chapter offers an analysis of who these prisoners were, and highlights that naval men constituted up to eighty per cent of them. What is often considered as a privileged civilian depot was in fact a naval

¹⁵⁶ Carolyn Steedman, ‘Something She Called a Fever: Michelet, Derrida, and Dust’, *The American Historical Review* 106:4 (2001), pp. 1159-80.

¹⁵⁷ Joan W. Scott, ‘The Evidence of Experience’, *Critical Inquiry* 17:4 (1991), pp. 773-97; Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*. trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, 1986), p. 203.

¹⁵⁸ ‘la question des prisonniers de guerre ... pose finalement à l'historien le problème classique, mais complexe, du rapport entre l'évènement et la durée. D'un côté, l'évènement, limité dans le temps, avec la guerre, la bataille, la vie ou la survie de l'individu ; de l'autre, la mémoire de l'évènement qui s'inscrit dans la durée, aussi bien celle de l'individu lui-même porteur d'une expérience qu'il communique à autrui par ses paroles, son être, ses écrits parfois, que celle de la collectivité ... A l'intersection de ces deux mémoires, il revient à l'historien d'étudier les phénomènes d'écart, de distorsion concernant l'image de l'autre, les stéréotypes, mais aussi l'inscription de l'évènement dans ... le souvenir collectif’. Caucanas, Cazals, Payens, *Prisonniers de Guerre dans l'Histoire*, p. 319.

gathering, which was marked by strong social fissures of rank and habitus. Despite the common claim that captives emulated a little Britain-beyond-the-seas in Verdun, the so-called ‘colony of captives’ was more a metaphor than a tangible process, revealing less a patriotic effort than the performative nature of identity abroad.

The second chapter teases out one key aspect of this performance: gender. Whilst the privileged status of parolees has often been ascribed to male and aristocratic notions of honour reclaimed by enlightened thinkers to promoted codes of ‘civilised’ conduct, the case of Verdun suggests that the presence of women amongst the sequestered British induced gendered conceptions and practices of detention. Indeed, the familial entity lay at the core of the depot’s regulations and everyday, as the French State designed it for Englishmen ‘accompanied by women and children’.¹⁵⁹ Through their migrations across the Channel or their correspondence from home, these women played an equally significant role in the development of a transnational charity network orchestrated *for* and *by* the prisoners themselves. These charitable activities are the focus of the third chapter, which is concerned with the financial, religious and regional ties of kinship that underpinned this network, and which nuance previous claims of a univocal British patriotic effort in prisoner relief.

This study engages with the idea that the concept of honour lost its substance in France with the advent of the Revolution of 1789 and mass conscription. Chapter four is dedicated to these ‘ties of honour’ and argues that parole was part of a reciprocal and *ad hoc* management of prisoners of war, tainted by gendered and military re-evaluations of *ancien regime* notions of honour and gentility. Because captivity was based on individual interactions and social antagonisms rather than national tensions, free-masonry, cosmopolitan networks and corruption blurred the line between friends and enemies in this locale. Chapter five further explores how the captives became vectors of cultural and knowledge transfers transcending religious antagonisms in their everyday interactions with the local population. Botany, medicine, science, and book exchanges with the local Benedictines enabled captive Protestants to intermingle and develop amicable relations with their Catholic counterparts.

Ideas and feelings of belonging were problematized by forced displacement. Chapter five illuminates a variety of ‘homecomings’ for captives and captors. This entails not only the prisoners’

¹⁵⁹ ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Règlement de Verdun’, December 1803.

return to the home-*land* in Britain, but what the literary scholar Franco Moretti has identified as the nineteenth-century longing for home.¹⁶⁰ This decade-long captivity left enduring marks visible in the military tourism that developed around the depot after 1814, the captivity of the heart for couples and children, and the continuation of debates about the captives' debts, up to 1914. These debts reshaped the imagination of Verdun as a 'ruined town' and prompted certain captives to chronicle their lives under the aegis of what they named the 'captive muse'. The last chapter is devoted to this muse and the emergence of a community of authors and readers. It was placed at the end of this thesis not to suggest that captivity ended in life-writing, but rather to affirm that creativity and writing formed a space where captives sought a kind of homecoming.¹⁶¹ Considering captives' life-writing and visual culture in unison offers a prism through which tropes become apparent and explain the similar vein in which historians and prisoners have chronicled this experience.

Because this captivity took place in Verdun, and because this doctoral research has been conducted in 2014, one cannot but think of the *longue durée*. On the eve of the anniversary of WWI, this captivity reveals a palimpsest memory of two 'Great War(s)'. Although it is by no means comprehensive, this thesis aims to make a historiographical claim about the symbolic place of Verdun, a town hemmed in by its position as a national '*lieu de mémoire*', whose pre-1914 history has utterly been eclipsed by the war of the trenches.¹⁶² It intends to show the fruitfulness of apprehending transnational history on a local scale, and to relocate prisoners of war within discussions of national identity, totalisation of warfare and memory between two countries recurrently, yet misleadingly, considered as two antagonistic entities. This approach throws into relief how captivity can prove not merely reflective, as Colley argued in *Captives*, but as causal of social dynamics animating two countries at war.¹⁶³ This study thus hopes to enhance our understanding of detention in a broader temporal and spatial framework by apprehending the depot as an interface, and captivity as a process. This endeavour commences with a closer look at the 'place' of Verdun and its British guests.

¹⁶⁰ Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: the Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London and New York, 2000).

¹⁶¹ Raymond Williams, *Writing in Society* (London and New York, 1983).

¹⁶² Annamaria Lasserra, 'Le Nom de Verdun Entre Réalité, Mythe et Fiction', *Mémoires et Antimémoires Littéraires au XXe Siècle: la Première Guerre Mondiale, Colloque de Cerisy-la-Salle, 2005* (2 vols, Bruxelles, 2008), I, pp. 81-105; Antoine Prost, 'Verdun', in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (3 vols, Paris, 1984-1997), II, pp.111-41.

¹⁶³ Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* (London, 2002).

A place abroad

The 'motley assemblage' of captivity

Reminiscing about his arrival at the depot in 1806, Lieutenant Richard Langton narrated his astonishment at finding a space that had 'lost the appearance of a French town'.

To a stranger, the *Grand Rue* of Verdun, at the hour of three o'clock in the afternoon, presented a curious scene. Here were carriages of various descriptions belonging to English men, others on horseback attended by their grooms; it did not seem as if we were in captivity. There were shops kept by the English, eating houses, club houses, livery stables, new rooms, and an Anglican church; the sight of the congregation issuing thence was singular ... inspir[ing]the English spectator with the idea he was once more at home.

This vivid sketch of an urban metamorphosis has been widely diffused by contemporary commentators and historians.¹ George Call's observation, in 1810, that 'Englishmen are much the same whether prisoners or at home' has led Michael Lewis to marvel at the 'remarkable English community stranded in an alien soil'.² In France, Odette Viennet and more recently Didier Houmeau have equally reused the trope of a carefree '*vie à l'anglaise*' in Verdun.³ Yet, this interest in the 'accelerated process of community-building in detention' does not keep tally of how previous

¹ Richard Langton, *Narrative of a Captivity in France from 1809 to 1814* (2 vols, Liverpool, 1836), I, p. 245. For other references to the trope of an Anglicised Verdun, see Henry Raikes (ed.), *Memoir of Vice-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton* (London, 1846), p. 189.

² Quoted in Richard Garrett, *P.O.W.: The Uncivil Face of War* (Newton Abbot, 1988), p. 67; see also Michael Arthur Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives* (London, 1962), pp. 124, 129.

³ Odette Viennet, 'Les Anglais à Verdun ou Onze Ans d'Insouciante Captivité, d'Après les Documents non Cotés des Archives Municipales et le Manuscrit 484 de la Bibliothèque de Verdun', *Recueil de Travaux et Documents de la Revue Napoléon* 4 (1944), pp. 36-43; Didier Houmeau, 'Les Prisonniers de Guerre Britanniques de Napoléon 1^{er}' (PhD thesis, Université de Tours, 2007), p. 362.

experiences shaped performances in detention, and often reduce Verdun to a void suffused by prodigal British captives.⁴

Rather, this chapter aims to relocate prisoners as complex, living individuals evolving in a variety of socio-professional settings. As a contemporary put it, Verdun constituted a ‘motley assemblage’ of civilian and military subjects, who should not be considered as a homogenous group.⁵ As Renaud Morieux has argued, eighteenth-century parole depots functioned as a ‘social laboratory, where people of different status would socialize’.⁶ Drawing on this approach, this chapter is concerned with what the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu termed the ‘place’. By shifting the focus from overarching structures to individuals, Bourdieu developed a theory of the body and space as sites of socially instilled habits.⁷ His ‘theory of practice’ relied on an appreciation of everyday activities as articulated through bodies and incorporated via education (accents, tastes, postures, comportments), which serve individuals in learning and carving out their place in society. These dispositions, termed *habitus*, enable distinctive deployment of various forms of capital. This conception of *place*-making is a cultural approach to class that has no real equivalent in the English language, despite gaining currency in cultural geography.⁸ Whilst some sociologists have insisted on the Franco-centric nature of this framework, it is my contention that Bourdieu’s combination of spatial and social positioning is appropriate for conceptualising a decade-long displacement abroad.⁹

This theory informs a twofold questioning: what did it mean to be sequestered there, in this French town, away from kin and the social milieu of navy ships, camp sites, British cities, villages and settlements in the empire? And what did it mean, in socio-cultural and economic terms, to receive in one’s streets and homes those who were meant to be the enemy? The first section will explore the oddity of the Verdun space, before investigating the affinity between captivity and tourism for the *détenus*, who polarised rather than metamorphosed the town. Reflecting on the

⁴ Historians have reproduced the prisoners’ use of the popular microcosmic genre, by painting the depot as a little Britain on French shores. This point will be developed in the chapter 7 on the ‘captive muse’.

⁵ Raikes (ed) *Memoir of Vice-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton*, p. 179.

⁶ Renaud Morieux, ‘French Prisoners of War, Conflicts of Honour, and Social Inversions in England, 1744-1783’, *Historical Journal* (2013) 56: 1, pp 55-88.

⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations* (Cambridge, 2000), pp.130-5.

⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 82. On *habitus*, see also Erica Haimes, ‘Embodied Spaces, Social Places and Bourdieu: Locating and Dislocating the Child in Family Relationships’, *Body & Society* 9:1 (2003), pp. 11-33.

⁹ Phil Hubbard and Rob Hitchin (eds), *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* (2014) (2nd edition, Los Angeles, London and New Delhi, 2011), pp. 76-81.

⁹ See Bridget Fowler, *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory: Critical Investigations* (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, 1997). See Chapter 5 for an analysis of transfers between captives and their landlords at Verdun.

common travelling experiences of all parolees, the last section will consider the sociability of naval men, who progressively formed a majority at the depot, and whose ‘wooden worlds’ were unsettled by civilians and soldiers.¹⁰



Fig.2: Devilliers, Verdun, 1830

The oddity of a place

‘We found the position of the town very pleasant, surrounded by meadows and gardens, in a cheerful plain, several branches of the Meuse flowing through it, and lying among hills both near and far’, wrote Goethe upon his arrival at Verdun in 1792.¹¹ Whilst the picturesque town (Fig.2) lent itself to contemplation and epiphany for the Romantic author, Goethe was part of a military incursion of the Prussian King into Revolutionary France, which left long-lasting scars in the area. Buildings bore the marks of a deadly siege, the commandant Beaurepaire committed suicide, leading the Revolutionaries to discard Verdun as a weak fortress with a treacherous population. After the battle of Valmy, thirty-five inhabitants, amongst whom featured young women later known as ‘the Virgins of Verdun’, were guillotined for ‘conspiring against the French people, by keeping intelligence and correspondence with the enemies of France’.¹² These events were still in the minds of the locals and

¹⁰ The expression ‘wooden world’ is borrowed from the naval historian, N.A.M. Rodger.

¹¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe's Works* (London, 1882), p. 89. Goethe's account echoes other travel guides and memoirs which insisted on the fluvial charm of the town. See René Cazin, Marguerite Chagot and Guy Frémond (eds), *Verdun* (Colmar-Ingersheim, 1973), pp. 7-14; *Almanach du Commerce de Paris, des Départements de l'Empire Français et des Principales Villes de l'Europe. An XIII* (Paris, 1905), p. 621; François Aynès, *Nouveau Dictionnaire Universel de Géographie Ancienne et Moderne* (3 vols, Paris, 1804), III, p. 325; Hyacinthe Langlois, *Itinéraire Complet de l'Empire Français, de l'Italie et des Provinces Illyriennes* (2 vols, Paris, 1812), II, p. 225.

¹² The execution took place on 26 April 1794. This episode inspired a poem by Victor Hugo in 1818 entitled ‘Les Vierges de Verdun’.

the national authorities, when hostilities were resumed a decade later, which raises one paramount question: why was Verdun chosen to host British captives?

The choice of Verdun responded to territorial, military, and socio-economic preoccupations. The location of POW depots in North-East France was embedded in evolving geographies of captivity, shifting from the sea to the land, to complicate escape and isolate detainees from seditious communication.¹³ Valenciennes, Arras, Givet, Bitche were situated on a well-defended military axis, on which Verdun was a central point, being at the crossroad of the first-class imperial road n°4 between Paris and Mainz, and the route to Luxembourg and Holland.¹⁴ Verdun was a solid stronghold designed by the Marquess of Vauban, shielded by Sedan and Montmédy to the North; Metz, Strasbourg, and Neuf Brisach to the East. This protection meant that Verdun was not attacked until 1792, when the garrison surrendered to the Prussians. As a fortified town, not only did Verdun offer protection but also the infrastructure necessary for detention: a large citadel for strict confinement, and, above all, a population accustomed to welcoming strangers into their homes. Verdun was a garrison-town, where the number of soldiers used to be considerable. Before the Prussian invasion, the army 'occupied the town' with 8000 soldiers living amongst 9000 inhabitants.¹⁵

Politics might have also influenced Napoleon's decision. Many prisoners have speculated on the zeal the *Verdunois* demonstrated in the plebiscite for making Bonaparte First Consul. This should not be taken at face value, since the election was well-known to be fraudulent. Rather, it seems that the reason why the mayor of Verdun was so eager to host prisoners was because of a local rivalry with Bar-sur-Meuse to gain control of the *prefecture* through an increased population, and most importantly, to keep a garrison to maintain the commercial prosperity of the town.¹⁶ As the *Annual Register* put it, the First Consul, 'like a politic shepherd', moved 'the pen of his bleating English

¹³ This changing geography also intended to prepare the coasts for an invasion of Britain. On the movement from the sea to the land in military and diplomatic strategy of prisoner of war management, see Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives*, p.114, and Louis Cros, *Condition et Traitement des Prisonniers de Guerre* (Montpellier, 1900).

¹⁴ Jean Tulard, *La Vie des Français sous Napoléon* (Paris, 1978), pp. 164-65; François de Dainville, Jean Tulard, *Atlas Administratif du Premier Empire, d'après l'Atlas Rédigé par Ordre du Duc de Feltre en 1812* (Paris, 1973), pp. 15, 92. See appendices for maps of the road and telegraph networks.

¹⁵ In 1792, the State decreed that that all these soldiers should be scattered everywhere and live among the locals. See Guy Frémont, 'Economie Locale et Mentalité Verdunoise au Lendemain de 1789', in Jean Coudert, Michel Parisse, Albert Ronsin, Guy Frémont, Gérard Canini and Jean Lanher (eds), *Verdun: La Société Verdunoise du XIIIe au XIXe Siècle* (Nancy, 1975), p. 93.

¹⁶ Frémont, 'Economie Locale et Mentalité Verdunoise', pp. 89, 93.

flock' to Verdun, 'well knowing that the soil [would be] enriched by their temporary residence.'¹⁷ Whilst no record of such intentions has been found in Napoleon's letters, Verdun was clearly in need of economic encouragement.¹⁸ 'Small-scale production, small profits, small wages': this seems to summarize the situation of Verdun at the arrival of the British prisoners. Its inhabitants had meagre means of subsistence: 'the ploughmen, as the winegrowers and the labourers, [were] all very poor, and [could] only provide for themselves'.¹⁹ The numerous candle makers, founders, potters, vinegar and *dragées* makers were 'little artisans hardly achieving economic subsistence'.²⁰ One thousand and three hundred inhabitants worked in the agricultural sector, which resulted in what Gérard Canini termed a 'rural urbanity'.²¹ The walls of the citadel thus artificially established the boundary between urban and rural areas: in 1810, there were sixteen cowsheds and fifteen pigsties within the town. Most of its premises were, in fact, owned by cattle dealers, butchers, bakers and former religious bodies. Overall, the population had suffered greatly during the Revolution, the Prussians having pillaged its resources, and the *Comité de Salut Public* having later levied taxes to chastise the inhabitants for their surrender.²²

Yet, the paradox of Verdun lays in the fact that in becoming a parole depot, the town no longer corresponded to the criteria that had determined its designation. The social *hiatus* between British parolees and a French population of a lower sort did not prevent them from building strong amicable ties with the inhabitants, who facilitated their daily life at the depot, as much as their correspondence and escapes.²³ Arguably, the lack of a local aristocracy in Verdun, which stood in stark contrast with Nancy, was meant to isolate them socially, culturally and perhaps ideologically.²⁴ However, the period of captivity witnessed the return of many cosmopolitan *émigrés*, who, along with local Benedictine scholars, were eager to socialise with British detainees. As will be developed in this

¹⁷ *Annual Register* quoted in John Ashton, *The Dawn of the Nineteenth Century in England: A Social Sketch of the Times* (Unwin, 1886), p. 97.

¹⁸ At the dawn of the nineteenth century, 'Verdun [was] not an industrial, but a simple town of artisans ... a world living in a somewhat lethargic, not to say, apathetic state', write Frémond. See Frémond, 'Economie Locale et Mentalité Verdunoise', p.90.

¹⁹ Frémond, 'Economie Locale et Mentalité Verdunoise', p.90.

²⁰ Canini, 'Verdun Sous la Monarchie Constitutionnelle', in Coudert, Parisse, Ronsin, Frémont, Canini and Lanher (eds), *Verdun*, pp. 101-2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 100; Frémond, 'Economie Locale et Mentalité Verdunoise', p.90.

²² André Basset, 'Les Mentalités Populaires à Verdun en l'An II', *Bulletins des Sociétés d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de la Meuse*, 10 (1973), pp. 25-35; *Almanach du Commerce de Paris*, pp. 250, 276; Frémond, 'Economie Locale et Mentalité Verdunoise', p. 90; Tulard, *La Vie des Français sous Napoléon*, pp. 19-28; Canini, 'Verdun Sous la Monarchie Constitutionnelle', pp. 101-2.

²³ See chapter 2 and 4.

²⁴ For many prisoners, Verdun did not have the charm of a bourgeois city like Metz or Nancy, 'the former capital of Lorraine and still a kind of provincial Paris', which presented more congenial surroundings for a mundane like Dillon. See John Goldworth Alger, *Napoleon's British Visitors and Captives (1801-1815)* (London, 1904), p. 195.

thesis, there was a strong tradition of book printing at Verdun, which flourished during captivity and bolstered an educated bourgeoisie comprising clergymen, magistrates, landowners, factory owners, and doctors.²⁵ Captives benefitted from their money-lending networks as much as two other dynamic sectors, which developed with their arrival: the *commerce de bouche* (confectionaries, caterers, wine merchants) and textile factories.

But Verdun was an odd choice because of its peculiar urban structure, which complicated the prisoners' surveillance. It was 'a quartered town, whose centre [was] everywhere and consequently nowhere'.²⁶ There was no ducal square, no central boulevard, as in the neighbouring towns of Charleville and Bar-sur-Ormain. Though the *Place du marché* hosted weekly markets, annual fairs were dispersed between the *place de la Roche* and the *place Sainte-Croix*, which, with the *place Chevert*, could have catalysed an urban social life, had it not been for the exiguity of their entrances and the traffic congestion created by the inn-houses. This centreless disposition had a great impact on the town's identity and the inhabitants' *mentalités*. As Canini argues, this led to a 'withdrawal of social life', which surprised travellers. One of them voiced his astonishment as to how 'at Verdun people do not stroll around and, whatever the hour, it is extremely rare to meet someone walking on the beautiful ramparts or the *Roche*'.²⁷



Fig. 3: Scharf, *Les portes de la citadelle de Verdun dessinées d'après nature*, 1811

(British Library)

²⁵ Canini, 'Verdun Sous la Monarchie Constitutionnelle', p. 100.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

The medieval gates of the town (Fig.3), through which the passage of merchants, families and captives was scrutinised by *gendarmes*, were meant to delineate the parole zone of the town. This open space of detention was paradoxical in many ways. First, it was constructed on an *ad hoc* basis, the rules of the depot (*Règlement*) being written after the arrival of the British *détenus*.²⁸ Amongst the early newcomers was John Maude, who arrived from Switzerland in July 1803. Until December 1803, he enjoyed a comfortable life, travelling to Etain and Varennes-sur-Argonne, a destination of predilection for many British eager to see where Louis XVI had been captured, and where young Maude was keen on encountering ‘the most beautiful girls’ of the locality.²⁹ He dined in good company, meeting with Madame De Staël on her way to Germany.³⁰ It was only on 2 December that prisoners were confined inside the gates, and obliged, the following week, to attend a daily roll-call named *appel*, which, owing to the structure of the town, took place in several streets before being centralised in the town hall.³¹ Yet, these were variable and permeable limitations. The day before the first order, Maude had bought a double barrel gun, which he kept for mallard shooting until April the following year, when guns were finally collected at the citadel.³² Charles Throckmorton regularly retrieved his pistols from the citadel and hired some from local farmers and *gardes champêtres*, and was allowed, on the day of signing the register for the first time, to go ‘out of the town occasionally and exempt from presenting [himself] everyday at the *Hotel de ville*’.³³ Prisoners were allowed to go outside in a perimeter of two leagues, yet gates were shut during the night for those who did not hold a passport, which offered affluent captives the right to peregrinate in the vicinity and, for scientific

²⁸ ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Règlement concernant le service de surveillance et de police à établir à l’égard des prisonniers anglais dans la ville de Verdun en exécution de l’arrêté du gouvernement 1er Frimaire An 12’.

²⁹ QCL, GB/NNAF/P144289, John Barnabas Maude, ‘Journal’, 30 August and 23 September 1803.

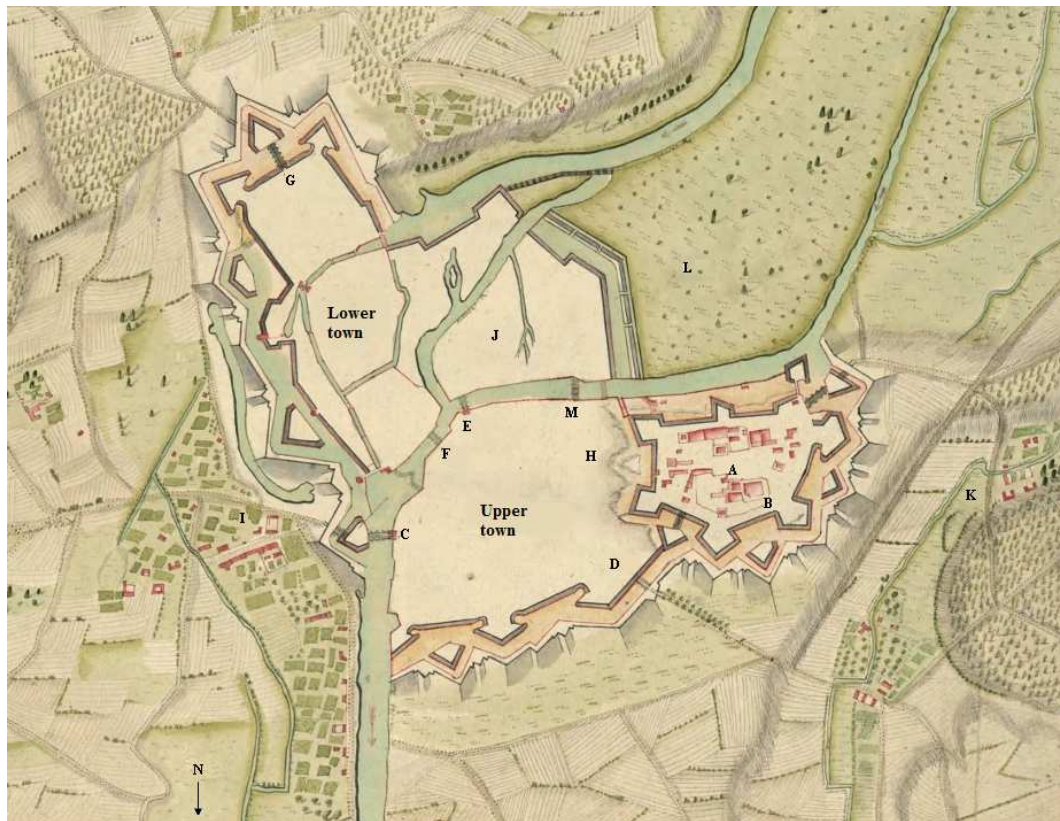
³⁰ *Ibid.*, 25 October 1803. On Madame de Stael’s passage through Verdun and involvement in relieving Spanish prisoners or war, see David Glass Larg, *Madame de Staël: la Seconde Vie (1800-1807)* (Geneva, 1974), p. 112; Michel Winock, *Madame de Staël* (Paris, 2010).

³¹ The rules of the depots stipulated that ‘pour faciliter les appels journaliers les Prisonniers d’un Arrondissement se réuniront dans celui de leurs logements qui sera le plus convenable et le plus rapproché du point centrique de chaque quartier.’ See ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Règlement concernant le service de surveillance et de police à établir à l’égard des prisonniers anglais dans la ville de Verdun en exécution de l’arrêté du gouvernement 1er Frimaire An 12’. The hours of the *appel* changed over time, see chapter 4 and QCL, GB/NNAF/P144289, John Barnabas Maude, ‘Journal’, 2 and 5 December 1803: ‘Received an order from the Commandant that in future we were prisoners and could no longer go out of the gates of the town. A General of the Gendarmerie arrived today from Paris bringing the order to the Commandant that this town had been appointed by the government as the grand depot of all English, who like ourselves have been unjustly detained prisoners in France. He says they must be here by the 1st Nivose [23 December] and that the list has contained 1200 ... Received orders from the Commandant and General Wirion that we must appear everyday at the municipality at 10 o’clock, and that we must be at home every evenings at 9 – whoever is found out in the streets after that will be put in the citadel.’

³² *Ibid.*, 1 December 1803, 5 April 1804.

³³ WRO, Charles Throckmorton Papers, CR 1998/CD/Drawer 81B, ‘Memoranda’, 16 January 1804. The *sous-préfet* complained in report to the mayor of Verdun that inhabitants provided guns to the prisoners: ‘Je vous recommande, Monsieur le maire, d’empêcher qu’aucun propriétaire se permette d’user de cette complaisance [de louer des fusils] envers les prisonniers de guerre anglais et de recommander aux gardes forestiers et champêtres d’arrêter et de conduire devant Mr le baron de Beauchesne tout anglais [sic] qu’ils trouveront chassant soit avec des lévriers soit avec des armes.’ AMV, uncatalogued file, ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, undated report from the *sous-préfet* to the mayor of Verdun.

or health purposes, reside temporarily in Tours, Melun, and Paris, despite Napoleon's efforts to evict British travellers from the capital.³⁴



- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| A: Citadel | H: La Roche, esplanade |
| B: Tour d'Angoulême | I: Faubourg du Pavé |
| C: Porte Chaussée | J: Faubourg Saint-Nicolas |
| D: Porte de France | K: Faubourg Glorieux |
| E: Porte Saint-Nicolas | L: Pré Lévêque |
| F: Porte Sainte-Croix | M: Sluice gates and water mills |
| G: Porte Saint-Victor | |

Fig.4: Map of Verdun-sur-Meuse, from a sketch by Compagnot Félicit, 1739

(Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Gallica)

Captivity did not metamorphose Verdun. Rather, it polarised it. The *Règlement* made Verdun a socially segregating space, by stipulating that 'the prisoners will have the possibility to find lodgings amongst the inhabitants, based on individual agreements and at their expense. Those who might not

³⁴ See chapter 3 and 4. In 1810, after many unsuccessful measures, Napoleon ordered all British travelers in residence in Paris to be sent back to their depot. AN, F/7/6541, 1833.

be able to afford such arrangements will be lodged in military buildings'.³⁵ The indigent captives had thus the possibility of lodging in collective dormitories in the Citadel (Fig.4) or in the barracks in the lower town, which stood in stark contrast with the 'fine individual apartment' an affluent *détenu* such as the Marchioness of Tweeddale could find amongst the local gentility.³⁶ Captivity thus deepened the gap between the wealthy residential upper town and the commercial lower town, with its insulated quarters, scattered in a watery maze of canals and branches of the river Meuse.³⁷ French local authorities in charge of the captives' surveillance established their quarters around the Cathedral, whilst Grand Tourists such as John Maude, competed for the 'best houses' around the episcopal palace, where the clubs, theatricals, balls and libraries of the captives were progressively gathered.³⁸ The occupation of these seventeenth-century 'handsome' lodgings could be arranged via the recommendations of Parisian friends and paid by the intermediacy of Perrégaux, the banker of British Grand Tourists, before arrival at Verdun.³⁹ This suggested the importance of touristic ties of British citizens used to lodging on their travels.

Dwelling-in-travelling

Conceptualising this detention as a second experience of displacement remains uncharted territory. Yet, it seems significant that all the Verdun detainees had travelled abroad, if not been captured, prior to their arrival in the town.⁴⁰ France had been a destination of interest for the four hundred *détenus* who visited the country for touristic, commercial, familial or political reasons. Whilst Renaud Morieux has called for a refined analysis of who these travellers were, the following tables

³⁵ *Les Prisonniers auront la faculté de se loger de gré à gré et à leur frais chez l'habitant. Ceux a qui leurs moyens ne permettraient pas d'user de cette faculté seront logés dans les Bâtiments militaires. Le Commandant d'Armes et le Commissaire de Guerre s'entendront pour qu'ils puissent s'y établir à leur arrivée.*. ADM-Bar, 9R2, 'Règlement', December 1803.

³⁶ Prisoners would stay for a night at the *Hotel des Trois Maures* before finding lodgings amongst the inhabitants

³⁷ Due to this concentrated wealth, the upper-town presented a picturesque sight with several luxurious seventeenth-century town-houses. As the heart of a former episcopal city, the upper town also comprised almost all the religious buildings: the episcopal palace, the cathedral, the three Benedictine abbeys and a dozen churches. The upper town had also become an administrative centre invested by the new imperial nobility, as the *sous-préfecture* was established in the episcopal palace. See Canini, 'Verdun sous la Monarchie constitutionnelle', p. 98; *Almanach du Commerce de Paris*, p. 621.

³⁸ 'Left our old lodgings, where we had been exactly six months and removed to the best house in Verdun, belonging to Mr Duroux – we occupy the ground floor, consisting of a very handsome *salle*, two very good bedrooms, cabinet, kitchen, &&&. General Rousel and his lady occupy the upper part of the house. He is Commandant of the troop in the town and Department, he was with Moreau in his famous retreat and made a general by him. We pay seven Louis a month and are to have it decidedly for three months – went this evening to a ball at the Eveché.' QCL, GB/NNAF/P144289, John Barnabas Maude, 'Journal', 6 February 1804.

³⁹ Forbes and his family 'settled in a comfortable lodging, with a physician's family, to whom [they had been] recommended from Paris'. James Forbes, *Letters from France Written in the Years 1803 and 1804, Including a Particular Account of Verdun and the Situation of the British Captives in that City* (2 vols, London, 1806) II, p. 215.

⁴⁰ See introduction about the mass arrest of 1793. This excludes the children born in detention, who developed a complicated sense of home, as will be discussed in chapter 6.

(Table 1-2) reveal that these were not merely genteel parliamentarians, as if often assumed.⁴¹ Rather, the depot gathered a ‘motley assemblage’ of young grand tourists, merchants, doctors, servants, women, children, artisans and manufacturers who, like the majority of young naval and army men who joined them after 1803, had been accustomed to ‘dwelling-in-travelling’.⁴² The expression is derived from the cultural anthropologist James Clifford, who emphasized that, although ‘everyone’s on the move, and has been for centuries ... once traveling is foregrounded as a cultural practice, then dwelling too, needs to be reconceived, [it is] no longer simply the ground from which traveling departs and to which it returns’.⁴³ In this context, the notion of ‘home’ – the English ‘home’ of Langton mentioned above – is complicated. For the Verdun prisoners, feelings and ideas of belonging were ‘traversed from outside’ by the Grand Tour, trade and military migrations, which explains the captives’ great adaptability to dwell in Verdun, to interact with the locals and recreate modes of sociability which were entrenched less in patriotism than travelling practices.⁴⁴

Category	Description	Number
Manufacturers and artisans	‘ <i>Mécaniciens</i> ’ (an elusive French category including men working in textile and pottery: master spinners, boot makers, master potters, candle makers), along with tailors jewellers, cabinet makers, horse dealers, tobacco manufacturers, carpenters, knife makers, painters, book printers and metal manufacturers (copper, tin and gold plating).	132
Aristocracy and gentry	Parliamentarians, young Travelling Gentlemen, eloped couples.	107
Professions and scholars	Ministers of religion, doctors, students of medicine and classical scholars.	75
Servants	Including two ex-soldiers working as servants for aristocrats.	62
Businessmen and traders	Mainly merchant passengers.	59
Shopkeepers	Hairdressers, long-established inn-keepers, postmasters whose usual residence was on the coast.	7
Criminals	Smugglers, swindlers, persons detained in civil prisons.	7
	Total	449

Table 1: Socio-professional categories of the British *détenus*, 1803-1814

⁴¹Renaud Morieux, *Une Mer pour Deux Royaumes: la Manche, Frontière Franco-Anglaise (XVIIe-XVIIIe Siècles)* (Rennes, 2008), p. 312.

⁴²The following quantification was based on the remarkable archival work done in Vincennes by Margaret Audin. See, Margaret Audin, ‘British Hostages in Napoleonic France: the Evidence with Particular Reference to Manufacturers and Artisans’ (M.A. dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1988).

⁴³James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Harvard, 1997), pp. 2, 44.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p.25

Type of industry	Number	Percentage
Textiles	106	54%
Leather	55	28%
Metal	13	6.5%
Potters	7	3.5%
Book printing, binding and trade	4	2%
Hatters	4	2%
Soap	3	1.5%
Buttons	2	1%
Arms and powder	2	1%
Glass	1	0.5%

Table 2: Breakdown of the industries and trade of 197 British merchants, artisans and manufacturers sequestered as *détenus*, 1803-1804

The *Grand rue*, or *rue Mazel*, which received the transnational nom-de guerre of *Bon Street* in 1804, became populated by British merchants, who resumed their commercial activities in detention. In April 1804, Rietschel, a captive tailor, opened a shop in the house he bought from Mr Avet.⁴⁵ In the following month, signs such as ‘Stuckey: Tailor and Ladies’ habit maker from London’, ‘Anderson: Grocer and tea dealer from London’ populated the street.⁴⁶ These merchants were successful amongst the captives and locals alike: in 1807, Anderson sold more than 1400 livres worth of merchandises, and shoe makers such as Outhwaite and O’Kelly took advantage of the constant flow of poorly-shod naval captives to make substantial profits of 2000 and 3000 livres respectively.⁴⁷ Most of them had a similar trajectory to Amplett, a shoe maker who had left Worcestershire for France in 1802, owing to deleterious family relations, with the ‘inten[tion] to settle there’.⁴⁸ Such professional aspirations complicated national loyalties, leading merchants such as Outhwaite to request French citizenship in 1811 and permission to reside permanently with his family in the town.⁴⁹ The rapidity with which they implanted their trade in Verdun was not only

⁴⁵ ‘J’étoit établi tailleur d’habit à Verdun depuis le mois d’avril 1804, jusqu’au mois d’octobre 1812. Mes relations étoit principalement avec des Anglais prisonniers de guerre ... Pour renseignement concernant ma résidence à Verdun, j’avais acheté une petite maison rue Mazelle de mr Avet, que je fus obligé de vendre lors de la fermeture du Continent par l’Empereur, pour payer les engagements occasionnés par les fournitures pour ses prisonniers.’ AMV, uncatalogued file ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, Letter of Rietschel to the mayor of Verdun, 17 Mai 1844.

⁴⁶ AN, F/7/3310, Letter of O’Kelly to Général Wirion, 26 August 1807.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Letter of Anderson to Général Wirion, 29 August 1807, Letter of O’Kelly to Général Wirion, 26 August 1807; Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives*, p. 32.

⁴⁸ *The Edinburgh Annual Register*, 21 August 1810.

⁴⁹ ‘J’ai l’honneur de vous dire que ce prisonnier depuis son arrivée à Verdun exerce l’état de Bottier Cordonnier en boutique et qu’il travaille avec succès. Le 22 Germinal an XII (12 Avril 1804) il a fait à la mairie de Verdun la déclaration de vouloir se fixer en

owing to their original intention to migrate, but was also facilitated by the local textile industry and haberdashers such as Houzelle, who lent money to the British tailors in his street.⁵⁰ As such, the establishments of shopkeepers ‘from London’, as their sign advertised, was not a colonisation of the Verdun space. Rather, it solidified existing networks.

This commerce bolstered varied activities orchestrated by prisoners at the depot. Through clubs, balls, theatricals and horse races, civilian captives replicated the spontaneous associative spirit they enjoyed during their Grand Tour of the Continent.⁵¹ Parole captivity was in close affinity with tourism for these *détenus*. Therefore, it is hardly surprising to see that they created five clubs in the upper town (Table 3). These clubs had various etiquettes and memberships, which despite being sometimes onerous, could also be a remedy for a lack of means, since prisoners economised on candles and firewood by spending their evenings there.⁵² Moreover, the mere fact that a club could be closed for acquiring an anti-Bonapartist book suggests that these captive clubs mirrored less the partisan societies in London than the merchant and planter clubs in the empire which, in Kenneth Morgan’s words, ‘were dining and social clubs rather than institutions with political strength’.⁵³ Most of them relied on a circulating library (Fig.5) created alongside the new *bibliothèque municipale* of Verdun.⁵⁴

France et d’y acquérir le droit de citoyen français – et ce en conformité de l’article 3 du titre 1er de la constitution française et par suite de l’autorisation de S. E. le ministre de la guerre du 30 Ventôse an XII, ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter from the *sous-préfet* to the *préfet*, Verdun, 4 July 1811, Letter from Réal to the *préfet*, Paris, 5 September 1811.

⁵⁰ Because of the river Meuse, and the hydraulic energy it provided, Verdun played host to a nascent textile industry. In 1806, there were four cotton mills that had been established between 1793 and 1803. These mills were large and dynamic, totalling 40 mule jennies, 505 spindles, and employing 276 workers, for a total production of 19 tonnes of cotton yarns in 1806. In addition to this, there were several small-sized hosiery factories, one of them producing *schakos*, the Hussards’ bonnets, which built on the town’s earlier successes in the tannery sector. Production was assured by the presence of two fulling mills (*foulons à draps*) and five water mills within the walls of the town. Yet, these small-scale productions remained marginal, with one or two workers employed in each workshop. Tanneries, on the other hand, producing chamois leather in particular, were well-established in the lower part of the town, along the river Meuse and its canals. The manpower in these traditional tanneries remained modest, with eleven factories employing twenty workers in 1812. This was a small-scale local production, as the hide essentially came from within the *département*, and the tanbark from the forests in the vicinity. During the First Empire, the production was somewhat reduced when the fabrication of ‘*cuir fort*’ (thick leather) was abandoned, due to growing competition with the factories at Malmédy.

⁵¹ Rosemary Sweet and Jeremy Black have argued that a spontaneous associative spirit lied at the core of Grand Tourists’ networks across Europe. See Jeremy Black, *The British and the Grand Tour* (London, 1985), p. 82; Rosemary Sweet, ‘British Perceptions of Italian Cities in the Long Eighteenth Century’, in Kazuhiko Kondo and Miles Taylor (eds), *British History, 1600-2000: Expansion in Perspective* (London, 2010), pp. 153-76.

⁵² ‘Several individuals who were not overburdened with cash, belonged to some club from motives of economy. They spent their mornings, noons, and nights by the side of a rousing fire, by which means they saved the expense of fuel at home, and when disposed for bed, they lighted a scrap of candle, retired to their lodgings, and in ten minutes were between their sheets.’

James Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun, or the English Detained in France* (2 vols, London, 1806), I, pp. 115-6.

⁵³ Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire: from Africa to America* (Oxford, 2007), p. 51.

⁵⁴ The connections between prisoners and former Benedictines in charge of this library will be analysed in chapter 5. *A Catalogue of Books Belonging to the British Subscription Library, Place de la Cathédrale* (Verdun, 1806).

Name	President	Number	Membership		Activities
			Conditions	Sociology	
Caron Club	Royal Navy Lieutenant Barker	120	Male members Elections by current members 6 l. per month ('only half that of the other clubs', Lawrence, <i>A Picture of Verdun</i> , I, p.97)	'young dashers', 'whist players', 'quidnuncs' and 'the steadier people of a certain age' (Ibid.)	<i>Coffee-house</i> : the club was located above the <i>Café Thiery</i> . <i>Informal homosocial mingling</i> through whist playing and conversation. <i>Balls</i> occasionally.
Episcopal palace Club	Mr and Mrs Concannon (Irish couple, faro banker and brothel keepers before capture)	50	Male and female members	Literary dilettanti, including families and bachelors	<i>Balls and card games</i> every Monday evening. <i>Literary events</i> : theatricals, impromptu poetry, outdoor readings and picnics.
Créange Club	John Campbell (<i>détenu</i> from a planter family in Jamaica)	40	Male members Access by invitation card	'the most noisy dashing young fellows in the place' (Lawrence, <i>A Picture of Verdun</i> , I, p.103)	<i>Gaming tables</i> : Parisian entrepreneur, Jean-Luc Jérôme Balby settled in the same building <i>rue de Saint Esprit, maison Créanges</i> , to run gambling at the club. <i>Dinners</i> : 6 l. per person, excluding wine, prepared by a 'first-rate cook from Paris'.
Upper Club	Mr Wilson and Mr Hurry	-	Male and female members Closed in 1807 for acquiring a seditious dictionary	Readers and map-makers	<i>Reading</i> : newspapers, maps and books. <i>Charity</i> : money collected for distressed merchants in detention.
R****s	Mr Clive, <i>détenu</i>	-	Male and female members	Captive families	<i>Charity</i> : money collected for officers of the Horse-Guards, their wives and children
German Club	Monsieur Lambert, language master	15	Informal	Language learners	<i>Weekly German lessons</i>

Table 3: List of clubs organised by prisoners in Verdun.

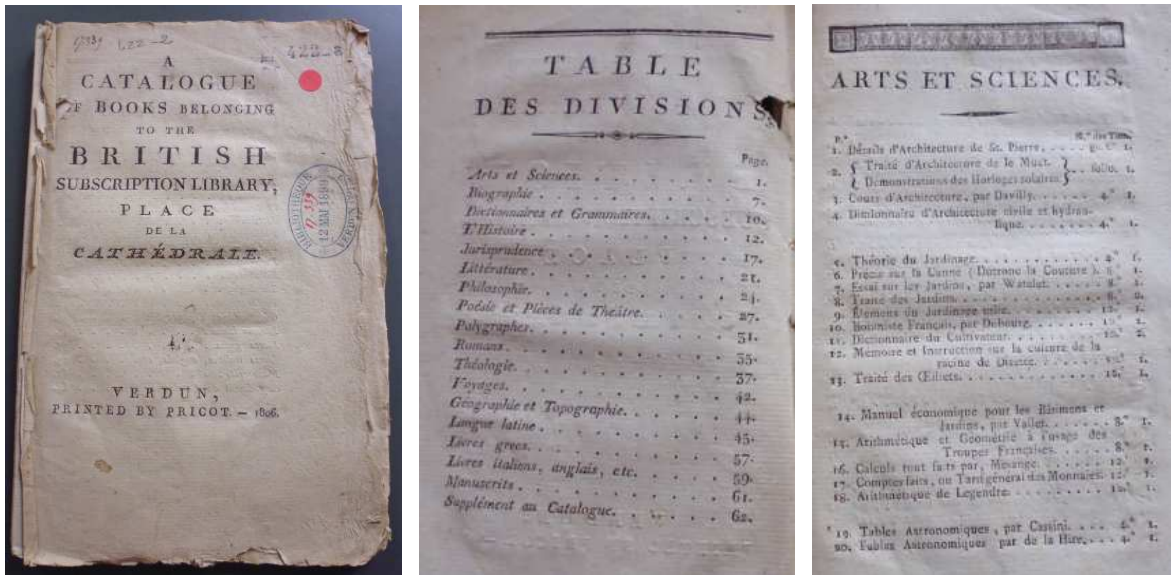


Fig.5: A Catalogue of Books Belonging to the British Subscription Library, Place de la Cathédrale, 4° (Verdun: Pricot, 1806)

As Roger Chartier noted, inventories are deceiving, since books can remain unread on the shelves of individual and collective libraries.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, however ornamental they might be, ‘books do furnish a mind’.⁵⁶ The daily lives of eighteenth-century Britons were informed by reading, and the books borrowed by library subscribers offer an entry to their intellectual and social lives. Focusing on the books themselves is not committing what Jonathan Rose named a ‘receptive fallacy’, namely trying ‘to discern the messages that a text transmits to an audience by examining the text rather than the audience’.⁵⁷ Rather, as Carolyn Steedman observes, ‘the texts themselves are ... the bridge between what was in their pages and what [historical actors] did with them’.⁵⁸ In 1806, British prisoners commissioned Pricot, a local bookseller who also published some of their own poetic works, to print a *Catalogue of Books Belonging to the British Subscription Library, Place de la Cathédrale*: sixty-three pages listing more than three thousand books borrowed from the episcopal palace, where former monks were in charge of creating a new municipal library.⁵⁹ This explains the significant number of Latin and Catholic writings in the collection (Table 4), which provides a

⁵⁵ Not all the books purchased or borrowed were consulted and influenced the lives of their owners. See Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe Between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, 1994).

⁵⁶ Carolyn Steedman, *An Everyday Life of the English Working Class: Work, Self and Sociability in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 29-53

⁵⁷ Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven and London, 2001).

⁵⁸ Steedman, *An Everyday Life*, p.29.

⁵⁹ This was published the same year as the *Captive Muse*, see chapter 7. As chapter 5 will argue, these books were lent by former enlightened Benedictines, which allowed cultural transfers to occur beyond religious antagonisms.

different picture from what has been said about the patriotic nature of British captive clubs: that they allowed prisoners to, overtly yet exclusively, express themselves as a ‘nation of readers’.⁶⁰

The catalogue is illuminating in its materiality. Its bilingualism suggests that it was also meant to be used by French borrowers. In fact, most of the books were in French (78%): 17% were in Latin, 2% in Greek, 2% in Italian and only 0.5% in English.⁶¹ The latter included two eighteenth-century collections of blank verse poetry, musing on loss and the passing of time: Edward Young’s *Night Thoughts* and James Thomson’s *Seasons*. English newspapers were also donated by the prisoners and listed in the additions to the catalogue: the *Monthly Review*, *Repertory of Arts* and *Philosophical Magazine*.⁶² It included various French and Italian translations of Newton’s physics and theology, writings of deist thinkers such as Woolston, educational and political treatises of Locke, Milton’s poetry, biographies of modern heroes such as Captain Cook and ‘famous sailors’, but also, and perhaps more surprisingly, Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, and numerous Scottish texts, particularly the works of the historian Robertson, which suggests a residual Auld Alliance in the circulation of translated print in French localities. Most of the books were published in France, Italy and Holland, ranging from Renaissance prints to current accounts of the Napoleonic campaigns.⁶³

⁶⁰ Expression borrowed from David Allan, *A Nation of Readers: The Lending Library in Georgian England* (London, 2008).

⁶¹ These figures exclude multilingual dictionaries and lexicons.

⁶² See chapter 5 on the question of ‘supplements to the catalogue’.

⁶³ The dates and places of publication are only detailed for books in Latin and Greek.

Categories and number of books of the British subscription at Verdun

(Catalogue, 1806)

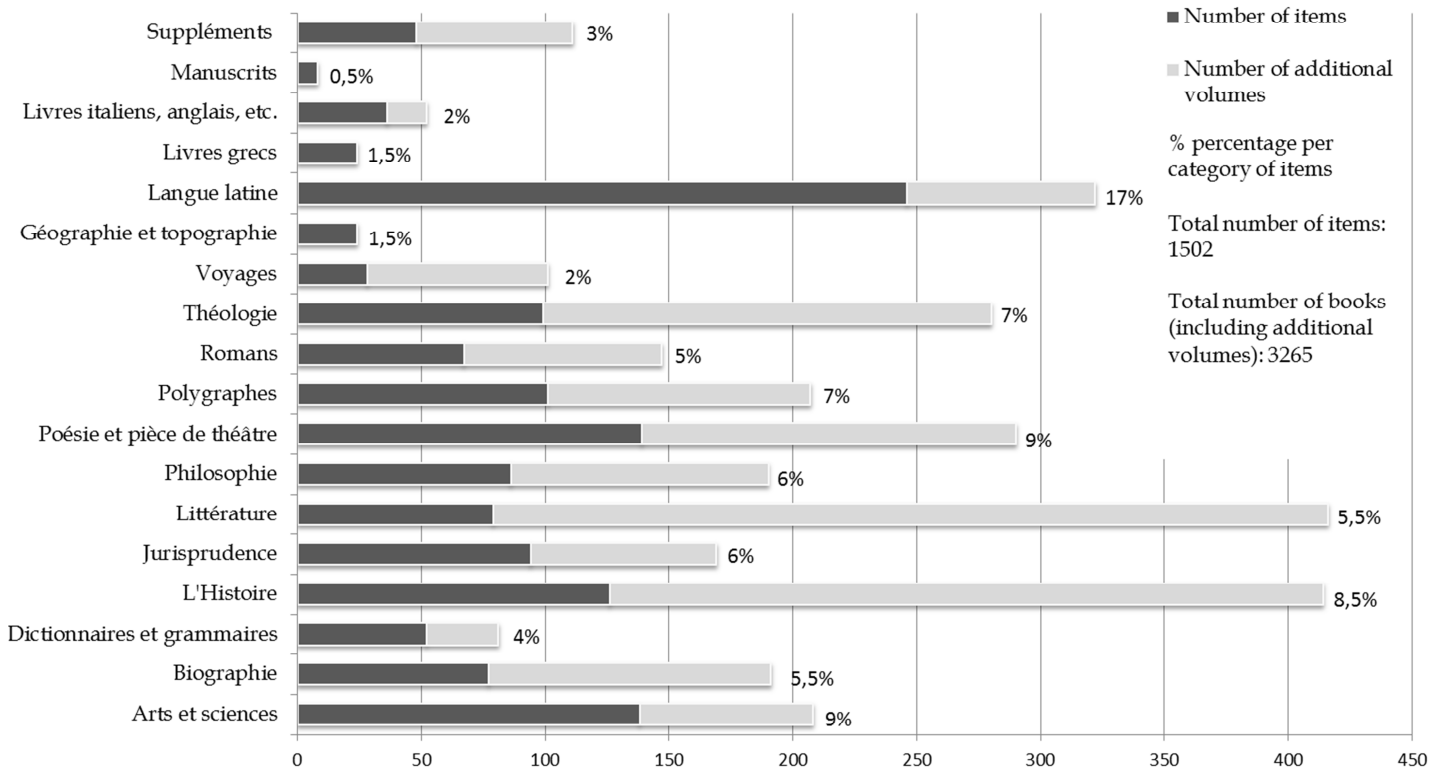


Table 4: Category and numbers of books of the British subscription at Verdun

The catalogue was a selection of books deemed meaningful for the captives, and collated in eighteen French categories.⁶⁴ This graph (Table 4) aims to highlight two realities: the variety of books as *items* per category, and the quantity available in *volumes*. Although some publications were entrenched in local concerns about Benedictine doctrine, wolf hunting and regional flora, this was a very liberal and cosmopolitan collection. Prisoners selected the works of most of the French Enlightened thinkers – Voltaire, Rousseau, Buffon, Diderot, Beaumarchais – and revolutionaries such as Mirabeau and Robespierre. They selected Italian operas and comedies, along numerous writings on female education, amongst which featured philosophical works and epistolary novels of *libertinage* and *préciosité* such as *La Princesse de Clèves* and *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, and English

⁶⁴ As will be discussed in Chapter 5, this categorisation served as the basis of the municipal library inventory. These categories included: ‘Arts and sciences’, ‘Biography’, ‘Dictionaries and grammars’, ‘History’, ‘Case law’, ‘Literature’, ‘Philosophy’, ‘Poetry and drama’, ‘Polygraphs’, ‘Novels’, ‘Theology’, ‘Travel writings’, ‘Geography and topography’, ‘Latin writings’, ‘Greek writings’, ‘Books in Italian and English etc.’, ‘Manuscripts’, ‘Additions to the catalogue’.

Bildungsroman such as *Clarissa* and *Tom Jones*.⁶⁵ On the whole, it was an eclectic collection, where the tribulations of kings and queens stood alongside the *History of Rats*.⁶⁶

The collection relied on two prominent subjects of interest derived from the captives' childhood: History and Classics. Most of the historical writings, whether plays, poems, novels or criticism, along with grammars and dictionaries suggest that prisoners aimed to cultivate a familiar set of references: a community of knowledge. There were a lot of Latin writings, the common basis of a European wide classical education of upper middle class men, to which women of the middling sort would have also had access in Britain. Cicero, Lucius, Quintilian, Seneca, Demosthenes: these authors would have been read at school by the prisoners.⁶⁷ These were read alongside the botanical and scientific work of enlightened authors, such as Samuel Auguste Tissot, whose writings were well-known and translated in Britain, and which prisoners could now peruse in their original language.⁶⁸

Captives recorded, more or less directly, their consumption of these texts, as *readers*. Charles Throckmorton, a *détenu* from Warwickshire, kept notes in his commonplace book about the botanical and travel writing he borrowed.⁶⁹ The practice of copying passages from print and examining their content by collating them in a personal notebook – in other words ‘common placing’ – was a habit inculcated in most of the men who had received anything beyond a rudimentary education.⁷⁰ Not only did they take notes, but they also translated some works, which informed their own writings.⁷¹ As will be discussed in chapter 7, the writing of their lives under the aegis of the ‘captive muse’ was influenced by the Classics and twenty-nine volumes of the *Almanach des Muses* available in the library.⁷²

⁶⁵ Amongst the texts on female emancipation featured Choderlos de Laclos. *Des Femmes et de Leur Education* (Paris, 1783).

⁶⁶ *A Catalogue of Books Belonging to the British Subscription*, p. 31

⁶⁷ Martin Lowther Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain, 1500-1900* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 38-45.

⁶⁸ On the circulation of the work of the Swiss physician Tissot in England, see Projit Bihari Mukharji, *Nationalizing the Body: The Medical Market, Print and Dakitari Medicine* (London and New York, 2011), p. 235.

⁶⁹ WRO, Charles Throckmorton Papers, CR 1998/CD/Drawer 8/12, ‘Commonplace book’, 1795-1808. A case study of Throckmorton features in chapter 5.

⁷⁰ See Carolyn Steedman, *Master and Servant: Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 61; Carolyn Steedman, *Labours Lost: Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 65-98. For discussions of modes of reading and writing during the period, see Roger Chartier (ed.), *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 1-10; Michael Mascuh, *Origins of the Individual Self: Autobiography and Self-Identity in England, 1591-1791* (Cambridge, 1997).

⁷¹ As will be developed in chapter 5, certain prisoners wrote their own simplified grammar of the French language, which were discussed in the local newspaper.

⁷² *A Catalogue of Books Belonging to the British Subscription*, pp. 30-1.

Format	Pages	Description	Height	Ratio
In-folio	4 printed pages		> 30 cm	5%
In-quarto	8 printed pages		25–30 cm	10%
In-octavo	16 printed pages		20–25 cm	23%
In-douze	24 printed pages		17,5–20 cm	46%
In-seize	32 printed pages		15-17,5 cm	12%
In-vingt-quatre	48 printed pages		13 cm	4%

Table 5: Format of the books of the British subscription at Verdun

(*Catalogue*, 1806)

One can visualize the captives’ reading world, by quantifying the formats of these books (Table 5).⁷³ These tell us something about reading practices in detention: the books were portable items that could be swiftly consulted and easily lent. They were meant to be borrowed and brought to individual lodgings in a very similar fashion to circulating libraries in Britain. It was, after all, a ‘subscription’, which meant that the library itself was less a reading space, than a commodity for commensal companionship over tea, punch and spiced wine for British and French clients.⁷⁴ Whilst Alexander Don, a Scottish civilian, praised the discussions about ‘Robertson’s best books’, the subscription did not create consensus amongst captives.⁷⁵ Revd Lee, an Oxford theologian, deplored being sequestered in

a petty town, situated at the extreme of a kingdom ... having no library but what may be comprised in a few dirty novels, historical memoirs and polemical discussions of the latter age, no society but our provincial meetings ... no conversation but what is

⁷³ Formats are consistently detailed in the catalogue, unlike places and dates of publication.

⁷⁴ See chapter 4 and 5.

⁷⁵ NAS, Papers of the Montague-Douglas-Scott Family, GD224/31/16-3, Letter from Alexander Don to Lord Dalkeith, Verdun, 6 July 1804.

accompanied by a languor of despair, the peevish selfishness of discontent or the frivolity of thoughtless and inexperienced youth. To such society I am doomed.⁷⁶

What was at stake was the absence of polite conversation amongst the ‘inexperienced’ captives, and the lack of urban refinement amongst the Verdun locals, who were less perceived through the lens of anti-French sentiments, than prejudices against provincial and juvenile naivety.⁷⁷

The mere act of publishing a catalogue reveals the importance of print culture for the continuation of social and cultural lives in detention.⁷⁸ This is perceptible in the cards and bills captives printed for their clubs, balls and the horse races, which, by being bilingual and addressed to the locals, suggest that the French were also invited to the party (Fig.6).⁷⁹ The initiative of horseracing done by hiring a field in Bras-sur-Meuse was a combined effort of civilian and military aristocrats, eager to display their habitus and wealth abroad.⁸⁰ Horse racing was not as diffused in France as it was in Britain, and was a complete novelty in Verdun.⁸¹ The emergence of Ascot, Newmarket and Epsom during the late eighteenth century led the prisoners to compare the Verdun races with such fashionable gatherings.⁸² There was a clear attempt to emulate their etiquette by advertising them in the French and British press, and collating bets at a ‘Verdun Jockey Club’, which awarded prizes such as ‘gold cups’, ‘hunter cups’ and ‘naval plates’.⁸³ These maintained socio-

⁷⁶ Parry-Wingfield, John (ed.), *Napoleon's Prisoner. A Country Parson's Ten-Year Detention in France* (Ilfracombe, 2012), p. 37.

⁷⁷ As many historians have noted, polite conversation was considered as a daily art for the upper classes during the period. Katie Halsey and Jane Slinn (eds) *The Concept and Practice of Conversation in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1688-1848* (Cambridge, 2008), Stephanie Vial, ‘The Art of Conversation’, *The Art of Musical Phrasing in the Eighteenth Century: Punctuating the Classical 'period'* (Rochester, 2008), pp. 51-6; John Mee, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community* (Oxford, 2011).

⁷⁸ The publication of these bills was enabled by the strong tradition of book printing at Verdun. Canini, ‘Verdun Sous la Monarchie Constitutionnelle’, p. 100.

⁷⁹ A printed card was necessary to access the captives’ clubs. In the café Thiery, ‘on y joue, dit-on, toute la nuit, les portes sont fermées et on n’y rentre qu’avec une carte’. See AMV, uncatalogued file, ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, Police report, 29 Nivôse an XIII. Balls invitation cards were printed, completed with the names of the guests and sent to the selected captives and local gentry families, as evidenced by the card addressed to Mademoiselle Picard (Fig.6). This ball at the Thiery Club was organised very formally by three ‘commissaires de bal’, all of whom were field army servicemen from the old nobility: Major-General Blayney from Ireland, Monsieur de Larminat an ‘old gentleman’ maréchal based in Verdun who refused to emigrate during the Revolution, and Major Choppin of the 11th Regiment of Chasseurs. This was facilitated by the educational connections of Blayney, who had trained in military academies in France and Germany, and who had thus the double benefit of bilingualism and professional ties with his captors. See Thomas Andrew Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey Through Spain and France As a Prisoner of War in the Years 1810 to 1814* (2 vols, London, 1814), II, p. 312

⁸⁰ In 1804, aristocratic *détenus* rented a field at Bras-sur-Meuse to be transformed in a race track under the aegis of Francis Charles Seymour-Conway, third marquess of Hertford and courtier, Sackville Tufon, ninth earl of Thanet, and Mr Jennings, a captive horse dealer. The first races occurred weekly from May to September 1804, and were reproduced every year. Yet, after the exchange of Lord Yarmouth in 1806, the races were less ‘followed’, as was said in the *Narrateur*, due to the bottomless debts contracted by the race-goers. The races stopped in 1810, but were reintroduced by a noble redcoat captured in Spain, Major-General Blayney, in 1812. *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 21 September 1806.

⁸¹ Forbes, *Letters from France*, II, p.277.

⁸² ‘There were bills of the races regularly printed and distributed upon the course, as at Newmarket or at Ascot’, Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, I, p. 127; see also Frederick Hoffman, *A Sailor of King George. The Journals of Captain Frederick Hoffman R.N. 1793-1814* (London, 1901), p. 238.

⁸³ *Sporting Magazine*, 12 July 1804.

economic performances of landed gentlemen during the ‘Season’, who, like Alexander Don, could continue their ‘racing concerns’ at home and abroad, on the pitch and in correspondence.⁸⁴

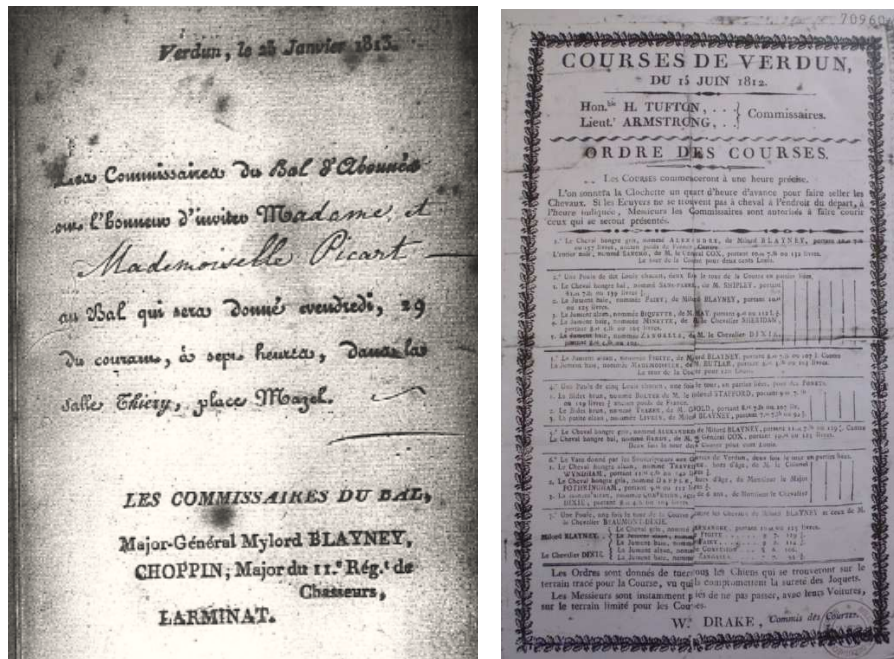


Fig. 6: Printed Ball invitation card to Mademoiselle Picart and racing bill in French

(Bibliothèque d’Etude, Verdun)

Despite the captives’ aspirations, thoroughbred ‘English racers’ were unusual at Verdun. Most of the horses came from French dealers.⁸⁵ As the war went on, the *Narrateur* even reported that mules progressively replaced horses on the racecourses, which complicates the claims of an exported Ascot.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the naming of these horses is illuminating. Sancho, Don Quichotte, Endeavour, Dupe, Timbertoe, Lodoiska: these names were less indicative of a national spirit, or a

⁸⁴ During his detention, he continued to write to Lord Dalkeith about his two horses and the competitions they should enter in his absence in the North of England. Yet, his private interests transferred to his new place of abode as he congratulated himself of the ‘very good race course’ at Verdun. In his letters, he also discussed his ‘racing concerns’ in England: ‘I know enough to see there will be no use in sending my Precipitate to run for the Pavillia Stakes, as Lord Egremont’s Hannibal is a competition, and I am told is infinitely beyond anything of his year. The Skycraper was named for the 3 grad stakes at hereafter before I left England, he has (I suppose) by this time run for them, but I have not that time to hear the event. They ought both to have been put in the Innerpal Stakes (sic.) in the North.’ NAS, Papers of the Montague-Douglas-Scott Family, GD224/31/16-3, letter from Alexander Don to Lord Dalkeith, 6 July 1804.

⁸⁵ ‘This morning arrived from Paris a famous English racer called Split Pigeon, for Mr Dendy and Kearne, it is a very fine horse, and is expected to beat all the racers here; it is a great grandson of the celebrated Eclipse. It was bought from Mr Tourton, a French gentleman, near Dijon. A large fair in the town today for horses, cattle &c.’ QCL, John Barnabas Maude, ‘Journal’; see also Blayney, *A Narrative of Forced Journey*, II, p. 286.

⁸⁶ *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 14 September 1805, 23 August 1811.

serious interest in pedigrees, than imbued with references to popular novels and plays which featured in the library.⁸⁷

The racetrack provided an outdoor stage where identities were performed, if not aped. Although most of the captives and locals had access to the racecourse through special permissions granted by the commandant, the audience was a codified gathering. Special booths, stands and carriages were hired by genteel captives with their families, and formal invitations were exchanged beforehand.⁸⁸ Bachelor captives stood apart, especially when accompanied by French sporting ladies from the *Palais Royal*.⁸⁹ Naval sub-officers had to stand along the course, which was a space of social competition and cultural distinctiveness. Midshipman Ellison regretted to be sent

to the same depot as the *detenus*, for among the latter were marquises and baronets, honorables, knights and gentlemen of fortune. Many a fellow, like the frog in the fable, ruined himself by striving to appear as big as his neighbour; for in Verdun, as in all other places each link of the chain of society was endeavouring to be on a par with that immediately above it.⁹⁰

The races enabled performances that could not have taken place at home, as evidenced by the social ascension of Green, a clerk of the Jockey Club, who was knowledgeable about horses from his former occupation as highwayman in Jamaica.⁹¹ Mr and Mrs Chambers, who had eloped to Paris in 1802, pretended to be married at the depot.⁹² Verdun, in the words of Hewson, ‘included [captives] unknown to each other ... so that whatever might have been their former standing in society ... ‘twas unknown to their fellow-lodgers, and an opportunity given of wearing the garb of integrity’.⁹³

The social antagonisms that permeated the ‘motley assemblage’ of parolee were staged in their theatricals. These reflected associative behaviours to be found elsewhere in the British empire: amateur acting was flourishing not only in Britain, but aboard ships and colonial settlements after the

⁸⁷ Lodoiska was a reference to an eighteenth-century sentimental novel by Jean-Baptiste Louvet de Couvrai. See articles of the *Argus* quoted in Paul Morand, *Mon Plaisir en Histoire* (2 vols, Paris, 1969), II, p. 47.

⁸⁸ Parry-Wingfield, *A Country Parson's Ten-Year Detention*, p. 40

⁸⁹ The question of cultural transfers affecting local prostitution will be developed in chapter 4.

⁹⁰ Prisoners had access to Lafontaine fables in the library. Seacombe Ellison, *Prison Scenes: and Narrative of Escape from France, during the Late War* (London, 1838), p. 25. A closer look at account and debt books further reveals these dynamics, as will be discussed in chapter 5.

⁹¹ Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, vol.2, p. 130.

⁹² AN, F/7/6541, 1833: Letter from ‘un ami des lois’ to the minister of Police, Paris, 19 March 1814.

⁹³ Maurice Hewson, *Escape from the French, Captain Hewson's Narrative (1803-1809)* (London, 1891), p. 68.

1780s.⁹⁴ The captives' evening plays were popular comedies from the Restoration period and the mid-eighteenth century such as Farquar's *The Beaux Stratagem*, Dryden's *Marriage à la mode*.⁹⁵ Captives could modulate the script and improvise to make the piece resonate with their current situation.⁹⁶ This was the purpose of prologues which enabled prisoners to stage their own detention, internalized these plays and used them to articulate their experience to their kin at home.⁹⁷ 'To give you a more just idea of my countrymen's foreign life', wrote Revd Lee to his cousin in 1804, I must recall to mind that inimitable piece entitled "High Life Below Stairs".⁹⁸ The following table (Table 6) is a sample of the plays attended by two civilian prisoners over sixteen months.⁹⁹

After crossing the data, comparing the dates of performances at Verdun with their first staging, along with their genres, three phenomena emerged. First, the importance of humour, which not only served what Freud termed a 'laughter remedy', but a sense of collective joke, what Karen Horna called a 'humour identity' in captivity.¹⁰⁰ Second, the prisoners invited French troupes to perform at their clubs and attended comic operas at the local theatre, which mainly staged Revolutionary and sentimental farces in vogue during the Napoleonic conflicts.¹⁰¹ The plays selected resonated with the current detention, such as *Les Dettes* (The Debts), *Le Locataire* (The Tenant), and sometimes directly portrayed life at the depot. Indeed, whilst prisoners mocked their unlucky petitions (*A Parody of the Petition*), *gendarmes* in charge of their surveillance also took up the pen to caricature captives and captors (*Le Retour de la Course*, see also *L'Anglois à Verdun*).¹⁰² Overall, the theatre formed the basis of an open but inward-looking community, where French and British participants reflected and commented on their current cohabitation.

⁹⁴ As Gillian Russell has noted, at that time, 'military and naval men also collaborated in amateur theatricals with civilian servants of the empire in places as far afield as Kingston in Jamaica, the Cape of Good Hope and Calcutta'. Gillian Russell, 'Private theatricals' in Jane Moody and Daniel O'Quinn (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre, 1730-1830* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 198; Daniel O'Quinn, *Staging Governance: Theatrical Imperialism in London, 1770-1800* (Baltimore, 2005), p. 301.

⁹⁵ Lucius Concanon had carried scripts with him to the Continent.

⁹⁶ WRO, Charles Throckmorton papers, CR 1998/CD/Folder 1/20, copy of the prologue to the *Beaux's Stratagem*, spoken by Mr Halpin, and written by Mr Concanon, Verdun, 17 April 1805.

⁹⁷ See chapters 4 and 7 on plays about captivity at Verdun.

⁹⁸ Parry-Wingfield (ed.), *Napoleon's Prisoner*, p. 30. *High Life Below Stairs* was the most famous comedy of inversion in Britain during the period.

⁹⁹ They recorded their attendances in their respective manuscript diaries. See QCL, GB/NNAF/P144289, John Barnabas Maude, 'Journal', 1803-1806; WRO, Charles Throckmorton papers, CR 1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 'Memoranda', 1802-1805.

¹⁰⁰ Sigmund Freud, 'Humor', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 9 (1928), pp. 1-6; Karen Horna, "'Stalag Happy': South African Prisoners of War during World War Two (1939-1945) and their Experience and Use of Humour", *South African Historical Journal* 63:4 (2011), pp. 537-52; Linda D. Henman, 'Humor as a Coping Mechanism: Lessons from POWs', *International Journal of Humor Research* 14:1 (2008), pp. 83-94.

¹⁰¹ On theatre in the French provinces, see Cyril Triolaire, *Le Théâtre en Province pendant le Consulat et l'Empire* (Clermont-Ferrand, 2012).

¹⁰² This will be further discussed in chapter 4

Performance at Verdun	Title of the play	Genre	First staging
November 1804	<i>The Tragedy of the Revenge</i>	Revenge play	-
	<i>Love a la Mode (or Marriage a la Mode)</i>	Restoration comedy	1673
March 1805	<i>The Tragedy of Douglas</i>	Tragedy	1756
	<i>The Lying Valet</i>	Sentimental farce	1741
April 1805	<i>The Beaux Stratagems</i>	Sentimental comedy	1707
May 1805	<i>The Revenger</i>	Jacobean revenge tragedy	1606
	<i>Miss in her Teens</i>	Sentimental farce	1747
	<i>Zanga or the Revenge</i>	Tragedy	1721
June 1805	<i>Les Dettes</i>	French comedy (<i>arriettes</i>)	1787
	<i>'Gulmore'</i>	-	-
	<i>Traité Nul</i>	French comedy	1797
	<i>Blaise et Babel</i>	Opéra comique	1791
July 1805	<i>Le Secret et la Colonie</i>	French comedy	-
	<i>Jemine [Jasmine] and Agor</i>	-	-
	<i>Le Chaudronnier de Saint-Flour</i>	Revolutionary vaudeville	1798
	<i>Le Califat de Bagdad</i>	Oriental opéra comique	1800
	<i>L'Opéra Comique</i>	-	-
	<i>Ivrogne Tout Seul</i>	French vaudeville	1804
	<i>Voyage en Poste [Les Suspects]</i>	French comedy (ariettes)	1797
	<i>Le Jaloux Malade</i>	French vaudeville	1805
	<i>Nina ou la Folle par Amour</i>	French drame lyrique	1786
	<i>'Gusmare'</i>	-	-
August 1805	<i>Trésor Supposé ou, le Danger d'Ecouter aux Portes</i>	Opéra comique	1802
	<i>Le Locataire</i>	Opéra comique	1800
	<i>Blue Beard</i>	Pantomime	1798
	<i>Le Tailleur</i>	Opera comique	-
	<i>La Fausse Magie</i>	French opera	1775
	<i>Le Tonnelier</i>	Opera comique	1761
	<i>La Folie et le Mari en Colère</i>	French vaudeville	1804
October 1805	<i>Médecin Turc</i>	Opéra comique	1803
	<i>Le Barbier de Séville</i>	French comedy	1775
	<i>La Folie et le Mari en Colère</i>	French vaudeville	1804
November 1805	<i>Médecin Turc</i>	Opera comique	1803
	<i>Lodoïska</i>	Opéra comique	1791
November 1805	<i>A Parody of the Petition Sent to the Duchess of Württemberg</i>	Comedy	1805
January 1805	<i>Madame Furioso Dance of the Rope</i>	Itinerant musical	1800s
February 1806	<i>Ma Tante Aurore</i>	Opéra bouffe	1803
	<i>L'Opéra Comique</i>	Opéra comique	-
	<i>Richard Cœur de Lion: An historical Romance</i>	English semi-opera	1786
	<i>La Jeune Mère de Famille</i>	-	-
	<i>Tableau Parlant</i>	Opéra comique	1769
	<i>Les Deux Savoyards</i>	Opéra comique	1789
March 1806	<i>Ivrogne Tout Seul</i>	French vaudeville	1804
	<i>Templiers et Frosine</i>	-	-
	<i>Henri de Bavière</i>	Opéra comique	1804
March 1806	<i>L'Anglois à Verdun</i>	Comedy by Simonet, a Verdun actor on the depot	1806

Table 6: Sample of plays attended and performed by prisoners in Verdun, 1804-1806

Animals enabled prisoners to further reflect on their conditions and find a self affirmed in their company in captivity. Whilst Lady Throckmorton sang with her pet bird in her lodgings, and naval men mused about the cats of their lost ships, the most common pets amongst prisoners were dogs.¹⁰³ Some had been acquired in England and accompanied their masters on their Grand Tour, as did Charles Sturt's dog Coco.¹⁰⁴ But they were mostly acquired in detention, by civilian and military captives alike. There, they served domestic purposes, and were a source of masculine pride to be displayed during hunting parties, particularly pointers, as these dogs were sporting dogs.¹⁰⁵ Revd Lee's letters to his cousin suggests how these canine companions allowed prisoners to contemplate, with a novel eye, their social place and interiority in displacement:

The commandant presented me with a Russian pointer, a species of dog which in this country they call a *Griffin*. I think he is one of the finest and most docile animals I have seen. I am almost sorry that I have accepted him, as at this hour it is folly to augment affection, and I am certain that I could not part with him without suffering more than one ought to do on such occasion. I can never think of England without indulging the hope that he may be present at Charlton.¹⁰⁶

Prisoners developed strong emotional bonds with their canine companions, as evidenced by their advertisements for lost dogs or dog vaccinations in the local newspaper.¹⁰⁷ Revd Lee, in particular, increasingly identified with his dog: he saw himself fulfilling episodes of the Bible in its company, and fashioned his perception of captivity with the eyes and attributes of his dog, writing in 1804 that: 'I have no alternative but to follow Dog's policy, that is to grin, shut my mouth and bear it'.¹⁰⁸ The solitary quest to find oneself in company of the dog, in the woods surrounding the depot, led him to develop his 'character' as a 'country parson'. This performance materialised upon his return to

¹⁰³ WEO, Throckmorton Papers, CR 1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 'Memoranda', November 1802-August 1805.

¹⁰⁴ See Roland G. Thorne, 'Sturt, Charles (1763-1812), of More Critchell and Brownsea Castle, Dorset', *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1790-1820* (London, 1986) [<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/sturt-charles-1763-1812>, accessed 17 July 2014]; Charles Sturt, *The Real State of France in the Year 1809, with an Account of the Treatment of Prisoners of War and Persons Otherwise Detained in France* (London, 1810).

¹⁰⁵ Hunting will be discussed in the chapter 5.

¹⁰⁶ Parry-Wingfield (ed.), *A Country Parson's Ten-Year Detention*, p. 33.

¹⁰⁷ *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 27 July 1808, 16 December 1810, 4 August 1813.

¹⁰⁸ Parry-Wingfield (ed.), *A Country Parson's Ten-Year Detention*, pp. 35-7, 48.

Charlton, when he commissioned a portrait of himself with his dog 'friend' to be displayed there (Fig.7).¹⁰⁹



Fig.7: Reinagle, *Portrait of Lancelot Charles Lee*, c.1814-1815

(Bridgeman Art Library)

Arguably, the situation of captivity, and the boredom it induced, necessitated occupying time with other Georgian sportive 'diversions'.¹¹⁰ 'Almost every species of amusement was carried on at Verdun', wrote a recoat, 'cricket, cock-fighting, push-pin, horse and donkey racing ... however manly or childish, disgraceful or noble.'¹¹¹ This depiction of an all-encompassing captive world was part of a microcosmic trope which permeated narrations of detention.¹¹² It also poses the question of the social functions of such activities. The *Narrateur* often reported on ice-skating and foot races involving 'half-naked prisoners', where endurance and masculinities were displayed to impress the audience. In Georgian Britain, partial nudity in sport was usual for men, and served to perform

¹⁰⁹ On the popularity of sporting dog paintings in Georgian country homes, see William Secord, *Dog Painting: A History of the Dog in Art* (London, 2009). French parole prisoners in Britain perceived the display of animals at Verdun as the core of a social liberty, to which gentry captives were entitled on both sides of the Channel. One of them wrote: '[Le prisonnier britannique à Verdun peut] porter son uniforme sans crainte d'être insulté, à la liberté de fêter le jour de naissance de son souverain, de boire à sa santé, à la prospérité des armes britanniques, ... d'avoir des chevaux, des chiens, aller à la chasse, aux spectacles, et se livrer à tous les amusements de son pays; enfin ... il est accueilli avec distinction par la nation la plus généreuse et la plus hospitalière d'Europe.' Colonel Lebertre, *Lettre Ecrite à l'Honorable John Wilson (Membre du Parlement, Secrétaire à l'Amirauté)*, 11 Juillet 1812 (Paris, 1815) quoted in Masson, *Les Sépulcres Flottants*, p. 28.

¹¹⁰ Denis Brailsford, *A Taste for Diversions. Sport in Georgian England* (Cambridge, 1999).

¹¹¹ Francis Glasse, *Ned Clinton; or, The Commissary; Comprising adventures and Events during the Peninsular War* (2 vols, London, 1825), I, p. 117.

¹¹² See chapter 7 for a detailed discussion of this trope.

physical skills within moral and religious boundaries.¹¹³ In the case of Verdun, it appears significant that the scantily-clad competitors were mostly naval men.¹¹⁴ As N.A.M. Rodger's analysis of the 'anatomy' of the naval 'wooden world' suggests, navigational knowledge aboard ships was judged and performed physically. Ashore, sports thus enabled naval men to display their professional skills and identity, which affected the ways in which prisoners were seen and intermingled as a group.¹¹⁵

A 'wooden world' ashore

The Napoleonic Wars marked a 'watershed in the history of warfare', as an asymmetrical conflict leading Britain to assert its position as a maritime power. This explains why naval men became predominant amongst the British captives, as they constantly flowed in Verdun (Table 7). The lists of captives available in Greenwich suggest that overall, from 1803 to 1814, naval men formed a vast majority (80%) of the male military prisoners in Verdun, and indeed the whole depot (Table 8).¹¹⁶ These were prominently represented by young petty officers (43%), including 212 midshipmen (27%).

¹¹³ Brailsford, *A Taste for Diversions*, pp. 152-1.

¹¹⁴ WRO, Charles Throckmorton Papers, CR 1998/CD/Drawer 81B, 11 April 1806, 2 June 1806; QCL, GB/NNAF/P144289, John Barnabas Maude, 'Journal', 2 June 1805.

¹¹⁵ Nicholas Andrew Martin Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean. A Naval History of Britain 1649-1815* (London, 2004), pp.487-527.

¹¹⁶ Though partial, Lieutenant Carslake's list of military captives in Verdun, available in the National Maritime Museum, seems rather accurate. The list contains seven hundred and seventy-three names of fellow captives, which he seems to have collected during his detention. He wrote a final list after his release and had it approved by 'correctors' of the Admiralty. By naming seven hundred fellow-prisoners, Carslake's list, combined with the personal records of naval cadet John Hopkinson, has hence enabled me to elaborate representative statistics. See NMM, PRN/6, officers of HM Royal Navy, prisoners of war at Verdun, 1803-13; John Hopkinson, 'Register of fellow prisoners at Verdun', quoted in Thomas Walker, *The Depot for Prisoners of War at Norman Cross, Huntingdonshire, 1796 to 1816* (London, 1913), pp. 312-341; Charles Esdaile, *Napoleon's Wars: an International History, 1803-1815* (London, 2008), p.11.

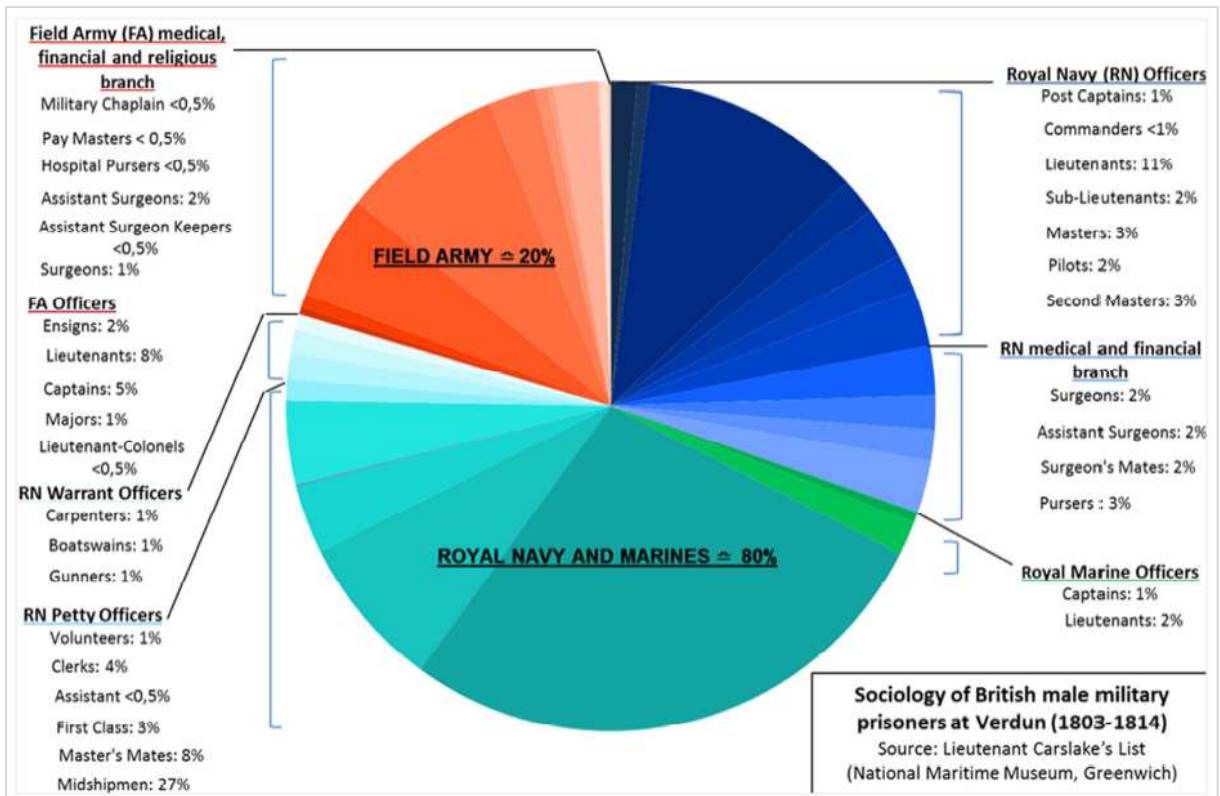


Table 7: Sociology of British male prisoners captured under arms and sequestered in Verdun, 1803-1814

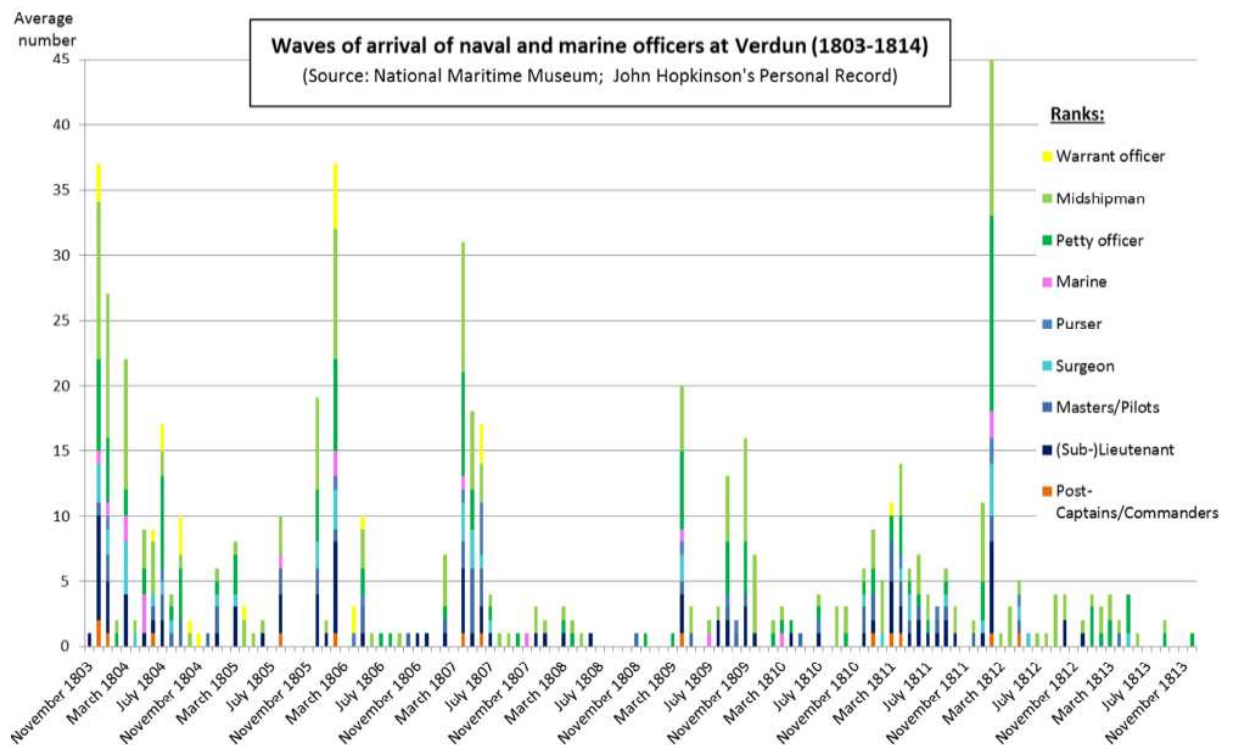


Table 8: Arrivals of naval and marine officers captured under arms and sent to Verdun, 1803-1814

'Being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned', wrote Samuel Johnson in 1773.¹¹⁷ Whilst the depiction of the Navy ship as a floating gaol was a trope in the late eighteenth century, the analogy poses a singular question: if captivity was the constant lot of naval men, how did they experience internment ashore in the hands of the enemy? How did officers navigate the separation from their men, the contrast with whom their status depended? And how did the numerical importance of naval officers impinge on the life of captive civilians and soldiers at Verdun? First, it is important to stress that RN captains and lieutenants had expectations and rules to follow in case of capture. They had to face a court-martial assessing their responsibility in the loss of the ship, which would eventually mark an ellipsis in their career. Maintenance of discipline amongst their inferiors, especially when crews were divided, was essential and stated in codes of behaviour set by the Admiralty, which they had to read for their lieutenant examination. Some internalised these regulations following the Great Mutinies of 1797.¹¹⁸ Amongst them featured Jahleel Brenton, a captain who used his own captivity as a 'case' for a disciplinary manual published at his liberation and used in naval academies, which shows that captivity *informed* as much as it was *informed by* naval codes of conduct.¹¹⁹

However, the size of the ship and the geography of capture deeply affected the ways in which, as individuals, they were to maintain order amongst the crew. Being arrested after a shipwreck in the Channel Islands or being captured at sea in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean were different experiences. In the first case, the immediate dislocation of the crew complicated the maintenance of their pay and morale, which could only materialise through letter-writing once the men were dispersed in different depots.¹²⁰ On the other hand, the weeks Captain Daniel Woodriff spent on the French vessel which captured HMS Calcutta off the coasts of Australia, gave him sufficient time to

¹¹⁷ James Boswell and John Wilson Croker, *Life of Johnson* (London, 1833), p. 367.

¹¹⁸ The 1797 Great Mutinies fundamentally altered the attitudes of officers towards their men, considered increasingly as 'a thinking set of people', which led to a wave of paternalism from the quarterdeck. See Brian Lavery, *Nelson's Navy: the Ships, Men and Organization, 1793-1815* (Annapolis, 2000); Dickinson, Harold William, *Educating the Navy: Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Education for Officers* (London, 2007).

¹¹⁹ Jahleel Brenton, *The Hope of the Navy; or, The True Source of Discipline* (London, 1839).

¹²⁰ The crews were often 'dislocated', as the French local authorities tried to separate officers from sub-officers and place the wounded under the care of local hospitals. The pay lists available in Kew and Greenwich suggest that their men's monies arrived late as a consequence, and necessitated these captains to petition the French government to obtain their transfer to their parole depot for fear of a mutiny. This also greatly depended on the religious feelings of these officers. See chapter 3 on charity.

make arrangements for his men to receive half-pay from the Admiralty, maintain their morale, and perform his status by socialising with the French captain until they reached land.¹²¹

Once landlocked in the Meuse, captains, lieutenants, midshipmen and pursers mimicked the sociability of the quarterdeck. Officers and petty officers of one crew often stuck together during the journey on land and recreated ‘messes’, as is suggested by the cohabitation of officers and midshipmen of *HMS Proserpine* in Captain Otter’s apartments in Verdun.¹²² The naming of their lodgings as ‘a mess’, a term mainly used for a military and naval context, encapsulated the extension of the maritime space ashore.¹²³ The same language was used by common sailors in fortress depots such as Givet, Sarrelibre, Bitche. And this system was reproduced in the citadel at Verdun, where naval prisoners petitioned the local administrator for the possibility of ‘messing’ together.¹²⁴ These arrangements were subject to change. The messes in question could include civilians, as and when other acquaintances were made at Verdun, as suggested by Seacombe Ellison, who wrote:

My passenger, P. Boys, Dr Crigan (of late HMS Shannon, now a rector ... with myself agreed to mess together, and took the lower part of a house, containing a sitting-room, and two bed-rooms ... The time passed pleasantly, but at the time of eight months we broke up the mess, dissatisfied with our way of life ... I met Thomas Cecil and though we were of very different dispositions, we formed a friendship which continued until death. We took lodgings in the same house, and lived very happy together.¹²⁵

Whilst this was an expansion in the ‘same house’, other prisoners changed lodgings, depending on the flow of naval prisoners ebbing to the town. Owing to educational and family networks, captivity could be the theatre of many reunions for sailors. This was certainly the case of James Hyslop, a Scottish purser, who contrived to find lodgings with a brother of a friend named Bell in

¹²¹ The men in question fared rather well: ‘In your last you said you did not wish to write often for the postage, not knowing how I was off for money. I am happy to say I am very well off in that respect, as the Admiralty has given permission to all the Officers whilst prisoners to draw their personal pay, and that together with the French pay does pretty well’. Dorothy Booth Hyslop (ed.), *Shepherd, Sailor and Survivor: the Life and Letters of James Hyslop, RN, 1764-1853* (Inverness, 2010), p. 86.

¹²² Edward Proudfoot Montagu, *The Personal Narrative of the Escape of Edward Proudfoot Montagu: an English Prisoner of War, from the Citadel of Verdun* (London, 1849), p. 12

¹²³ ‘mess, n.1’. Oxford English Dictionary Online. [<http://0-www.oed.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/Entry/117092?rskkey=XSXqLN&result=1&isAdvanced=false>, accessed 3 February 2014].

¹²⁴ George Vernon Jackson, ‘“Damn’em, Jackson, They’ve Spoilt My Dancing” 1809-1812’, in Dean King (ed.), *Every Man Will Do His Duty. An Anthology of First-Hand Accounts from the Age of Nelson 1793-1815* (London, 1997), p. 280.

¹²⁵ Seacombe Ellison, *Prison scenes: and Narrative of Escape from France, during the Late War* (London, 1838), pp. 18-9.

Scotland, also serving in the Navy.¹²⁶ Similarly, midshipman Maurice Hewson, for whom Verdun was a second experience of detention, reunited with his ‘cousin Lieutenant Thomas Crosdale of the Navy’ and ‘an old schoolfellow Mr. Christopher Tuthill’. ‘With him and Mr. Thorley his shipmate’, wrote Hewson, ‘I now joined in a mess, substituting one of my honest Captain’s Dartmouth friends in my place who had just arrived.’¹²⁷ The ‘substitution’ process shows the well-regulated nature of the lodgings networks of naval captains at the depot. It also shows that captivity proved to be a catalyst, forging or eroding bonds between companions in misfortune. Indeed, some naval lieutenants decided to extricate themselves from previous connections and immerse themselves in a French family, as was the case of Edward Proudfoot Montagu, who ‘having a great desire to obtain a correct knowledge of the French language, [decided] to associate little with [his] own countrymen’.¹²⁸ The last example suggests the agency developed by these captives, which also manifested itself in the way they used their time away from their maritime everyday.

The mess was a space where social status could be performed. In the early years, before French lodgers raised the prices of rents, captivity offered better conditions of living than Royal Navy vessels. Renting civilian houses at Verdun enabled midshipmen to further assert their status as gentlemen through material comfort, and above all, through food.¹²⁹ Maurice Hewson, for instance, was pleased to secure cultural and material facilities that would distinguish him, especially from members of the merchant service.

We had our dinners sent to us from a *Traiteur* [caterer], under covers, for the small sum of fifteen sous each, and lived really very comfortably. We had a French master to attend us, and learning French was the order of the day. In these economic habits of life I found I could support myself with respect for Thirty Pounds a-year with the addition of Twenty Eight *Livres* allowed us by the French government.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ ‘Mr Bell and I lodge both in one house ... When you see or write to Mr Bell you may let him know is brother is very well’. Hyslop Booth (ed) *Shepherd, Sailor and Survivor*, p. 66.

¹²⁷ Hewson, *Escape from the French*, p. 66.

¹²⁸ Proudfoot Montagu, *Personal Narrative*, p. 12.

¹²⁹ Prices increased from 30 to 300 francs per month. The question will be explored in greater depth in chapter 4.

¹³⁰ Hewson, *Escape from the French*, p. 66.

On the other hand, for masters of merchantmen surviving on ‘small savings in England’,

‘twas only by living four in a double-bedded room which served at same time as kitchen, going to market each time in his turn, that they were enabled to exist, and even with all this management, it did not suffice to clothe them.¹³¹

Naval men on half pay acted as off-duty officers: they had more space, therefore more privacy, even servants, and could develop their cultural capital by the study of French. The use of certain games, such as chess, further affirmed their distinction from ‘low company [where] habits of drinking and gambling were contracted’.¹³² Objects are often left aside in studies of inter-group dynamics amongst prisoners.¹³³ However, material culture offers a precious insight into modes of sociability in Napoleonic captivity. Indeed, it seems significant that Lieutenant-colonel Philip populated his room with statuettes of Cook, which were crafted for him by Italian merchants in Verdun. He had been in Hawaii when the explorer was killed, and used his lodgings to articulate previous experiences to his fellow captives.¹³⁴ These figurines were the ‘little things’ that Carolyn Steedman identified as ‘ways of dreaming, or imagining *yourself* ... in new ways’, and in this case, it served to relocate the witnessing of a historical event into one’s own individual new trajectory in captivity.¹³⁵ A case study of the chess set kept by a naval prisoner of war at Verdun, Lieutenant William Hamilton, provides further insight into the social and cultural ‘process’ underpinning these objects.¹³⁶

¹³¹ Ibid, pp. 66-7.

¹³² Ibid., pp. 66-7.

¹³³ Despite the emerging interest in the ‘significance of objects’ amongst historians and archaeologists of captivity, little attention has been paid to these objects used and sometimes crafted by naval prisoners of war during the period. Only Clive Lloyds’s popular history compendia has attempted to contextualise the various ship models, spinning jennies and game-boxes made and sold by Napoleonic French captives in Britain, yet without a real engagement with the parameters of their uses before and during captivity. See Gilly Carr and Harold Mytum (eds), *Cultural Heritage and Prisoners of War. Creativity Behind Barbed Wire* (London, 2012); Gilly Caar and Harold Mytum (eds), *Prisoners of War. Archaeology, Memory, and Heritage of 19th- and 20th-Century Mass Internment* (London, 2013); Gillian Caar, *Legacies of Occupation. Heritage, Memory and Archaeology in the Channel Islands* (London, 2013); Clive Lloyd, *The Arts and Crafts of Napoleonic and American Prisoners of War 1756-1816* (London, 2007), pp. 193-222.

¹³⁴ See Léon Monnier, *Les Anglais à Verdun ou l’Art de ne pas Payer Ses Dettes* (Bar-le-Duc, 1933), pp. 19-34.

¹³⁵ Carolyn Steedman, ‘Englishness, Clothes and Little Things: Towards a Political Economy of the Corset’ in Christopher Breward, Becky Conekin, and Caroline Cox (eds), *The Englishness of English Dress* (Oxford, 2002), p.36.

¹³⁶ Igor Kopytoff’s , ‘The Cultural Biography of Things’, in Arjun Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 64-91.



Fig. 8: Chess set used by William Hamilton whilst a prisoner at Verdun

(Musée de la Princerie, Verdun)

This is a complete chess set (Fig.8), containing thirty-two pieces carved in ivory and ebony.¹³⁷ Its features are unmistakably English: it has all markers of the eighteenth-century ‘English Washington’ pattern, particularly apparent in the urn-like necks and bases, and the bent horse heads. Faint marks of attrition can be seen on certain pieces, which suggest that the game was played and had not a mere ornamental function. This is confirmed by the attributes of the relatively small wooden box – where the pieces fitted loosely on a velum inner cover – and which is the most ‘telling’ and ‘biographical’ part of the object.¹³⁸ Indeed, the dimensions of the box – twenty-three by twelve centimeters – and its simple but delicate design with a spiralling line framing the edges, reveal that this portable object was meant to be used not only as a recreational but as an economic resource whilst travelling. As opposed to plain workmanship usually kept in little bags, the set had a lock which served to protect

¹³⁷ This object donated to the *Musée de la Princerie* by a descendant in 2006. MPV, Hamilton Papers, 2006.0.25.3, Chess set of William Hamilton.

¹³⁸ See Janet Hoskins, *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People's Lives* (London, 1998).

what was a valuable piece for its owner, as confirmed by a brief manuscript note written by William Hamilton and pasted underneath the box. This illuminates the genealogy of the box, namely its trajectory from the hands of a ‘friend’ at the depot (presumably a captive, given the English style of the piece) to his own family once liberated, and which reads: ‘I leave this chessmen to my nephew Boyd Hamilton. They were returned by a friend at Verdun & given to his Grand Father by the same power [*sic*] to be sold.’

This note unravels the familial and friendship connections tied in this box, and the ways in which, by being exchanged and appropriated by captives, objects anchored the practice of playing in previous domestic and professional settings. Whilst chess was a popular game amongst French captives ‘to while the time away’, it was equally popular amongst British captives, civilians, field army and navy servicemen alike. In fortress depots, ‘frequent parties at chess [were] a great source of relief and relaxation’.¹³⁹ Yet, in the parole depot of Verdun, it had another meaning for naval captives, as it reproduced a favourite pass-time of off-duty officers.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, the exchange of these ‘little things’ through familial legacy, and which functioned as tokens of friendship, long-lastingly solidified bounds between the captive upper deck. For instance, Seacome Ellison, received a ‘snuff-box, a parting present from poor Cecil’ which was given to him by another common naval friend Innis at Verdun. The object was cherished by Ellison, who kept it ‘on [his] table’ as testament to their captive mess whilst writing his memoirs in the 1830s.¹⁴¹

Outside the messes, naval captives organised a collective life through dinners and balls on Saint-George day for the King’s sailors.¹⁴² In 1804, Maude wrote in his diary having been ‘admitted today and dined with a naval society that dine every Wednesday in the country, of which Capt. Brenton and Gower are members’.¹⁴³ They gave special trophies for the horse races, as exemplified by the ‘navy plate ... won by Mr Don’s horse’ in 1806.¹⁴⁴ Depending on their rank, they participated in the captive Grand Tourists’ amusement in different ways. ‘At the first formation of the depot we had racing the first week of every month’, wrote a midshipman; ‘this was a fine amusement for the light-

¹³⁹ See Francis Abell, *Prisoners of War in Britain 1756-1815* (Oxford, 1914), p. 424.

¹⁴⁰ See Nicholas Blake and Richard Lawrence, *The Illustrated Companion to Nelson's Navy* (London, 2005), p. 113.

¹⁴¹ Ellison, *Prison Scenes*, p. 50.

¹⁴² QCL, GB/NNAF/P144289, John Barnabas Maude, ‘Journal’, 4 June 1805.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 20 April and 1 August 1804.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 13 August 1805.

heeled Mids riding jockeys.’¹⁴⁵ Whilst officers designed trophies, the young midshipmen were thus on the racetrack, seeking patronage from genteel civilians in the assembly. As Sam Cavell recently argued, seeking patronage was essential for this class of sailors loosely defined as ‘young gentlemen’ whose sole ambition was to obtain commissioned rank, a project endangered by capture.¹⁴⁶

Naval captives used the space of detention not only for recreational but also for professional purposes. As will be developed in chapter 7, listing fellow prisoners and drawing maps of Verdun were an integral part of the continuation of professional practices ashore.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, whilst Verdun was as far away from salt water as to hinder any attempt at escape, its watery nature – with its myriad canals and locks – was exploited by sailors. In particular, their locus of activity shifted to the local river, the Meuse, which, in absence of the sea, became a site of exploration, inspiration and writing. Shuldham Molyneux practiced his navigational skills on the river and invented an ice-sailing boat, much to the dismay of both the local inhabitants and the fish.¹⁴⁸ The *Narrateur* reported on various ‘*inventions nautiques des Anglais*’ in 1813.¹⁴⁹ Other prisoners read about rivers and seas, such as James Kingston Tuckey, who prepared a four-volume compendium of maritime geography and develop an interest in the river Congo that would ensure his future career as a commissioned explorer.¹⁵⁰ Finally, two schools were opened by senior captives along the Meuse to perfect navigational skills and enabled midshipmen to take the lieutenant examination.¹⁵¹ In these schools, young non-commissioned naval men

were taught to read, write, go through the highest rules in arithmetic, navigation ...
construct charts and maps, and work at the practical part of their profession, as far
as it can be learned from the form of a vessel, which had been admirably rigged for

¹⁴⁵ Hewson, *Escape from the French*, p. 72.

¹⁴⁶ See Sam Cavell, *Midshipmen and Quarterdeck Boys in the British Navy, 1771-1831* (London, 2012); Gregory Fremont-Barnes, *Nelson's Officers and Midshipmen* (New York, 2009).

¹⁴⁷ See chapter 7 on the ‘captive muse’.

¹⁴⁸ Léon Renard, *L'Art Naval* (3rd ed., Paris, 1873), pp. 254-58; Laetitia Maynard Elton, *Locks, Bolts and Bars: Stories of Prisoners in the French Wars 1759-1814* (London, 1945), p. 234; John Goldworth Alger, *Napoleon's British Visitors and Captives (1801-1815)* (London, 1904), p. 201; Edward Fraser, *Napoleon the Gaoler, Personal Experiences and Adventures of British Sailors and Soldiers during the Great Captivity* (London, 1914), p. 44.

¹⁴⁹ *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 5 September 1813.

¹⁵⁰ See chapter 6 on ‘homecomings’.

¹⁵¹ I will return to these schools later as they were funded by a complex charity network that turned senior officers into ‘jailors of their own men’. See chapter 3 on charity.

that purpose ... The immediate results arising from this employability of their time were beneficial to [what] they might hope to experience in their future prospects.¹⁵²

Social mobility in the service, via prize money, led to ambiguous views about the ‘place’ of naval officers in British society.¹⁵³ In detention, however, they seemed to have earned the general approval of *détenus* particularly clergymen, with whom they might have been educated (such was the case of Reverend Lee and Sir Thomas Lavie, two Winchester college fellows who messed together at Verdun) and organized charity at the depot.¹⁵⁴ Writing to his cousin about the education of his son Harry, Revd Lee praised the practical knowledge displayed by Captains Gander and Brenton at Verdun, both being well-versed in French, Spanish and Swedish. This led him to reconsider his views on classical education and advise Harry ‘not to waste his time in learning Latin or Greek’, were he ‘decidedly for the sea’.¹⁵⁵

However, ‘British seamen of the period had a strong sense of their own identity ... They were tempted to regard landsmen as an inferior species, and used markers of dress, bearing and language to set their own world apart’.¹⁵⁶ This was felt by army captives, who nurtured strong views about their naval fellows. Major-General Blayney considered that midshipmen ‘presented a singular and not unmeaning sight, from the bizarrerie of their costumes and equipage, which gave ... the appearance of a masquerade ... These young gentlemen, to use one of their phrases, “were up to everything” ... few were without French female companion, many of whom had made great progress in plain English ... having perfectly at command the choicest selection of sailors’ oaths and cant sayings, which they applied in the slang stile, and with a tone and manner as if they had received their education at the back of the Point at Portsmouth.’¹⁵⁷ Down the social ladder, Francis Glasse, a redcoat writing under the penname of Ned Clinton, mocked the lingo and naivety of his new naval

¹⁵² Raikes (ed.), *Memoir of Vice-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton*, p. 231. A closer look at naval regulations reveal that naval trainings did occur on tidal rivers at that time, especially for officers like Nelson who practiced on the Thames or in port cities before engaging at sea. See *Rules and Regulations of the Maritime School, on the Banks of the Thames, near London* (London, 1781); Colin White (ed.) *Nelson, the New Letters* (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 125.

¹⁵³ The naval characters who populated Jane Austen’s novels suggest that the Royal Navy – although it became an increasingly popular career prospect for landed classes yearning for prize fortunes and a ‘social virtue’ that would distinguish them from aristocrats – was a source of various debate and myths in the early nineteenth century. In *Persuasion*, she portrayed an aristocrat, Sir Walter, as objecting to the Navy ‘as being the means of bringing persons of obscure birth into undue distinction.’ Margarette Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy: British Sea Power, 1750-1815* (Aldershot, 2002), pp. 3-4, 115; see also Brian Southam, *Jane Austen and the Navy* (London, 2000).

¹⁵⁴ This was also impinged by the revival of the blue lights in the Navy, see chapter 3 on charity.

¹⁵⁵ Parry-Wingfield, *A Country Parson’s Ten Year Detention*, pp. 42, 76.

¹⁵⁶ Lincoln, *Representing the Navy*, p. 9.

¹⁵⁷ As Margarette Lincoln noted, this rivalry was based on social promotion and the acquisition of land from prize money. Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy*, p.4; Andrew Thomas Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey*, II, pp. 284-5.

roommate at depot. ‘The worthy tar reason[s] for a considerable time’, he wrote, ‘seasoning his language with a variety of sea expressions extremely entertaining ... [his] ignorance of everything beyond nautical affairs, and sea-port towns, [makes] it impossible [for him to be] acquainted with the pride [and] affectation ... of his country-people’.¹⁵⁸ Overall, the arrival of these opinionated redcoats during the Peninsular War (Table 9) destabilised the social place sailors had carved for themselves in Verdun.

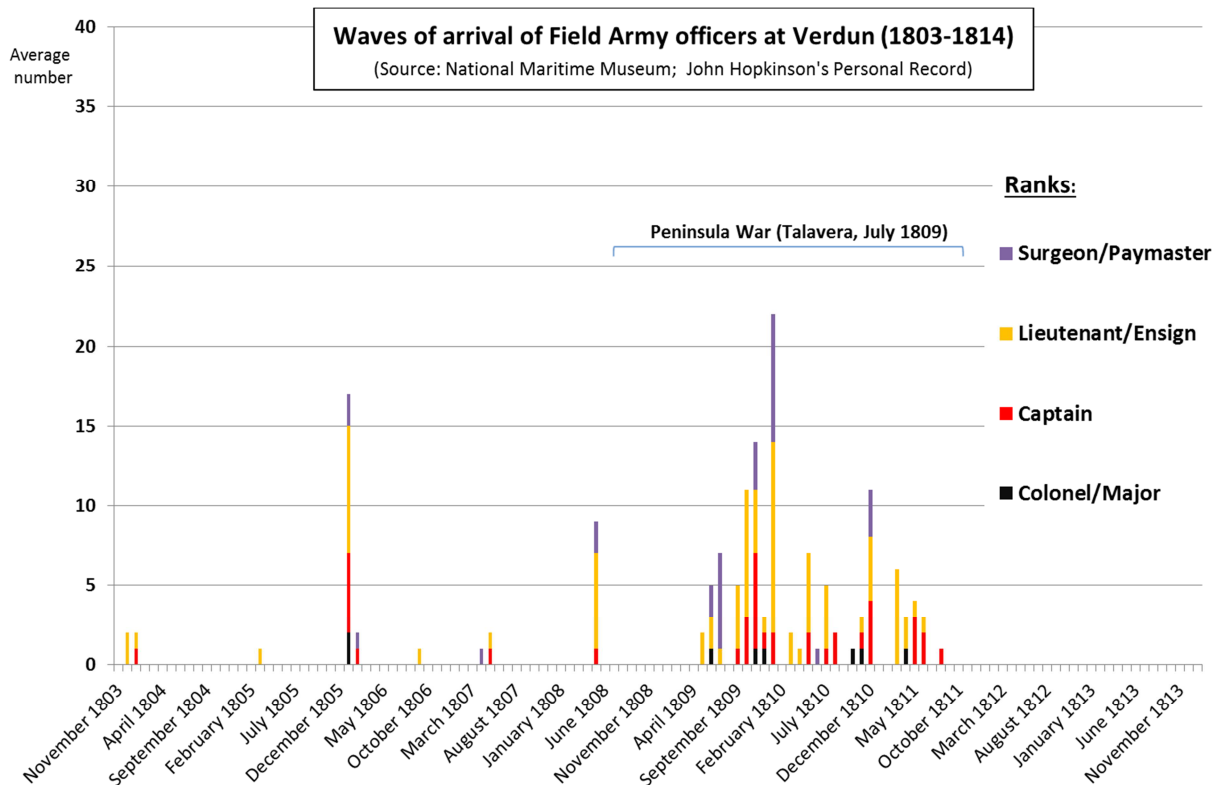


Table 9: Arrivals of army officers at Verdun, 1803-1814

Unstable places

Catriona Kennedy argued that during the Napoleonic wars, ‘as with POWs in World War I, officers and men inhabited “strikingly different worlds in captivity”. They lived for the most part in separate depots, enjoyed fundamentally different rights and were subjects to different restrictions’.¹⁵⁹ Whilst parolees clearly enjoyed a comfort prisoners in northern fortresses lacked, this comparison is not entirely accurate. Although there was a segregation process between officers and their men, this was

¹⁵⁸ Glasse, *Ned Clinton*, p. 146.

¹⁵⁹ Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 116.

very mutable at Verdun. Officers petitioned for their men to join them as parolees, to reunite the crew of the lost ship in one same depot, as evidenced by a successful appeal for the transfer of common sailors from Longwy to Verdun.¹⁶⁰ By this means, but also by mass transfers orchestrated by the French State, common sailors could join the Verdun parolees, which complicated the sociology of detainees in the town.

Whilst Verdun hosted two types of captives – the civilian ‘*détenus*’ and military officers taken under arms, the real demarcation was the length of time spent at the depot. A line was drawn between those who were meant to dwell in the town and those whose presence was merely temporary, subject to the context of war, the varying patronage of the first group, and who experienced displacement in other depots in North-East France. The secret police records suggest that transfers strongly affected the captive population, which oscillated from 545 to 1118 male prisoners (Table 10).¹⁶¹ Transfers were for logistical purposes, as northern depots were repeatedly opened and closed.¹⁶² It was in this context of that certain captives found themselves in temporary residence at Verdun. On 12 November 1804, 25 merchant captains arrived from Givet, the following month 51 common soldiers were sent back to Sarrelibre.¹⁶³ In May 1806, the Metz captives – mostly domestics – were sent back again to Verdun, before the arrival of a convoy of merchantmen from Valenciennes in June. This was followed by a transfer of 85 sailors from Arras in April 1811.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ SHD, YJ 28, Letter from the Ministry of War to the Commandant Soyer at Verdun, 5 February 1812.

¹⁶¹ Ernest d’Hauterive (ed.) *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire, Bulletins Quotidiens Adressés par Fouché à l’Empereur, 1804-1807* (3 vols, Paris, 1908-1922); Ernest d’Hauterive (ed.) *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire, Bulletins Quotidiens Adressés par Fouché à l’Empereur, 1808-1810* (2 vols, Paris, 1963-1964); Nicole Gotteri (ed.) *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire, Bulletins Quotidiens Adressés par Savary à l’Empereur, 1810-1814* (7 vols, Paris, 1997).

¹⁶² Whilst the number of British captives’ depots increased from four in 1803 to twelve in 1810, most of them were short-lived. In 1806, 1200 prisoners were sent to a new depot in Maubeuge, which was closed the same year. Equally, The depot in Metz opened in July 1805, but was closed in Mai 1806. This engendered mass transfers. 1288 British prisoners were marched from Auxonne to Besançon in 1811. See Mark Philp (ed.), *Resisting Napoleon: the British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815* (London, 2006).

¹⁶³ Hauterive (ed.), *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, I, pp. 129, 171, 196.

¹⁶⁴ The ministry of war decided the temporary closure of the Arras and Valenciennes depots, so that merchant captains could ‘receive an exemplary surveillance’ after a series of escape from these depots. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 58, 347, 445.

Number of male prisoners of war at Verdun (1804-1814)

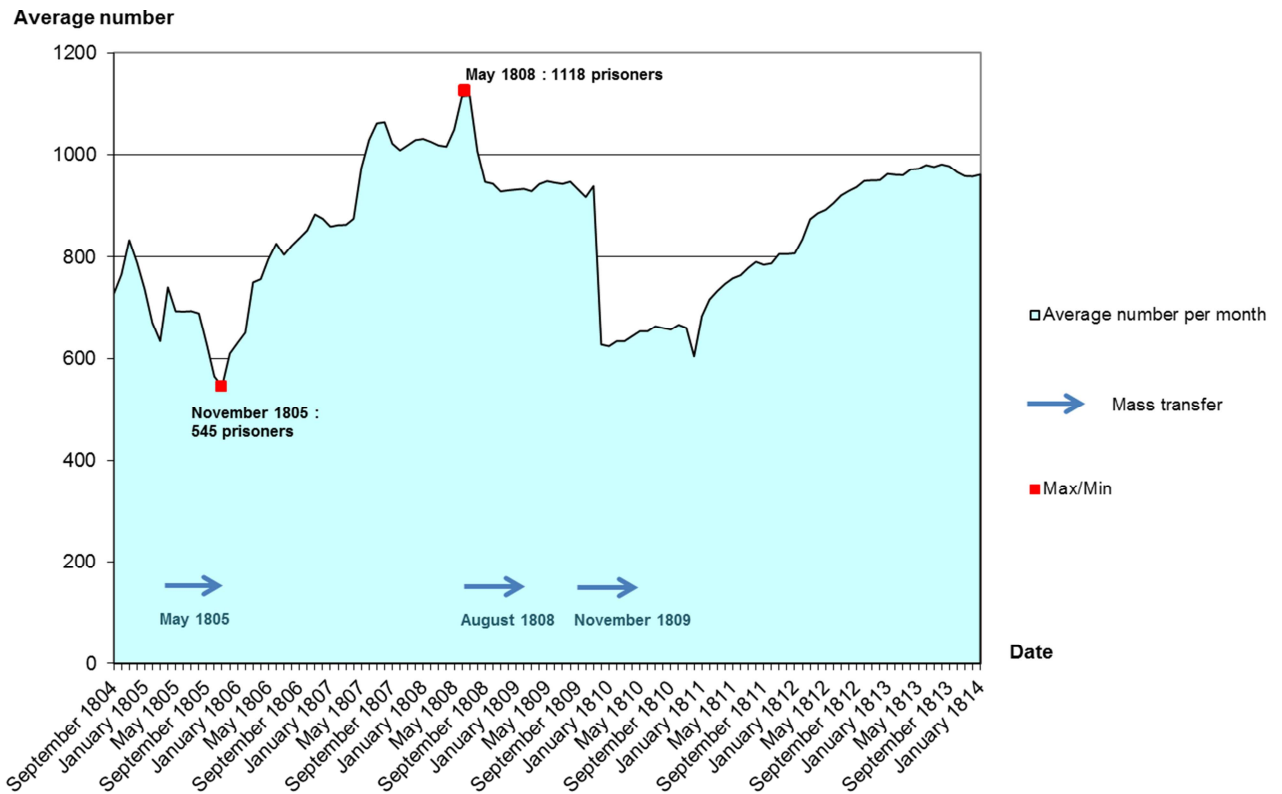


Table 10: Number of male prisoners at Verdun from September 1804 to January 1814

(La Police secrète du Premier Empire, 11 vol.)

Three mass transfers in 1805, 1808 and 1809 (Table 10) were the result of a social selection operated at Verdun, which served as a platform to separate the wheat from the chaff amongst those who claimed their right to parole status.¹⁶⁵ The correspondence between Wirion and Fouché, the Minister of Police, bears witness to this segregating process. As early as 1804, Wirion ordered the transfer of merchantmen to Sarrelibre, for not obtaining patronage amongst their senior captains at the depot.¹⁶⁶ This ‘class’ was imposed by a commandant who drew a rather arbitrary line amongst merchantmen based on the tonnage of their vessels.¹⁶⁷ Yet, this was also the result of a lack of patronage from their senior colleagues, who were permanent residents in Verdun. Considering how

¹⁶⁵ See chapter 4 on the social selection of parolees.

¹⁶⁶ ‘Ils n’offraient plus une garantie suffisante pour être assimilés aux prisonniers sur parole et la faiblesse de la garnison ne permettant pas d’entretenir le nombre de postes nécessaires pour les garder à la citadelle ... à Sarrelibre ... ils seront soumis à une surveillance convenable aux prisonniers de leur classe ... ils auront le traitement de soldats et de matelots’ Ibid., I, 17 Vendémiaire , 21 Brumaire, 12 Frimaire an XIII.

¹⁶⁷ Above eighty tons, they were granted parole, under that tonnage they were sent to other non-parole depots. The question of how the French military personnel, which was renewed following the Revolution of 1789, experienced difficulties in identifying the status of the British captives, owing to a lack of common set of references, will be discussed in chapter 4. On the tonnage issue, see Booth Hyslop (ed.) *Shepherd, Sailor and Survivor*, p. 74.

the latter caused or responded to these transfers sheds another light on the parole dynamics at the depot, which were not the sole doing of the French authorities.

The transfers of servants to Metz in 1805 destabilized many *détenus*' households, friendships and political views. John Maude's diary bears witness to the repercussions of this measure for masters and servants. On 13 October, he wrote

got up at 6 to see my friends the Jacksons and Mr Blacland set off. They were about 44 in number, principally tradesmen and servants, and seemed all in good spirits. I am very sorry to lose my good friend Jackson, who is a very worthy man and the only person at Verdun whom I knew in England.¹⁶⁸

On 26 October, he noted again:

Early this morning 20 English servants escorted by several gens d'armes were very unexpectedly sent off to Metz. Among them is my friend Edgeworth's servant William Stone. This is a very tyrannical and arbitrary measure.

The loss of servants led him to reflect on the question of 'humanity' and the debates on slavery in Britain.¹⁶⁹ Certain masters sporadically petitioned the French government for the return of their servants to Verdun, but the number of British domestics in the depot dropped significantly from eighty-free to fifteen between September 1804 and May 1811.¹⁷⁰ Whilst in 1804 Lord Yarmouth could parade in the *rue Mazel* attended by, as the Verdun deputy major noted, 'numerous servants, none of whom [were] French', this performance changed after 1805, since captives had to employ French servants in their houses and stables.¹⁷¹

In 1808 and 1809, two mass confinements in the citadel followed by transfers targeted masters of merchantmen and midshipmen, who were stigmatised by the local military authorities, owing to their

¹⁶⁸ QCL, GB/NNAF/P144289, John Barnabas Maude, 'Journal'.

¹⁶⁹ On the 26 October, pondering on the death of Cole, Alexander Don's servant who contracted rabies in seclusion, he wrote that the Fox's bill to 'abolish the African trade ... will reflect great luster and credit on the new ministry and on the country it will be a striking act of justice and of humanity' He later added: 'but it is in my opinion very problematical, if it will turn out a political measure – time will prove it – but I think our colonies will suffer.' Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Hauterive (ed.), *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, I, 23 Fructidor an XIII; Paul Gerbod, *Voyages au Pays des Mangeurs de Grenouilles : la France Vue par les Britanniques du XVIIIe Siècle à nos Jours* (Paris, 1991), p.73.

¹⁷¹ 'Ce seigneur a une domestique nombreuse et pas un Français à son service'. ADM-Bar, 9R2, Account from the 'premier adjoint au maire, Varaigne-Perrin, occupant temporairement les fonctions de commissaire de police, au sous-préfet de la Meuse, sur la présence nouvelle des prisonniers anglais à Verdun', Verdun, 26 Frimaire an XII (18 décembre 1803).

young age and repeated attempts at escape. In 1808, several paternalistic and evangelical officers offered their patronage and swore on their honour that they would be considered as ‘gentlemen’ in Britain, and that their parole should therefore be restored. William Story was thus liberated through the patronage of Lieutenant Pridham, who arranged for him to be given a passport to circulate outside the two leagues during the day.¹⁷² These arrangements based on interpersonal connections were however systematised by the French military authorities, which, in 1805, began appointing ‘senior officers’ to be taken ‘collectively responsible’ of their inferiors at the depot.¹⁷³

This weakened patronage networks amongst captives. Naval and Army ‘*cautionneurs*’, as they were called in French, became reluctant to offer patronage as the escapes multiplied, and their young inferiors contracted debts which threatened the maintenance of the depot, and consequently their own situation as parole captives. In June 1805, Murray and Robinson, two midshipmen, made their escape after a ‘*caution corps par corps*’ had been agreed by their senior officers. The ‘body for body’ patronage was based on a simple principle: the patron would be deprived of his parole and sent to the citadel if his protégé attempted an escape. The escape led to a strong reaction amongst naval officers, and the most senior member of them all, Captain Edward Leveson Gower, wrote to the commandant to exclude them from the service.¹⁷⁴ An exclusion from the profession conveniently annulled the officers’ responsibility in the matter and the potential reassessment of their parole. Naval officers proved equally vehement against civilians deserters. In May 1807, the police bulletin reported that ‘English officers made a formal complaint against Edmond Temple’, who had escaped his Verdun bankers the previous day and made his way to Austria in his mistress’ carriage.¹⁷⁵

A sub-culture emerged amongst the captives who stayed only temporarily on parole at Verdun. First, the denial of patronage created resentment amongst sailors deprived of their parole who, like midshipman Edward Boys, calculated that their word of honour was only worth a sixth of that of their senior officers who could travel outside the gates during the day. Midshipman Robert James was more vehement in his critique of the jolly life of *détenus*, ‘a set of scoundrels, who never dared

¹⁷² William Story, *A Journal Kept in France, during a Captivity of More than Nine Years, Commencing the 14th Day of April 1805 and Ending the 5th Day of May 1814* (London, 1815), pp. 65-6.

¹⁷³ Richard Langton, *Narrative of a Captivity in France from 1809 to 1814* (2 vols, Liverpool, 1836), I, p. 249; Goldworth Alger, *Napoleon’s British Visitors and Captives*, p. 211

¹⁷⁴ ‘Gower, capitaine de frégate de Robinson, très affecté de ce manque de parole, demande à l’amirauté de l’exclure de la marine’. Hauterive (ed.), *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, I, p. 470.

¹⁷⁵ ‘Les officiers anglais portent plainte contre Edmund Temple.’ *Ibid.*, III, pp. 241-42.

show their faces again in England ... [and] Despard's gangs; such as Taylors, and shoemakers'.¹⁷⁶ Through their migrations to other non-parole depots, they exchanged specific stories. They discussed the mythical presence of the Duc d'Enghien at the *Tour d'Angoulême*, with whom they identified as wrongly detained captives. Having experienced what they called the 'Castle of Tears' – the basements of the fortress in Bitche – solidified their bonds particularly when they retrieved their parole status at Verdun, a couple of months later. As will be explored in chapter 7, their passage to this disciplinary depot triggered their autobiography: Thomas Dutton published sardonic poems on Verdun in 1806, Charles Sturt drafted a political pamphlet on parole and Edmund Temple, mentioned above, penned a satire on the 'chamber pot of Lorraine'.¹⁷⁷ The return to parole status, transient though it may have been, was celebrated humorously, detainees of the *Tour d'Angoulême* creating, for instance, the order of the 'Bold Knights of the Round Tour'.¹⁷⁸ 'The members celebrated the anniversary of their liberation by a dinner ... each appeared with the riband of the order' and operated through singing a social inversion, by which they shifted from the status as 'slaves' deprived of their parole to that of resistant noblemen.¹⁷⁹ This sub-culture crystallised in the ways prisoners portrayed themselves in their writings and drawings as marching prisoners, constantly on the road, continuously challenged in their social place, yet keeping their hats on, as evidenced by the watercolours produced by Lieutenant Langton (Fig.9).

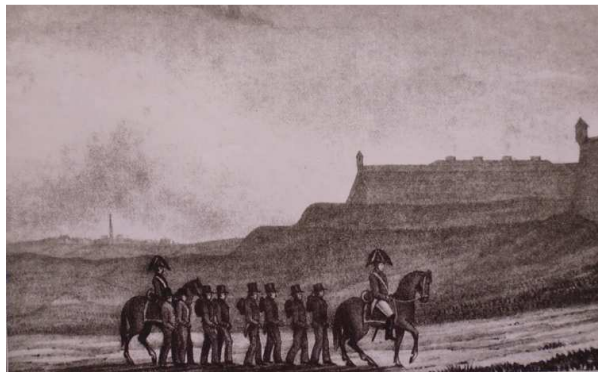


Fig. 9: Sketch of captive midshipmen

(Richard Langton, *Narrative of a captivity*, 1836)

¹⁷⁶ Robert James, *Ten Years a Captive*, quoted in Fraser, *Napoleon the Gaoler*, pp. 113-4.

¹⁷⁷ Edmond Temple, *The Life of Pill Garlick* (London and Dublin, 1815), p. 299.

¹⁷⁸ Langton, *Narrative of a Captivity in France*, I, p. 254.

¹⁷⁹ 'Ye noble hearts devoid of fear,/ Slaves to power, slaves to power;/ Spite fate we're happy here,/ Bold Knights of the Round Tower./ We've many toils and dangers seen,/ And drank the dregs of anguish keen;/ Till now of late, confirmed we've been,/ Bold Knights of the Rounder Tower.' *Ibid.*, I, p. 254.

The context of war and the Continental blockade in 1806, further reconfigured the status of parolees. Clothing was crucial for their daily performance. In 1803, the deputy major of Verdun had noted with astonishment that Captain Brenton paraded through the town in uniform.¹⁸⁰ Redcoats and blue coats would keep their uniforms in captivity, unless they had to be placed in quarantine in the local hospitals, owing to a violent shipwreck or skirmish.¹⁸¹ The captive tailors and shoemakers would then provide them with new clothes until 1806, when they could no longer procure the materials to do so. The tailor Rietschel was ‘forced to close the shop owing to the closure of the Continent by the Emperor’ both because of a lack of ‘supplies for the prisoners’ and the pecuniary difficulties his customers experienced.¹⁸² This was problematic for the captive newcomers from naval and army services. The case of midshipman Maurice Hewson shows the social repercussions of such a shortage of British tailors to repair his uniform upon his arrival at Verdun, as he had to rely on the local hospital for his clothing. ‘Such were my necessities’, he wrote, ‘that I was indebted to the Hospital for the shirt I wore ... but my shattered appearance did not create much sympathy ... one of my fellow-inmates would scarcely acknowledge me’.¹⁸³

National allegiances were also destabilised by the context of war. The ‘picture of Verdun’ a *détenu* painted in 1806 as a harmonious microcosm where ‘all national distinctions between Irish, Scot, and English ceased, and their only contest was to do the honors of their respective countries on their particular Saint’s day with the most hospitality’ was a clear romanticisation of inter-national relations amongst captives.¹⁸⁴ Patron Saint’s days were popular amongst all captives, yet sociability could prove nationally exclusive. In 1804, the local newspaper, the *Narrateur de la Meuse* reported that one club was solely destined for Irish detainees.¹⁸⁵ As will be discussed in chapter 3, Cornish, Yorkshire, Welsh, and Channel Island identities and networks were reaffirmed in detention, leading

¹⁸⁰ ‘*Cet officier toujours en uniforme, paraît plein d’honneur*. ADM-Bar, 9R2, Account from the ‘premier adjoint au maire, Varaigne-Perrin, occupant temporairement les fonctions de commissaire de police, au sous-préfet de la Meuse, sur la présence nouvelle des prisonniers anglais à Verdun’, Verdun, 26 Frimaire an XII (18 December 1803).

¹⁸¹ Glasse, *Ned Clinton*, p. 118.

¹⁸² AMV, uncatalogued file, ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, Letter of Rietschel to the mayor of Verdun, 17 May 1844.

¹⁸³ Hewson, *Escape from the French*, pp. 59-60

¹⁸⁴ Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, I, pp. 90-1.

¹⁸⁵ ‘*Deux clubs sont formés par ces étrangers: l’un compose tout à fait d’anglais d’origine, est ouvert chez Mr. Carron; l’autre fréquenté par les seuls irlandais, se tient chez Mr Concanon, irlandais lui-même*’. *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 27 September 1804; ‘CONCANNON, Lucius (c.1764-1823)’, The History of Parliament online [<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/concannon-lucius-1764-1823>], accessed 8 February 2014]; Henri Fauville, *La France de Bonaparte vue par les visiteurs anglais* (Aix-en-provence, 1989), p. 228.

to tensions between captives.¹⁸⁶ In particular, Jersey prisoners were critiqued for trading their bilingualism and acting as interpreters for the local authorities. Royal Navy Lieutenant O'Brien, voiced these tensions against Garree, a Jersey-born interpreter whom he considered as a 'very scoundrel' and 'informer', accusing him of denouncing a boatswain and gunner of his acquaintance to the commandant as they prepared their escape.¹⁸⁷ Such fear of espionage led midshipmen like Hewson to socialise only within the circles of their captains at the depot.¹⁸⁸

To conclude, this chapter has explored the 'places' of the British prisoners in a town turned into a parole depot. It highlighted the use of spaces, print and material cultures by prisoners used to 'dwelling-in-travelling'. Whilst the local newspaper *Le Narrateur* described the depot as 'a colony of captives', the expression was more a metaphor than a tangible process.¹⁸⁹ Verdun was polarised rather than metamorphosed by the socio-professional performances of the captives, who maintained, reinvented and challenged their 'places' abroad. In this respect, captivity was both reflexive and causal in illuminating tensions within British society, and the Navy and the Field Army in particular. However, one significant social sphere in this 'motley assemblage' remains neglected: that of the French and British women. The next chapter concerns these female influences on the prisoners' living conditions and their parole status at Verdun.

¹⁸⁶ This point will be discussed in greater depth in chapter 3.

¹⁸⁷ Donat Henchy O'Brien, *My Adventures in the Late War, Comprising a Narrative of Shipwreck, Captivity, Escapes from French prisons* (2 vols, London, 1814), quoted in *The Naval Chronicle*, July-December 1812.

¹⁸⁸ Equally, Forbes progressively restricted his society. See Forbes, *Letters from France*, II, p. 244. See also Hoffman, *A Sailor of King George*, p. 238.

¹⁸⁹ *Le Narrateur de la Meuse*, 8 July 1805.

Voluntary captives?

Women and gender in detention

As Fabien Théofilakis recently argued, writing an inter-gender history of military detention presents a methodological obstacle, for captivity appears as an essentially masculine space, ‘a state of radical deprivation, forbidding any female presence’.¹ Yet, this initial tension dissipates as one begins to appreciate the constant presence of women in captivity, whether directly or indirectly. In the context of parole detention in Verdun, women were involved in many ways, and most remarkably in taking on the ambivalent role of voluntary captives. As victims of the *Prairial* decree or as dedicated spouses following their husbands, more than one hundred British women joined the depot and shared the fate of their captive kin, with their children and servants. Subject to a wavering tolerance from the French state, they played an active role in petitioning for ‘*permissions*’, and crossing the Channel despite the blockade to ensure family businesses and the transmission of letters.² Whilst the presence of these female actors is virtually absent in conventional narratives of the conflict, their presence complicates the gendered definition of the prisoner of war. As this chapter argues, not only did they form a problematic group of captives at the depot, but the agency they displayed throws into relief the ambiguities of the dividing line between civil and military spheres in the totalisation of warfare during the period.³

The burgeoning literature on women during the Napoleonic Wars, especially on female political responses and soldiering by means of cross-dressing, by correspondence and in the everyday of campaign life, invites us to go further in considering how captivity did not preclude but encouraged

¹ Fabien Théofilakis, ‘La Sexualité du Prisonnier de Guerre’, *Vingtième Siècle, Revue d’Histoire* 3:99 (2008), p. 203.

² ‘*Permission de sortie*’ was a temporary passport to circulate outside the city walls during the day. These could be prolonged up to three months, depending on the willingness and corruption of the local administrator. See chapter 4 on the subject of *ad hoc* treatments of POWs and the captives’ relationships with the post-Revolution French personnel. NAM, 968-07-362-1, Officer’s parole card delivered to Lieutenant James Whitley of the 9th (The East Norfolk) Regiment of Foot at Verdun, 30 December 1812.

³ David Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon’s Europe and the Birth of Warfare As We Know It* (London and New York, 2007).

the presence of women, which significantly coloured the experience of their male relatives.⁴ Propelled by a feminist school in POW studies, cultural scholars of military history have lately endeavoured to relocate women in experiences of captivity, particularly with regards to charity, the construction of the familial space and its regulation by the State.⁵ Yet the focus of these works is frequently on how women negotiated patriarchal structures imposed in the public and private spheres after the return of their absent husbands. In this respect, the feminist narrative remains a story of absence rather than an analysis of women's actual contribution to shaping experiences of detention. In these circumstances, what appears necessary is not so much a history of captivity *with* women in it, but an investigation into how their presence or absence induced gendered conceptions and practices of detention. This is the main contention of the following chapter, which aims to explore less the relational *status* of women towards their male captives (marital, filial, amicable, etc.) than their *roles* in captivity and the shaping of experience for both male and female actors.

In order to fully appreciate women's various roles in Verdun, a classification appears useful. Indeed, Sylvie Aprile has recently argued the need to explore gender in forced exile through a specific categorisation.⁶ Whilst her analysis focuses on the situation of the wives of French political activists in exile under the Second Empire, she presents her theoretical canvas as a historical model applicable to similar experiences of displacement during the period. She identified three main categories: *l'exilée* (the exiled), *la suiveuse* (the follower), and *l'épouse* (the wife who stays in the home country). Whilst the methodological value of this model is evident, the case of Verdun invites us to go further and propose a refinement.⁷ Convinced that the categorisation should not merely focus on romantic relations, that is the prisoners' wives and mistresses, but should be extended to

⁴ Kevin Linch, *Britain and Wellington's Army: Recruitment, Society and Tradition, 1807-1815* (Basingstoke, 2010); Catriona Kennedy, 'From the Ballroom to the Battlefield: British Women and Waterloo', in Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann and Jane Rendall (eds) *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 137-56; T.G. Fraser and Keith Jeffery (eds), *Men, Women and War: Papers Read Before the Twentieth Irish Conference of Historians, Held at Magee College, University of Ulster, 6-8 June 1991* (Dublin, 1993); Waltraud Maierhofer, Gertrud Maria Rösch and Caroline Bland (eds), *Women Against Napoleon: Historical and Fictional Responses to His Rise and Legacy* (Chicago, 2007); Bernard Cook (eds), *Women and War: a Historical Encyclopedia from Antiquity to the Present* (Santa Barbara, 2006).

⁵ Sarah Fishman, *We Will Wait: Wives of French Prisoners of War, 1940-1945* (New Haven and London, 1991); Barbara Hatley-Broad, *War and Welfare: British Prisoner of War Families, 1939-45* (Manchester, 2009); Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton, 2006); Dekel R, Goldblatt H, Solomon Z., 'Trapped in Captivity: Marital Perceptions of Wives of Former Prisoners of War', *Women Health* 42:3 (2005), pp. 1-18; Clive Lloyd, 'Women: Their Absence and Their Presence' in *A History of Napoleonic and American Prisoners of War 1756-1816: Hulk, Depot and Parole* (2 vols, Woodridge, 2007), I, pp. 188-95.

⁶ Sylvie Aprile, 'De l'Exilé à l'Exilée: Une Histoire Sexuée de la Proscription Politique Outre-Manche et Outre-Atlantique Sous le Second Empire', *Le Mouvement Social* 4:225 (2008), pp. 27-38.

⁷ Some categories are obviously overlapping and reductive; the follower being often a correspondent, for instance.

other significant female kin, from the sister to the mother, along with gender transgressions, five main types have been identified here: the hostage, the follower, the correspondent, the captive child, and the fictional woman. Each of these categories will be examined in the light of their diverse roles in framing Napoleonic experiences of imprisonment.

The ‘social politics’ of female hostages and followers

Retrieving the experience of British women in Verdun is an arduous task. Either hostages or followers, their presence is both elusive and latent, their migrations and voices scattered in fragments of police records, correspondence and memoirs.⁸ Whilst the secret police counted ninety-nine British women at Verdun in February 1805, their story remains that of an ‘absent presence’ difficult to grasp in the archives.⁹ But, despite the paucity of documentation, the historian can reflect on their collective ‘trace’ on captivity.¹⁰ Indeed, a prosopographical approach highlights their influence on three key aspects of detention: the status of the prisoner of honour, the (re)creation of home and socio-political performances on the Verdun stage, both physically and metaphorically.

The familial entity was at the core of the privileged status of the parole captives, as the French state designed the depot of Verdun specifically for ‘Englishmen accompanied by women and children’.¹¹ Arguably, the parole treatment of the male detainees was thus tailored to the presence of female hostages amongst the civil *détenus*.¹² This was not solely limited to Verdun. It occurred sporadically in other parole zones in the French Empire, as evidenced by the correspondence of Mathew Flinders, a naval explorer captured on his passage from Australia and sequestered with military and civil passengers in Mauritius. Writing to his wife Ann in Lincolnshire in 1805, he noted: ‘there were four ladies taken prisoners; two have been permitted to go with their husbands to India,

⁸ No complete list of female captives or companions of captives has been found for this study. The foreign office records do not mention the nationality of passport applicants, which complicates any attempt to quantify their movements. This has already been noted by Renaud Morieux in his study of the Channel in the long eighteenth century. Renaud Morieux, *Une Mer Pour Deux Royaumes: la Manche, Frontière Franco-Anglaise (XVIIe-XVIIIe Siècles)* (Rennes, 2008), p. 303; TNA, FO610/1, Register of passes from England to France, 1795-1822.

⁹ Ernest d’Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire, Bulletins Quotidiens Adressés par Fouché à l’Empereur, 1804-1807* (7 vols, Paris, 1908), I, p. 306.

¹⁰ Several lists of prisoners were drawn by naval men and will be discussed in chapter 7. On the question of the notion of ‘trace’ in history, I am referring to Jacques Derrida, *De la Grammatologie* (Paris, 1967), pp.96-111; Paul Veyne, *Comment On Ecrit l’Histoire* (Paris, 1978); Carlo Ginzburg, ‘Traces. Racines d’Un Paradigme Indiciaire’, in *Mythes, Emblèmes, Traces. Morphologie et Histoire* (Paris, 1989), pp. 139-80.

¹¹ ADM-Bar, 9R2, Décret du 2 Prairial an XI.

¹² Only estrangement or marriage to a Frenchman could exclude British ladies from the measure, as exemplified by the case of Maria Fagnani and Fanny Burney (then Madame d’Arblay) who both stayed in Paris.

and the others are living at a house about 4 miles in the country; they have met with handsome treatment upon the whole, their husbands being indulged with a country house on their account, instead of being shut up in this house which is the common place of confinement for other officers'.¹³ In 1813, the Minister of Defence, Henri-Jacques-Guillaume Clarke, confirmed the French state's leniency towards prisoners accompanied by women and children, especially those married to French women.¹⁴ He requested that the commandant in Bitche – a disciplinary depot where several Verdun captives were temporarily secluded for debts or attempts at escape – draw lists of captive 'families' there. This was meant to determine 'exceptional favours' to be granted to captive fathers and husbands, namely the restoration of their parole status in Verdun. 'Considering the duration of the English prisoners' captivity and the poverty that pervades amongst them', he wrote, 'I believe it would be necessary to give exceptional favours to those of them who are married in France, and who have several children. There is no need to provoke their despair or their desertion'.¹⁵ Familial ties, and the presence of women in captivity, thus altered the meaning of parole detention for both the French authorities and British male prisoners alike, as, in the words of Clarke, they maintained 'order' and 'humanity' between captives and captors.¹⁶

Female travellers, particularly companions of off-duty army servicemen, were captured during the mass arrest in 1803. Maria Cope was one of them. She had migrated to France with her family to economise during the peace.¹⁷ In her diary, she relates how she defied the *gendarmes* who came to arrest her in her lodgings, by claiming to be 'an Englishwoman & not afraid'.¹⁸ Her writings suggest that capture reaffirmed her sense of bravery and identity as a 'free-born' subject, which she projected onto that of her fellow male captives on her arrival at the depot. This is particularly evident in her narration of the initial interrogation, which formed an integral part of the military ritual of parole-

¹³ NMM, Flinders papers, FLI25, Letter from Matthew Flinders to Ann Flinders, Wilhems Plains in the Isle of France, 20 November 1805.

¹⁴ On the question of Franco-British marriages, see the section on 'the captivity of the heart' in chapter 6.

¹⁵ 'En considérant la durée de la captivité des prisonniers anglais et la pauvreté d'un grand nombre d'entre eux je crois qu'il est nécessaire de faire des exceptions de faveur particulièrement pour ceux qui se sont mariés en France, qui ont plusieurs enfants et qu'il est utile de ne pas conduire au désespoir ou provoquer à la désertion. Telles sont les considérations qui me font désirer d'avoir l'état nominatif de ces familles avec un compte particulier de la position de chacune d'elles afin que je puisse juger des exceptions que l'humanité et le maintien du bon ordre réclament.' SHD, YJ 30, Letter from Clarke to the commandant in Bitche, 28 October 1813.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ On Maria Cope and her diary, see Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 118.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 118; NLI, MS 1718, Maria Cope, 'Memoirs of captivity in France, 1803-1813', II, p.17.

giving at Verdun.¹⁹ Upon their arrival, the captives had to be examined by the Commandant of the depot, who judged their status by requesting further details about their parents and ancestors.²⁰ Maria Cope witnessed such procedure first-hand, emphasizing the ‘un-British’ nature of the inquisition, which, according to her, several rejected ‘saying John Bull like, what is it to them, who my Grandfather was, I won’t tell’.²¹ Her diary attests to a strong awareness of the laws of nations – a knowledge which transgressed gender divides, as both male and female victims of the 2nd *Prairial* decree utilised Vattel’s treatises to critique their arrest.²²

Whilst Maria Cope demonstrated an acute sense of the illegitimacy of her capture, a resistance which she linked to traits traditionally ascribed to Britishness (namely liberty and free-will), other female captives resigned themselves to their fate, having no possibility or longing to return to Britain. This was the case for twenty-year old Betty Amphlet, an illegitimate child from Gloucestershire who had been cast away by her parents in her infancy. ‘Dependent upon the bounty of some poor relations’, she took advantage of the peace in 1802 to go to France, following ‘an uncle, a shoemaker, who intended to settle there’. In 1803, she followed him and remained in Verdun for want of monies, family support and prospects in Gloucestershire.²³

I use the term ‘resign’ because Betty could have envisaged liberation in 1804, had she enjoyed the financial and social means other British women utilised to extirpate themselves from captivity.²⁴ Indeed, whilst Frances Burney was allowed to reside in Passy and Paris after May 1803, owing to her marriage to the French Général d’Arblay, Maria Edgeworth managed to negotiate her passage to Dover, leaving her brother to a decade-long seclusion in Verdun.²⁵ Departures were envisaged collectively by other women down the social ladder. In 1803, before their transfer to Verdun a list of ten ‘women belonging to English prisoners of war’ – namely eight wives and two daughters of civilian captives – was drawn up in Valenciennes to ‘request their return home’.²⁶ Similar

¹⁹ This will be further developed in chapter 4.

²⁰ See chapter 4 on the difficulties of the post-Revolution personnel in identifying the status of the British captives.

²¹ NLI, MS 1718, Maria Cope, ‘Memoirs of captivity in France, 1803-1813’, II, p.17.

²² The reference to Vattel was thus not solely the fruit of retrospective writing, see chapter 7.

²³ *Edinburgh Annual Register*, 21 August 1810.

²⁴ John Goldworth Alger, *Napoleon’s British Visitors and Captives (1801-1815)* (London, 1904), pp. 235-43.

²⁵ June Burton, *Napoleon and the Woman Question: Discourses of the Other Sex in French* (Lubbock, 2007), p. 241; Marilyn Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography* (Oxford, 1972), p. 197.

²⁶ SHD, YI 28, ‘Etat nominatif des femmes appartenant aux prisonniers de guerre anglais demandant à retourner dans leur patrie’, Valenciennes, 10 Fructidor an 12 (28 August 1804). This list included Mrs Stanhope, Wilson, Hurry who were later transferred to Verdun.

endeavours took place in Verdun, yet without success. In 1806, seventeen 'English women partaking in the bread distributions' were considered as candidates for being 'sent back to England' owing to their lack of means, eight of them being mixed-raced women captured on a cargo from India.²⁷ Paradoxically, their destitution also conditioned the rebuttal of their request, as the French state refused to pay for their travel expenses.²⁸

However, the nature of the identification files held in the French military archives in Vincennes suggests that female hostages were crossed off the prisoners' lists.²⁹ As mentioned in the introduction, no comprehensive list of the Verdun captives kept by the French administration has survived.³⁰ Yet, notes on individual prisoners were sent to the Ministry of Defence, hence their current presence in Vincennes. These files greatly vary from an empty cover to over one hundred documents on a same captive. One of the reasons for this discrepancy lies in the practice of the Napoleonic administration. Documents were meant to move from one file to another as the original lists were amended in various depots. New files were opened, others were emptied. The file 'Abercombie' was dedicated to a sergeant's widow, before being emptied to contain documents about a colonel who became general.³¹ Separate sheets were inserted for cross-referencing, along with brief lists of names and information about the depots and their vicinity. Perhaps the lack of manuscript records, the silence the historian cannot but initially lament, offers as an insight into these female hostages' migrations, and the *ad hoc* nature of their treatment.³²

The language used by the French administration to describe these women and their presence amongst male captives was ambivalent. There had been precedents for female captivity, particularly during the French Revolution in 1793, when 'British and Hanoverian subjects' were arrested and their properties confiscated.³³ Numerous British female excursionists and radicals such as Helen Maria Williams, Charlotte West and Grace Dalrymple had featured amongst them; however they

²⁷ I will develop this point about mixed-raced women in the following chapter.

²⁸ 'Il ne connaît à ces femmes aucun moyens de faire la route à leurs frais'. SHD, YI 28, Report of Wirion to the Ministry of Defence, February 1806.

²⁹ There are 48 alphabetical boxes, whose content exceeds 3500 items.

³⁰ Lists have been made by the prisoners themselves. These will be analyzed as ego-documents in chapter 7.

³¹ For a history of the inventory of these documents and their authenticity conducted in the late 1980s, see Margarete Audin, 'British Hostages in Napoleonic France: the Evidence with Particular Reference to Manufacturers and Artisans' (M.A. dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1988), pp. 85-6.

³² Their *ad hoc* treatment is confirmed by other unclear references, most notable in Aitken's file to a certain Mr Sykes living outside the depot in Verdun but 'not listed as hostage'. Ibid., p. 86.

³³ The Convention 'decreed the arrest of British and Hanoverian subjects and the seizure of their property in France' and it 'wanted no exceptions to the law'. Michael Rapport, *Nationality and Citizenship in Revolutionary France: the Treatment of Foreigners 1789-1799* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 200-1

were liberated in the following months.³⁴ Exchange cartels had been organised for the liberation of female passengers and children captured at sea.³⁵ During the Napoleonic wars, exchange ceased to be systematic, for practical and ideological reasons, and became, in the case of female hostages, almost impossible for the simple reason that Britain did not hold any French female captives. ‘*Femmes anglaises*’, ‘*otages*’, ‘*détenues*’, ‘*prisonnières*’: the British women of Verdun were described by a nebulous cluster of semi-synonyms that further blurred their status between tacit and fully-incarcerated detainees. On the whole, their status and presence obscured the definition of the prisoner of war as a diplomatic and military category during the period.

At the depot, British women benefitted from a certain indulgence. For example, the regulations stipulated in 1803 that ‘women, children and female servants’ were exempted of the *appel* – the daily roll-call at the town hall.³⁶ Seldom were they detained in fortresses, and the case of Mrs Prescott, the widow of a naval officer, who was sequestered in the citadel until 1819, should be considered as unusual.³⁷ Like their male counterparts, these women were confined to the two-league perimeter and did not receive any allowance from the French state, as evidenced by couples’ petitions for subsistence in February 1804.³⁸ In terms of their sociology, several sub-categories can be distinguished: the lone aristocratic exile, the genteel spouses following their husbands on their Grand Tour, the tradesman’s wife or niece, and the female servant. Yet, the status of these women was complicated by the arrival, with the official resumption of hostilities, of women arrested as passengers, and others having decided to migrate and join their male relatives at the depot, hence obtaining the tacit status of voluntary captives (Table 11).³⁹

³⁴ Helen Maria Williams, *Letters Containing a Sketch of the Politics of France, from the Thirty-First of May 1793, till the Twenty-Eighth of July 1794, and of the Scenes which Have Passed in the Prisons of Paris* (2 vols., London, 1795) I, p. 17; Charlotte West, *A Ten Years’ Residence in France, during the Severest Part of the Revolution, from the Year 1787 to 1797, Containing Various Anecdotes of Some of the Most Remarkable Personages of that Period* (London, 1821), pp. 58-9; Grace Dalrymple Elliott, *Journal of My Life during the French Revolution* (London, 1859), pp. 166-7.

³⁵ TNA, ADM103/468, Lists of exchanges, 1793-1801.

³⁶ ‘Art. 13. *Les femmes, les enfants et la domestiques femelles seront exemptés de ces appels*’, ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Règlement du dépôt de Verdun’, December 1803.

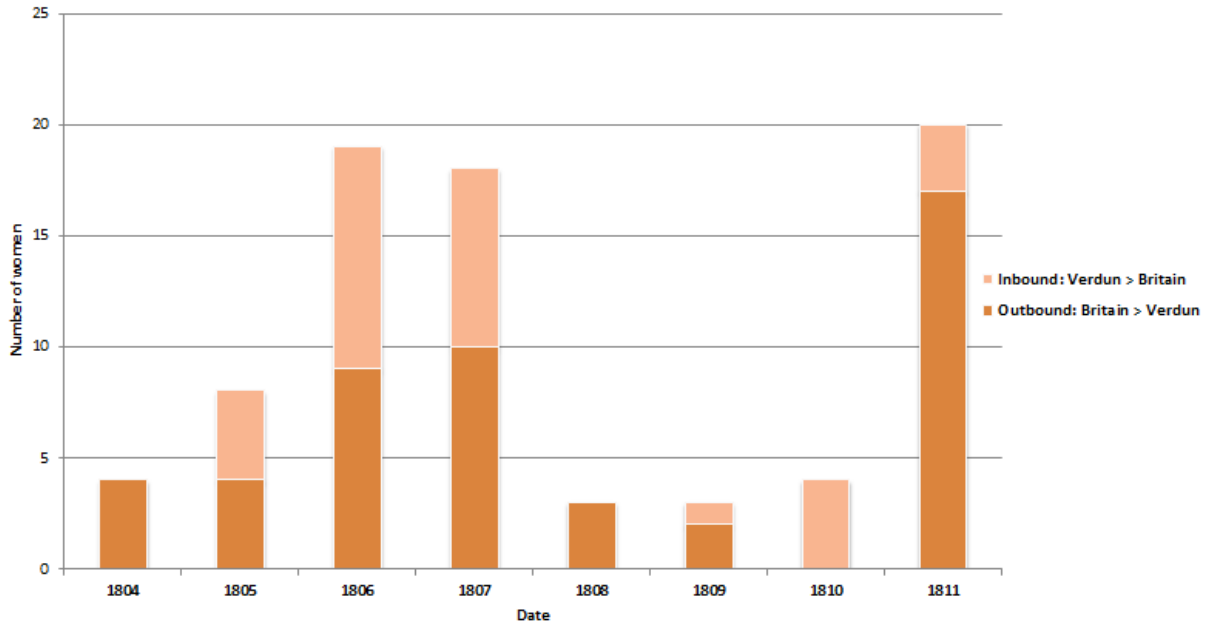
³⁷ Léon Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun* (3 vols, Fremont, 1840), II, p. 239.

³⁸ ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Etat nominatif’, 10 Nivôse an XII (2 January 1804).

³⁹ Hauterive, *Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, I, p. 142.

Legal migrations of British women between Verdun and Britain (1804-1811)

(Source: French secret police records, CARAN Paris, AD Bar-le-Duc, AM Verdun)



Familial status of legal British female migrants to Verdun (1804-1811)

(Source: French secret police records, AN CARAN Paris, AD Bar-le-Duc, AM Verdun)

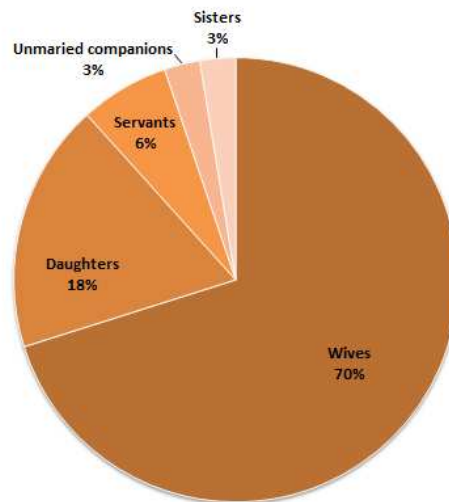


Table 11: Chronology and familial status of British women travelling with French passports between Verdun and Britain

As early as October 1804, British women began to migrate from Britain to Verdun (Table 11).⁴⁰

For the main part, wives of landed gentlemen, tradesmen and navy officers obtained the formal

⁴⁰ Ibid., I, p. 142. As N.A.M. Rodgers noted, new marital attitudes developed in the Navy during the Napoleonic Wars, which could explain these migrations. ‘Separation had always been one of the hardships of the sea service’, he wrote, ‘particularly hard in the blockade years of the Great Wars ... during the Napoleonic War it was not unknown to meet wives afloat, especially in semi-

approval of the French Minister of Police.⁴¹ The response of the local authorities was however, more hostile. General Wirion demanded more surveillance of these visiting women who were ‘only tolerated’ at the depot and should be ‘watched as foreigner[s], but, above all, as coming from England’.⁴² Such an ambivalent policy raises the question of the place of the female foreigner, particular the English foreigner, in a post-Revolutionary society constructing a new form of ‘paper identity’.⁴³ Indeed, the tension between the national and local treatment of these women crystallised around the question of passports, for women increasingly crossed the Channel without any prior authorisation either from the Alien Office or French customs, sometimes without their husbands’ request, as in the case of Mrs Eckford, the wife of a marine officer who ‘was quite surprised’ by her arrival in 1804.⁴⁴ The case of Mrs Eckford reveals the agency these women displayed in navigating the police system in Holland and France to arrive in Verdun. Travelling without passport with a Mrs Bruce, Eckford followed a rather hazardous yet common itinerary: landing in Rotterdam, they travelled to Antwerp by mail coach, then to Brussels, Mons, Valenciennes, Cambrai, Rheims, Chatillons and Verdun in public coaches, but surprisingly ‘without encountering any impediments’.⁴⁵ Between 1804 and 1811, she travelled three times between Morlaix and Plymouth, both with and without documentation.⁴⁶ Her case was not isolated. For female servants, Verdun even became a *laisser-passer* to England. Mary Oliver, an English woman serving Mr Guerhoueün, an amnestied *émigré* in the Ardennes *département*, was one of the first to be accepted in Verdun in the hope of ‘getting attached to one of her countrymen and seize the opportunity of returning to her country’.⁴⁷

combatant situations like coastal passages, or aboard troopships’. Nicholas A. Rodgers, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain 1649-1815* (London, 2004), pp. 526-7.

⁴¹ ‘Le Ministre ne voyant aucun inconvénient à ce que ces étrangères puissent venir soutenir leur mari.’ Hauterive, *Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, III, p. 274.

⁴² ‘surveillée comme Etrangère et surtout comme venant d’Angleterre’, see AN, F/7/6512; ‘le séjour des femmes anglaises à Verdun n’est que de tolérance. Elles doivent pour ce qui concerne les passeports dont il s’agit être aussi sévèrement assujetties que leurs maris même, à la surveillance établie’, see AMV, uncatalogued box, letter to the sous-prefet, Verdun, 11 October 1811.

⁴³ Vincent Denis, *Une Histoire de l’Identité: France, 1715-1815* (Paris, 2008); Gérard Noiriel, *État, Nation, et Immigration: Vers une Histoire du Pouvoir* (Seysell, 2001); Jane Caplan and John Torpey (eds.), *Documenting Individual Identity: the Development in State Practices in the Modern World* (Princeton, 2001); John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship, and the State* (Cambridge, 2000).

⁴⁴ Langholm archives, Hyslop papers, letter from James Hyslop to his brother, Simon Hyslop, Verdun, 10 October 1804. [<http://www.langholmarchive.com/hyslopleters.php>, accessed 4 February 2013].

⁴⁵ AN, F/7/6512, Minute from Wirion, Verdun, 28 Vendémiaire an XIII (20 October 1804)..

⁴⁶ John Goldworth Alger, *Englishmen in the French Revolution* (London, 1889), p.282.

⁴⁷ ‘Le but de cette fille est de s’attacher à un de ses compatriotes et y saisir l’occasion de retourner dans son pays’. AMV, uncatalogued box, ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, Letter from the *sous-préfet* to the mayor of Verdun, Verdun, 5 Thermidor an XIII (24 July 1805). She did find a position in Verdun, see AMV, uncatalogued box, ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, Note from Cajot and Dupont, Verdun, undated.

Such trajectories and the relative ease with which they managed to travel a country at war suggest, as Renaud Morieux noted for the preceding decades, the inefficacy of the passport system in formation, not only within the space of the Channel but also in the French hinterland.⁴⁸ Whilst the tolerance of the French authorities towards the migrations of these female followers varied over time, hence explaining the gap in legal migrations between 1808 and 1810 (Table 11), the French state failed to police the migrations of these women, which continued until the end of detention. Despite the Continental blockade and Napoleon's order on 21 June 1809 to send 'Englishwomen and children under the age of twelve, who did not serve as ship's boys' to Morlaix to be shipped back to Britain, British women continued to travel across the Channel. The secret police records and Napoleon's correspondence suggest that the migrations of captives' female companions, along with aborted exchange schemes, or indeed any diplomatic actions relating to prisoners of war between France and Britain, were meant to be channelled through the harbour of Morlaix in Brittany.⁴⁹ However, despite being placed under the authority of military services after that date, not only were British women still present in Verdun in 1812, but they received passports to travel to other places in France (Paris, Melun, Nancy) from the mayor without the consent of the General of *gendarmerie*, suggesting a conflict between the individual and the national, the civil and the military surveillance of the POWs at a local level.⁵⁰ Some women even obtained individual allowances from Wirion to assist them in their journey.⁵¹

⁴⁸ The relation between parole captivity and the emerging paper identity, as encapsulated in the passport system, will be developed in chapter 4. AMV, uncatalogued box, 'Les Anglais à Verdun', Letter from the *Inspecteur général de la Gendarmerie nationale, commandant supérieur in Verdun* to Monsieur Huguin, the mayor of the town, Verdun, 4 Thermidor an XII (23 July 1804). As Renaud Morieux pointed out, the passport system in formation during the period to construct the border of the Channel was problematic: 'L'adaptation technique du passeport à la surveillance est bien connue, et il est aisé pour les voyageurs de se dérober au contrôle ... En Angleterre, les problèmes comme les remèdes sont analogues, comme l'illustre l'évolution de la forme des documents d'identification utilisés par l'Alien Office'. See Renaud Morieux, *Une Mer Pour Deux Royaumes. La Manche, Frontière Franco-Anglaise (XVII-XVIII Siècles)* (Rennes, 2008), pp. 293-4.

⁴⁹ A closer examination of the customary archives in Morlaix and marine records would certainly provide further information on this subject. This town served as an enclave for diplomatic discussions particularly after the closure of the Continent in 1806.

⁵⁰ 'Son Excellence est informée ... que les femmes anglaises qui sont à Verdun, quoique soumises à la surveillance des autorités militaires plus particulièrement encore qu'aux autorités civiles, reçoivent souvent de ces dernière des passeports pour l'intérieur sans que le Commandant du dépôt ne soit même consulté.' ADM-Bar, 9R2; Anthony Latreille, *Verdun, under Wirion, Courcelles, De Beauchene, and De Meulan, Translated from the Original French* (London, 1816).

⁵¹ 'Passport délivré à Madame Frazer, anglaise pour se rendre à Morlaix à l'effet d'embarquer pour l'Angleterre... elle touche une indemnité de 3 sols par lieue.' AMV, uncatalogued box, 'Les Anglais à Verdun', Letter from the *sous-préfet* to the mayor of Verdun, Verdun, 26 August 1811.



Fig.10: Forbes, *A view from the Ramparts of Verdun, 1804*

(Musée de la Prinerie, Verdun)

As is suggested in James Forbes's portrait of a captive family, together facing the Verdun ramparts – the symbol of their internment (Fig.10) – the constant migrations of these women ensured the maintenance of familial and emotional bonds in forced exile. A closer look at the watercolour reveals that the chain formed by the man, the woman and their child crystallised in the partaking of recreational activities, river fishing and model boat sailing, in this instance.⁵² In the case of the Brentons mentioned above, captivity became an opportunity to gather a household dislocated by a career at sea.⁵³ When Jahleel Brenton obtained the visit of 'his wife, one of his sisters, his son aged of twenty months and a servant' in February 1804, he created a home he had barely experienced before. Having married Isabella Stewart in 1802, a lady from a loyalist family of Nova Scotia whom he had first met during his service on the North American Station in the 1790s, he had only spent a year in her company before being captured in the Channel. The diary of Isabella suggests that her thirteen-day journey with her sister-in-law, Mary, who was fluent in French, was not merely dictated by the duties of matrimony. As an Evangelist, her journey was spiritual, and bore the mark of Providence in offering her 'to feel a proper sense of ... [a] most merciful God'.⁵⁴ Jahleel Brenton's account of their reunion confirms the emotional and spiritual impact her presence had on his perception of captivity:

⁵² The clothes of the child make it difficult to assess his or her gender, as it was the custom at the time to dress boys in long garments in Britain.

⁵³ Patricia K. Crimmin, 'Brenton, Sir Jahleel, first baronet (1770-1844)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edition, January 2008 [<http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/3326>, accessed 15 November 2012].

⁵⁴ Quoted in Henry Raikes (ed.), *Memoir of the Life and Services of Vice-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton, Baronet K.C.B.* (London, 1816), p. 209.

Our meeting was indeed one of pure, and unmixed felicity. My beloved wife forgot in a moment all her fatigue, and anxieties; and the recollection of captivity itself was instantly banished from my thoughts, or if I remembered it at all, it was as a blessing which brought me the happiness I enjoyed.⁵⁵

Incidentally, the visit of his sister Mary, who was fluent in French, was not simply fortuitous. She helped the couple settle in the village of Charmi, in the property of a member of the old noblesse, Monsieur de Beaumont.⁵⁶

Travelling with their servants and children, these women served a domestic purpose in the (re)construction of households abroad. The journey of Black servants and spouses from India and the Caribbean to France, such as Suzanne Miller with her '*femme de chambre négresse*' or Petrie Rudden, the Scottish wife of an East India Company officer, confirms the reconstruction of imperial households in Verdun.⁵⁷ The role these wives undertook offers an insight into the interlacing of the military and the domestic in the male captives' attempts to reproduce familiar patterns of sociability, especially in the 'mess', as suggested in the letters of John Hyslop, a Royal Navy purser, who wrote in 10 October 1804:

Mr Bell, Mr Eckford, Marine Officer, and myself have messed together ever since we came here, and about a week ago we had a new messmate joined us, which was Mrs Eckford from England. She was only 14 days from Gravesend. She is a very pleasant young Lady, it will be much more pleasant for us to have a lady to manage matters, although we made it out very well before as Mr. Eckford's servant was a very good cook and managed matters very well.⁵⁸

Whilst British wives 'managed matters', namely the financial and domestic maintenance of the mess, they also ensured sociability, through their presence at clubs, balls, which shows the extent of

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 210, 215.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 215.

⁵⁷ AMV, Uncatalogued box, Letter from the *sous-préfet* to the mayor of Verdun, Verdun, 4 July 1811. The case of mixed-race women will be analysed in the following chapter on charity provision and transnational networks.

⁵⁸ Langholm Digital Archives, Hyslop Papers, Letter from James Hyslop to his brother, Simon Hyslop, Verdun. 10 October 1804 [<http://www.langholmarchive.com/hyslopleters.php>, accessed 4 February 2013].

their role in what Elaine Chalus termed ‘social politics’.⁵⁹ Gentry women such as the Mrs Clives, Clarke, Aufrère, Fitzgerald, Watson and Lady Cadogan established fashionable salons in the upper town, whilst Mrs Concannon, the wife of an Irish faro bank businessman, organised grandiose masked balls in the Episcopal Palace.⁶⁰ Successive balls were given *by* and *for* the British ladies at Verdun, as advertised in the local newspaper, the *Narrateur de la Meuse*, which suggests the importance of their presence in the implantation of a ‘colony of captives’, in the words of the editor.⁶¹ Indeed, their presence along the race tracks in their ostentatious attire enabled the prisoners to preserve patterns of fashionable society. In England, the *Courier* reported a bachelor’s ball in Verdun, where

The ladies were dressed in a style much beyond what was even seen at Mrs Concannon’s great routs in London ... The Honorable Mrs Clive ... wore a Vandyke diadem profusely set round with jewels ... the Honorable Mrs Annesley ... wore a dress which cost at Paris one hundred and fifty guineas. Mrs Concannon had a beautiful bird of paradise feather, which cost twenty-five guineas.⁶²

Dress, taste and sociability became the social markers of British ladies in their attempts to distinguish themselves from French women.⁶³ A consideration of these interactions offers a significant addition to the categorisation of Sylvie Aprile. Indeed, whilst she did not examine the issue of the relations between female migrants and their counterparts in the receiving society, it seems that in parole detention such transnational interactions deeply impinged social and gender identities. ‘On our arrival the wives of the bourgeoisie were dressed like maidservants, and not a white stocking was to be seen amongst them’, noted RN Lieutenant William Henry Dillon, before praising the positive influence of British genteel ladies in gentrifying the fabric of the everyday in the town: ‘in a few months their whole costume was improved by silks and muslins. The shops which were nearly empty, were now crammed with articles for sale. The improvement of the town

⁵⁹ Elaine Chalus and Hannah Barker (eds), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (London, 1997) quoted in Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson (eds), *Women in British politics, 1760-1860: the Power of the Petticoat* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 10.

⁶⁰ Léon Monnier, *Les Anglais à Verdun, ou l’Art de ne Pas Payer Ses Dettes* (Bar-le-Duc, 1933), pp. 22-3.

⁶¹ ‘La colonie anglaise de Verdun’ in *Le Narrateur de la Meuse*, 8 July 1805.

⁶² *Courier*, 26 September 1805.

⁶³ Theories of fashion and taste as a key to distinction have been developed by Roland Barthes and Pierre Bourdieu.

was daily perceptible.⁶⁴ The theatre, the lodges in particular, formed a space where the distinction could be made apparent yet destabilised between two types of women. Under the title 'Gallantry', James Lawrence dedicated a chapter of his memoir to the subject, focusing particularly on the dress and status of the French sporting ladies, the Parisian mistresses of the Grand Tourists arrested in 1803 who followed them from the *Palais Royal* to Verdun:

There were a number of women, kept in a handsome, sometimes in a most expensive style, by our countrymen of fortune, who lived with them as the French say *maritalement*, like man and wife. The wardrobe of some of these beauties would have stored a milliner's shop. They regularly consulted the journals of fashion for every change in their costume. At the play house their Indian shawls, and their veils of Brussels lace, were negligently hung over the boxes, to the great envy and mortification of the citizen's wives and daughters; and even our English ladies were eclipsed by them in the elegance and expence [*sic*] of their toilette. Travelling rubs away our vulgar prejudices. Two-thirds of the boxes were let to the wives of Fontainebleau, as they were called; the English ladies occupied the other boxes, and every gentleman used to pass from one to the other, and pay his compliments indifferently to each; or placed between a *dame comme il faut*, and a *dame comme il en faut*.⁶⁵

The idiom '*la dame comme il en faut*' (the necessary woman), as opposed to '*la dame comme il faut*' (the upright woman), was a pun toying with the distinction between two female categories, which lay at the core of bourgeois conceptions of female virtue in nineteenth-century France.⁶⁶ These opposing social figures served to distinguish the female inhabitants of *le monde* and *le demi-monde* who competed through their dress and manners. The expressions were an attempt to culturally construct their places, which reflected both the emergence of 'the socially indeterminate female' in the post-1789 society and the concerns provoked by such indeterminacy.⁶⁷ Indeed, this

⁶⁴ Quoted in Clive Lloyd, *A History of Napoleonic and American Prisoners of War 1756-1816: Hulk, Depot and Parole* (2 vols, Woodridge, 2007), p. 320.

⁶⁵ James Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun or the English Detained in France* (2 vols, London, 1810), I, pp. 134-5. The trope of the '*dame comme il faut*' versus '*dame comme il en faut*' was taken up by Seacome Ellison in the 1830s and travel narratives published in the press in England and on the Continent in the 1850s. On the subject of intertextuality in memoirs, see chapter 7. Seacome Ellison, *Prison Scenes* (London, 1838), p. 25; *Musical world*, 18 February 1854; *Presse Médicale Belge*, 18 October 1857.

⁶⁶ Susan Hiner, *Accessories to Modernity: Fashion and the Feminine in Nineteenth-Century France* (Philadelphia, 2010), pp. 9-10.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

dialectical vision stemmed from an increasing link between social status and fashion as a form of belonging, following the ‘freedom of dress’ decree in 1793, which had made ‘everyone ... free to wear whatever clothing and accessories of his sex that he finds pleasing’.⁶⁸

The binary model of women ‘*comme il faut*’ and ‘*comme il en faut*’ has been traditionally associated with the emergence of mass consumer society in Parisian department stores between 1820 and 1850, where these figures combined and collided. Most historians have argued that they coincided with the rise of ‘protosociological *physiologies* and essays by authors such as Balzac, Dumas, Maurice Alhoy, and the Goncourt brothers ... in the genre referred to as *la littérature panoramique*’.⁶⁹ Susan Hiner has even argued that the pun on ‘*femme comme il en faut*’ was ‘invented by Balzac’, an assertion complicated by Lawrence’s memoir. Indeed, I am tempted to speculate here about the long term implications of his narrative of captivity – and more broadly the interactions between captives and captors he recorded – for conceptions of social hierarchies in nineteenth-century France. Admittedly, James Lawrence might have heard the expression at the depot. But he might have coined it himself, being known as a literary dilettante partial to puns. In any case, it seems likely that Balzac consulted the piece in preparation for *La femme de trente ans*, a novel dealing with a British parole prisoner and his interactions with a French bourgeois family under Napoleon.⁷⁰

British women’s self-fashioning and interactions with their French counterparts received an ambivalent response from the male captives, as evidenced by a letter of Alexander Don, who noted in 1804:

The English ladies here are rather below par. I get terrible quizzed [*sic*] by the march of their own sex, who are continually retailing malicious stories, told to them by their *couturiere* or their *marchande de robes*. Consequently they principally pour scorn upon the economy preserved in the dress of the English, which they take care to contrast with the elegance of their own, and tell you ‘*que ce n’est pas permis d’être ni avare que Madame telle et telle chose*’. We have certainly a bad specimen of our fair country

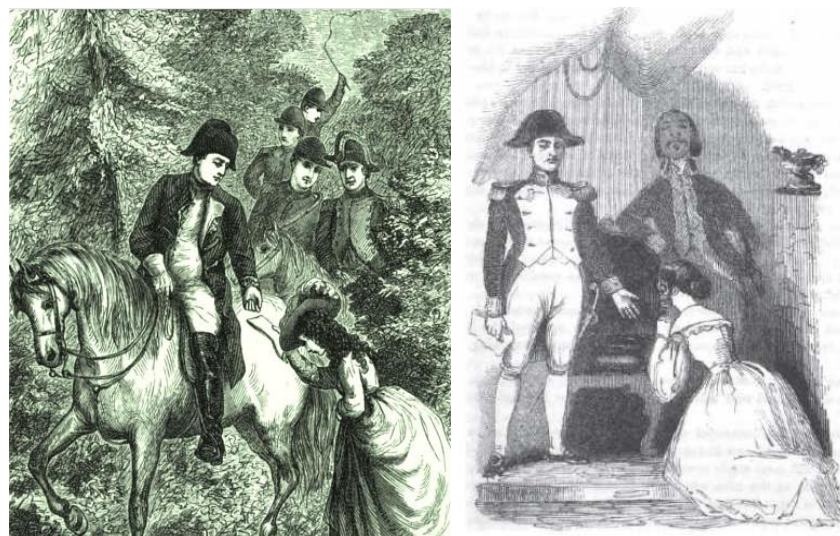
⁶⁸ ‘The Revolution successfully legitimized a consumer economy that had been emerging throughout the eighteenth century’. Ibid, p 17.

⁶⁹ Hiner, *Accessories to Modernity*, p.10. See chapter 7 on the panorama and life-writing.

⁷⁰ See chapter 7 on the popularity of Lawrence’s memoir and Balzac. Honoré de Balzac, *La Femme de Trente Ans* (Paris, 1869).

women, as they are for the most part ugly and vulgar, in short quite different in every respect from what you meet with in good society in England.⁷¹

This male assessment of British female society throws into relief the class antagonisms at play within the community of captives. Yet, despite disapproval of the luxury competition between genteel women at Verdun, what the male prisoners generally praised was their political activity through petitioning.



**Fig. 11: An., ‘With downcast eyes, and a lovely reverence Nerrissa presented her petition’
and ‘The petition’**

(Giberne, *Detained in France*, 1870; Cockton, *The sisters, or England and France*, 1844)

The first engraving on the left (Fig.11) adorned a novel by Agnes Giberne, a prolific Victorian author of children’s book, who, at the dawn of the Franco-Prussian War, published a historical fiction on the *détenus*.⁷² The novel illuminated a double change: first, the dramatic rise of female petitioning in nineteenth-century Britain, which Giberne witnessed whilst writing, and which Sarah Richardson has recently studied to ‘gauge women’s interaction with national politics’ after the

⁷¹ NAS, Montagu-Douglas-Scott papers, GD224/31/16/3, Letter from Alexander Don to Lord Dalkeith, Verdun, 6 July 1804.

⁷² In her preface, Agnes Giberne detailed her sources for the novel: ‘With regard to the treatment of the English *détenus* and prisoners in France, I have been chiefly indebted to three books – “A Picture of Verdun, or the English Detained in France, from the Portfolio of a *Détenu*,” published 1810. “Narrative of a Forced Journey through France and Spain as a Prisoner of War, in the years 1810 to 1814.” By Major-General Blayney; published 1814. “The Real State of France in 1809.” By Charles Sturt; published 1810. The exact agreement, in almost every particular, of these three separate and independent narratives, is very remarkable. A large number of the incidents described in the story are facts.’ See Agnes Giberne, *Detained in France: a Tale of the First French Empire* (London, 1871), p. iv; Joanne Shattock (ed.) *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature: 1800-1900* (Cambridge, 1999) p. 2389; Belinda Copson, ‘Giberne, Agnes (1845-1939)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* [<http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/58972>, accessed 3 March 2014].

official exclusion of women from the national franchise in the 1832 Reform Act.⁷³ Second, it suggests that a female culture of petitioning had precursors in the Napoleonic Wars, captivity reflecting and causing political awareness amongst female relatives of parole prisoners. Male authors equally praised the proactive politics of Napoleonic women in detention. Captives and the editor of the local newspaper near Verdun recognised their value for potential exchange negotiations, whilst Victorian novelists later utilised the image of female petitioners – especially bold yet modest petitioners securing the favours of Napoleon – as a textual and visual trope in their writings.⁷⁴

Whilst there were strong local and professional traditions of petitioning in the eighteenth century, amongst naval wives in particular, it seems that captivity further prompted political action amongst literate women. The diary of Catherine Exley, the wife of a captive redcoat, bears witness to this phenomenon. Catherine had learnt to read and write whilst following her husband's regiment during the Peninsular Wars. After an unsuccessful attempt to seek his remains after the battle of Victoria, she had resigned herself to mourning and a life of indigence back in Yorkshire, where she received a letter disclosing his situation as a captive in 1813.⁷⁵ She immediately liaised with his hierarchy and informed his 'colonel, who had not then received the returns from France, and was therefore ignorant of [her] husband's situation'.⁷⁶ The number of surviving petitions is limited.⁷⁷ Yet, they reveal a twofold process: petitions were *addressed* to women of power to seek their patronage for potential exchanges (such as the heiress of Württemberg or the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna of Russia) and *initiated* by women attached to civilian or military captives alike, who deployed wide familial connections to obtain their liberation, as evidenced by a petition written by Mrs Broughton for Captain Elrington to her father-in-law, Sir Thomas Broughton, a famous Anglican clergyman and author.⁷⁸

⁷³ Sarah Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Abingdon, 2013), p. 155.

⁷⁴ *Le Narrateur de la Meuse*, 25 February 1807, 14 December 1808; Henry Cockton, *The Sisters, or England and France: A Romance of Real Life* (London, 1844), p. 177.

⁷⁵ See timeline in the appendices.

⁷⁶ Elodie Duché, 'The Missing Spouse: The Wives of British Prisoners in France under Napoleon, Their Lives and Writings', in Rebecca Probert (ed.), *Catherine Exley's Diary: The Life and Times of an Army Wife in the Peninsular War* (Kenilworth, 2014), pp. 106-22.

⁷⁷ Examples of such petitions can be found at the British Library in the correspondence of a captive named Stephen Wilson, see BL, Add MS 45692, Correspondence and papers of Stephen Wilson, 1803-1830.

⁷⁸ Ruth Smith, 'Broughton, Thomas (1704-1774)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/3589, accessed 3 March 2014]; Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, I, p. 37

Through petitioning, women formed an integral part of the honour dynamics at the basis of parole detention in Napoleonic France. They were, to take up K.D. Reynolds's theory of the political role of eighteenth-century spouses, as 'incorporated wives', acting if not on an equal footing with their husbands, in an active partnership with them to alleviate the conditions of detention.⁷⁹ Napoleon was certainly flattered by the attention of these women, especially as he intended to cultivate his image as a messianic and enlightened Emperor. These women acted within the framework of a patriarchal structure. They utilised the tropes of petitions of mercy to their advantage by arguing poor health, financial difficulties, and most of all the importance of family – a value celebrated by Napoleon.⁸⁰ Whilst the petition represents in itself a space of direct political engagement with the male politicians they wished to influence, the way it was delivered reveals the significance of the female presence, since women did not hesitate to short-circuit protocol and deliver letters to Napoleon in person. Mrs. Chambers and her harassment method is probably the best example of the specificity of female petitioning in detention. She travelled to Paris and enquired about Napoleon's hunting quarters to present her request to restore her husband's parole.

The first time that the Emperor went to the *chasse*, Madame Chambers made her appearance. It was after the shooting was over [that]... Madame Chambers advanced and presented a petition to him. He inquired curiously who she was and what she wanted, and took no further notice of her. The next time the Emperor went to the *chasse* Madame Chambers again made an appearance, the same scene was re-enacted, with the same result. He went again a third time, and there also again appeared Madame Chambers with her petition.

'*Comment!*' exclaimed the Emperor furiously, '*toujours Madame Chambers!*'

⁷⁹ K.D. Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1998), quoted in Gleadle and Richardson (eds), *Women in British Politics*, p. 10.

⁸⁰ There is an extended literature on Napoleon's interactions with women and his perceptions of their place in society. See June Burton, *Napoleon and the Woman Question: Discourses of the Other Sex in French Education, Medicine, and Medical Law 1799-1815* (Lubbock, 2007); Waltraud Maierhofer, Gertrud Maria Rösch, and Caroline Bland (eds), *Women Against Napoleon: Historical and Fictional Responses to His Rise and Legacy* (Chicago, 2007); Jennifer Heuer, *The Family and The Nation: Gender and Citizenship in Revolutionary France, 1789-1830* (Ithaca, NY, 2005). On the gendered measures of the *Code Civil*, see Suzanne Desan, 'Qu'Est-Ce Qui Fait Un Père? Illégitimité et Paternité de l'An II au Code Civil', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences sociales*, 4(2002), pp. 935-64; André-Jean Arnaud, Jean-Louis Halpérin, and Renée Martinage, 'L'Esprit des Codes Napoléoniens', in Simone Goyard-Fabre (ed.), *L'État Moderne: Regards sur la Pensée Politique de l'Europe Occidentale entre 1715 et 1848* (Paris, 2000), pp. 227-243; Jacques-Olivier Boudon, "'Mon Code" fondements de civilisation' 14 (2000) *Grand Tour*, pp. 10-2.

'*Oui, Empereur, toujours Madame Chambers*', she replied imperturbably.⁸¹

Whilst the account was made by someone who did not witness the scene, the police records confirm the repetitive attempts of Mrs Chambers to obtain permission to reside in Paris, which she did in 1810.⁸² Furthermore, the case suggests the importance of the political *body* of these women, who like Mrs Tuthill used their beauty to charm the Emperor and elicit a positive response to their requests.⁸³ On the whole, the relative success of these petitions challenges the vision of women as disregarded by the Napoleonic State and reduced to the position of a subordinate actor in public and private life with the enforcement of the *Code Civil*.⁸⁴ This confirms recent research in showing how female and male patronage presented similar patterns, based on the common culture of petitioning in France and Britain.⁸⁵

Ultimately, through their political interest, women constituted a tangible link with the mother country, the familial and societal gaze, which proved problematic for certain prisoners involved in French espionage.⁸⁶ In 1810, the case of Dillon's complaint about the journey of his wife back home throws into relief the potentially political nature of the British women's migrations.

Mr Dillon, English prisoner at Verdun, has made it known that his wife has gone to England without his consent, and moreover without his knowledge; that she only informed him when she was about to get on the ship, and that she also took the children with her, who were at boarding school. A M. de Boisgelin advanced her 2000 francs for this journey. She wrote to a solicitor in Paris that she was leaving France because she was discontented. Mr Dillon believes however that she means to make it known in

⁸¹ A. M. W. Stirling (ed.), *The Letter Bag of Lady Elizabeth Spencer Stanhope* (2 vols, Whitefish, 2004), I, pp. 187-8.

⁸² AN, F/7/6541-1833, Certificate signed by Monsieur le Chevalier Bourdois, '*médecin des enfants*', Paris, 1810; Request from William Chambers to Napoleon, Paris, 26 January 1813.

⁸³ Kenneth Neill Cameron (ed.), *Shelley and His Circle 1773-1822* (Harvard, 1961), p. 191.

⁸⁴ See June Burton, *Napoleon and the Woman Question* (Lubbock, 2007).

⁸⁵ Katharine Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (London, 2011), p. 113; Benoît Agnès, 'Le Pétitionnaire Universel: les Normes de la Pétition en France et au Royaume-Uni Pendant la Première Moitié du XIX^e siècle', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 58:4 (2011), pp. 45-70; Benoît Agnès, 'Le Solliciteur et le Pétitionnaire: Infortunes et Succès d'Une Figure Sociale et Littéraire Française (Première Moitié du XIX^e Siècle)', *Revue Historique* 661:1 (2012), pp. 27-47.

⁸⁶ See chapter 4.

England that he has offered his service to France, and in doing so she would do him much wrong.⁸⁷

In this respect, it could be argued that British women were somehow free radicals navigating between the two countries, thus embodying the link with the mother country, its constraints and obligations. They spread news about the Verdun captives and transformed their localities and social circles in Britain into what Alain Cabantous termed ‘communities of intelligence’, which could affect the existing domestic reputation of the prisoners.⁸⁸ Yet, beyond their physical displacement, one object made this phenomenon tangible: the letter.

The correspondent: ‘weak ties’ and the power of the written word

This category includes not only the prisoners’ wives and fiancées who stayed in Britain during the detention, but other significant female kin such as mothers, sisters, nieces and cousins at home. Through letter-writing, letter-smuggling and gift-exchanges, the prisoners maintained emotional, cultural, spiritual and financial bonds with these women, which served to maintain social and masculine identities abroad.

Corresponding with Britain was relatively easy during the first three years of detention, as exemplified by the active correspondence of James Forbes, Lancelot Lee and John Hyslop.⁸⁹ From December 1803 to July 1804, Forbes sent bi-monthly letters to his sister in England, using the correspondence route of Bordeaux to Spain and Portugal, and the northern network to Bruges, Ostend and the *Meuse Inférieure*.⁹⁰ Such transactions greatly benefited from the temporary permissions certain captives, particularly scientists, obtained to reside in Paris and other provincial cities, and to resume cosmopolitan connections, develop their professional knowledge or improve

⁸⁷ ‘M. Dillon, prisonnier anglais au dépôt de Verdun, donne avis que sa femme vient de passer en Angleterre sans son consentement et à son insu ; qu’elle l’a seulement informé au moment qu’elle s’est embarquée, et qu’elle a emmené les enfants qui étaient dans une maison d’éducation. M. de Boisgelin lui a avancé 2000fr pour ce voyage. Elle a écrit à un avoué de Paris qu’elle quittait la France parce qu’elle était malheureuse. M. Dillon craint cependant qu’elle fasse connaître en Angleterre qu’il a offert ses services à la France et qu’elle ne lui cause beaucoup de torts’. Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, I, p. 129.

⁸⁸ See Alain Cabantous, *Dix Mille Marins face à l’Océan: Les Populations Maritimes de Dunkerque au Havre aux XVIIIe et XVIIIe Siècles (vers 1660-1794)* (Paris, 1991).

⁸⁹ John Parry-Wingfield (ed.), *Napoleon’s Prisoner: A Country Parson’s Ten-year Detention in France* (London, 2012); James Forbes, *Letters from France Written in the Years 1803 and 1804: Including a Particular Account of Verdun, and the Situation of the British Captives in that City* (2 vols, London, 1806).

⁹⁰ Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, I, p. 337.

their health.⁹¹ Yet, in November 1806, the postal service became a political instrument, serving the isolationist strategies of the French state in its attempt to stifle the British economy.⁹² The Berlin decree forbid all correspondence with Britain, and ordered the seizure of all ‘letters and parcels bound to England or addressed to an English person, or written in English’.⁹³ The Verdun captives were thus under close scrutiny: from then on, their letters were to be sent open to the authorities who decided whether or not to forward them to their addressees. Some letters had to be translated using prisoners as interpreters, which suggests the flaws in local application of the decree.

As early as December 1806, the prisoners circumvented this measure, and maintained their epistolary connections with the help of the inhabitants, hawkers in particular.⁹⁴ In 1807, Edmund Temple was found corresponding under the name of Baudot-Barthe, a local tradesman.⁹⁵ A clandestine network seems to have flourished until 1809, as Thatcher declared having been able to correspond with England through the network established by Cunning, Willison and Madame Gallais in the nearby village of Saint-Servan.⁹⁶ A few days later, Velasquez, a bookseller, was caught sending letters and money to Marlott.⁹⁷ Despite these findings, the French state failed to put an end to such clandestine commerce, the Ministry of Police still complaining about the inefficiency of the local authorities in 1811.⁹⁸ These networks remained unmanageable, partly due to the fact that some were initiated from Britain by French *émigrés*, as is suggested by the letters of Brigadier General de Turtar, of Little Queen Street in London, who found a *Verdunois* willing to transmit letters and money to Lieutenant Colonel Stanhope, on behalf of his father.⁹⁹

⁹¹ See chapter 4 about the prices paid for these favours.

⁹² Jean-Claude Quennevat, ‘Napoléon et les Télécommunications’, *Revue du Souvenir Napoléonien*, 280 (1975), pp. 2-18.

⁹³ ‘*Tout commerce et toute correspondance avec les îles britanniques sont interdits. En conséquence, les lettres ou paquets adressés ou en Angleterre ou à un Anglais, ou écrits en langue anglaise, n’auront pas cours aux Postes et seront saisis*’, in ‘Lettre n°11283, décret, camp impérial de Berlin, 21 novembre 1806’, in *Correspondance de Napoléon 1er, Publiée par Ordre de l’Empereur Napoléon III* (19 vols, Paris, 1863), XIII, p.556.

⁹⁴ ‘*Les prisonniers anglais, pour éluder l’exécution du décret impérial du 21 Novembre, cherchent à se procurer des intermédiaires, sous les noms desquels ils puissent entretenir leur correspondance...Ils en trouveront facilement dans Verdun, ayant diverses liaisons d’intérêt et de société avec plusieurs habitants de la ville*’. Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, III, p.208.

⁹⁵ William Story, *A Journal Kept in France, During a Captivity of More than Nine Years, Commencing the 14th Day of April 1805 and Ending the 5th Day of May 1814* (London, 1815), p. 98; Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, III, p. 640.

⁹⁶ Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, V, p. 28.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, V, p. 81.

⁹⁸ ‘*Il paraît constant ... que plusieurs habitants de Verdun se prêtent à faire parvenir furtivement des lettres aux prisonniers de guerre*’, ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Requête du ministère de Police générale au Commandant de Verdun’, Paris, 24 May 1811.

⁹⁹ ‘I have found a man at Verdun who might be trusted to give necessaries to the prisoner, Lt. Col. Stanhope, provided by his father Mr. Spencer Stanhope’. West Yorkshire Archive Service, Bradford, Spencer-Stanhope Manuscripts, SpSt/6/1/142, Letter of Brigadier General de Turtar, London, 1811.

Arguably, the main reason why epistolary containment failed remains the difficulties the French authorities encountered in policing the migrations of British women. Indeed, the most important contribution to letter-smuggling was that of British women, who, by travelling back and forth the Channel, served as correspondence agents for their male counterparts. 'I very gladly take my pen to embrace the present opportunity of writing unto you which is by way of some English women who have got their passports to return to England', wrote Captain Nicholas Lelean on 23 June 1809.¹⁰⁰ His case was not isolated as suggested by the recurring concerns of the French Secret Police that British women might transmit information and political tracts in these letters.¹⁰¹ Whilst the French customs appeared rather inefficient; some letters were occasionally intercepted, such as that of Captain Foggo, which contained information on maritime watch-making.¹⁰²

Women also carried objects and tokens of affection with them, hence ensuring emotional bonds between prisoners and women at home. By this means, Alexander Don sent a Parisian dress to Lady Dalkeith: 'Mrs Concannon left this place for England last Monday, she has taken with her a gown which I hope D.Y. Dalkeith will do me the favour of accepting, it is black lace, with embroidery according to the newest Parisian fashion, it will I think suit her particularly well as you know how black becomes her. That kind of gown is worn in general with a *par dessous*, of white satin.'¹⁰³ If this exchange of gifts suggests how affection could be demonstrated through material culture, the situation was not limited to romantic connections, since the dress in question equally served to maintain the patronage of Lord Dalkeith, an M.P. Don later petitioned to obtain an exchange with a Frenchman through Lord Melville.¹⁰⁴ Through this, Don also subtly cultivated a friendship with

¹⁰⁰ Royal Institute of Cornwall, Courtney Library, the Wesleyans of Mevagissey papers, Correspondence of Nicholas Lelean, 1806-1813.

¹⁰¹ Memoirs of captivity bear witness to their role as secret correspondents. 'Sir Thomas Wallace', wrote Dillon, 'with whom I was on most friendly terms, was obliged to send his kept mistress home, on urgent affairs. She kindly took charge of all letters relating to me, undertaking to deliver them, herself, at the Admiralty. That task she performed with the strictest punctuality'. See Michael Lewis, *Napoleon's British captives* (London, 1962), pp. 34-5; 'As the communication have been shut for some time, I have neither had the opportunity of writing or hearing from you. I now embrace the opportunity by a Lady who has got leave to return to England ... it is by a Lady who is returning to England that I send it'. Langholm Digital Archives, Hyslop Papers, Letter from James Hyslop to his brother, Simon Hyslop, Verdun. 28 February 1807, 18 April 1812. [<http://www.langholmarchive.com/hyslopletters.php>, accessed 4 February 2013].

¹⁰² 'Foggo, écossais, interrogé sur une lettre énigmatique trouvée sur une Anglaise à Morlaix, prouve qu'elle a traité à une machine utile pour les montres marines. Berthout, Lepaute et Bréguet font son éloge.' in Hauterive (ed.), *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, III, p. 508, Gotteri (ed.), *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, VII, p. 205

¹⁰³ NAS, Montagu-Douglas-Scott papers, GD224/31/16/15, Letter from Alexander Don to the Earl of Dalkeith, Verdun, May 18th 1806.

¹⁰⁴ NAS, Montagu-Douglas-Scott papers, GD224/31/16/3, Letter from Alexander Don to Lord Dalkeith, 7 June 1807; 'Montagu Scott, Charles William Henry, Earl of Dalkeith (1772-1819)', *The history of parliament online* [<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/montagu-scott-charles-william-henry-1772-1819>, accessed 15 March 2014]. See also 'Alexander Don (1779-1826)', *The history of parliament online*

Dalkeith's father, the Duke of Buccleuch, in the hope of competing for the Roxburghshire constituency on his return.

The last example suggests that, in the context of detention abroad, female acquaintances formed 'weak ties' through which captives could maintain political patronage in Britain.¹⁰⁵ The expression is derived from the work of the sociologist Mark Granovetter, who differentiated two types of social linkage: the 'strong ties' of friendship and love, and the 'weak ties' of acquaintance.¹⁰⁶ Weak ties proved more powerful, particularly in times of absence, as rumours spread more widely by their intermediary.¹⁰⁷ The mere fact that every letter or gift addressed to female acquaintances by the Verdun captives contained a list of names of persons to be saluted by them on the prisoners' behalf, reveals the importance of their role as social mediators connecting them to greater networks of information and patronage. Listing 'friends' at the bottom of a letter was a code of the genre, and served to end letters irrespectively of the genders of both the addressee and the scrivener.¹⁰⁸ Yet, what appears remarkable is that women were the recipients of a correspondence to be mediated by third parties: kin, friends and neighbours of captives at Verdun. Indeed, their letters were not merely *texts* but what Gary Schneider termed '*sociotexts*', namely compositions conceived to address more than one recipient, and to circulate amongst groups of people whom Schneider termed 'epistolary communities'.¹⁰⁹ Read aloud, described orally by messengers, given and copied for friends, these letters had a complex '*horizons d'attente*'. Indeed, whilst the author entrusted the recipients to respond with the 'news from home', he had to satisfy a set of expectations not only from his

[<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/don-alexander-1779-1826>, accessed 15 March 2014]. On the political career of Don and its return to Britain, see chapter 6.

¹⁰⁵ Mark S. Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', *American Journal of Sociology* 78:6 (1973), pp. 1360-80. See chapter 5 on Catholicism and inter-faith networks for a further engagement with this theory.

¹⁰⁶ The argument developed here is inspired by the study of female correspondence to sailors conducted by Renaud Morieux in a presentation delivered at the IHR. Renaud Morieux, 'Women at War: French Prisoners in England and Family Relations in the Eighteenth Century', IHR seminar series, London, 20 May 2013.

¹⁰⁷ See example of Mrs. Dillon mentioned above.

¹⁰⁸ For example, see the correspondence of John Hyslop recently published by a descendant. Dorothy Hyslop Booth (ed.), *Shepherd, Sailor and Survivor: the Life and Letters of James Hyslop, RN, 1764-1853* (Inverness, 2010).

¹⁰⁹ The letters were sociotexts 'in the sense that they were collective compositions purposely conceived to circulate among groups of people' whom Schneider defines as 'epistolary communities'. In other words, letters were addressed to more than one recipient, read aloud to wide audiences, explained orally by messengers, given to friends and copied. See Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolary: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Newark, 2005), pp. 15,22,102

immediate female reader, but also that of a wider audience: an extended circle of family, friends and neighbours.¹¹⁰

Through collective letter-reading, women maintained the place of the absent male captive in an extended circle in his home locality. This is particularly evident in the letters of Nicholas and Catherine Lelean, a devout Methodist couple of Huguenot heritage in Mevagissey, Cornwall. The son of a ship-builder, Nicholas Lelean was captured by a French privateer when serving as master of the 'Seven Brothers' brig in 1805. In Verdun, the correspondence he kept with his wife enabled him to ensure continuity with his home parish and former everyday life.¹¹¹ Catherine acted as an anchor in the neighbourhood by mediating her husband's role in a well-established Cornish epistolary network syncretizing merchant and religious interests.¹¹² Between 1808 and 1809, their letters transited via John Pearce, a merchant in Megavissey who was an equally devout Methodist, as evidenced by his subscription to the *Essay on the Immateriality and Immortality of the Human Soul* by Samuel Drew, a Cornish Methodist theologian.¹¹³ This explains Nicholas Lelean's eagerness to utilise the letter to remember him to his 'friends' and passed on information from other Cornish prisoners and detained members of his crew.¹¹⁴ Though private, the letters were addressed to a wider audience: the Cornish Methodist community. In October 1809, Catherine wrote: 'Mr Moor ... had your letter and read it in the Chapel. It rejoiced his Soul to hear how the work of God did prosper among you. Your letter have [*sic*] been carried far and near and many ardent prayers is put up to heaven for the preservation of your body and the prosperity of your Soul. May the Lord crown your Labour with great success. Amen.' During his nine years of captivity, her husband held prayer

¹¹⁰ The porosity of the social circles of family, friends and neighbours in eighteenth-century Britain has been demonstrated by the seminal work of Naomi Tadmor, which will be further discussed in the following chapter on 'charitable connections'. Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001).

¹¹¹ Some of these letters survived in the family collections. Royal Institute of Cornwall, Courtney Library, the Wesleyans of Mevagissey papers, Correspondence of Nicholas Lelean, 1806-1813.

¹¹² Cornish Methodists were well-known for forming a solid local network. See Jeremy Lake, Jo Cox and Eric Berry (eds), *Diversity and Vitality: the Methodist and Nonconformist Chapels of Cornwall* (Truro, 2001); Luke Truro, 'Revivalism in Theory and Practice: The Case of Cornish Methodism', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 37 (1986), pp. 603-619; Cathryn Pearce, *Cornish Wrecking, 1700-1860: Reality and Popular Myth* (London, 2010), pp. 116, 208-11.

¹¹³ 'Subscribers', in Samuel Drew, *An Essay on the Immateriality and Immortality of the Human Soul Founded Solely on Physical and Rational Principles* (Saint Austell, 1802), p. 264. A native of Cornwall, Samuel Drew was called the 'Cornish metaphysician' owing to his works on the human soul and the deity of Christ.

¹¹⁴ 'James Dunn is very well and gives his love to his wife and family. Thomas and Nicholas is well and gives their love to thire friends ... You give my love to brothers and sisters and all from your loving husband.' Royal Institute of Cornwall. Courtney Library, the Wesleyans of Mevagissey papers, Letter from Nicholas Lelean to Catherine, dated 23rd May 1806, and sent from Arras, before his march to Verdun.

meetings for his fellow prisoners in Verdun, hence resuming the pastoral role he had as a Class Leader and a Trustee of the chapel of Megavissey.¹¹⁵

Whilst there is an evident and well-studied element of performance in letter-writing, especially when religion is a focal point, Nicholas Lelean's captive letters bear witness to a double process of spiritual awakening stemming from his separation from his wife and a wider preaching performance for his local community.¹¹⁶ Writing to John Pearce in 1809, his emotional account of Catherine progressively took on an incantatory rhythm, reproducing biblical phraseology: 'I can judge her feelings and distress of mind on my account from my own account of her and my dear Children and how it does rejoice my heart when I hear from them and that of their being in health & I hope this will find you & them in the Enjoyment of that great Blessing, a Blessing we can never be thankful enough for unto that God whose mercy & loveling [*sic*] kindness are Extended to all his Creatures the unthankful as well as the thankful are partakers of his Bounties the eyes of all are up unto him and he giveth unto Each their portion of meat in due Season ...'¹¹⁷ The incantation continued in the following thirteen lines, without any interruption by punctuation, with suggests a fusion of the oral and the written in the letter as the 'universal' language of the Bible merged with his own voice.¹¹⁸ The identification of his faith with his attachment to his wife in adversity materialised upon his return. When taking up the family shipbuilding business, he named a 94-ton schooner after her as a blessing for further voyages at sea.

The epistolary exchanges of this Methodist couple suggest that the letter became a recipient of a mystical connection beyond captivity and physical separation. Indeed, their letters were not solely

¹¹⁵ Ibid., Letter from Nicholas Lelean, Verdun, 23 June 1809: 'I rejoice to say that we still enjoy our Religious and other privileges as heretofore and that the work of the Lord still prospers amongst us.' See chapter 5 on religion.

¹¹⁶ The question of letter-writing and performance has attracted an increasing attention amongst historians and literary scholars. See Alison Searle, 'Writing Authority in the Interregnum: the Pastoral Letters of Richard Baxter', in Anne Dunan-Page and Clotilde Prunier (eds), *Debating the Faith: Religion and Letter Writing in Great Britain, 1550-1800* (New York and London, 2013), pp. 49-50; David Barton and Nigel Hall (eds), *Letter Writing as A Social Practice* (Amsterdam, 2000); Rebecca Earle (ed.), *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945* (London, 1999).

¹¹⁷ The sentence continues: '... but his promises are in a more particular manner promised to the Household of Faith & to those that Call upon him (in security of Soul & he hath said for an Encouragement that all such) shall not want any good thing for He knows what is the Best for Comforts which are pleasing to our nature & to deprive us of the Company of those that are so Dear to the heart by a natural tie he Can abundantly make up for the Life of all earthly comforts by sending his Holy Spirit the Comforter which bringeth that peace which the world cannot give nor take away and He hath said he doth not afflict willingly or grive [*sic*] the Children of man and when he sees in his infinite wisdom till then is a need be for him to draw on the Bad [*sic*] it is for our benefit and we must acknowledge that it is for life.' Royal Institute of Cornwall. Courtney Library, the Wesleyans of Megavissey papers, Letter from Catherine Lelean to Captain Nicholas Lelean, Megavissey, 8 October 1809. This passage refers to the *Psalms* (104:27 and 145:15 in particular), which further suggests the incantatory nature of the letter.

¹¹⁸ On the inwardness and outwardness languages of the Bible and its acceptance in early modern languages in England has been explored by Naomi Tadmor. See Naomi Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000).

meant to be informative but to convey mutual prayers celebrating their spiritual union beyond temporal concerns.¹¹⁹ In particular, the language of elevated suffering developed by Catherine in her letters illuminates the interwoven marital and religious concerns of spouses separated by war. ‘My dear I hope you have not think [*sic*] that I have neglect writing you’, she wrote in 1809, ‘It is long since I have had any possibility of forwarding your letters. When I consider the long absence and distance that we are form each other I feel much but tho we are absent in the Body I trust we are present at the throne of grace. There we find a sweet submission to all the dispensation of his Providence awareness [*sic*] in all things’.¹²⁰ This passage further reveal how women acted as religious mediators, particularly in maritime communities where, as Alain Cabantous noted for the French littoral, specific forms of ‘maritime Christianity’ emerged as communities contemplated the daily perils of dying at sea.¹²¹ Whilst the ‘presence-in-absence trope’ permeated many other prisoners’ correspondence – captivity standing as a test of affection in lovers’ discourse – the Lelean letters reveal that this was not merely a literary archetype, as detention offered a space for spiritual emotions to be rearticulated, if not reinforced.¹²²

Indeed, put to the test by captivity and the prospect of a long separation from her husband, Catherine’s devotion was revitalised and crystallised in the process of writing to him: ‘I find it to be a very great trial to my mind, but we must submit to all the trials of this Life happy for us when we can say the will of the Lord be done at some seasons. I can rejoice under a scense [*sic*] of his Love but through care and anxiety about the thing of this life I feel my mind beclouded but I bless the Lord it is the desire of my Soul to live devoted to him’.¹²³ The recurring negative thoughts counteracted by the ‘but’ of a second life in the realm of God is a constant feature in her writing, which suggests a spiritual repositioning within the space of the letter and the act of writing. The indirect experience of captivity led her to further reflect on her ‘Soul’, her religious selves – the

¹¹⁹ ‘I hope the present will meet you the same as my daily prayers to heaven for you...My dear I hope you have not thought that I have neglected writing you. It is long since I have had any possibility of forwarding you letters, when I consider the long absence and distance that we are from each other I feel much but tho we are absent in the Body I trust we are present at the throne of the Grace.’ Royal Institute of Cornwall, Courtney Library, the Wesleyans of Megavissey papers, Letter from Catherine Lelean to Captain Nicholas Lelean, Megavissey, 8 October 1809.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ This point will be further developed in chapter 5 on the question of Books of Common Prayer published by prisoners at Verdun and the provision of relief to captives in chapter 3. See Alain Cabantous and Françoise Hildesheimer, *Foi Chrétienne et Milieux Maritimes, XVe- XXe Siècles* (Paris, 1989).

¹²² Renaud Morieux, ‘Women at War: French Prisoners in England and Family Relations in the Eighteenth Century’, IHR Seminar Series, London, 20 May 2013.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

temporal and the spiritual – though the melancholic contemplation of the passing of time, the transience of happiness and the growing mortality in her neighbourhood.¹²⁴ Such discourse on intertwined marital and spiritual hardships in displacement is to be found in the writings of other spouses of dissenting religious groups.¹²⁵ Evangelist couples, in particular, conceived captivity as a cross to bear on the path of Providence, an obstacle nurturing their faiths.¹²⁶ Verbalising the temporal distance was a transformative spiritual act, which became apparent in the difficulties of sending the letter itself.

Indeed, despite ingenious clandestine networks, the letters took some time to arrive, from two months to almost a year.¹²⁷ Distance from home was hence measured less in mileage than in time. That time, the time of absence, was not only a catalyst for emotional bonds but for the stability of households in financial and educational terms, especially for such modest families of naval men and shipbuilders. In maritime communities, sailors' lengthy absences made it necessary for female companions to develop independent sources of income.¹²⁸ As Margarett Lincoln has recently argued, the resourcefulness of these women, along with letter-writing if they were literate, was supported by the Admiralty to maintain morale amongst members of the service separated from their home.¹²⁹ The activity of these women thus developed patterns of consumption, along with gendered and religious solidarities in their localities. In the case of Catherine Lelean, the absence of her husband enabled her to develop her pastoral role as a Methodist teacher. She kept a little Dame school for children, 'a few scholars' as she called them, in Mevagissey during the war.¹³⁰ Female

¹²⁴ She voiced these metaphysical concerns most vividly in this passage: 'There is nothing else that can yeald [*sic*] in any lasting happiness for how short the duration of all things for everything.' The period of the peak of smuggling trade in Mevagissey and the population was rapidly increasing (2500 inhabitants were recorded in 1809).

¹²⁵ This resonates with other types of writings such as that of itinerant Quaker female preachers during the period. See Naomi Pullin, 'In pursuit of heavenly guidance: the religious context of Catherine Exley's life and writings', in Probert (ed.) *Catherine Exley's Diary*, pp. 76-91.

¹²⁶ Other spouses of dissenting religious groups, particularly Evangelists and more sporadically Quakers, perceived captivity and separation as an obstacle furthering their faiths. See chapter 3 on evangelism and charity, and chapter 6 on the question of transnational interactions in a post-Revolution Catholic society. See Probert (ed.) *Catherine Exley's Diary*, pp. 106-122.

¹²⁷ Langholm Digital Archives, Hyslop Papers, Letter from James Hyslop to his brother, Simon Hyslop, Verdun, 18 April 1812. [<http://www.langholmarchive.com/hyslopleters.php>, accessed 4 Feb. 2013].

¹²⁸ Margaret Hunt, 'Women and the Fiscal-Imperial State in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries' in Kathleen Wilson (ed.) *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840*. (Cambridge, 2004), p.31.

¹²⁹ 'These complicated family lives', she observed, 'had a broader impact on society, as women's work, both inside and outside the home, helped the Admiralty to keep men at sea for long periods'. Margarett Lincoln, *Naval Wives and Mistresses* (Stroud, 2011), p. 13.

¹³⁰ Royal Institute of Cornwall, Courtney Library, the Wesleyans of Mevagissey papers, Letter from Catherine Lelean to Nicholas Lelean, 8 October 1809.

preaching was flourishing amongst Methodist communities in Cornwall during the period.¹³¹ Given this context, it is then perhaps not surprising to observe the rapid development of Catherine's activities. Her husband publicly recognised her capacity to keep the family from hardship, with the money she earned from her teaching. 'You say you hope my wife will be able to bring the younger ones', he wrote to Peace before claiming that 'they are all Tractable Good Children and Obedient to their Dear Mother'. Catherine arranged the employment of their sons, Nicholas in the local shipwright and Thomas in Liverpool under the aegis of his uncle, along with the education of the youngest children: 'Ann is with me & is at Mr. Pearce's seller [*sic*] this year & last. Peter is at Mr. William's School. William & Kitty I tutor myself'.¹³² This transferred patriarchal role was coupled with increased financial responsibilities, as Catherine distributed what she called 'shares' to the household amongst the different young members of the family: she 'received' four shillings from Nicholas' labour and five from that of Thomas each week.¹³³

Mothers were also endowed with greater financial responsibilities in absence of their sons. For instance, the power of attorney John Aytoun, a civil detainee from the Scottish landed gentry, signed at Verdun enabled his mother to obtain 'full power to manage and transact all [his] affairs ... in the same way and as validly as [he] could do [himself] if present.'¹³⁴ This decision did not merely ensure the stability of this gentry family, but enabled the captive son to develop a rhetoric of manly sacrifice, 'having never indulged in the smallest comfort whether luxurious or effeminate, and would not at the moment think [himself] unhappy in being condemned for [his] whole life to the homely fare of a Scottish peasant.'¹³⁵ Such an interaction positioned himself in a place of authority in comparison to his brother, cultivating family dynamics from afar.

¹³¹ Jennifer M. Lloyd, *Women and the Shaping of British Methodism: Persistent Preachers, 1807-1907* (Manchester, 2010); Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge, 2008).

¹³² Royal Institute of Cornwall. Courtney Library, the Wesleyans of Mevagissey papers, Letter from Catherine Lelean to Nicholas Lelean, 8 October 1809.

¹³³ 'In respect of my situation of Life you may judge we do not abound but I thank the Lord that we have our fill daily. You expressed a desire to have Nicholas bound to a Shipwrite I shall soon see about i the have been to seen. This season there have been very little fish caught at Megavissey. His share will be nothing. I receive for his labour 4 shillings for week as for Thomas has been with his Uncle John in Mr. Shephards employ he is now bound for Liverpool in a large cutter for sale. I feel such uneasy for from it shall have indenters upon them. I trust the Lord will preserve him and bring him to me in safety while he was working about rigging I receive 5 shillings for week'. *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ NAS, GD1/42/2/7, Power of Attorney by John Aytoun of Inchdarmy and letter to his mother Verdun, 10 January 1813.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*; Matthew Forster Conolly, *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Men of Fife of Past and Present Times* (Edinburgh, 1866), p. 19.

Female embodiments: captive daughters and fictional women

On the other end of the familial spectrum, children born or educated in captivity formed an integral part of the maintenance and renegotiation of prisoners' place abroad. Because this thesis aims to investigate the 'passage to imprisonment' and reflect on the idea of 'experiencing' parole captivity in the long term, I will explore the question of the captive daughters in the chapter on 'homecomings' in order to appreciate the problematic identity of these children in the *longue durée*, their education into womanhood and society in detention and its consequences for their captive parents. In this section, I will focus on what I shall term 'female embodiments', namely the influence of theatrical and fictional women on the experience, representation and interpretation of captivity by the male prisoners.

First, it is important to emphasize that women were not solely contributing to the social performances of their male counterparts in the theatre pit, as mentioned above. Their influence spread 'outside the box', on stage as characters and/or actresses in the captive plays.¹³⁶ 'The intended play for Wed. next is "The Fair Penitent"', noted Lee in 1805, 'the penitential part being by the mother of five children, in person, make and shape *inferioris ordinis commensalis*, in language *deterioris*. How the labours of the night can be laboured thro' with such subjects a future letter must disclose'.¹³⁷ Whilst Revd Lee nurtured disparaging views of female acting in captivity – especially in regard to the morality of a mother incarnating a seduced woman, and its implications for the charitable donations the event aimed to collect – it appears significant that the Verdun prisoners chose to stage what was then known as a 'she-tragedy'.¹³⁸ Indeed, the script was an adaptation by Rowe of a Restoration tragedy in blank verse entitled *The Fatal Dowry*. Whilst the original 'concentrate[d] largely on the legal and political affairs of the cuckolded husband', Rowe's version focused on the infidelity of Calista (the eponym discussed by Lee), thus making the play a vehicle for female performance.¹³⁹ Various literary scholars have noted that the play marked new attitudes towards women on stage, which accompanied the rise of domestic tragedy and the popularity of

¹³⁶ Susan C. Harris, 'Outside the Box: The Female Spectator, The Fair Penitent, and the Kelly Riots of 1747', *Theatre Journal* 57: 1 (2005), pp. 33-55.

¹³⁷ Lee, *A Country Parson's Ten-Year Detention*, p. 47.

¹³⁸ 'She-tragedy' was a fashionable genre at the time when Rowe supposedly coined the phrase. See Tumir Vaska, 'She-tragedy and it's men: conflict and form in *The Orphan* and *The Fair Penitent*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 30:3 (1990), pp. 411-28.

¹³⁹ In the original production of *The Fatal Dowry*, all the female roles were played by young men, since women did not appear on the English stage until the Restoration era. See Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama 1660-1700* (Cambridge, 1992) pp. 124-7; Jean Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (Ithaca, NY, 2006).

female *Bildungsroman* such as Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa*.¹⁴⁰ The play had indeed been a wide success throughout the century, satisfying both male and increasingly female critics.¹⁴¹

Given this context, it is perhaps not surprising that most of the plays performed by captives revolved around key female characters. Dryden's comedy *Marriage à la mode*, revived by Hogarth's painting in the late eighteenth century, was popular amongst prisoners, who staged it three times between 1804 and 1806. It combined two interwoven plots, the Restoration comedy of manners and the conventions of romantic tragicomedy, in a courtly intrigue on the 'love-honor conflicts' of the female characters Doralice and Melantra, which questioned the existence of love outside marriage.¹⁴² The plot strongly resonated with the prisoners' concerns about the validity of their unions with French women, which, in the first years of detention, were not recognised by the Anglican Church.¹⁴³ In the same vein, the *Beaux Stratagem*, staged the romantic adventures of two beaux on the outlook for a rich heiress to repair their fortunes, a project complicated by the alluring Dorinda.¹⁴⁴ The *Revenge* and the *Fair Penitent* followed the codes of the Restoration 'revenge drama', in which the passion and wrongs of women formed the pillars of moral and political intrigues.¹⁴⁵

Most notably, these plays were not always performed by female actors in Verdun. Male captives dressed as women to interpret them. Indeed, whilst many historians have mused about female cross-dressing as an entry to the Naval and Army services during the Napoleonic Wars, less has been written about such practices amongst male and captive communities during the period. Recent investigations in theatre studies, eighteenth-century macaroni clothing and analyses of the military 'homo-social' have revealed that naval men, in particular, developed traditions of gender inversions through theatricals aboard war and merchant vessels, some of them packing dresses during

¹⁴⁰ Its hero, Lothario, besides giving a new word for an attractive rake to the English language, was apparently the prototype of Lovelace, the hero of Samuel Richardson's novel *Clarissa*.

¹⁴¹ It was praised by critics as demanding as Samuel Johnson, who wrote: 'there is scarcely any work of any poet so interesting by the fable and so delightful in the language'. See Benjamin Griffith Brawley, *A Short History of English Drama* (New York, 1921), p. 158. As mentioned in chapter 1, these plays were extremely popular, which made the plays inward-looking performances for captives. They did not perform for novelty, they performed for themselves.

¹⁴² Earl A. Reitan, *An Age of Achievement: Politics and Culture in Eighteenth Century England* (Bloomington, US, 2010); Edward Tomarken, *Genre and Ethics: the Education of an Eighteenth-Century Critic* (London, 2002), p. 189.

¹⁴³ I will develop this point in chapter 6 on the return and the captivity of the heart.

¹⁴⁴ Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, "'The Beaux Stratagem': a Production Analysis", *Theatre Journal* (1982) 34:1, pp. 77-95.

¹⁴⁵ Misty Sabrina Krueger, "'The Last Dear Drop of Blood": Revenge in Restoration Tragic Drama' (PhD thesis, University of Tennessee, 2010), p. 5.

shipments.¹⁴⁶ These traditions of gender transgression continued on the panoptic stage, with the support of female actors in Verdun, as suggested by RN Lieutenant Richard Langton, who wrote that

the theatre (rather a neat building) afforded opportunity for English amateur performances ... The female characters were taken by the younger and more slender, having a taste for theatricals; they were attired, or as they termed it “rigged out” by women. Had steps and gestures accorded with the correctness of the costumes, those performances would have gone off with more éclat, as it was, the change of the pantaloons for the petticoat, appeared excessively inconvenient. In the green room, there was no want of restoratives, liquids from champagne to brandy were amply provided, owing to this, a little over acting was occasionally perceptible, putting aside all gravity when the part ought to have been tragic.¹⁴⁷

The general state of inebriation suggests the ‘carnavalesque’ nature of the performance, which, through humour and inversion of gender norms, turned detention into a diversion.¹⁴⁸

The plays, songs and poems penned by the captives about their detention confirm the prevalence of femininity in the representation and interpretation of the experience. In 1813, James Lawrence, a former captive and escapee, published a play entitled *The Englishman at Verdun or, The Prisoner of Peace*. This was clearly a continuation of his memoir, as it was published with the same epitaph by Virgil and by the same publisher.¹⁴⁹ What appears striking in this play, and other plays penned by British captives as opposed to productions staged by French POWs in Britain, is the social

¹⁴⁶ New work suggests the importance of theatricals in the naval everyday and the commerce of dresses in preparation for shipments. Christopher McKee, *Sober Men and True: Sailor Lives in the Royal Navy, 1900-1945* (Cambridge MA and London, 2002); Julia Swindells and David Francis Taylor (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre 1737-1832* (Oxford, 2014); David Worrall, *Celebrity, Performance, Reception: British Georgian Theatre as Social Assemblage* (Cambridge, 2013); Michael Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation: Jews and Other Outlandish Englishmen in Georgian Britain* (Philadelphia, 2010).

¹⁴⁷ Richard Langton, *Narrative of a Captivity in France from 1809 to 1814* (2 vols, Liverpool, 1836), I, pp. 254-5.

¹⁴⁸ *Carnavalesque* is a term used in the English translations of works written by the Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin, which refers to a literary mode that subverts and liberates the assumptions of the dominant style or atmosphere through humor and chaos. See Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London, 1986); Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington, 1941).

¹⁴⁹ The influence of the publishing industry on narratives of captive will be discussed in chapter 7. The preface made the link obvious: ‘This Drama, may either be considered a distinct work, or form an additional volume to the *Picture of Verdun*. It was written at Verdun, in 1806, when the author saw his fellow-prisoners every day subject to some aggravated imposition, humiliated by some fresh indignity, or oppressed by some new act of violence ... Though the sufferings of our countrymen have been already offered to the public in the *Picture of Verdun*, they may strike the imagination more forcibly when collected in a dramatic focus. Besides, as many are desirous of peace, in order to flock over to Paris, they may, in the perusal of this Drama, anticipate the pleasure that they will derive from the state of society there; and it may be useful, that those, who are more inclined to exercise their hospitality at home, than to expose their follies abroad, may know the materials of that new noblesse which will swarm over to St. James’, and sport their new coronets at the watering-places in our island.’ James Lawrence, *The Englishman at Verdun or, The Prisoner of Peace: a Drama in Five Acts* (2 vols, London, 1813), I, pp. xi-xii.

antagonisms around which they revolved. Lawrence's piece is a play about class, which the central female characters embody. Their names are evocative: Marie-Antoinette de St. Aldegonde (a French aristocrat from the *Ancien noblesse*), Matilda Trafford (the genteel excursionist), Madame Vaurien (camp follower and parvenu *blanchisseuse* married to the commandant of the depot), Justine, afterward Princess Justine-Napoleon (the new imperial elite), and Mother Goujat, afterward H.M.S. Madame (a naval mistress), the rest of the female characters being referred to as 'English Ladies'. All these characters are female allegories of social tensions at the depot. They also reflect a retrospective outlook on captivity through one overarching fictional female figure: the 'captive muse'. Indeed, male captives such Thomas Dutton legitimatised the writing of their lives by invoking a female muse who, without any 'passport' could 'from these prison walls ... bear [their] voice'.¹⁵⁰ Whilst this muse was an allegory of captivity itself, she could be armed with martial attributes. She could incarnate another, more politicized allegory, a feminised national sentiment which was further invoked in the creation of a transnational charity network for captives, namely Britannia.

¹⁵⁰ 'Through Lawless power detain me from thy court./ A Muse may bring the tribute of a line; / My Muse among thy vassals may resort, / She needs no passport to approach the Rhine. / She from these prison walls may bear my voice'. See chapter 7 on this 'Captive Muse' for a detailed analysis of life-writing and creativity in captivity at Verdun.' Thomas Dutton, *The Captive Muse* (Verdun, 1806), pp. v-vi.

Charitable connections

Transnational financial networks and captive relief

In 1803, John Halpin opened a ‘Farce for the benefit of the distressed English’ with a ‘Prologue’ inviting his captive brethren to partake in a new institution at the depot: ‘the committee for the relief of British prisoners of war in France’.¹ The following season, the play was staged again with an amended prologue which revealed a change in the ‘sociability of charity’.² Genteel stages of fundraising in theatricals, races and the thriving club of Mr Clive were increasingly populated by naval men who, like Captain Gower and Captain Brenton, were eager to offer their ‘friendly’ patronage in the wake of a post-1797 paternalistic turn.³ Along with captive clergymen, they forged a clerico-military network of assistance organised by the captives themselves, who resumed banking and regional connections across the Channel. The revised ‘Prologue’ travelled through their correspondence with the Admiralty, maritime insurance brokers and their kin at home. Tweeddale sent a manuscript copy to Edinburgh in 1804, whilst Lawrence addressed it to a publisher in 1806 to encourage remittances to a fund organised at Lloyd’s of London and to be distributed in various depots through the intermediary of Verdun.⁴ The ‘Prologue’ circulated in several depots, and

¹ NLS, Tweeddale papers, MS 14527/226, ‘Prologue’, Verdun, 1804: ‘No cold subscription – bounty we disclaim,/ Nay, even charity’s respected name./It is the duty which we owe each other, /For ev’ry British captive is our brother’. See chapter 1 on the political and social use of prologues in the captives’ plays.

² Ibid: ‘Chang’d is the scene, and chang’d too are the faces, / There, ‘twas forest walk and here, the *Races*, / There, ‘twas mild converse, over frugal face, / Here, my friend asks me, ‘do you back the mare?’ / Let’s see the nags, a gallop before dinner, / Damne, I’ll bet you ten I name the winner’.../ But through this dissipation’s glare appear/ Some good old English Virtues cherish’d here / All distress the willing succour lend / The Tar in Gower and Brenton finds his friend / In Gordon preaches Charity revives / And for the Social virtues come to Clive’s’. The expression ‘sociability of charity’ is borrowed from Gillian Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre in Georgian London* (Cambridge, 2007), p.25.

³ Nicholas A .M. Rodgers mused much on the paternalistic turn following the 1797 Great Mutinies. See Nicholas A. M. Rodgers, *The Wooden World: an Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (New York, 1986); Harry W. Dickinson, *Educating the Royal Navy: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Education for Officers* (Abingdon, 2007); Philip MacDougall and Ann Veronica Coats (eds), *The Naval Mutinies of 1797: Unity and Perseverance* (London, 2011), p. 41.

⁴ NLS, Tweeddale papers, MS 14527/226, ‘Prologue’, Verdun, 1804; James Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun; or the English Detained in France* (2 vols, London, 1810), I, pp. 108-9, II, pp. 262-3.

inspired other prisoners to seek further political patronage in Britain and to petition William Wilberforce to consider captivity as a 'worse' distress than slavery, a cause to defend in parliament.⁵

This piece of poetry, its uses and voyages tell us something about the importance of connections in a transnational charity network organised not only *for* but also *by* prisoners of war. This constitutes the core of this chapter, which considers the notion of connection, and connections, as they were understood in the eighteenth century. As Naomi Tadmor noted, the term 'connection' became popular during the period as part of an opaque language of kinship emerging in polite conversions, and nuptial and political negotiations.⁶ Used in the plural form, it could refer to kin and non-kin relations including friends and neighbours, the closeness of the linkage being modulated by the adjectives 'distant' or 'near'. This language of 'connections' was employed by the captives and their relations in Britain, via the press and letters, as part of their charitable activities.⁷ As mentioned in the previous chapter, women utilised it to petition various political bodies, particularly in maritime communities where religious, banking and naval ties enabled subscriptions for the relief of prisoners to flourish. Whilst existing studies have emphasized the patriotic impetus of a British nation eager to relieve their compatriots sequestered abroad by subscribing to the Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, this chapter intends to offer a more nuanced study of such charitable endeavours by emphasizing how a network was buttressed by multilateral financial, professional, spiritual, and local forms of kinship.⁸

To explore how connections were made, sustained or reinvented for charitable purposes in detention, this chapter combines two recent historiographical trends in charity and POW studies. In the 1990s, historians of early-modern welfare and medicine began to consider the two ends of the 'charitable equation', previously conceived as a unilateral and vertical process.⁹ Not only the

⁵ 'It is true we are not slaves; yet, all things considered, our case is worse. May we entreat you, worthy Sir, to use any means which may appear to you consistent with prudence, to complete our joint wishes'. The correspondence with Wilberforce was mediated by Mr Greenaway in Verdun. See William Story, *A Journal Kept in France, during a Captivity of More Than Nine Years Commencing the 14th Day of April 1805 and Ending the 5th Day of May 1814* (London, 1815), pp. 98-9.

⁶ Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 131-2; Emrys Jones, *Friendship and Allegiance in Eighteenth-Century Literature: the Politics of Private Virtue in the Age of Walpole* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 97-8. See also Will Coster, *Family and Kinship in England, 1450-1800* (London, 2001).

⁷ For examples in the press, see the *Monthly Review*, November 1810; and later the *Monthly Magazine*, November 1827.

⁸ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven, 1992), pp. 261-2.

⁹ Expression borrowed from Kathryn Norberg, *Rich and Poor in Grenoble, 1600-1814* (Los Angeles and London, 1985), p.120. For the recent bottom-up trend in charity studies, see Anne Borsay and Peter Shapely (eds), *Medicine, Charity and Mutual Aid: the Consumption of Health and Welfare in Britain, c. 1550-1950* (Aldershot, 2007); Colin Jones, 'Some Recent Trends in the History of Charity', in Martin Daunton (ed.), *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare in the English Past* (London, 1996), pp. 51-63; Joseph P. Ward,

production but also the reception of charity became a subject of investigation.¹⁰ Whilst Colin Jones and Joseph Ward have illuminated the deficiencies of a top-down approach to charity, I would go further by questioning the nature of an exchange, which, I argue, constitutes more a multipolar spectrum than a binary equation. The active effort demonstrated by the prisoners at Verdun in creating their own relief through internal subscriptions and multilateral connections, which led to the involvement of Lloyd's, blurs the traditional benefactor/recipient dyad. In this respect, my approach is in keeping with the recent works on the agency deployed by prisoners in shaping their own experiences of detention through mutual aid within the space of the camp.¹¹

Furthermore, the institutional myopia denounced by the historian Anne Borsay strongly resonates with the nation-centric paradigms within which the conventional literature on Napoleonic British captives has so far confined the study of their self-help networks.¹² Studies of the Lloyd's Patriotic Fund have presented the prisoners only as incidental objects of a national war effort rather than as agents in the organisation of their own relief.¹³ Conversely, French historians have insisted on the diplomatic and economic implications that providing aid to foreigners had for the French State and its expanding territory.¹⁴ Although valuable, these perspectives do not justice to a situation which, in fact, complicates national narratives and necessitates a transnational route few historians have taken so far. Only Joanna Innes has paved the way for pan-European approach to charity in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century wartime.¹⁵ By focusing on the captive synapse of Verdun, I will further her

Culture, Faith, and Philanthropy: Londoners and Provincial Reform in Early Modern England (New York, 2013); Donald T. Critchlow and Charles H. Parker (eds), *With Us Always: a History of Private Charity and Public Welfare* (Boston and Oxford, 1998); Hugh Cunningham and Joanna Innes (eds), *Charity, Philanthropy and Reform from 1850 to 1960* (Basingstoke and New York, 1998).

¹⁰ Anne Borsay recently noted that 'too many studies in the past have taken an institutional stance, concentrating on the benefactors and officials who were responsible for implementing policies. But this was a two-way relationship in which recipients were not passive in the face of whatever was put before them'. Borsay and Shapely (eds), *Medicine, Charity and Mutual Aid*, p. 1.

¹¹ Felicia Yap, 'Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees of the Japanese in British Asia: Similarities and Contrasts of Experiences', *Journal of Contemporary History* 47:317 (2012), p. 318.

¹² Borsay and Shapely (eds), *Medicine, Charity and Mutual Aid*, p. 1.

¹³ These works, partly commissioned by the Patriotic Fund, aimed to write a *long durée* history of the institution: Herbert De Rougemont, *A Century of Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, 1803-1903* (London, 1903); Lloyd's Patriotic Fund (ed.), *A History of Lloyd's Patriotic Fund: from its Foundation in 1803* (London, 1914); Arthur Newton Saint-Quintin, *The Patriotic Fund at Lloyd's* (London, 1923); Raymond Flower and Michael Wynn Jones (eds), *Lloyd's of London: an Illustrated History* (Newton Abbot, 1974); Vanessa Harding and Priscilla Metcalf, *Lloyd's at Home* (Colchester, 1986); Jim Gawler, *Britons Strike Home: a History of Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, 1803-1988* (London, 1993); Charles Messenger, *Unbroken Service: the History of Lloyd's Patriotic Fund* (London, 2003). See also Sampson Low, *The Charities of London in 1861: Comprising an Account of the Operations* (London, 1861); Margarete Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy: British Sea Power, 1750-1815* (London, 2002).

¹⁴ Didier Houmeau, 'Les Prisonniers de Guerre Britanniques de Napoléon 1^{er}' (PhD thesis, University of Tours, 2011), pp.285-304; Odette Viennet, 'Les Anglais à Verdun, ou Onze Ans d'Insouciante Captivité, d'Après les Documents non Cotés des Archives Municipales et le Manuscrit 484 de la Bibliothèque de Verdun', *Institut Napoléon. Recueil de Travaux et Documents* 4 (1943), p.36.

¹⁵ Joanne Innes, 'State, Church and Voluntarism in European Welfare, 1600-1850' in Hugh Cunningham and Joanna Innes (eds), *Charity, Philanthropy and Reform*, pp. 15-65. One article has attempted such a transnational approach for the case of American

approach by posing one question: how did the prisoners navigate varied forms of welfare and charity operative in Britain and France? To answer this question, this chapter will sketch the transnational channelling of captive relief, with an eye for the nature of charity (monetary, material, associative), and the meanings of this assistance on both sides of the Channel.¹⁶

The first section will position the daily finances of the prisoners within a French military welfare system. Considering the limits of this policy will lead me to explore how captives cemented connections with London-based funds and banks. This, with a closer consideration of local and parish subscriptions, nuances the time-honoured discourse of a univocal British war effort through prisoner relief, by highlighting significant regional differences – if not conflicts – in conceptions and practices of international charity. Drawing on a letter-book of the Verdun Committee mentioned above, the last section will investigate the consumption of charity by the prisoners themselves, with particular attention to the tensions between charity and solidarity amongst naval captives.

A ‘treatment’

As Patricia Crimmin has argued, governmental aid to military prisoners was engrained in the financial war waged between France and Britain during the period.¹⁷ The abandonment of the ransoming system, which no longer coincided with revolutionary tenets, led to a more subtle scheme of economic pressure.¹⁸ Napoleon’s decision that every nation should provide for the prisoners held on their soil aimed to encumber the British economy and enforce peace negotiations.¹⁹ However, this strategy proved more expensive than expected. A rough estimation has shown that the French State

prisoners of war in Britain. Robin F. A. Fabel, ‘Self-Help in Dartmoor: Black and White Prisoners in the War of 1812’, *Journal of the Early Republic* 9:2 (1989), pp. 165-90.

¹⁶ ‘Charity’, ‘relief’, ‘philanthropy’, ‘aid’, ‘succour’: historians of charity have often attempted to delineate the subtleties of these notions as an introduction to their studies, yet sometimes only to use them interchangeably in the body of their work. A sensitivity to the vocabulary used at the time seems necessary. Instead of imposing definitions from the start, I will use the terms ‘relief’ and ‘charity’ in commenting with my own voice on their practices, mainly because the prisoners used these terms regularly. See Martin Daunton (ed.), *Charity, Self-interest and Welfare in the English Past*, p. 3; Hugh Cunningham and Joanna Innes (eds), *Charity, Philanthropy and Reform*, p. 2.

¹⁷ Patricia K. Crimmin, ‘Prisoners of War and British Port Communities, 1793-1815’, *The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du Nord*, 5:4 (1996), p. 18. Clear fluctuations occurred in the legislation charting the economic policing of British prisoners from 1793 to 1815. See Frédéric Jarousse, *Auvergnats Malgré eux. Prisonniers de guerre et Déserteurs Etrangers dans le Puy-de-Dôme Pendant la Révolution Française (1794-1796)* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1998).

¹⁸ Vasilis Vourkoutiotis, *Prisoners of War and the German High Command: the British and American Experience* (Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 5-7; Philippe Masson, *Les Sépulcres Flottants: Prisonniers Français en Angleterre sous l’Empire* (Rennes, 1987); Edna Lemay, ‘A Propos des Recherches Faites sur le Sort des Prisonniers de Guerre Français Pendant les Guerres Européennes (1792-1815)’, *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* 312 (1998), pp. 229-44.

¹⁹ The cost for the British State was considerable. By 1798 it was running at £300,000 per annum, while the estimated expense of French prisoners alone between 1803 and 1815 was £6 million. As a result, regular exchanges broke down and from 1809-1810 ceased altogether. At the same time, the number of attempted escapes rose on both sides, and captives were imprisoned far longer than was customary in alien communities. They represented only two per cent of the total recipients of military allowances. Crimmin, ‘Prisoners of War and British Port Communities’, p. 18.

spent approximately three million francs per annum to subsidise the British captives, which equated to twenty-five per cent of the total military expenditures in 1810, despite the fact that the prisoners formed a very small group.²⁰

The language used by the Napoleonic State to characterise the aid to prisoners was military, referring to the funds as *'traitement'*, *'solde'*, *'indemnité'* and more occasionally *'secours'*.²¹ This 'treatment' aimed to position the British captives within a military and post-republican scheme of pensions and transportation refunds. The initial policy enforced by the Ministry of Police in 1803 was inspired by a decree issued on 13 May 1799, stipulating that captive sub-officers and soldiers should receive, in addition to food provisions, half of the wages granted to their counterparts in the French army. The officers and sub-lieutenants, on the other hand, would obtain the same subsidies as the French officers declared unfit for service.²² Within this framework, prisoners en route could claim back some of their lodging and transport expenses, which four merchantmen did in Arras in 1810.²³ Accompanied by a table comparing the treatments of French and British prisoners, Fouché's schema envisioned a reciprocal military welfare for the prisoners of the two nations.²⁴ This, however, failed to materialise, as exchanges of captives were fraught with unprecedented difficulties.²⁵

The main point of contention was the eviction of the *détenus* from these plans. From 1803 to 1805, non-belligerent 'hostages' were denied financial aid from the French government, as evidenced by hostage couples' petitions for subsistence and requests to be assimilated to prisoners taken under arms in 1804.²⁶ Servicemen arrested in May 1803, such as Colonel Abercrombie, were equally denied these grants. Whilst the Napoleonic State proved more lenient towards its British 'first-class prisoners' than its predecessors, and did not resort to punish the subject of a 'tyrannical

²⁰ The total cost of providing subsidies to the British prisoners is very difficult to estimate. However, Didier Houmeau's attempt to calculate it is indicative. They represented, at most, only two per cent of the total recipients of military allowances. Houmeau, 'Les prisonniers de guerre britanniques de Napoléon 1^{er}', p. 293; Pierre Branda, *Le Prix de la Gloire, Napoléon et l'Argent* (Paris, 2007), p. 358.

²¹ The term 'treatment' was polysemic, encompassing behaviour, problem-solving, military pay and medical care. However, its usage by the French police and military authorities in relation to prisoners was strictly military.

²² SHD, YJ 1, Letter of Berthier, the French ministry of defence, 4 July 1803: '*Les prisonniers de guerre détenus en France recevront: -sous-officiers, soldats, chacun selon son grade, indépendamment de la ration de pain, moitié de la solde accordée aux sous-officiers et soldats en activité dans les troupes de la République ... Enfin les officiers de tous grades depuis et y compris les sous-lieutenants, recevront le traitement de réforme accordé aux officiers français du même grade non employés et n'auront droit à aucune autre indemnité.*'

²³ Houmeau, 'Les prisonniers de Guerre Britanniques de Napoléon 1^{er}', p. 285.

²⁴ SHD, YJ 28, 'Tableau comparatif des traitements des prisonniers de guerre en Angleterre et en France', 1803.

²⁵ See the introduction on exchange cartels.

²⁶ AMV, uncatalogued file, 'Les Anglais à Verdun', Petitions of prisoners of war, 1804.

nation' through forced labour, as was the case for the Spanish captives, I would argue that the ways in which the French government oscillated in supporting the British civil and military captives by constantly re-categorising them socially, positioned them as 'impossible citizens' of a post-Revolutionary society.²⁷

In 1806, the Berlin decree revised the '*détenu*' category by ceasing to differentiate the capture of civilians and military prisoners, yet leaving aside the living conditions of those already detained.²⁸ The implementation of this measure proved problematic, especially for female detainees. This is evidenced by the debate about mixed-raced female passengers taken on board British vessels. In 1806, the capture of eight Anglo-Indian women, travelling to Calcutta under the command of Captain Alexander Foggo of the East India Company, provoked discussions about the aid they should receive from the French state.²⁹ They had been declared 'indigent' by the local authorities and therefore were allowed to 'take part in the bread distribution' organised by the local *dépôt de bienfaisance*. Yet, this civil assistance was not considered substantial enough by Commandant Wirion, who submitted an official request for them to receive relief from the Ministry of War and potentially be sent to England. The nature of the document, presented as a '*signalement*' – a table detailing the identity of these 'Mulatto women' in a format similar to physiognomic descriptions of deserters or criminals – suggests that race, age, religion, and colonial ties were crucial criteria in considering state relief for them.³⁰ Wirion insisted on their receiving assistance because of their age (from twenty-four to fifty years old), their denomination (three being Catholic, the others Hindu), but mostly because they were 'coloured women' devoid of any 'attachment to a master'. The request was therefore symptomatic of a patriarchal state, which conceived aid to foreign female captives at the confluence of military welfare and local social control.

The provision of military allowances to prisoners taken under arms was equally subject to change, owing to the difficulties experienced by post-revolutionary personnel in identifying the

²⁷ The decree of the 7 *Prairial* an II on British and Hanoverian POWs created a vehement discourse on the tyrannical British enemy and their subjects held in the Republic. Sophie Wahnich, *L'Impossible Citoyen: l'Etranger dans le Discours de la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1997), p. 252.

²⁸ 'Tout individu sujet de l'Angleterre, de quelque état ou condition qu'il soit, qui sera trouvé dans les pays occupés par nos troupes, ou par celles de nos alliés, sera fait prisonnier de guerre.' Quoted in *Le Moniteur*, 4 December 1806.

²⁹ SHD, YJ28, Letter from Wirion to the Ministry of Defence, Verdun, 12 June 1806; *Reports and Papers on the Policy of Employing Indian Built Ships in the Trade of the East-India Company, and of Admitting Them to British Registry* (London, 1809), p. 234.

³⁰ The categories included: '*noms et prénoms*', '*age*', '*lieux de naissance*', '*signalement: taille, cheveux et sourcils, yeux, nez, bouche, menton, visage*', '*observations*'.

socio-professional status of their British counterparts.³¹ The constant re-categorisation of non-commissioned lieutenants and ships' masters, which the French national authorities struggled to position in their transnational ranking scheme, is illuminating. Considered as sub-officers, the masters were excluded from the parole system, which led them to reclaim their status as 'gentleman officers' and petition for receiving the corresponding subsidies.³² In 1806, Napoleon thus reformed the categorisation of 'prisoners who *should* be treated as sub-lieutenants under the 350 francs per annum'. However, the list of two hundred eligible captives in Verdun also included 'passengers' from various social backgrounds: doctors, students, tradesmen, booksellers, landowners, clergymen, and the most elusive categories of all, '*gentilhommes*'.³³ Unsatisfied with this categorisation, the Transport Office intervened in 1808, by publishing a memorial explaining the Admiralty's decision to 'confer upon Masters of [the] Royal Navy the rank of lieutenant'.³⁴ But the question of the 'rank' of masters of merchantmen was still debated between the French Ministry of War, Napoleon and the Transport Office. The debate only ceased in July 1813 when the French Admiralty accepted a request for 'masters *really* in possession of officer ranks and certificates'.³⁵ The 'reality' of rank, in absence of documentation attesting the captive's social status in Britain, was a concept the French authorities wrestled with to implement their aid to captives – a support which proved insufficient on a daily basis.

After the religious turmoil of the Revolution and the drastic restructuring of the hospital system, the Napoleonic State strongly encouraged local voluntary aid.³⁶ 'The nation's system of relief', wrote Colin Jones, was 'now buttressed by state-sponsored ... home relief agencies, the *bureaux de bienfaisance*'.³⁷ This enforced local benevolence was a structure in which the prisoners had to partake in, not benefit from. Balls, dinners and plays were taxed by the municipal authorities, and the receipts were donated to the local poor through the *bureau* in Bar-sur-Ornain. 'The society', wrote a

³¹ I will develop that point in the following chapter.

³² ADM-Bar, 9R2, Petition entitled 'Prisonniers anglais à Verdun', 1805.

³³ SHD, YJ29, 'Etat des prisonniers de guerre anglais du dépôt de Verdun qui d'après la décision de sa Majesté Impériale du 24 Juillet 1806, doivent être traités comme sous lieutenants sur la pied de 350 francs par an', 'Ordre de Sa Majesté l'Empereur', Paris, 24 July 1806'; 'Liste des Passagers à traiter comme sous-lieutenants', Verdun, 15 December 1806.

³⁴ SHD, YJ29, 'Request by the Commissioners for executing the Officer of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland', London, 1 October 1808.

³⁵ '*Les Commissaires du Transport Office réduisant leur demandes aux seuls masters, qui ont réellement rang et brevet d'officiers, je ne pense pas qu'il y ait lieu de refuser à la demande du gouvernement anglais.*' SHD, YJ29, Response to the request cited above, Paris, 28 June 1813.

³⁶ Colin Jones, *The Charitable Imperative: Hospitals and Nursing in Ancien Regime and Revolutionary France* (London and New York, 1989), pp. 6-7.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

prisoner, ‘after hiring the theatre and decorations, buying dresses and paying some of the actors and actresses, prompters, and candle-snuffers ... were obliged to pay the French poor at Verdun the *droit des indigens* (which is a fixed sum, or percentage paid for each performance, on every theatre in France, to the poor of the town; and which, by the bye, may be no improper way of raising a poor tax), [but] the British *détenus* received but little assistance from the undertaking’.³⁸ The prisoners’ resources also served to sponsor the French government through the *Caisse d’amortissement*.³⁹ In November 1808, the possessions of ten prisoners who died in Verdun were auctioned. The receipts were divided between the Ministry of War, local creditors and three hundred and nineteen francs were deposited into a fund for the governmental debt, which suggests that the prisoners were not merely recipients but were expected to contribute to their gaolers’ welfare system on a local and national scale.⁴⁰

Captivity in Verdun is often conceived as a temporal hole, during which the prisoners steadily emptied their purses until destitution.⁴¹ Yet, their account books, wills and inventories unravel a more complex picture. They reveal how individuals negotiated the limitations of this French welfare system and the maintenance of their monies abroad through the help of bankers.⁴² A salient example would be the account book kept by Sir Thomas Lavie ‘for the *Young Gentlemen* of His Majesty’s late ship *Blanche*’, which contains accounts of everyday expenditures between 1808 to 1813 for board, lodgings, clothes, provisions, and tuition.⁴³ The book suggests that, whilst French military subsidies were meagre, help was sought from Parisian and local bankers. The book includes an account opened by Revd William Gorden and Thomas Lavie with Perrégaux & Co. detailing substantial funds transmitted by eight money-lenders in Verdun at low interest.⁴⁴

³⁸ Lawrence, *Picture of Verdun*, I, p. 243.

³⁹ Jacques Wolff, ‘Les Insuffisantes Finances Napoléoniennes: Une des Causes de l’Echec de la Tentative d’Hégémonie Européenne (1799-1814)’, *Revue du Souvenir Napoléonien* 397 (1994), pp. 5-20; *The New Annual Register; or General Repository of History, Politics, and Literature for the Year 1806* (London, 1807), p. 193.

⁴⁰ SHD, YJ 32, ‘Certifié le présent bordereau véritable, à l’appui duquel sont jointes les quittances des paiements effectués aux créanciers et celle des receveurs particuliers de l’Arrondissement de Verdun, constatant le versement de trois cent dix neuf francs, quatre vingt quatre centimes, a la caisse d’amortissement’, Verdun, 30 November 1808.

⁴¹ Michael Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives* (London, 1962), p. 23

⁴² Other documents confirm this sketch of the everyday economy in Verdun, see Northumberland County Record Office, Rochester, Ridley Blagdon Manuscript, ZRI/32/4 809-1824, 24/63-76; James Forbes, ‘Prix auxquels les denrées se sont vendues à Verdun avant la Révolution, pendant la Révolution, et depuis que M.M les Anglais sont en cette ville’ in *Letters from France*, pp. 239-40.

⁴³ BCA, Matthew Boulton Papers, MS3782/19/2, Records of the Committee for the relief of British prisoners in France at Verdun, 1808-1809.

⁴⁴ The account continued in Guéret until their liberation. An analysis of money-lending at Verdun features in chapter 4 and 5. See appendices for a transcription of these transactions.

The Swiss and cosmopolitan financier, Jean-Frédéric Perrégaux had acted as a liaison officer for the British travellers during the Revolution.⁴⁵ During the Napoleonic conflicts, he kept a checkered commerce, acting both as an official representative of the newly-created Bank of France, and a private agent of his clients in captivity.⁴⁶ For Perrégaux, and his associate and successor Lafitte, finances were never at war, which clearly raised the suspicions of the Emperor after 1806.⁴⁷ However, Lavie's account-book suggests that, despite the continental blockade, these bankers distributed monies from subscriptions raised at Lloyd's in London through five members of the Committee at Verdun. They used connections with banking houses in Holland and Britain (Greenwood, Lee, Wilson, Mines & Factor, Thornton and Power Drummond) to channel the remittances.⁴⁸ Teetering on the brink of legality, their activity was legitimized by a decision from the Minister of War, who was also acquainted with affluent *détenus*, to allow the transmission of funds from the captive's private connections, a decision which somehow weakened the initial isolationist plan of Napoleon.⁴⁹ If political loyalties were thus in conflict with private interests on the French side, it remains to determine the meaning and mechanics of this transnational network within the discourses of patriotic charity emerging in Britain during the period.

⁴⁵ Educated in England, the Swiss-descent and Protestant banker Perrégaux had strong connections with London. The papers of Charles Throckmorton confirms these connections. WRO, Charles Throckmorton Papers, CR 1998/CD/Drawer 8/12, 'Commonplace book', 1795-1808.

⁴⁶ ADM-Bar, 9R2 'Lettre du sous-préfet de Verdun au préfet de la Meuse', Verdun, 10 July 1809; Ernest d'Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire, Bulletins Quotidiens Adressés par Fouché à l'Empereur* (7 vols, Paris, 1914), III, pp. 195, 230, 208.

⁴⁷ Michael Stephen Smith, *The Emergence of Modern Business Enterprise in France, 1800-1930* (Harvard, 2006), pp.53-4; Emile Ducoudray, 'Jean-Frédéric Perrégaux', in Albert Soboul (ed.) *Dictionnaire Historique de la Révolution Française* (Paris, 2005), pp.836-38 and 'La Place du Nord sur les Routes de l'Argent 1792-98', in Gérard Gayot and Jean-Pierre Hirsh (eds), *La Révolution Française et le Développement du Capitalisme* (Lille, 1989), pp.91-8; Henry Heller, *The Bourgeois Revolution in France, 1789-1815* (Oxford, New York, 2009), pp. 92-110; Youssef Cassis and Philip Cottrell (eds), *The World of Private banking* (Farnham, 2009), p. 244; Romuald Szramkiewicz, *Les Régents et Censeurs de la Banque de France Nommés sous le Consulat et l'Empire* (Genève, 1974), p. 315; Warwick Lister, *Amico: The Life of Giovanni Battista Viotti* (Oxford, 2009), p. 232.

⁴⁸ Thornton and Power, English bankers at Hamburg and other Continental towns, opened a branch at Paris in 1802. In 1805, John Power applied for French citizenship. John Goldworth Alger, *Napoleon's British Visitors and Captives (1801-1815)* (London, 1904), p. 98.

⁴⁹ I will explore the prisoners' connections with members of the French government in the following chapter.



Fig. 12: Seal of the Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, 1803

Verdun and the Royal Exchange

One image (Fig.12), a seal depicting a belligerent Britannia slaying a dragon underlined by the inscription 'Britons strike home', has long served to encapsulate the nationalistic spirit of the aptly-named Lloyd's Patriotic Fund. Inspired by visual tropes of martial nationalism, this image has been used to illustrate studies of the fund and writings by British captives who benefitted from it.⁵⁰ Yet the existing research conducted into the fund and its agenda to relieve British captives in France has not demonstrated a critical engagement with the institution, which, in fact, commissioned most of these studies from the late nineteenth century up to the present day.⁵¹ The result is an inward-looking narrative celebrating 'the oldest UK Fund of its kind in existence', failing to assess the meaning, mechanisms and achievements of an establishment, which actually led to some opposition in Britain.⁵² In particular, little attention has been given to the individual connections of its members and their transnational interlocutors, were they bankers or captives. Drawing on meeting minutes and correspondence, I argue that in the case of captives' relief, the initial nationalistic discourse was a facade hiding insurance and banking enterprises buttressed by ties of kinship.

⁵⁰ BCA, Matthew Boulton Papers, MS3782/19/2.

⁵¹ Herbert De Rougemont, *A Century of Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, 1803-1903* (London, 1903); Lloyd's Patriotic Fund (ed.), *A History of Lloyd's Patriotic Fund: from its Foundation in 1803* (London, 1914); A. N. Saint-Quintin, *The Patriotic Fund at Lloyd's* (London, 1923); Jim Gawler, *Britons Strike Home: a History of Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, 1803-1988* (London, 1993); Charles Messenger, *Unbroken Service: the History of Lloyd's Patriotic Fund* (London, 2003). See also Sampson Low, *The Charities of London in 1861: Comprising an Account of the Operations* (London, 1861); Margarette Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy: British Sea Power, 1750-1815* (London, 2002).

⁵² William Cobbett in the *Weekly Register* voiced his opposition to the fund, accusing its members of 'usurping the function of the Crown'. Gawler, *Britons Strike Home*, p.7. Oppositions to the fund will be explored in the following paragraphs.

Established on 28 July 1803 at Lloyd's Coffee House in the City of London, the Fund led by Brook Watson and leading businessmen was a financial and moral response to the threat of invasion from the French neighbour, with whom hostilities had been resumed two months since. The first meeting made their rationale explicit: 'it behoves to us to meet our situation as man – as *freeman* – but above all, as *Britons*. On this alone, with the Divine Aid, depends our exemption from the yoke of Gallic despotism.'⁵³ Drawing on a gendered propagandist discourse, their first meeting minute articulated their charity agenda as 'comfort and relief' provision.⁵⁴ As John Crowley has recently argued, the concept of comfort underwent a significant change in the eighteenth century: it shifted from a strictly moral notion of spiritual and emotional support to a modern embrace of its physical dimension as bodily and environmental contentment.⁵⁵ The provision of 'comfort' by the Patriotic Fund encompassed these two dimensions. Combining moral and medical languages, their purpose was to 'alleviate', 'palliate', 'assuage', and 'smooth the brow of sorrow' of those distressed by the impact of a necessary war.⁵⁶ This materialised in a threefold policy providing pecuniary support to invalid combatants, annuities to widows and orphans, and the remittance of financial reward and badges of honour to servicemen who had distinguished themselves in battle.⁵⁷

Despite the emphasis on the defence of a quintessentially British freedom, the fund did not include the relief of British prisoners in its initial agenda.⁵⁸ It was only two years later, in June 1805, upon the receipt of a letter from Paul Le Mesurier, a London-based banker acting on behalf of his customer detained in Verdun, Captain Brenton, that the fund 'resolved that the alleviation of the sufferings of prisoners of war ... [was] within the meaning of this institution'.⁵⁹ It was in keeping with 'the meaning' of the fund, because the prisoners had already established a hospital in Verdun, and were requesting further aid specifically for 'the relief of the sick and wounded'.⁶⁰ The funds raised for the prisoners were thus to serve as military and medical aid. Arguably, the delay of the

⁵³ LMA, CLC/120, 'Lloyd's Patriotic Fund Record Minutes', 28 July 1803.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ John E. Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort. Sensibilities and Design in Early Modern Britain and Early America* (Baltimore and London, 2000).

⁵⁶ LMA, CLC/120, 'Lloyd's Patriotic Fund Record Minutes', 28 July 1803.

⁵⁷ These awards (ornamented swords, vases, plates or certificates) were regularly publicised in the press to further encourage the war effort at home.

⁵⁸ Because the creation of the institution coincides with the 2nd *Prairial* decree, historians often assumed that the Fund immediately supported the British prisoners of war detained in France.

⁵⁹ LMA, CLC/120, 'Lloyd's Patriotic Fund Record Minutes', 25 June 1805.

⁶⁰ I will develop this aspect later in the chapter. This was extended to prisoners 'aged of fifty five and upwards' in 1809. BCA, Matthew Boulton Papers, MS 3782/19/1-761, Records of the Committee for the Relief of British prisoners in France at Verdun, 1808-1809.

Lloyd's in getting involved in prisoner relief was caused by the predominance of civil captives, whose residual Francophilia had caused their detention. It was only when naval men became dominant in the depot that the connection was sealed between Verdun and the Royal Exchange, and money was entrusted to captives.

The language of trust developed by the aptly named 'Trustees' of the Fund reveals that connection with captive agents abroad was entrenched in a socio-professional differentiation rather than a unifying patriotic momentum. Trust was placed in their captive *peers* in Verdun, not in the lower orders of the Northern depots. Whilst all communication had to be carried out through them, not all Britons in Verdun were to be trusted to receive and distribute the money adequately. The monies were to be put under 'the care of five of the principal officers, or medical men, of His Majesty's Navy or Army, now prisoners of war in France; or such other prisoners of war, as shall be chosen by them in case of their exchange'.⁶¹ The captive agents had to report on their activities under the supervision of the instigators of the partnership, significantly a doctor and a naval man: Dr Allen and Captain Brenton.⁶²

Ties of kinship between members of the fund and Verdun detainees have only been alluded to in existing studies.⁶³ Yet it appears significant that out of nine Trustees, two founding-fathers had relatives detained there: Germain Lavie, whose brother Captain Thomas Lavie had been captured on the *Blanche*, and sent to Verdun with James Secretan, serving under his command, who was the son of another Trustee named Frederick Secretan. Significantly, Thomas Lavie immediately entered the Committee upon his arrival at Verdun to distribute money from the Fund, which suggests that financial trust was not only based on professional status but also family ties.⁶⁴ On the whole, looking at individual connections between Verdun and the Royal Exchange reveals the blurred line between private and public interests in prisoner of war relief.

⁶¹ LMA, CLC/120, 'Lloyd's Patriotic Fund Record Minutes', 25 June 1805.

⁶² This socially-bound partnership between Verdun and the Fund was cemented by the visit of these two captives, who were part of an exceptional exchange in January 1807. They attended a meeting of the fund, during which they detailed the use of the money sent and pleaded for further assistance. After their exchange, midshipman Dillon was in charge of transmitting correspondence to Captain Lavie in Verdun, solidifying naval ties with the fund.

⁶³ Gawler, *Britons Strike Home*, p. 12.

⁶⁴ It appears significant that the two trustees were also eager to recompense the first distributor of the fund, Captain Brenton, by pushing his case to get a sword through the accounts, even though it was after they officially stopped awarding them in 1809.

The fund relied, in fact, on a thriving marine insurance market, a 'sea bubble mania' which collided with national obligations.⁶⁵ After the serious financial blow of the American War of Independence, the Napoleonic Wars restructured the market: foreign businesses were channelled to London, traders covered all risks and spread the losses, the mass of insurance being placed at Lloyd's. There, fortunes could be made, and the boom in premiums tempted many merchants to insure marine property.⁶⁶ Such escalating wealth led Lloyd's to build a special and interested relationship with the Navy, which prompted the creation of a fund for the sailors' widows and orphans. Its support was part of a dual culture of risk management and risk taking, which 'gave the coffee-house more than just mercantile prestige'.⁶⁷ As a contemporary put it, through charity provision, Lloyd's became a power within the British state: 'an Empire within itself; an empire which in point of commercial sway, variety of powers, and almost incalculable resources gives laws to the trading part of the universe'.⁶⁸ This provoked discontent amongst politicians. The radical William Cobbett objected that, through the distribution of monies and honorary swords, 'a set of traders at Lloyd's' were 'usurp[ing] the functions of the Crown by bestowing on naval and military officers'. Even the First Lord of the Admiralty condemned 'the mischievous system of rewards ... which is held out to the navy as giving greater encouragement than the government of the country'.⁶⁹ Tensions culminated in 1810 with a trial of Lloyd's in Parliament, which pointedly attacked its financial monopoly and the mercantile nature of its philanthropic activities.

⁶⁵ Raymond Flower and Michael Wynn Jones (eds), *Lloyd's of London: An Illustrated History* (Newton Abbot, 1974), p. 40

⁶⁶ Huge insurance could be implemented with astonishing ease. In 1810, Angerstein placed £40,000 on a ship from Tonningen, £60,000 on a West Indiaman and cargo, and £200,000 on a regular ship from Quebec. See Hal Cockerell and Edwin Green (eds) *The British Insurance Business 1547-1970* (London, 1976), pp. 3-17, 118; Frank C. Spooner, *Risks at Sea: Amsterdam Insurance and Maritime Europe, 1766-1780* (Cambridge, 1983).

⁶⁷ Flower and Jones (eds), *Lloyd's of London*, pp. 71-7.

⁶⁸ *Public Characters of 1803-1804* quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-7.

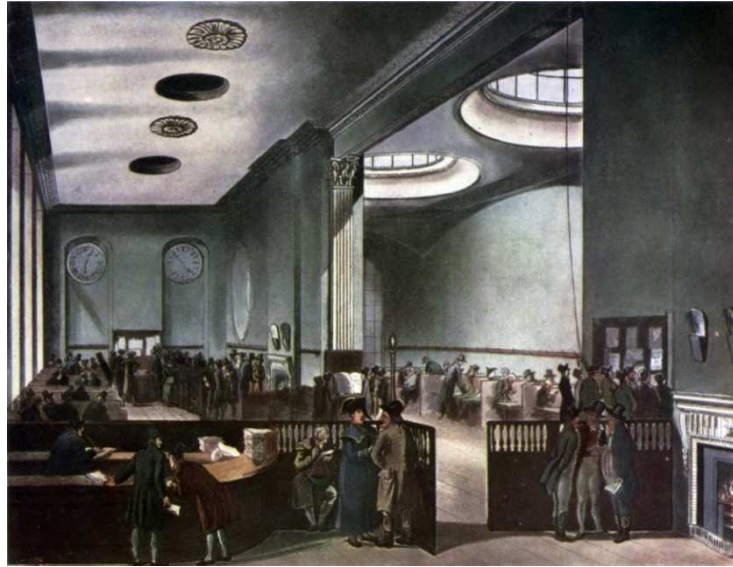


Fig. 13: Rowlandson, *Lloyd's subscription room* (1809)

(National Maritime Museum, Greenwich)

The mechanics of subscriptions for prisoners further suggest the close intimacy of trade and charity in their activities.⁷⁰ Advertisements were regularly placed in national newspapers for ‘contributions to be received at the bar of Lloyd’s Coffee-house’ (Fig.13), and ‘by all the bankers in the United Kingdom’.⁷¹ ‘Coffee-houses’ had passed their glory days, the country having moved from coffee- to tea-drinking sociability over the previous decade.⁷² Select coffee-houses such as Lloyd’s came to play a more prominent role in the dissemination of financial intelligence to international markets.⁷³ They underwent a similar transformation to the ‘financial revolution’ experienced by the port of London after the Glorious Revolution, by shifting from political table-companionship to credit and insurance activities.⁷⁴ The Patriotic Fund subscriptions for prisoners did not occur in spaces of consumption, the ‘bar’ at Lloyd’s being a wooden barrier separating it from other offices rather than a drinks counter. These endeavours were also buttressed outside the walls of the Lloyd’s by other coffee-houses acting as moneylending establishments, as suggested by a series of articles in the *Literary Panorama* (Table 12). They had ramifications outside the City, as exemplified by adverts placed in local newspapers such as the *Nottingham Review*, which announced a series of

⁷⁰The very ambiguous space of the coffee-house, which developed in the seventeenth century, was inherently at the confluence of private and public interests. See Valérie Capdeville, *L’Age d’Or des Clubs Londoniens (1730-1784)* (Paris, 2008).

⁷¹*Literary Panorama*, October 1809.

⁷²Brian William Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: the Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven, 2005).

⁷³Markman Ellis, *The Coffee-House: a Cultural History* (London, 2011), p. 171.

⁷⁴Economic historians, such as Peter George Muir Dickson, have utilised this expression. Peter George Muir Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England: a Study in the Development of Public Credit 1688-1756* (London, 1967).

subscriptions in 1811 to be ‘received at the different banks in Nottingham’. The advert mentioned four local bankers based on Long Row as the prime and first contributors to the fund, which further confirms that charity for prisoners was based on banking ties and practices.⁷⁵

Establishments	Localisation		
	Street	City	Country
Barclays's Bevan's Kensington & Co. Martin & Co. Robarts & Co. Tritton's	Lombard Street	London	England
Child & Co. Coutts & Co. Hoare & Co.	Fleet Street	London	England
Down & Co.	Bartholomew lane	London	England
Drummond & Co.	Charing-cross	London	England
Forster & Co.	Mansion-house- Street	London	England
Hankey & Co.	Fenchurch-Street	London	England
Masterman & Co.	White-hart court	London	England
Smith & Co. Payne & Co.	George-Street		
Sir William Forbes & Co.		Edinburgh	Scotland
Latouche & Co. Robert Shaw & Co.		Dublin	Ireland

Table 12: Banks contributing to the Patriotic Fund's subscriptions for the prisoners in Verdun

(*Literary Panorama*, 1808-1812)

The interests of these banks were woven into a network of apprenticeships and investments conducted under Lloyd's.⁷⁶ The sums raised were considerable. The first payment to Verdun amounted to £27,000. In 1809, £16,700 was raised.⁷⁷ The subscriptions were nevertheless affected by the vicissitudes of war, the Peninsular War in particular, which led them to refocus their agenda on the dependants of dead servicemen. As a result, the Patriotic Fund claimed back some of the ample funds the Verdun detainees had received. In July 1812, a letter from the fund secretary advised that prisoners had exceeded the amount of £5,000 donations for 1811 by 23,008 francs, which were to be reimbursed to Lloyd's by immediate transfer.⁷⁸ By 1812, the monies of the fund

⁷⁵ *Nottingham Review*, 26 April 1811 and 29 May 1811.

⁷⁶ The Scottish William Forbes & Co, for instance, owed its origins to the London merchant firm, John Coutts & Co, and later associated with Lloyd's. William Forbes and James Hunter were both apprenticed to John Coutts & Co. in 1754. In January 1773, the name was changed to Sir W. Forbes, J. Hunter & Company, and the management of the bank devolved to Sir William Forbes.

⁷⁷ This constituted around five per cent of their annual expenditures (excluding advertisements and internal charges such as income tax, postage, rent and salaries), a similar amount to the money spent on honorary rewards. Gawler, *Britons Strike Home*, p. 51.

⁷⁸ LMA, CLC/120, Letter from Thomas Ferguson to the Verdun Committee, July 1813.

diminished and the annual payment to Verdun ceased, but other individual funds picked up the torch up to 1814.⁷⁹

In 1806, the maritime insurance broker Angerstein, who acted as a banker for the Fund, made a direct appeal to the Fund for two hundred and twenty masters of merchant ships detained in France.⁸⁰ In July 1806, *The Times* recorded that, following the failure of this appeal, a ‘Society established at Lloyd’s’ was created by him for these prisoners, and had already received a contribution of £643. The monies came from individual donors, who gave ten guineas each, but the bulk of the contributions came from the Royal Exchange Assurance and London Assurance Corporation, which gave fifty guineas each, and the Committee of Underwriters on the *Abergavenny* East Indiaman contributed £50. This suggests that the fund was part of a risk management scheme in the shipping market. These funds collected under the auspices of Angerstein were transmitted by Perrégaux as ‘*billets d’allouaine*’, with the significant request that this ‘fund should be distributed to them half in money and half in provisions’.⁸¹ These provisions, mainly shoes and clothes, were not sent from Britain, as British goods were banned on French soil and the Transport Office experienced difficulties during the machine-breaking crisis of 1811-1817.⁸² The prisoners were thus to be clad with French clothes, which further complicates the idea of a patriotic effort through charity.⁸³

The currency of charity is rarely considered. Yet, as an object, money and its channelling to France had meaningful implications. The Patriotic Fund transferred money through one sinew of the British power: the Navy. They used individual bills of exchange devoid of the visual patriotism flaunted in coins and notes, which the work of David Blaazer has identified as a central component of British nation-building.⁸⁴ The money received by prisoners was thus French, either in *Francs* or *livres tournois*, which suggests that the remittances were more pragmatic than overtly patriotic.

⁷⁹ It was reminded that another subscription had been raised in England and Scotland in the previous year for their benefit, and nearly £74,000 was collected.

⁸⁰ Angerstein was an opulent insurance broker and patron of the art. His philanthropy extended beyond maritime concerns as he contributed to the Waterloo collection, the Lifeboat Fund, the Veterinary College and rewards against women offenders. Sarah Palmer, ‘Angerstein, John Julius (c.1732–1823)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/549>, accessed 10 Oct. 2013]

⁸¹ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS3782/19/1-761.

⁸² Robin F. A. Fabel argued that the Transport Office struggled to provide clothes for the prisoners on its own territory. Robin F. A. Fabel, ‘Self-Help in Dartmoor: Black and White Prisoners in the War of 1812’, *Journal of the Early Republic* 9:2 (1989), pp. 165-90.

⁸³ I will further explore these points in the following section of the thesis.

⁸⁴ David Blaazer, ‘“Not Only Patriotism But Self-Interest”: War, Money and Finance in British Public Discourse 1914-1925’, *War and Society* 23 (2005), pp. 1-12 and ‘Currency in the Formation and Representation of National Identities in Britain’, *Formations and Representations of British National Identity Conference*, University of Warwick, 19-20 Sep. 2013.

Other funds, however, used Louis coins to demonstrate a symbolic support to the victims of the ‘Corsican usurper’. In 1807, the equivalent of £5000 was received at Verdun ‘to be distributed at the rate of one *louis d’or* per man to every man in distress’.⁸⁵ After the monetary change, one Louis was worth twenty francs, a highly valuable contribution to the prisoners’ purses. The ‘Louis Charity’, as it was called at the time, emanated from ‘an unknown quarter’ connected to Thomas Coutts & Co.⁸⁶ The anonymous nature of this London-based fund suggests that this subscription might have been organised by French *émigrés*, who used a monetary token of the lost King as a vector for a politically-orientated solidarity with fellow exiles.

Relief to captives was not simply monetary, but also spiritual. This support materialised in books sent from the ‘British and Foreign Bible Society’.⁸⁷ Established in 1804, this voluntary society developed in the wake of an evangelical revival in eighteenth-century England. Whilst its rationale was to publish and facilitate the distribution of the Bible at home and abroad, their annual reports reveal that they put a particular emphasis on providing prisoners of war in Britain with copies of the Scriptures to be kept and read on their return to their home country. This relief was not Protestant per se, but ecumenical. However, their activities did not concern the British prisoners of war in France until 1812. This late connection was initiated by Revd William Gorden, from the Committee at Verdun, who, despite the blockade, obtained in 1813 the shipment by post to Morlaix of twenty two boxes, ‘eleven of each containing two hundred copies of the Bible, and the rest three hundred copies of the new testament’, to be distributed by the Verdun agents in Longwy, Besançon and Bitche.⁸⁸ In 1807, the Birmingham Quakers had attempted a similar scheme, and in 1811 their London branch followed suit, but these differed by being exclusively for military prisoners.⁸⁹ The last example suggests that prisoner of war relief emerged from different local incentives and

⁸⁵ Lloyd’s must have been involved since the subscriptions were sent to ‘Messrs. Bennet and White at the Coffee House’. BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS3782/19/1- 1666, 405.

⁸⁶ This donation was known as the ‘Louis Charity’ and distinct account books were kept to record its distribution.

⁸⁷ See *Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (3 vols, London, 1810-1815).

⁸⁸ The shipment by post was problematic as no agent was sent to Morlaix to ensure the reception of the books, which were closely inspected by the French customs and the national authorities, who feared the insertion of political leaflets in the items but nevertheless accepted their distribution. SHD, YJ32, Letter of the Reverend Gorden to the French Ministry of Defence, Verdun, July 1813 ; AN, F/4/1527; Edward Fraser, *Napoleon the Gaoler, Personal Experiences and Adventures of British Sailors and Soldiers during the Great Captivity* (London, 1914), p. 48.

⁸⁹ The Quaker benefactors requested that the mission was carried out by a Field Army officer. General Lord Blayney, captured in an engagement in Spain, was commissioned to watch over their interests, and he travelled about France for this purpose. Goldsworth Alger, *Napoleon’s British Visitors and Captives*, p. 265.

conceptions of international charity that could stand in stark contrast with the motivations of the Royal Exchange.

***‘Proposita philanthropica’*: secular local subscriptions**

This Latin phrase was the heading under which the *Literary Panorama* regularly advertised calls for local subscriptions for the relief of prisoners in France.⁹⁰ The expression was characteristic of the literary outlook of its editor, Charles Taylor.⁹¹ Whilst his initiative was entrenched in a practice of voluntary state-sponsorship, which had its precedents in the Revolutionary Wars, his articles were devoid of martial rhetoric. Rather, they insisted on the cosmopolitan and ‘humane’ nature of the endeavour, a discourse aimed to touch his targeted audience: literary and entertainment circles.⁹² Theatres, operas and concert halls were indeed privileged vectors of international fund-raising amongst the higher classes of British society. In 1811, the *Annals of Bath* announced that private subscriptions had been made ‘by the inhabitants of Bath’ for the ‘relief of British prisoners of war in France’.⁹³ Additionally, ‘a concert was held in the upper-rooms on their behalf, when by the assiduous attention of the performers (gratuitously given) ... the sum of two hundred and seventy-one pounds was collected’.⁹⁴ Whilst the assistance to British prisoners was said to emanate from ‘the feelings of patriotism and humanity’ towards fellow ‘countrymen’, double the amount of money was raised for the ‘suffering Portuguese nation’ during this event.⁹⁵ The compatriot in need was clearly an imagined kin figure, whose contours stretched geographically with the vicissitudes of war.⁹⁶ Other contributions were made by various theatres donating the proceeds of particular performances. The Theatre Royal in Covent Garden donated the profits of a performance of *Hamlet* in 1811.⁹⁷ Individual performers also contributed in their own right. Mr Braham and Madame Catalani, for

⁹⁰ *Literary Panorama*, October 1809.

⁹¹ Born in a family of engravers in London, Taylor was a self-taught scholar, who travelled to Paris to learn modern and ancient languages, which might explain the Latin inspiration of his headings. Robin Taylor Gilbert, ‘Taylor, Charles (1756–1823)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Online Edition. [<http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/27021>, accessed 25 September 2013].

⁹² *Statement of the Distress of the British Prisoners in France, and Soliciting New Subscriptions for their Relief – Signed by Thomas Ferguson, Secretary, Committee Room, Lloyd’s Coffee House* (London, 1811).

⁹³ Rowland Mainwaring, *Annals of Bath, from 1800 to the Passing of the New Municipal Act* (Bath, 1838), p. 108

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁹⁵ ‘Nor should we omit to mention that appeals were made in behalf of the suffering Portuguese nation, in aid of which ... the corporation gave one hundred pounds, and Mrs Long of South Wraxhall, a similar sum, besides donations to a considerable extent from other parties’. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁹⁶ On the fictive nature of the kin, see Martin Daunton (ed.), *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare in the English Past* (London, 1996), p. 3

⁹⁷ LMA, CLC/120, ‘Lloyd’s Patriotic Fund Record Minute’, 25 July 1811.

instance, gratuitously performed the ‘Grand Scena’, ‘Aria’ and the highly-topical ‘Death of Nelson’. This ‘sociability of charity’ in concert halls was inscribed in the rise of associate philanthropy in Britain, where genteel actors, especially women, found in charity a noble gesture, in every sense of the term.⁹⁸

Another important contribution, though more modest in scope, was the regimental subscriptions made by volunteer corps. As Austin Gee’s study has recently demonstrated, volunteer corps ‘subscribed widely to public charities, particularly those that had patriotic connotations’.⁹⁹ It is thus not surprising that volunteer subscriptions were organized towards the Patriotic Fund, as evidence of their national loyalty. In 1811, a volunteer subscription was organised in Surrey, which raised two hundred pounds ‘towards the relief of the British prisoners in France’.¹⁰⁰ Yet, once again, more monies were collected for the ‘suffering Portuguese’ with three hundred pounds to be distributed as humanitarian aid to civilians whose towns had been turned into battlefields by the French and British armies. On the whole, whilst the British Army made a number of regimental contributions, little bulk monies were sent from the Navy, despite the individual interventions of naval officers, which implies that the military support to prisoners from the home country was not a unitary process.

Finally, donations were sought in a novel space: the shop. In November 1811, a reader of *The Times* suggested that charity boxes should be established in shops for the prisoners in France.¹⁰¹ The author recommended ‘the shopkeepers in and about London ... to have on their counters, or in any other conspicuous part of their shops, a box, with a small hole in it, superscribed “For British prisoners in France”.’ The box was supposed to be ‘opened weekly and the content sent to general subscriptions’. Money boxes were not a new invention. They had been used privately for family savings, and they were commonplace in the eighteenth-century public sphere for charity in hospitals, churches, seminaries and prisons.¹⁰² What was considered as a novelty was the transfer of this anonymous system to the commercial space of the shop, which the author conceived as a zone of

⁹⁸ Gillian Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre in Georgian London* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 25

⁹⁹ Austin Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement, 1794-1814* (Oxford, 2003), p. 201.

¹⁰⁰ TNA, Returns under Defence and Security Act 1803 and miscellaneous correspondence, HO 50/357, ‘Joseph Hardy, Inspecting Field Officer, Surrey and Kent’, 9 May 1811.

¹⁰¹ *The Times*, 23 November 1811.

¹⁰² Peter Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York, 2003), p. 30; Margaret DeLacy, *Prison Reform in Lancashire, 1700-1850: a Study in Local Administration* (Manchester, 1986), p.33; ‘money box, n.’, OED Online, Oxford University Press, 2013 [http://www.oed.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/View/Entry/121176?redirectedFrom=MONEY+BOX&, accessed 26 Sep.2013].

social contact favourable for charity: ‘when you consider the many individual who go into retail shops in the course of a day, the efficacy of this plan will appear more plainly’.¹⁰³ Whilst the plan aimed to encourage charitable sentiments amongst the anonymous customers, one specific social group was particularly targeted: ‘the many people of low rank in society’, who ‘have as strong a wish to assist their brethren in captivity as those whose means enable them to do it in a way congenial to their hearts, but are checked from offering their mite.’ The author then detailed a system for the receipt of old coppers, which deprived donors would not think worth giving to national subscriptions.¹⁰⁴ This scheme further suggests the amalgamation of charity and trade in Britain already at play in the Lloyd’s policy, and the polyphonic languages of relief provision developed in diverse localities.

An act of ‘remembrance’: religious fund-raising

In 1808, the *Literary Panorama* announced that ‘after a very appropriate discourse, on Sunday the 22d Nov., a collection was made in the parish church of Clapham, London, for the relief of our unfortunate countrymen detained as prisoner of war in France. The sum of £87. 19s. 9d. was collected’.¹⁰⁵ Subscriptions for prisoner relief were indeed entrenched in traditions of congregational fund-raising, which was not merely confined to London. Similar sermons were preached throughout the country, and the hat was passed amongst worshippers missing a captive relative, neighbour or friend. Such activities were predominant in the North of England, particularly in Yorkshire, where nonconformist communities such as the Presbyterian congregations in Whitby and Hull actively sought to encourage ‘compassion for prisoners’.¹⁰⁶ The East and North Ridings were strongholds of Presbyterianism in the eighteenth century with sixty-three Presbyterian families in Whitby.¹⁰⁷ A case study of a sermon preached by Reverend Young in this town unravels the specificities of these congregational undertakings.

¹⁰³ *The Times*, 23 November 1811.

¹⁰⁴ ‘perhaps 2d. or 3d. or more or less’. Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ *Literary Panorama*, January 1808.

¹⁰⁶ George Young, *Compassion for Prisoners Recommended: a Sermon, Preached in Cliff-chapel, Whitby, on Sabbath, January 22, 1809; When a Collection was Made for the Relief of the British Prisoners of War in France* (3rd edition) (Edinburgh, 1809).

¹⁰⁷ There were one thousand and sixty-nine families in Whitby in the late eighteenth century. Judith Jago and Edward Royle (eds), *The Eighteenth-Century Church in Yorkshire: Archbishop Drummond’s Primary Visitation of 1764* (York, 1999), pp. 23-5.

In 1809, two years after leaving his native Edinburghshire and having been ordained pastor of the Presbyterian congregation at the Cliff Lane chapel in Whitby, George Young published a sermon he had preached for the British captives in France.¹⁰⁸ The text was re-arranged for publication and included as a preface, an address to his readers to subscribe to the Patriotic Fund. All proceeds of his publication were to be donated to the fund.¹⁰⁹ Following the official line of the fund, the vicar insisted on the loss of three inherently national characteristics in captivity: liberty, property, and Protestant faith.¹¹⁰ These served as a prelude to a broader argument in four acts, in which he developed a particular language of international charity based on divine and kin connections. Deconstructing his rhetoric and outlook on captivity highlights a fascinating local and devotional vision of international charity as an act of ‘remembrance’.

Entitled *Compassion for Prisoners Recommended*, the sermon was given to the text *Hebrews* XIII.3: ‘remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them’.¹¹¹ ‘Remembrance’, a fundamental concept shaping the Protestant mind, formed the core of a poignant interpretation of the verse, which the following passage encapsulates.¹¹²

The *Remembrance* here mentioned is not merely an act of memory. When we are enjoined to *remember* our Creator, and to *remember* the Sabbath-day, the injunctions imply much more than the bare recollection that we have a Creator, and that there is a Sabbath: And when we are exhorted to remember them that are in bonds, we are not called merely to recollect that they exist, or to think of their hardships, but to cherish a compassion and active remembrance of them ... We must remember them as if we

¹⁰⁸ William Joseph Sheils, ‘Young, George (1777-1848)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): [<http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/30262>, accessed 17 October 2013].

¹⁰⁹ ‘The Collection made by the Associate Presbyterian Congregation of Cliff-Lane, and their friends in Whitby and the neighbourhood, at the time when this Discourse was delivered, was intended as a small addition to this Fund for relieving the Prisoners. This Discourse is presented to the public, agreeably to the wishes of some who heard it, in the hope that it may contribute to cherish those sentiments of benevolence which are congenial to the spirit of the Gospel. Whatever profits may arise from the sale of the publication shall be devoted to benevolent uses...It is possible that some into whose hands these pages may come, may be disposed to assist their captive countrymen. Such benevolent individuals are respectfully informed, that any Donation may be safely transmitted by sending a bill for the amount, in a letter, addressed “to the Committee for the Relief of the British Prisoners in France”, *under cover* “To FRANCIS FREELING, Esq; General Post-Office, London.’ Young, *Compassion for Prisoners*, p. iii.

¹¹⁰ The vicar was clearly unaware of the creation of Protestant churches by captives.

¹¹¹ Young, *Compassion for Prisoners*, p. 5.

¹¹² ‘Benevolence’ was also used in abundance, and defined as an expression of Christian love reminiscent of the Ancient *ἀγάπη* or *caritas*. Firmly opposed to Unitarianism, he identified it as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit in human creatures, a power ‘constrain[ing] us to exercise philanthropy’. This benevolent *nature* was inherent to mankind yet proportional to the familiarity with the Scriptures, which manifested itself as a *feeling* of ‘pity’, ‘sympathy’ an ‘compassion’, and *actions* of ‘liberality’ and ‘philanthropy’. Significantly, the array of the ‘benevolence’ lexical field he used was placed within a broader language of mutual ‘remembrance’, which permeated the whole sermon.

were bound with them ... We ought to remember them, as we should do if we were their fellow-prisoners ... We should be willing to become their fellow-prisoners in a certain sense, by consenting to bear a portion of their hardships, in traitening [*sic.*] ourselves, in order to send them relief ... We ought to remember them as we ourselves would wish to be remembered if we were in their situation.¹¹³

By making the connection between the everyday of the flock (remembering God, remembering His Son through the Eucharist conceived as a mental recollection of the Last Supper rather than a transubstantialist ritual, and thus remembering themselves as spiritual beings) and the task in hand (remembering captives abroad), the minister presented the charitable act as a communal experience where the boundaries of the selves dissolved.¹¹⁴ To be 'as one with' those in need by giving money, provisions or simply time and prayers was a common theme in charity persuasion at the time. Yet, Young's address appears extraordinarily powerful, and not at all fitting with the common view of a Presbyterian 'old-fashioned way of haranguing'.¹¹⁵ The speech reached into the life of its audience, realigning them with the theological through the affective power of a familiar notion.¹¹⁶ His variations on 'remembrance' must have strongly resonated in the minds of his flock educated to think that 'without remembrance, there is no salvation'.¹¹⁷ The sermon was published in three editions within the year of its preaching, which clearly indicates that the congregation responded with fervour to this divine 'command'.¹¹⁸

'We are commanded ... to have pity on those who are in prison, not through any criminal conduct, but merely through the misfortunes attendant on war: especially if they are our own countrymen and friends', claimed Young.¹¹⁹ The last allusion suggests that, despite requesting aid to British prisoners of war regardless of their origin, the minister also solicited compassion through

¹¹³ Young, *Compassion for Prisoners*, pp. 16-7.

¹¹⁴ Catholicism and Protestantism differed on this question of the objective ontological presence of the Christ during the Eucharist. Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought* (Oxford, 2003), p.189.

¹¹⁵ Joris van Eijnatten, 'Getting the Message: Towards a Cultural History of the Sermon', in Joris van Eijnatten (ed.), *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Leiden, 2009), pp. 350-51.

¹¹⁶ Sabine Holtz mused much on the topic of the eighteenth-century 'sentimentalisation' of sermon delivery. Her study of James Fordyce (1720-1796), a famous Scottish Presbyterian orator, who moved to London, offers an interesting parallel with the case of George Young, and further shows the 'affective' turn in Presbyterian oratory during the period. Sabine Holtz, 'From Embodying the Rules to Embodying Belief', in Van Eijnatten (ed.), *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change*, p.325.

¹¹⁷ Miriam Elisabeth Burnstein, 'Anti-Catholic Sermons in Victorian Britain', in Robert H. Ellison (ed.) *A New History of the Sermon: the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden, 2010), p.162.

¹¹⁸ On the importance of sermons in shaping public responses to national and international events see Ellison (ed.) *A New History of the Sermon*, p. 4.

¹¹⁹ Young, *Compassion for Prisoners*, p. 8.

local kinship.¹²⁰ The military captive was presented as a threefold kin figure: a family member, a friend and a parishioner. ‘To part of them’, he claimed, ‘some of you are bound by the ties of blood, and others by the ties of friendship. Some of them have often gone with you to the Sanctuary of God: Some of them have worshipped with us in this house. In contributing for their relief you are providing for your own’.¹²¹ This threefold kinship with the captives abroad was representative of the concentric circles of relations Will Coster has identified, in which cognatic, agnatic and fictive connections merged to form the notion of ‘kin’ in the late eighteenth century.¹²² This extended kinship shaped Young’s romantic depiction of the misery of the captive lost in a connection limbo: ‘no dear bosom friend, no fond mother, no loving sister ... perhaps they are now in the land of silence’.¹²³ The reference to ‘the land of silence’ was very powerful reminder of *Psalm XCIV.17*. This musical lamentation thanking God for His deliverance from personal distress aimed to further engrain the vision of a communion branching out overseas in the minds and hearts of his flock.¹²⁴

Spiritual kinship was also the basis for organising local collections and sermons for prisoners of war. It is indeed significant that two years later, in 1811, another Presbyterian minister in Hull, the Reverend Morley, also decided to give a sermon to the text *Hebrews XIII.3* as a ‘recommendation’, a ‘cause ... pleaded’ for the British prisoners in France.¹²⁵ It is likely that the two preachers met, for Young was an honorary member of the Hull Literary and Philosophical Society. They shared similar scientific interests since they both wrote on maritime history, geology and medicine.¹²⁶ On the whole, despite their involvement in national fund-raising, these activities in maritime communities in Yorkshire suggest the potency of spiritual and local kinship in providing relief to captives abroad.

Exclusive local solidarities

In addition to the three national financial reserves (Patriotic Fund, Lloyd’s Society, Louis Charity) to which the collections mentioned above were donated, a significant number of funds also emanated

¹²⁰ The *Reports from the Committee* show that a cluster of merchant masters from Whitby were recipients of this charity in Verdun in 1812. *Report from the Committee for the Relief of British Prisoners in France* (London, 1812), pp. 206-9.

¹²¹ Young, *Compassion for Prisoners*, p. 3.

¹²² See Will Coster, *Family and Kinship in England, 1450-1800* (London, 2001); Marco van Leeuwen, ‘Logic of Charity: Poor Relief in Pre-Industrial Europe’, *Continuity and Change* 24:4 (1994), p. 606.

¹²³ Young, *Compassion for Prisoners*, p. 9.

¹²⁴ ‘If you had not helped me, Lord, I would soon have gone to the land of silence’ *Psalm XCIV.17*.

¹²⁵ John Morley, *The Cause of British Prisoners of War in France Pleaded: a Sermon [on Heb. Xiii. 3]* (Hull: 1811).

¹²⁶ Morley also published works on religion and lunacy. John Morley, *The privilege of Believers an Antidote Against Fatal Lunacy; Being the Substance of a Sermon [on 1 Pet. i. 5]* (Hull, 1808).

from independent local subscriptions.¹²⁷ These private donations complicate the idea that subscriptions were organised to substantiate a united British war effort against the Gallic captor, as they aimed to provide assistance exclusively to the prisoners originating from their localities.¹²⁸

This manifested itself most vividly in subscriptions collected in the Channel Islands.¹²⁹ In August 1809, the bankers Le Mesurier remitted £450 collected in Jersey in aid to ‘the Natives of the Island or men of ships belonging there’.¹³⁰ They requested that the prisoners should, in return, provide lists of the captive islanders and detailed receipts attesting that money had been ‘distributed among them proportionally’.¹³¹ Similarly, in January 1808, William Gorden was informed of the arrival of a ‘French gentleman’ appointed to distribute monies gathered in Guernsey. This substantial subscription raised much alarm from his correspondent in Arras, George Norton, who deplored such a localist attitude and the potential dissension this could raise amongst prisoners. ‘The Guernsey Subscription ... is so large’, he wrote, ‘that I am convinced it will do more harm than good. All these worthy people would act more wisely if they threw their subscriptions into the General Fund at Lloyd’s, but it should be very difficult to make them think so.’¹³² These local endeavours were nourished by the sprawling financial connections of merchant bankers, who were well-implanted in their insular communities and equally familiar with French and London trades. The Le Mesurier brothers, for instance, had developed a successful transnational and colonial network between London, Normandy and Tobago, which led them to play a prominent role in the political arena during the period.¹³³ Their unprecedented influence in Parliament and the City of London Council enabled them to couple their financial projects with a strong agenda ‘in defence of the Channel Islands’ interests’.¹³⁴ Like other merchant bankers of Guernsey origin established in London, they lobbied and handled the financial affairs of their fellow islanders, a policy which extended to providing charity for those separated by the war.

¹²⁷ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1.

¹²⁸ See Linda Colley’s argument on the Lloyd’s Patriotic Fund. Colley, *Britons*, pp. 261-2.

¹²⁹ The Channel archipelago developed complex transnational identities as fiscal spaces during the period. Renaud Morieux, *Une Mer Pour Deux Royaumes: la Manche, Frontière Franco-Anglaise XVIIe-XVIIIe Siècles* (Rennes, 2008), p. 246.

¹³⁰ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1, 823, 826, 827. On the activities of Le Mesurier for prisoners, see the *Jersey Magazine; or, Monthly Recorder*, July 1809; Samuel de Carteret and George Syvret, *Chroniques des Iles de Jersey, Guernesey Auregny et Serk* (Guernsey, 1832) p. 247.

¹³¹ Messrs. Perrégaux facilitated the transaction. BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-823.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Gregory Stevens-Cox, *St Peter Port, 1680-1830: the History of an International Entrepôt* (London, 1999), p. 26.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

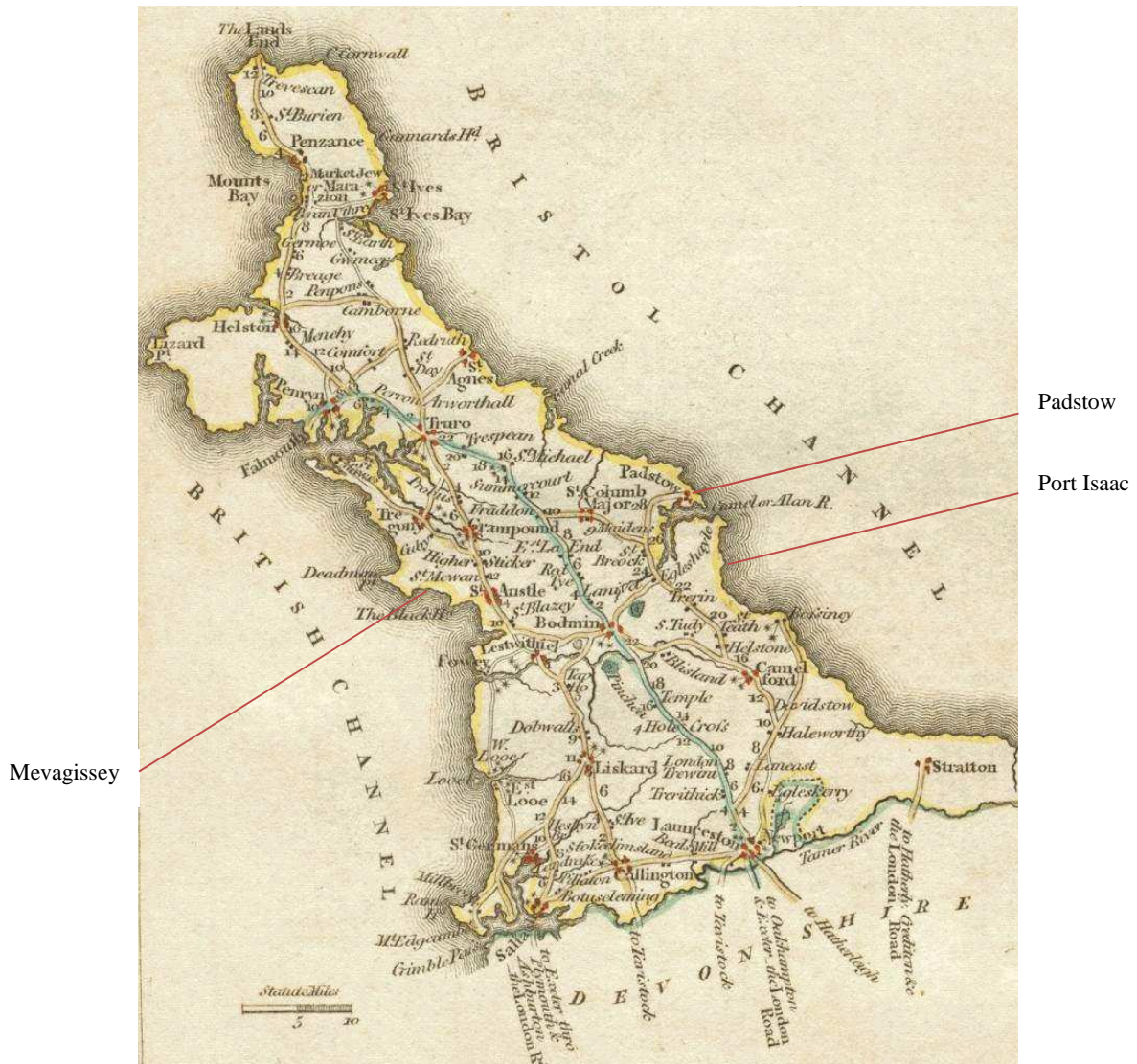


Fig. 14: John Cary, Map of Cornwall, 1814

(*Traveller's Companion*, 1814)

Other maritime communities imbued with strong littoral and county identities, such as Cornwall and Devon, provided region-orientated relief to prisoners. In March 1808, a ‘Dartmouth subscription’ was implemented under the supervision of Verdun in the depots of Arras and Sarrelibre.¹³⁵ The following May, Revd Gorden organised the remittance of a fund for ‘the Cornish men’, mostly merchant seamen, ‘at rate of 12 *livres* each to Masters and 9 *livres* to Mates’.¹³⁶ During the period a distinctive Cornish identity was expressed in various forms – maps for instance were often west-oriented constructions emphasizing the ‘the land’s end’, the farthest point of a peninsula

¹³⁵ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-67, 91.

¹³⁶ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-196, 79.

within the British Isles (Fig.14).¹³⁷ Whilst Linda Colley presented these physical and imagined spaces as the ‘peripheries’ of Britishness, it seems that the so-called ‘Celtic fringe’ crystallised the fissures of both national and local identities in formation.¹³⁸

Internal tensions occurred within the Cornish community, at home and abroad, as a result of subscriptions organised in various villages and dedicated exclusively to their inhabitants and not the entirety of the Cornish captive community. This is particularly evident in the triangular tensions between Mevagissey, Padstow and Port Isaac, three towns situated in a ten-mile perimeter (Fig.14) which organised separate subscriptions and money transfers, leading to ‘a great deal of murmuring amongst those belonging to the county that ha[d] not received any benefit from it’ in Verdun. Prisoners from Mevagissey demanded more ‘liberal’ and ‘general’ relief which would include them in collections made on the other side of the Peninsula, yet without much success, the funds having to be ‘divided equal amongst those belonging to th[e] Town ... from which they came from’.¹³⁹

Claiming rights to locally-exclusive subscriptions was equally problematic for Welsh monies. In July 1808, Hugh Lewis claimed his right to a Welsh fund from a seafaring locality: the ‘Merioneth Subscription’.¹⁴⁰ Lewis was ‘born in the county but quitted it very young’, which led to some reluctance from Verdun. However, his request found a positive outcome through the patronage of a fellow naval man, Captain Ellis.¹⁴¹ Not only nativity, but naval patronage and kinship thus formed the basis of these locally-oriented networks of charity, which suggest that significant local differences affected charity provision to prisoners of war, especially as littoral spaces, especially harbours, invested more specifically in the relief of their captive co-natives.

Arguably, the mere insistence of every fund or subscribers that recipients should be identified, by their profession and their geographical provenance, tells us something about the potency of

¹³⁷ As many historians and geographers have noted, maps reflects physical as much as imagined spaces. Whilst in the present day, North-oriented maps are a convention, the orientation of cartographic representations varied greatly in the early modern period. In the Middle Ages, maps, particularly T and O maps, were drawn with East at the top. Non-Western maps had a variety of orientations, but it seemed common for marine spaces, especially cities bordering a sea, to be represented with the sea at the top, as was the case in this map of Cornwall. Another explanation for this orientation might be the emphasis on the road from London to Cornwall, as this map was later reproduced in travel guidebooks. On maps as imagined space, see Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed their World* (London, 1997).

¹³⁸ Colley, ‘Peripheries’, in *Britons*, pp. 101-32.

¹³⁹ Royal Institute of Cornwall, Courtney Library, the Wesleyans of Megavissey papers, Letter from Nicholas Lelean to John Pearce, Longwy, 6 March 1813.

¹⁴⁰ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-298.

¹⁴¹ Stewart Marsh Ellis, *George Meredith: His Life and Friends in Relation to his Work* (New York, 1919), p. 29.

regionalism in Britain during the period. In 1809, the Lloyd's Insurance Fund requested that 'the names and residence in England of the women and children, of the masters, mates, and merchant passengers who partake of these succours [should be] forwarded monthly'. 'The reason of this request', they said, was 'for the purpose of encouraging the subscriptions which augment in proportion as the families in England find [that] their relatives and townsmen, prisoners in France, are relieved by their donations'.¹⁴² Family and local affiliations, in other words kinship understood broadly as it was in the late eighteenth century, formed the basis of charity provision between Verdun and Britain, rather than a unilateral expression of patriotism. This phenomenon was even more perceptible in the ways in which the prisoners consumed and distributed the monies.

A gentlemen's mission? Reception and distribution of charity

Finding a letter-book of the Verdun committee for the relief of British prisoners in France in the Birmingham City Library initially appeared to me as an oddity of the archival system.¹⁴³ Why is it there? And why does it only cover a year and a half of a decade-long captivity? An economic approach would have enabled me to quantify the financial transactions between Verdun and Britain, but it would not have done justice to this intriguing source. Rather, I chose to 'read' the book through a socio-cultural lens, as an epistolary text and as an object, in order to explore the social intricacies of the prisoners' charity network. Observed from this angle, the book unravels a complex bureaucracy and dynamics amongst depots, which, I argue, made Verdun the metropolis of a captive diaspora.

Retracing the book's journey confirms the importance of the maintenance of individual connections abroad and reveals the agency of the prisoners in distributing and consuming various funds. It is indeed significant that the letter-book is now kept in the personal papers of Matthew Robinson Boulton, the son of the famous industrialist of Birmingham. A closer look at the handwriting and signatures of the entries reveal that Revd William Gorden was a key protagonist in keeping the accounts of the Committee (Table 13). The book is most likely to have come into

¹⁴² BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-761.

¹⁴³ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-761.

Boulton's possession through him, when they met in Duns Tew in 1815.¹⁴⁴ However, one question remains open: why did Gorden give him the book? Why did he not submit it to the Lloyd's as testament of his good work in captivity? Whilst the correspondence of Matthew Boulton shows that he had been involved, professionally and privately, in relieving prisoners at Verdun, some deviations might also have been made by the captives in implementing the Patriotic Fund policy.¹⁴⁵ The prisoners were, after all, the ultimate decision-makers in the distribution of relief, away from the societal and governmental gaze of home.

As an object, the letter-book reveals the social mechanics of the Committee.¹⁴⁶ This is a sturdy volume, containing 838 manuscript entries, containing copies of letters mostly sent, but also received, by the Verdun Committee. It thus operated as a membership and account book. Written on the edges of the leaves, so as to be read when the book is closed, feature the words: 'From Jany. 1808 to Augt. 1809', followed by the number 'III' suggesting that this tome was the third of a series.¹⁴⁷ The regularity and neatness with which letters and minutes of committee meetings were transcribed, indicates the adaptability of prisoners who organised an efficient system of distribution throughout France.¹⁴⁸ The following graphs (Table 13) highlight that members corresponded with various bankers and captive emissaries who formed subordinate committees in eight depots.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Once liberated, he resumed his position as the vicar of the parish of Duns Tew in Oxfordshire, a village adjacent to the parish of Great Tew where Matthew Robinson Boulton acquired an estate in 1815. The two men were acquainted and corresponded, a connection through which the Verdun book most likely came into the possession of Boulton. Reverend William Gorden's career is summarized in Foster's *Alumni Oxonienses*. 'Gorden, William (1792-1823)', Clergy of the Church of England database. [<http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/search/index.jsp>, accessed 17 Oct. 2013].

¹⁴⁵ The correspondence of Matthew Boulton reveals that he subscribed to the Lloyds Patriotic Fund and took part in various subscriptions for the British prisoners in France. This was certainly owing to his performance as an 'enlightened industrialist' in the West Midlands, which, as Peter Jones has argued, relied on a wide national and international network. The final reason why Boulton was interested in the Committee for the relief of British prisoners in France was his professional activities. Indeed, the medals the Lloyd's Patriotic Fund bestowed on naval men for their prowess at sea during the war were struck at Boulton's Soho works in Birmingham: 'gold medals for captains, silver for lieutenants and copper medals for the ordinary seamen and marines'. Boulton's charitable activities thus combined cosmopolitan and mercantile interests. See BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, JWP 6/18, Correspondence of Mathew Boulton, 1808-1815; Peter Jones, *Industrial Enlightenment: Science, Technology and Culture in Birmingham and the West Midlands 1760-1820* (Manchester, 2008); Peter Jones, 'Matthew Boulton et Ses Réseaux, à Partir des Archives de Soho à Birmingham', *Documents pour l'Histoire des Techniques* 17:1 (2009) [<http://dht.revues.org/466>, accessed 12 June 2014]; John Sugden, *Nelson: the Sword of Albion* (London, 2014), p. 138.

¹⁴⁶ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1, Records of the Committee for the Relief of British Prisoners of War in France at Verdun, 1808-1809.

¹⁴⁷ A photograph of the book features in chapter 7, where the materiality of the document is analysed.

¹⁴⁸ Eleven meetings were recorded between February 1808 and July 1809. BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-62, 88, 119, 141, 390, 479, 613, 683, 709, 727, 760.

¹⁴⁹ Arras, Besançon, Bitche, Cambrai, Givet, Rocroy, Sarrelibre, Valenciennes.

Amongst these agents featured predominantly naval officers, doctors, clergymen, but also civilian prisoners in permission in cities such as Tours, Lyon and Paris.¹⁵⁰

Letters and diaries penned by members show how this network came into shape before 1809. From the farce performed in 1803 to the letter-book of 1808, the committee had moved from informal forms of aristocratic relief to an institutionalised system of charity headed by captive clerics and naval men.¹⁵¹ The initial joyous form of charity mentioned above was essentially vertical, opposing two classes of prisoners within the space of Verdun: the indigent, already deeply indebted, and what Alexander Don called ‘our aristocracy’, namely the wealthy civil travellers with useful connections in Paris and at home.¹⁵² Protestant clerics officially launched the committee using these connections. Following the farce, a subscription was organised by Revd Lee, a clerical tourist of New College Oxford, and correspondent of Fiott in Southampton.¹⁵³ In 1804, they created ‘a bureau’ in town, which as contemporary noted, ‘had all the appearance of an English counting house’.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Certain prisoners obtained permission from the French State to reside in non-depot towns in France either because of their health or to carry out scientific investigations. I will explore the delivery of such exceptional permissions in greater detail in the following chapter.

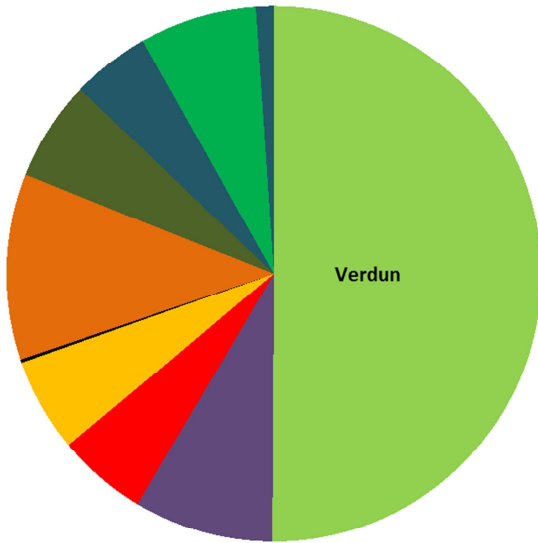
¹⁵¹ See ‘Prologue’ cited in the introduction to this chapter.

¹⁵² Albert Peel (ed.), *The Life of Alexander Stewart: Prisoner of Napoleon and Preacher of the Gospel* (London, 1948), p. 80. On the subject of genteel charity provision and entertainment, see Alan Kidd, ‘Philanthropy and the “Social History” Paradigm’, *Social History* 21 (1996) pp. 180-92; Sarah Lloyd, ‘Pleasing Spectacles and Elegant Diners: Conviviality, Benevolence and Charity Anniversaries in Eighteenth-Century London’, *Journal of British Studies* 41:1 (2002), pp. 23-57.

¹⁵³ ‘At an early period of our stay at Fontainebleau, a meeting was held for the purpose of considering the best means of assisting those among the prisoners who were in distress, many of whom had already been discovered. A subscription was entered into, and Mr. Fiott, of Southampton, kindly undertook the superintendence and distribution of it. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Lee, of New College, whose subsequent exertions in behalf of the distressed prisoners are well known, took upon himself at the request of the subscribers, the management of this relief’. Robert Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France, Containing Observations on Their Manners and Habits Principally with Reference to Their Religious State* (London, 1830), p. 5.

¹⁵⁴ ‘The sum collected in England for the distribution among the prisoners in the different places of confinement, were in the first instance transmitted here. An office was opened, and a committee formed to correspond with those of the different depots where the distribution had to be made. This bureau had all the appearance of an English counting house’, Richard Langton, *Narrative of a Captivity in France from 1809 to 1814* (2 vols, Liverpool, 1836), II, pp. 245-6.

Number of letters sent between agents of the committee and copied in the letter-book kept in Verdun (1808-1809)



Verdun	Rev. William Gorden	Thomas Latter
	Rev. Lancelot Lee	Commandant Wirion
	Sir Thomas Lavie	Thomas Phillips
	Falconer	John Ellis
	Gibson	De Berniere
Valenciennes	Charles Sevrigh	B. Robertson
	Richard Allison	William Wilson
Bitche	T.B. Scott	James Brennan
	Commandant Robquin	Rev. Robert Wolfe
Givet	John Lawmont	Gudmund Frieburn
Rocroy (Swedish POWs)	Peter Johnson	John Bell
Sarrelibre	John Douglas	Ridley
	Mrs Keating	Le Sage
	Monsieur Quarante	George Norton
Arras	C. Stewart	Captain Flattely
Non-depot correspondents, agents in temporary permissions and bankers (see details below)	Lieutenant Stewart	Jenvoise
	Capitaine de Havilland	Alexander Stewart
	William Milne	Andrew Blake
	William Scott	Pirie
	Charles Forbes	Christopher Strachey
	Strickland Kingston	Anthony Aufrere
	John Batdebat	Colonel C.J.Hall
	Sir William Codrington	Madame Kreymantz
	Roger Palmer	Christiana Brebmer
	John Perkins	John Gerrard
	Henry Gordon	Perrégaux & Co.
	Thomas Ferguson (Lloyd's)	James Hilbers
	S. Wilson	Angerstein
	Le Mesurier	Edward Bolton Clive (Lloyd's)
	Willink et d'Agrippe	Kreylinger & Co.
	Diot & Co.	

Non-depot correspondents: Parole prisoners in permission in France, French and Dutch bankers, and subscribers in Britain (1808-1809)
(Source: Birmingham City Archives, MS3782/19-1)

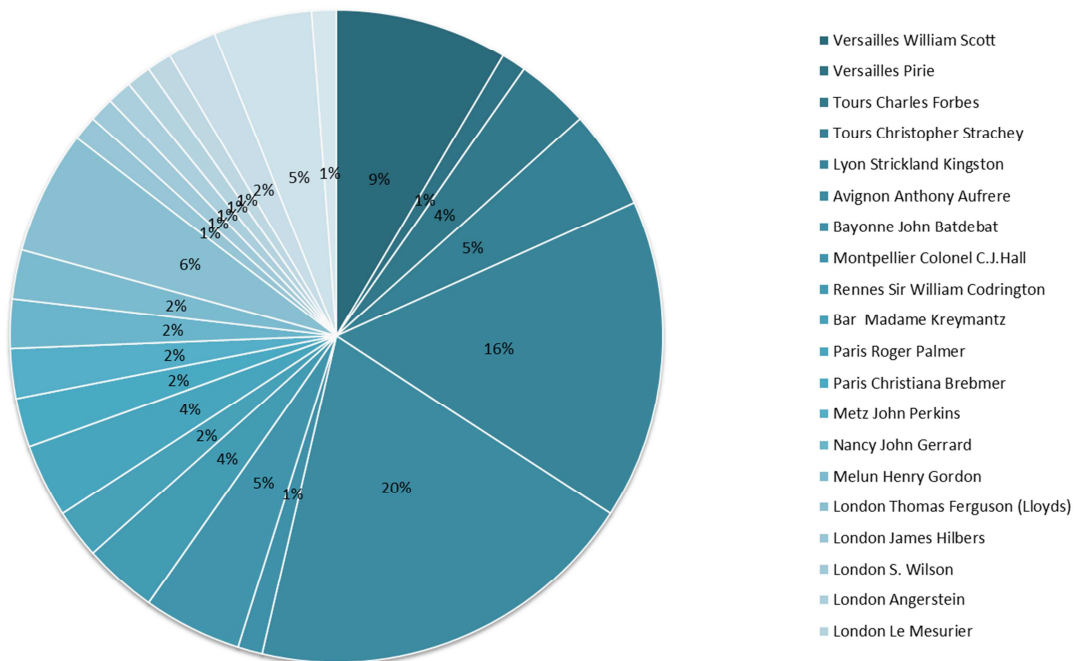


Table 13: Correspondents of the Committee at Verdun (1808-1809)

(Birmingham City Archives)

Comparing the social backgrounds of the Committee members at three points in time indicate a clear pattern: the movement towards the emergence of a clerico-naval institution.¹⁵⁵ Most of the original members in 1804 were *détenus*, whilst in 1808 and 1812 military prisoners formed a majority and clergymen became the pillars of the institution by occupying key roles such as president and treasurer. This evolution seems in keeping with Lloyd's directions. Nevertheless, these were regular members around which gravitated non-regular adherents, whose social milieu did not necessarily fit with the subscribers' policy. It included other civilians, such as George D'Arcy Boulton who, after being captured on his way back from Canada, acted as a lawyer for the committee. This exasperated his son in England: 'My father's letters are always about business for he has numberless "poor devils" to assist as clients.'¹⁵⁶ Even more surprising was the involvement of English Catholics, such as Charles Throckmorton, who entered the committee by connection with other genteel captives.¹⁵⁷

The presence of wealthy civilians coloured the organisation of the committee. In particular, the networks relied on Grand Tour traveller's networks with Parisian bankers. Significantly, Revd Lee, a tourist captured as *détenu*, was the exclusive correspondent with Perrégaux & Co. until 1808.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, the committee relied heavily on Verdun *détenus* temporally residing in towns such as Tours, Avignon, Lyon and Paris (Table 13), and who were put in charge of distributing shoes and money to prisoners on their march to their respective depots. This formed the basis of an internal missionary system organised from Verdun and branching out to other depots. Sub-committees were instigated through individual and voluntary departures. Revd Wolfe, for instance, left Verdun for Givet with his family in 1805 and settled there as a Committee envoy until 1810. By 1808, the Committee dispersed emissaries to eight depots, with whom they corresponded on a monthly basis and formed a missionary system amongst captives.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ See appendices for lists of members. BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-2; Wolfe, *English prisoners in France*; Geoffrey Auvie Turner (ed.), *The Diary of Peter Bussel with Illustrations from Original Drawings by the Author* (London, 1931); Henry Raikes (ed.), *Memoir of Vice-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton* (London, 1846); Michael Arthur Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives* (London, 1962). See chapter 5 for a further analysis of the alliance of clergymen with naval officers in detention.

¹⁵⁶ John Lownsbrough, 'Boulton, D'Arcy (1759-1834)', *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, VI, University of Toronto/Université Laval. [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/boulton_d_arcy_1759_1834_6E.html, accessed 29 Sept. 2013].

¹⁵⁷ See chapter 5 on religion in detention.

¹⁵⁸ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1.

¹⁵⁹ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-2.

Churches, schools and hospitals formed the pillars of this system, which strongly resonated with colonial endeavours. A captive-led dispensary was created in Verdun, where 786 patients were admitted between 1804 and 1806. The institution was well-organised, since, by 1806, 737 of these patients had been cured, 2 discharged as incurable, 12 died and only 35 were still on the sick list.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, naval surgeons petitioned the French government to provide medical succour to their countrymen held in other depots, such as Dr Moir who obtained permission to leave for Besançon with his family in 1810.¹⁶¹ These individual initiatives led to a system of medical missions endorsed by the Transport Office. Their role was then to cure prisoners injured during capture or on the march to their depot, and to contain epidemics amongst those secluded in fortresses.¹⁶² Payment for medicines was however ensured by the prisoners themselves through the Committee, and was only partly reimbursed by the French government after their liberation.¹⁶³ Though costly, the mission was efficient. By October 1808, there were captive-led hospitals in every depot except Sarrelibre.¹⁶⁴

Spiritual comforts were perceived as equally vital. The makeshift Protestant church firstly established in Verdun by Revd Gorden was exported to Givet with the transfer of Robert Wolfe, mentioned above.¹⁶⁵ After much debate in the British press and with Canterbury, the activities of these displaced clergymen were recognised by the Church of England in April 1806.¹⁶⁶ Revd Maude recorded, for instance, that Revd Wolfe was ‘appointed by the British Government, Chaplain to the prisoners here with a salary of £200 per annum’.¹⁶⁷ This measure itself reveals the colonial dimension of divine succour to prisoners, which also permeated the language used by clerics in their journals and letters. Providence guided Revd Wolfe’s endeavours. ‘I had a real and earnest desire for the spiritual good of my flock, according to the light which God had given me’, he wrote, justifying his decision to leave the comforts of Verdun for the fortress of Givet.¹⁶⁸ He also conceived his divine

¹⁶⁰ Gawler, *Britons Strike Home*, p. 51.

¹⁶¹ Ernest d’Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire, Bulletins Quotidiens Adressés par Fouché à l’Empereur* (7 vols, Paris, 1914), III, pp. 141, 1050; AN, F/7/6541-1847.

¹⁶² Peel (ed.), *The Life of Alexander Stewart*, p. 56.

¹⁶³ SHD, YJ29, French military correspondence about British captives, 1804-1815.

¹⁶⁴ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS3782/19/1-371, 149. The hospital at Arras contained separate fever wards.

¹⁶⁵ Other schools were established in Arras and Valenciennes.

¹⁶⁶ See chapter 5 and chapter 6.

¹⁶⁷ The debates mainly concerned the celebration of Anglican marriage on unconsecrated ground, to which I shall return in the last part of the thesis. QCL, MSS 403-04, John Barnabas Maude, ‘Journal’, III, 29 April 1806.

¹⁶⁸ Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, p.60.

task as disciplinary, as a form of social and moral control against ‘the mental debasement, and those habits of depravity and vice’ contracted in idleness.¹⁶⁹

Educating their fellow captives was a key element of the Verdun committee. Their policy was twofold: enhancing literacy amongst the captives’ children and providing professional training to young naval men. There were around 500 children in British depots in France. Each year, subscriptions were organised by one hundred captives in Verdun for the maintenance of ‘English schools’ to educate them.¹⁷⁰ In 1805, a note to Lloyd’s from Verdun recorded that eleven girls were ‘educated and dressed at Verdun’, and sixty-five boys were attending the school.¹⁷¹ There were, in the same year, 140 pupils in Givet, 120 in Valenciennes and 119 in Sarrelibre.¹⁷² These ‘scholars’, as Revd Lee called them, were educated by clergymen but also naval lieutenants such as James Brown and John Carslake. However, another school was specifically created for young naval men, namely midshipmen aged between four and twelve, who could prepare for the lieutenant examination by taking classes in mathematics, languages and navigation.¹⁷³ Whilst the naval school was shut in October 1808, most of the midshipmen having been transferred to the North, Revd Gorden noted that ‘an institution has been formed in town for the purpose of affording an opportunity of instruction to the younger part of the mates of vessels, and about 40 persons of this description constantly partake of its benefit. The whole number in the different depots who receive daily instruction from your benefactions amounts to 2137 individuals’.¹⁷⁴ The use of the money extended to the furnishing of schoolrooms, as is suggested by a letter from John Bell in May 1808, at Sarrelibre, who noted that ‘the schools are now well fitted, clean whitewashed, and all the tables and stools in complete repair’.¹⁷⁵ Schools, churches and hospitals served to inspire the prisoners ‘with the idea [they were] once more at home’, as a contemporary noted, and made Verdun the centre of a captive ‘colony’ as the French local press described them.

¹⁶⁹ ‘The fear of God ... even in them that were not decidedly religious, reciprocally acted upon their minds, preserved them from that mental debasement, and those habits of depravity and vice, which are ever contracted and induced by ignorance and want of employment.’ *Ibid.*, p. 76; Parry-Wingfield, *Napoleon’s Prisoner*, p. 30.

¹⁷⁰ Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives*, p. 34.

¹⁷¹ It appears that girls and boys attended the same school. The prisoners had also the possibility of hiring private tutors and registering their children in the local French schools.

¹⁷² Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives*, p. 34.

¹⁷³ I will develop this point in the following section.

¹⁷⁴ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1- 79.

¹⁷⁵ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-182.

Out of approximately 16,000 prisoners, 13,125 captives received funds from Verdun in 1812, which indicates the efficiency of their network.¹⁷⁶ In order to achieve this, clear deviations were made from the subscribers' requests. Whilst the Lloyd's provided funds for captives who were not treated in existing military hospitals, the line between French and captive dispensaries was far from being evident in the daily life of the depots. In Arras, for instance, the French commandant instigated a scheme in which English physicians were asked to attend 'an infirmary' in the town.¹⁷⁷ In Verdun, at least ten British doctors worked in the civil hospital and helped with the vaccination of French locals.¹⁷⁸ The Hippocratic Oath and the cosmopolitan nature of their profession placed these captive doctors above martial and national antagonisms in their provision of relief.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, not all the captive recipients mentioned in the letter book were British. The committee also used the funds from the Patriotic Fund to provide help to 'foreign' prisoners at Mont Léon (Table 14) and Swedish seamen, on the grounds that they had been taken under English colours.¹⁸⁰

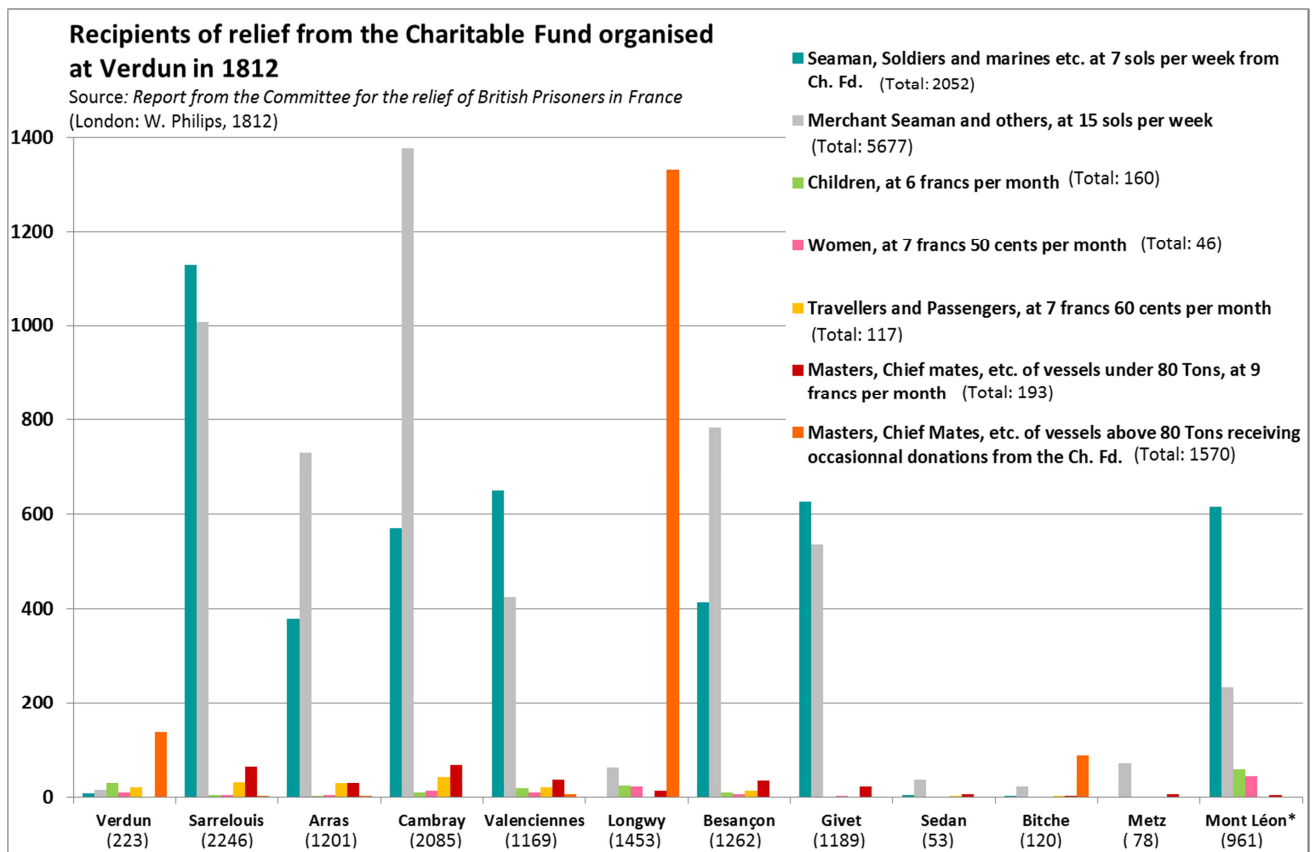


Table 14: Recipients of relief in 1812

(*Report of the Committee, 1812*)

¹⁷⁶ Lewis, *Napoleon's British Captives*, p. 162; Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, pp. 67-8.

¹⁷⁷ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-180.

¹⁷⁸ AN, F7/5161.

¹⁷⁹ See following chapter.

¹⁸⁰ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-65.

The Committee clearly amalgamated funds to ensure that most of the distressed prisoners would receive some support. In 1807, the committee send a request to the Patriotic Fund to relax their restrictions and permit the payment of three *sous* a day to captives of other classes, which Lloyd's rejected. Nevertheless, the Committee ignored their decision. They used the monies not only in behalf of naval prisoners, but also the civilians who had settled in France before 1803. The distribution of the Louis Fund was equally subject to some adaptations, the number of prisoners greatly exceeding the five thousand coins to be given to each of them. The deficiency was made up by transferring money from the remittances of the Patriotic Fund.¹⁸¹ The distribution of funds in 1812 (Table 14), when Lloyd's ceased to offer subsidies, also indicates that the special subscriptions for merchant masters and mates were incorporated into a general fund to continue sustaining the mass of Royal Navy seamen and redcoats in Sarrelouis, Cambrai, Valenciennes and Givet.¹⁸²

Finally, whilst letters from home were addressed to the 'the Gentlemen composing the Committee at Verdun', the network did not only consist of genteel captives.¹⁸³ The creation of citadel sub-committees complicates the time-honoured assumption that captive distributors were from the elite and their recipients situated at the base of the social pyramid. British inmates of septentrional citadels were not passive recipients of genteel endeavours from Verdun. In Arras, they replicated practices of 'plebeian associational culture' by forming friendly societies and burial clubs, very much in the fashion of the thriving informal associations in Britain, to relieve their co-captives grieved and concerned by an increasing death toll.¹⁸⁴ In February 1808, common soldiers and sailors formed a separate committee within the citadel of Valenciennes, in addition to the commission headed by Charles Sevright in the same depot.¹⁸⁵ Whilst the lack of communication could explain the creation of this second committee, it also suggests that the distribution of charity did not necessarily create consensus but tensions between prisoners of different classes.

¹⁸¹ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-405.

¹⁸² The merchantmen received a better treatment in Longwy. But the committee relieved masters above 80 tons, and excluded the more numerous and less privileged mates under that tonnage.

¹⁸³ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-823, 824.

¹⁸⁴ Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 124.

¹⁸⁵ BCA, Matthew Boulton papers, MS 3782/19/1-20.

Naval patronage and discipline

From the shores of Cherbourg, where HMS *Minerve* wrecked, to Verdun, Captain Jahleel Brenton marched apart from his crew. On the journey, he contrived to travel a day ahead of the main convoy to arrange their lodgings, or else a day behind to care for the sick and latecomers.¹⁸⁶ In January 1804, once arrived in Verdun, he obtained permission to ‘advance [his] people some money on account of their pay’, and addressed them a letter.

I shall never forget you ... This money is intended to make you comfortable ... and I trust will made a proper use of it. Let me request of you, then, one and all, to respect the situation you are in, to be sober and obedient to officers the fortune of war has placed over you, attentive to discipline, and patient under the misfortune which has befallen us. It is this kind of conduct that gains us respect in every situation, and when happier days arrive you will remember with pleasure having supported adversity like men.¹⁸⁷

Born in a loyalist family in Rhode Island, and named after the Old Testament, Jahleel (‘Hoping in God’ in Hebrew) Brenton had developed strong religious feelings since serving under James Saumarez.¹⁸⁸ Yet, it is only in his thirties, with personal hardships and above all captivity, now offering time to reflect on his soul, that Brenton experienced a spiritual awakening. This growing devotion was at the core of his charitable actions towards common sailors whom he represented as a senior officer. Captain Brenton’s letter attests the religious, gendered, professional and disciplinary nature of his aid to fellow seamen, which manifested itself particularly acutely in the manual he published after his release entitled *The Hope of the Navy: or the True Source of Efficiency and Discipline*.¹⁸⁹ His case shows that, for naval officers, charity was a confessional, professional and masculine duty.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Patricia K. Crimmin, ‘Brenton, Sir Jahleel, first baronet (1770-1844)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/3326, accessed 17 October 2013]; Richard Blake, *Evangelicals in the Royal Navy, 1775-1815: Blue Lights & Psalm-Singers* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 183-5, 243-5.

¹⁸⁷ The letter was kept by one of his men, John Tregether Short, a common sailor who cherished it, seeing in the Captain’s ‘comfort’ provision the sign of a mutual respect. Edward Hain (ed.) *Prisoners of War in France from 1804 to 1814, Being the Adventures of John Tregether Short and Thomas Williams of Saint-Ives* (London, 1914), p. 6.

¹⁸⁸ Charles Fillmore, *Mysteries of Genesis* (London, 2010), p. 217.

¹⁸⁹ Jahleel Brenton, *The Hope of the Navy; or, The True Source of Discipline* (London, 1839).

¹⁹⁰ Blake, *Evangelicals in the Royal Navy*, pp. 183-5

Contriving to maintain a link with the crew was part of a naval code of conduct following shipwreck and capture.¹⁹¹ This was put in practice with dedication by certain commanding officers who, having experienced the Great Mutinies of 1797, embraced the following paternalistic turn. Senior officers, such as Captain Otter and Captain Woodriff, put a particular emphasis on petitioning the Admiralty for bills of exchange to their men detained in northern depots. Between 1806 and 1809, at least twenty-four letters were addressed by naval officers to William Marsden and William Wellesley Pole at the Admiralty on this matter, which attest to their active lobbying.¹⁹² Sir Thomas Lavie, Captain Woodriff and Captain Leveson Gower were particularly active in ‘drawing bills upon board’, acting as senior naval officers for the committee.¹⁹³ Pay lists drawn by officers in Verdun for the naval men in this depot, and those kept in Bitche, Arras, Givet and Valenciennes, show that they obtained half-pay from the British authorities for their captive subordinates across France.¹⁹⁴

Naval relief was entrenched in a system of professional patronage, which aimed to discipline the younger generations of naval captives. This materialised in the creation of a third seminary for non-commissioned naval men. There, young midshipmen improved their literacy and had the opportunity of taking the lieutenant examination, which transformed Verdun into an exiled naval academy and a space of socio-professional mobility.¹⁹⁵ Whilst this measure somewhat confirms the meritocratic wave affecting the provision of commission in the Georgian Navy, the objectives of the two founders were clearly disciplinary. Their intention was to contain the evils of idleness: extract young men from the hands of gallant women and gambling-house keepers, and inculcate discipline and maintain professional hierarchies amongst them.¹⁹⁶ Paying the expenses of the school out of their

¹⁹¹ Douglas W. Allen, ‘The British Navy Rules: Monitoring and Incompatible Incentives in the Age of Fighting Sail’, *Explorations in Economic History* 39 (2002), pp. 204-31.

¹⁹² NMM, Bills to the Admiralty, ADM 354/222/285,412; ADM 354/223/332; ADM 354/224/63; ADM 354/225/241; ADM 354/226/190,244, 312; ADM 354/227/44,59, 259,280; ADM 354/229/141, ADM 354/231/201; ADM 354/232/15,72; ADM 354/233/27,53, 73,140, 236; ADM 354/234/19, 36; ADM 359/29B/93; ADM 359/32C/40,91; ADM 359/32A/126; ADM 359/32C/113; ADM 359/33C/165, 183.

¹⁹³ Naval surgeons also collectively initiated these requests.

¹⁹⁴ TNA, ADM 30/63/13, Pay lists of British prisoners of war, Verdun, 1806-1807; ADM 30/63/15, Pay lists of British prisoners of war, Arras, 1806, ADM 30/63/17, Pay lists of British prisoners of war, Bitche, 1815, ADM 30/63/12, Pay lists of British prisoners of war, Givet, 1806, ADM 30/63/14, Pay lists of British prisoners of war, Valenciennes, 1806. As mentioned in chapter 1, some officers also petitioned the French authorities for their men to join them in the Meuse, and reunite the ‘wooden world’ of the lost ship in one same depot, as evidenced by an appeal for the transfer of common sailors from Longwy to Verdun. See SHD, YJ 28, Letter from the Ministry of War to the commandant Beauchesne in Verdun, Paris, 5 February 1812.

¹⁹⁵ ‘These schools proved of infinite benefit; since by means of them not only were the boys trained up to industrious habits, but many of the steady seamen learned to read and write ... [They] also acquired a considerable knowledge of the principles of navigation. These, in turn, not unfrequently became tutors to others; such pursuits afforded an amusing occupation to many.’ Edward Boys, *Narrative of a Captivity, Escape, and Adventures in France and Flanders during the War* (2nd edn, London, 1863), pp. 49-50.

¹⁹⁶ Evan Wilson, ‘Social Background and Promotion Prospects in the Royal Navy, 1775-1815’, *Navy and Nation: 1688 to the Present conference*, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, 25 July 2013.

own pockets, Captain Otter and Captain Hoffman aimed to nip duelling, gambling, drinking and all kinds of ‘evil communications’ in the bud.¹⁹⁷ This was not an easy venture. Alexander Stewart wrote that few of his young colleagues from the lower deck were willing to attend this training. As a result, the senior officers made the naval school compulsory. This measure in itself reflects the relations of power between prisoners, who formed a strongly hierarchical group, an internal panopticon, which corroborates Raffael Scheck’s observations on the propensity of captive officers to become ‘jailors of their own men’.¹⁹⁸ Indeed, the naval officers of Verdun prompted charity, not solidarity amongst the prisoners. The difference is important, as it served to maintain religious obedience, patriotism and socio-professional hierarchies, which confirms the change in attitudes towards piety and morality in early nineteenth-century Royal Navy, identified by Richard Blake.¹⁹⁹

Paternalistic officers relieved common sailors and soldiers in order to prevent them from succumbing to the siren call of the French army.²⁰⁰ French military records indicate that around twenty British naval men from Verdun decided to serve in the French Navy, owing to a lack of financial means.²⁰¹ Flickering loyalties were almost instantly reported to the Admiralty. In 1809, for fear of being implicated in a court martial, Captain Otter denounced two captive midshipmen, Alfred Parr of the *Ignition* and Robert Mortimore of the *Magpie*, for having entered French service.²⁰² These denunciations, along with denials of patronage, created tensions between the naval agents of the Committee at Verdun and the lower deck.²⁰³ Senior officers were held responsible for their men’s attempts at escape. In June 180, two midshipmen named Murray and Robinson, to whom a ‘*cautionnement par corps*’ (bail bond for them to stay on parole) had been offered by officers, took

¹⁹⁷ Hoffman, *Sailor of King George*, pp. 316-7.

¹⁹⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan (New York, 1995) pp. 195-228; Raffael Scheck, ‘French Officers as Jailors of Their Own Men? The ‘Indigenous’ Prisoners under French Cadres, 1943-44’, *Captivity in Twentieth Century Warfare: Archives, History, Memory. An International Conference*, Ecole militaire, Paris, Université de la Défense, 17-8 November 2011.

¹⁹⁹ See also Gareth Atkins, *Wilberforce and His Milieu: The Worlds of Anglican Evangelicalism, c.1780-1830* (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2009); Timothy Jenks, *Naval Engagements: Patriotism, Cultural Politics and the Royal Navy 1793-1815* (Oxford, 2006).

²⁰⁰ ‘The object of the French, in treating our seamen with such inhumanity in this respect, was with the view of making them dissatisfied with their government, by inducing a belief that they were neglected by it, and in order to tempt them to enter into the French service’. See *Monthly mirror*, January 1807; Hain (ed.), *Prisoners of War in France from 1804 to 1814* (London, 1914), p. 9; Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, p. 44.

²⁰¹ Their navigational skills were eagerly sought by the French Admiralty, and their applications did not encounter any impediment. See SHD, YJ28, ‘Etat nominatif des prisonniers anglais désireux de rejoindre la marine impériale, certifié par le commandant du dépôt’, Givet, 8 Prairial an XIII (28 May 1805); ADM 359/32A/5,126, Reports of Captain Otter at Verdun about midshipmen entering French service in 1809, wage requests from gunners detained in France and forwarded by Captain Otter at Verdun, 1812-1814.

²⁰² Peter Gordon, *Narrative of the Imprisonment and Escape of Peter Gordon, Second Mate in the Barque Joseph of Limerick, Captain Connolly* (London, 1816).

²⁰³ SHD, YJ 28, Letter from the Ministry of War to the commandant Beauchesne in Verdun, Paris, 5 February 1812.

French leave. This led Captain Gower, Robinson's superior, to take a serious measure: 'very affected by the breach of parole, [he] ask[ed] the Admiralty to exclude [Robinson] from the Navy'.²⁰⁴ In his diary, Robert James, a common sailor held in Bitche, condemned such decisions and accused the Verdun Committee of distributing monies 'only among a set of scoundrels, who never dared show their faces again in England', a situation he ascribed to the negative influence of civil *détenu* in the committee.²⁰⁵ This last indictment of the committee from the lower deck reveals how the provision of captive relief was perceived through a prism of conflicting personal, socio-professional and devotional perspectives.

Overall, this chapter aimed to throw into relief the multifaceted nature of a transnational charity network, which should not be relegated to a binary between captive recipients and nationalistic benefactors at Lloyd's. Such perspective highlights that prisoners were the instigators and mediators of their own relief, along with the importance of banking and naval ties in channeling relief at home and abroad. However, prisoner relief had different meanings, varying from a meager military welfare provided by the French State, to cosmopolitan philanthropy, marine insurance endeavours, spiritual kinship in remembrance, and regional solidarities. Various languages of kinship were articulated in raising and channeling funds, which led to tensions between prisoners of different geographical origins and socio-professional statuses. Charity did not equate to solidarity amongst sailors, and the 'colony of captives' was marked by strong social antagonisms. This might have been owing to the forced cohabitation with a post-revolutionary society challenging social delineations amongst them, which the following chapters on encountering the 'other' aim to explore.

²⁰⁴ 'Gower, capitaine de frégate de Robinson, très affecté de ce manque de parole, demande à l'amirauté de l'exclure de la marine'. Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, I, p. 1462.

²⁰⁵ See chapter 1. Robert James, *Ten Years a Captive: What a Naval Officer Went Through. The Imprisonment and Attempted Escapes of Lieutenant R. B. James*, quoted in Fraser, *Napoleon the Gaoler*, pp. 113-4.

Ties of honour

Relations with the locals and the French State

‘Parole alone was the bond which had enchained them for so many years.’

Edward Boys, *Narrative of a Captivity*, 1863

Napoleon and his British Captives, Napoleon’s British Visitors and Captives, Les Prisonniers Britanniques de Napoléon 1er: most studies of the sequestered British in France have relegated their experience to a binary, opposing the group of prisoners to one celebrated yet controversial figure, an individual considered as solely responsible for their internment.¹ This is a restricted approach to the French State, which obscures the role of other national and local administrators, from the police to the military, along with the influence of the inhabitants in shaping detention. This chapter, on the other hand, intends to reevaluate the *ad hoc* nature of captivity in a parole locale, where the French inhabitants were considered as an integral part of the State and the surveillance of their British guests. The *Règlement* stipulated that landlords had to declare, on the day of agreeing the rent, the identities of their British tenants to the mayor and the local military authorities.² In the following years, the inhabitants were also obliged to report fugitive tenants, and denounce those amongst themselves who facilitated such escapes.³ As one of the prisoners put it, captives and captors, British

¹ Michael Arthur Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives* (London, 1962); Roger Boutet de Monvel, *Les Anglais à Paris 1800-1850* (Paris, 1911); Houmeau, Didier, ‘Les Prisonniers de Guerre Britanniques de Napoléon 1^{er}’ (PhD thesis, Université de Tours, 2011).

² ‘Le maire de la ville sera invité à prévenir les habitants qui logeront des Anglais d’en faire la déclaration dans le jour à la Mairie. Il sera également invité à transmettre de suite ces déclarations à l’Etat Major de la Place.’ ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Règlement concernant le service de surveillance et de police à établir à l’égard des prisonniers anglais dans la ville de Verdun en exécution de l’arrêté du Gouvernement 1er Frimaire An 12’, Verdun, December 1803.

³ ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Ordre de Police du Général Commandant supérieur en cette place’, Verdun, 1 April 1809.

guests and French hosts, were thus bound by the chains of parole, ties of honour which did not lose their substance with the French Revolution.⁴

Indeed, this chapter argues that the very existence of a parole depot at Verdun suggests that notions of honour did not disappear with mass conscription and the abolition of privileges, as is often assumed.⁵ As Renaud Morieux has pointed out, parolees enjoyed by nature a ‘paradoxical position of captives *with privileges*’.⁶ Equally, revolutionaries grounded ideas of belongings in Roman concepts of republican virtue, a nobility of the mind and quality of character entitling a person to the respect of their peers regardless of their birth.⁷ The question remains to determine how these honour dynamics were negotiated in Verdun by the prisoners, the French administrators and the locals, who developed amicable relations, which could collide with State and patriotic imperatives. Drawing on the French secret police records, municipal and military correspondence, along with plays penned by *gendarmes*, diplomas offered by Verdun freemasons, medical records, and account-books of the locals who entrusted prisoners with their money, this chapter argues that the everyday relations between captives and captors blurred the delineation between amity and enmity through ties of ‘confidence’.⁸ This made Verdun a contact zone, allowing transnational ‘cultural transfers’ to develop on a daily basis. Tensions occurred on occasions, as parole bonds could be severed by the context of war, debts and escapes, but these reveal that social antagonisms consistently superseded feelings and ideas of national alterity.

After evaluating the ‘form’ of honour during the Napoleonic wars, the second section will explore the question of economic trust in this locale. This will lead me to consider the cosmopolitan ties of scientific and freemasonry networks, and the cultural transfers they engendered further down the social ladder. The last part will investigate the boundaries of the parole space, and the social tensions which could potentially fissure trust and amity between captives and captors.

⁴ Edward Boys, *Narrative of a Captivity, Escape, and Adventures in France and Flanders During the War* (2nd edn, London, 1863), p. 60

⁵ A summary of this literature features in Renaud Morieux, ‘French Prisoners of War, Conflicts of Honour and Social Inversions in England, 1744-1783’, *Historical Journal* 56:1 (2013), pp. 55-88.

⁶ Expression borrowed from Renaud Morieux.

⁷ ‘honour, n.’, OED Online, June 2014 [http://0-www.oed.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/Entry/88227?rskey=yfFzE3&result=1&isAdvanced=false, accessed 07 August 2014]; Anthony Appiah Kwame, *Le Code d’Honneur: Comment Adviennent les Révolutions Morales* (Paris, 2012).

⁸ The term is used in article 10 of the ‘Règlement’. ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Règlement’, Verdun, December 1803.

The form of honour

- You, the French, fight for money.

Whereas us, the English, fight for honour!

- Everyone fights for what they lack.

Robert Surcouf, in conversation with a RN captain, 1790s

This dialogue, attributed to a famous French privateer, has been widely cited as testament to a British sense of honour invigorated by the experience of war during the period.⁹ British prisoners did internalise naval conceptions of honour, as evidenced by Captain Brenton's claim that a word of honour was 'stronger than any prison ... in France'.¹⁰ Yet, the choice of putting British detainees on their parole was not obvious for the Napoleonic regime. Napoleon first envisaged to employ them, particularly skilled *détenus*, in manufactures and agriculture.¹¹ Many attempts were made amongst sailors to enrol them in the Great Army and the French Navy, without much success.¹² The reason why British *détenus* and officers enjoyed the '*régime libéral de la parole d'honneur*', which was unlikely to be granted to Spanish captives, was embedded in diplomatic configurations, which also motivated the exchange of Austrian detainees in 1806. As mentioned in the introduction, the Napoleonic government conceptualized captivity on a principle of reciprocity, by which captives of honour were meant to 'respond to French prisoners in England', and ensure their good treatment, particularly as and when important figures such as Lucien Bonaparte were captured.¹³ Whilst *parole d'honneur* was suspended with the Revolution, honour was reinvented during the Napoleonic conflicts as a three-dimensional notion encompassing military, gendered and generational facets.¹⁴

⁹ ' - Vous, Français, vous vous battez pour l'argent. Tandis que nous, Anglais, nous nous battons pour l'honneur!
- Chacun se bat pour ce qui lui manque.' See Érick Surcouf, *La Mer en Héritage: Sur la Piste des Trésors Engloutis* (Paris, 1992), p.47.

¹⁰ Henry Raikes (ed.), *Memoir of Vice-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton* (London, 1846), p. 104.

¹¹ AMV, uncatalogued box entitled 'Les Anglais à Verdun', Letter from the *sous-préfet* to the mayor of Verdun, Verdun, 14 Brumaire an XIV (5 November 1805).

¹² The project was only abandoned in 1810. See Napoleon's letter to the Ministry of Defence, Rambouillet, 14 July 1810: '*Je suis instruit qu'on enrôle des prisonniers anglais pour la légion Irlandaise. Donnez ordre que tous ceux qu'on aurait enrôlé jusqu'aujourd'hui soient renvoyés parmi les prisonniers, et qu'on n'en enrôle aucun à l'avenir. Je préfère qu'ils soient prisonniers, parce qu'ils me répondent de mes prisonniers en Angleterre, et que d'ailleurs la plupart désertent.* Individual letter published by *La Grande correspondance* (Paris, 1814).

¹³ SHD, YJ28, 'Etat des Anglais prisonniers de guerre sur parole dont le ministre a ajourné le départ pour Verdun jusqu'au 1^{er} Vendémiaire an 13', Paris, 30 Fructidor an 12 (17 September 1804).

¹⁴ See introduction and chapter 2 on the role of women.

This change was embedded in a redefinition of the *'personne de qualité'* in France and the gentleman in Britain, which located honour in the body. As Michèle Cohen argued, the period witnessed a shift from politeness to 'chivalrous masculinity' in France and Britain, which identified bravery and loyalty as markers of honour and gentility.¹⁵ The Enlightenment critique of hierarchy induced this shift, subduing class tensions 'by playing up men's shared identity as "men"', whilst clearly differentiating sexes. Honour could thus integrate men of a lower sort, as long as they performed honourably, particularly in the army. During the Napoleonic conflicts, honour was articulated physically through the wearing of uniforms, and swords and facial hair, the postures induced by the practice of marching in formation, and the regiment's 'social time' cadenced by drills.¹⁶ As Catriona Kennedy argues, such performances bore witness to embodied codes of military honour, which were diffused throughout Europe during and after 1789.¹⁷

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising to find that in Verdun, the local civil and military authorities based their judgment of the prisoners' honour on their physiques. In December 1803, the deputy mayor Varaigne submitted a report to the mayor Huguin and the commandant Wirion about the 'new presence of British captives in the town', where he marvelled at their dignified postures. Describing RN Captain Brenton, he wrote: 'this officer, always in uniform, seems full of honour'.¹⁸ Equally, a *détenu* such as Francis Seymour-Conway was portrayed as a 'seigneur ... champing at the bit with chagrin, pride, impatience, and seeking in vain to spend his guineas'.¹⁹ Pride articulated in the body was described by the town hall administrators via *Ancien Régime* languages of nobility, as *détenus* and officers were constantly referred to as '*seigneur*', '*chevalier*' or '*Sire*'. Older captives were seen as honourable owing to their age, their professional experience and knowledge. Describing naval captives, Varaigne was pleased that 'these [were] captains of vessels with a perfect

¹⁵ Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (eds) *English Masculinities, 1600-1800* (Harlow, 1999), pp. 5-9; Michèle Cohen, "'Manners Make the Man": Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830', *Journal of British Studies* 44:2 (2005), pp.312-29; Michèle Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York, 2002).

¹⁶ The work of David Hopkin has recently highlighted that the 'popular idea of moustachioed military folk-heroes contributed more to the process of turning "peasants into Frenchmen" than the mythology of the "nation-in-arms"'. See David M. Hopkin, *Soldier and Peasant in French Popular Culture, 1766-1870* (London, 2013). See also Ilya Berkovich (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) 'Peasants into Soldiers – Drill, Honour and the Socialisation of Eighteenth-Century Recruits', *War, Society, and Culture in Britain, 1688-1830*, University of Leeds, 4-5 July 2013.

¹⁷ Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), p.86.

¹⁸ '*Cet officier, toujours en uniforme, paraît plein d'honneur*'. ADM-Bar, 9R2, 'Rapport du premier adjoint au maire, Varaigne-Perrin, occupant temporairement les fonctions de commissaire de police, au sous-préfet de la Meuse, sur la présence nouvelle des prisonniers anglais à Verdun', Verdun, 26 Frimaire an XII (18 December 1803).

¹⁹ '*seigneur ... paraissant ronger avec dépit son frein, fier, impatient, cherchant en vain à dépenser des guinées et se soumettant de mauvaise grâce aux mesures.*' Ibid.

knowledge of the sea, having grown old with her, therefore [had been] offered the command of corsair and public vessels by the English customs and other merchants.²⁰ The evaluation of their younger counterparts was based on their familial background: ‘aged up to fifteen, these are ranked apprentice sailors, some of whom belonging to excellent families’.²¹

The selection of parolees operated on an *ad hoc* basis. The ‘*tableau comparatif*’ mentioned in chapter three, which aimed to compare the ranks of French and British prisoners suggests that, on a national and local level, the post-Revolutionary State and its personnel experienced difficulty in discerning the social and military status of their British captives. This was owing to a lack of commonality of experience and reference, which cosmopolitan and military education had previously established between the French and British elites.²² This lack of socio-professional understanding explains the attempts of local commandants of *gendarmerie*, such as Louis Wirion in Verdun, to create simplified hierarchies of their British counterparts: masters of merchantmen were divided into two categories based on the tonnage of their ships (above 80 tons they were allowed parole; under that, they were sent to fortresses as common sailors).²³ This was accompanied by the designation of ‘Senior Officers’ of respective services, who were asked to vouch for petty officers’ honour, particularly midshipmen.²⁴ *Gentilhommes* were meant to be gathered in Verdun; however, as Valerie Capdeville observes, the term was never an equivalent of the British *gentleman*.²⁵ Equally, the term *Anglais* had another meaning, as it included English, Welsh, Scottish, Irish, Swedish, Maltese and American prisoners. On extremely rare occasions was the term ‘*Britannique*’ used, and prisoners were judged on the Englishness of their tongue or military affiliation (they were fighting for or with England).²⁶

²⁰ ‘*Ce sont des capitaines de paquebots, de bâtiments pêcheurs, des gens connaissant parfaitement la mer*’, ayant ‘*vieillis sur elle et à qui, pour cette raison, les douanes anglaises ou les marchands de l’île ont confié des bâtiments publics ou des corsaires*’. Ibid.

²¹ ‘*depuis jusqu’à 15 ans ... [ce sont] des mousses gradés dont quelques-uns tiennent à d’excellentes familles*’. Ernest d’Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire, Bulletins Quotidiens Adressés par Fouché à l’Empereur*, 1808-1810 (2 vols, Paris, 1964), V, 28 July 1809.

²² Charles John Fedorak, ‘L’Impact de la Révolution Française et de Napoléon sur l’Armée Britannique et la Grande-Bretagne en Tant que Nation Armée’, *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* 342 (2005), pp. 195-209.

²³ It also explains the mass transfers of merchant men and young midshipmen evoked in chapter 1

²⁴ See chapter 1 and 3.

²⁵ Valérie Capdeville, *L’Age d’Or des Clubs Londoniens (1730-1784)* (Paris, 2008), pp. 288-309.

²⁶ Because *détenus* and civil passengers did not necessarily have passports detailing their age, the French also captured civilian children. Cox, the five-year old son of a carpenter of the Minerve, was put on his parole and transferred alone to Verdun, as his father died following their capture. Lewis, *Napoleon’s British Captives*, p. 254.

Parole was negotiated en route to septentrional depots. Whilst *détenus* were entrusted to travel comfortably on their own to Verdun after signing a register at the local magistrate's – a touristic journey which could last several months – military prisoners were forced to swiftly march in convoys accompanied by *gendarmes*.²⁷ Indeed, prisoners were not granted the same treatment, whether in rags from the physical duress of wreckage and capture, or still presenting apparent social and military value. As the case of the wrecked *Rambler* brig suggest, crews in tatters received less regard from their immediate captors on the shore. Caught in a terrible weather, and poorly conducted by a half drunken crew, after capturing two French merchant vessels carrying wine in the Bay of Biscay, the *Rambler* ran aground in the mouth of the River Loire in August 1804. Captured by the local garrison, the crew presented a poor sight. 'We looked like a set of half-starved miserable wretches, instead of British seamen', writes midshipman Robert James, 'guards used to exhibit us as fine specimens of English sailors', he continues, 'in throwing a ridicule on our wretched appearance – long beards, half famished, no shoes.'²⁸ The *gendarmes* hence did not billet them out in taverns but sent the crew to local civil prisons at night.

The duress of the journey depended on the local commandants' generosity, their individual military and regional experience. Whilst Général Comte Le Marois, aide-de-camp of Napoleon in Boulogne, denied parole to RN Captain Frederick Hoffman on account of his dress and lack of knowledge of the French language, and detained him in a common gaol and ordered the whole crew to march to Arras; the governor of Arras, better acquainted with British captives, offered parole to the captain, his doctor and purser, and invited them to 'breakfast as gentlemen' before redirecting them to Verdun.²⁹ Age played a significant role in their treatment. The case of nineteen year-old O'Brien and Mahoney, two master's mates of the *Hussar* wrecked in Ushant in 1804 is illuminating. After a brief passage to the local hospital, they were declared '*adjudants*' by the local French commandant and marched with the common sailors, failing to persuade him that they were to be

²⁷ It took Charles Throckmorton and his wife several months to arrive in Verdun, see following chapter. Their experience stood in stark contrast with that of poorly shod sailors, such as RN Captain Hoffman, who wrote: 'I was much fatigued, as I had never walked so far in my life; my feet were becoming blistered, and I was very hungry'. Frederick Hoffman, *A Sailor of King George. The Journals of Captain Frederick Hoffman R.N. 1793-1814* (London, 1901), p. 308.

²⁸ BL, Add MS 38886, Robert Bastard James, 'The Fortune of War, or a Ten Years Captivity in France', 1804-1814. See also William Stephen Gily, *Narratives of Shipwrecks of the Royal Navy between 1793 and 1849, Compiled from Official Documents in the Admiralty* (London, 1850), pp.158-9

²⁹ Hoffman, *A Sailor of King George*, pp. 302-12.

‘considered as officers of rank’ and subsequently Verdun material.³⁰ On their march, they wrote to Captain Brenton and Lieutenant Pridham from *HMS Hussar*, who confirmed from Verdun that master’s mates were officers, and obtained from Commandant Wirion parole status. However, for them and all the others, parole was never gained. It had to be reiterated at the depot via a formal procedure: the signature of a form embedded in what Vincent Denis termed an emerging ‘paper identity’ in France and Britain during the period.³¹



Fig. 15: Pre-filled permission to go out of the gates during the day, 1812

(National Army Museum, London)

A ‘parole’ is a spoken utterance, an act of speaking by a linguistic subject.³² Understood as a promise – a word of honour – it is a ‘speech act’ which equates saying with doing.³³ In the words of John Austin, it has a ‘performative’ nature which should not necessitate any further guarantee. Yet, at Verdun, the promise of not attempting to escape or to take up arms until the end of the conflict

³⁰ The status of Master’s Mate constituted in itself an anomaly in the Royal Navy. They could be either the humble assistants (mates) of the commanding officer (master), or more often than not during the Napoleonic Wars, senior midshipmen occupying posts intermediate between midshipmen and commissioned lieutenants. Unfortunately for them, their status had no counterpart across the Channel, and were not consequently recognised by the French authorities. See Lewis, *Napoleon’s British Captives*, pp.85, 105; Donat Henchy O’Brien, *My Adventures during the Late War: Comprising a Narrative of Shipwreck, Captivity, Escapes from French Prisons, etc., 1804-1827* (2 vols, London, 1839), I, pp.88-92.

³¹ Vincent Denis, *Une Histoire de l’Identité : France 1715-1815* (Paris, 2008); ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Règlement’, Verdun, December 1803: ‘Aussitôt qu’il entrera des anglais dans la place ils seront conduits au bureau de l’Etat Major où leur signalement et autres renseignements seront inscrits sur le Registre conforme au modèle arrêté par le Commandant supérieur. Chacun d’eux donnera par écrit sa Parole d’Honneur de ne point sortir de la Ville.’

³² Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. by R. Harris (3rd ed., Chicago, 1986), pp. 9-10, 15.

³³ See John Austin, *Quand Dire, C’est Faire* (trans. by G. Lanne, Paris, 1962); John Austin, *How To Do Things With Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955* (Oxford, 1962); Pierre Bourdieu, *Ce Que Parler Veut Dire: l’Economie des Echanges Linguistiques* (Paris, 1982).

meant not only remaining on French soil and attending daily roll-calls, but also signing a form of honour, which made parole less an oral agreement than a written contract entrenched in Napoleonic bureaucracy.³⁴ The arrival at the depot was regulated by an administrative and ethnographic ritual which Major Blayney describes in these terms: ‘when the clerks had, according to the Verdun expression, “drawn my picture,” that is, taken down my description, size, the place of birth, and my father and mother’s names, and having signed a parole not to quit the town without permission, I was allowed to retire at perfect liberty’.³⁵ The interrogation about the prisoners’ families was thorough: captives were asked to provide the name and rank of not only their parents, but also their grandparents.³⁶ This investigation confirms that, for the French authorities, honour was conceived on a generational basis and entrenched in lineage.

The expression ‘draw a picture’ used by Blayney is illuminating as to the nature of the identification process, which aimed to collect physiognomic information. The captives’ sizes, colours of hair, eyebrows and eyes, the shapes of their noses, mouths, chins and faces were recorded using the categorisation of pre-filled forms printed by the local military authority (Fig.15). Additional forms were to be filled to seek medical assistance or permissions to go outside the gates during the day.³⁷ As Vincent Denis recently argued, the eighteenth century saw the development of a French ‘paper identity’ to rationalise the identification and migrations of the population – particularly paupers, vagrants, foreigners and criminals – via the use of passports. First propelled by the army, these were systemised with the Napoleonic *Code Civil*, which first recognised the notion of ‘individual identity’.³⁸

³⁴ NAM, 1968-07-362-1, Officer's parole card delivered to Lieutenant James Whitley of the 9th (The East Norfolk) Regiment of Foot at Verdun, 30 December 1812.

³⁵ Andrew Thomas Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey Through Spain and France* (2 vols, London, 1814), II, pp. 154-5.

³⁶ NLI, MS 1718, Maria Cope, ‘Memoirs of captivity in France’, II, p. 17.

³⁷ ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Règlement’, Verdun, December 1803: ‘*Les malades qui ne pourront paraître aux appels en déduiront les motifs par un écrit signé d’eux et rédigé ainsi qu’il suit: “Je soussigné (le nom et la qualité du Prisonnier) déclare ne pouvoir me trouver à l’appel du (la date du mois) parce que une infirmité ou la maladie ou l’incommodité, dont je suis atteint m’obligent de garder la chambre. Verdun le ... (Suivra la signature) logé rue (le nom de la rue), maison du Citoyen (le nom du propriétaire ou locataire), Numéro (le N° de la maison).” Cette déclara sera appuyée pour la première fois seulement d’un certificat d’officier de santé visé à la mairie constatant que la maladie ou infirmité empêche le prisonnier qui y sera dénommé de sortir de la chambre ou de la maison. Le sous-officier de la gendarmerie s’assurera par lui-même de la présence dans leur logement des individus qui se déclareront malades ou infirmes.*’

³⁸ Vincent Denis, ‘Administer l’Identité’, *Labyrinthe* 5 (2000), pp. 25-42. A similar process of ‘paper identity’ was in formation in Britain during the period. Several examples of attempts to categorise servants by specific passports feature in Carolyn Steedman, *Labours Lost: Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England* (Cambridge, 2009).

This 'paper identity' associated prisoners with deserters, as the physiognomic information could be used to find fugitives.³⁹ This was a residue of a revolutionary discourse which incorporated prisoners into the society of 'citizen-soldiers', but which also constantly envisaged escapes, and understood them as desertions.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, there is a danger in aligning the prisoners' visions of parole captivity with contemporary perceptions. The history of Napoleonic parolees is beclouded by determinist narratives depicting them as in constant pursuit of liberty: 'escaping is all they aspired to', concluded Didier Houmeau.⁴¹ This demonstrates a lack of understanding of different concepts of respectability. Two historical types of honour should be discerned with regards to escape: whilst WW1 and WW2 concepts of honour and masculinity dictated trying to escape by all means, during the Napoleonic Wars, honour dictated *not to*, for fear of sullyng one's name, family, and profession. That is not to say that prisoners did not escape. They did, but in the case of the Navy, they were well-aware that they would face an interrogation by the Transport Board, which condemned escape either 'while parole was operative or while debts were unpaid'.⁴² Failing to pass the court of honour, Lieutenant Henry Conn's was 'decided a parole-breaker', and his employment in the service ceased. Whilst Temple and Sheehy were formally expelled, others could be imprisoned or sent back to France.⁴³ Overall, it remains difficult to evaluate how many prisoners took French leave, since commandants were reluctant to report their difficulties in managing the depot, and put their career at risk.

Five officers from the field army and *gendarmérie* successively acted as commandants of the depot: General Louis Wirion, Lieutenant-Colonel Courselles, Colonel Baron de Beauchesne, General Dumolard, and Major de Meulan (Table 15). Their function was shaped by their various personalities, their social backgrounds and interactions with the British captives placed under their surveillance. Wirion, Beauchesne and Meulan referred to prisoners with deference as

³⁹ For an example, see AMV, uncatalogued, 'Les Anglais à Verdun', 'Signalement d'Auguste et Antony Neyrick', Verdun, 18 May 1811.

⁴⁰ See Frédéric Jarousse, *Auvergnats Malgré Eux. Prisonniers de Guerre et Déserteurs Etrangers dans le Puy-de-Dôme Pendant la Révolution Française (1794-1796)* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1998).

⁴¹ 'Nous pouvons penser que les prisonniers n'ont eu d'autre souci que de chercher à échapper de ce monde des prisonniers et ce par tous les moyens possibles et imaginables.' Didier Houmeau, 'Les Prisonniers de Guerre Britanniques de Napoleon 1^{er}' (PhD thesis, Université de Tours, 2011), p. 232.

⁴² Quoted in Lewis, *Napoleon's British Captives*, pp. 46-7.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 48

'gentilshommes', calling their captivity a '*séjour*', a '*résidence en Meuse*'.⁴⁴ Most reports mentioned only their names, ranks and professions, at worse referring to them as 'foreigners' or 'fugitive individuals' in case of escape. This stood in stark contrast with the propagandist minutes printed and diffused nationally by the Ministry of Defence which described British captives as '*cette classe d'hommes ennemie jurée du gouvernement*'.⁴⁵ The expression 'enemies of the government' reveals that a line was drawn between the State and its people, and which, as Cuvilliers and Crépin have noted for the North *département*, suggests that 'the sound and fury of official propaganda obscure[d] a different quotidian reality'.⁴⁶ Discourses of enmity were only used by Courselles, who complained about the overwhelming number of prisoners in 1811, who '[were] received everywhere' because they 'ha[d] been living for too long in Verdun'. Thus, they would leave 'vice, corruption, ignominy and shame' behind them and 'deep contempt ... in the hearts of myriad inhabitants of this miserable town'.⁴⁷ Although vehement, the critique was not anti-English *per se*, but based on social tensions with indebted detainees.

Relations between prisoners and commandants were based on social, rather than national dynamics. There was a clear discrepancy between the good-natured relations captives entertained with Beauchesne and Meulan, both members of the Field Army elevated to the new imperial nobility, and the animosity nurtured against Wirion and Courselles, both members of the *gendarmerie*. Born in Normandy, Jacques Pierre Soyer, made Baron de Beauchesne in 1808, commanded the 39th regiment of infantry when he was appointed at Verdun.⁴⁸ This military career, which started a decade before the Revolution, made him, to the eyes of the British captives, a 'respectable', 'amiable' and 'worthy' gentleman.⁴⁹ They invited him to balls, dinners, hunting parties, and lamented his death in 1813 by attending en masse his funeral and raising funds to erect a

⁴⁴ Hauterive, *Police Secrète*, II, p. 29-30; AN, F/7/6541; ADM-Bar, 9R2.

⁴⁵ ADM-Bar, 9R2, 'Circulaire de gendarmerie du département de la Meuse', Bar-sur-Ornain, 1 September 1807.

⁴⁶ Annie Crépin, Vincent Cuvilliers, 'Le Discours Anti-Anglais des Autorités: Mythes et Réalité dans les Départements Septentrionaux', in Mark Philp (ed.) *Resisting Napoleon. The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 14, 205-216.

⁴⁷ 'Il y a dans Verdun huit cents prisonniers répandus dans la population et logés chez l'habitant ... J'en ai eu jusqu'à douze cents ... partout où ils résident, partout où ils entrent, partout où ils sont reçus ... il y a trop longtemps que les Anglais sont à Verdun et que l'on peut conjecturer que S.E. [le Ministre de la Guerre] ordonnera la translation du dépôt dans une autre place ... Lorsque tous les maux se répandirent sur la Terre, l'espérance resta au fond de la boîte, quand les Anglais quitteront Verdun, ils y laisseront le vice, la corruption, l'ignominie et la honte. Ils n'emporteront au fond du cœur que le mépris profond qu'ils ont été forcé de concevoir pour la forte masse des habitants de cette malheureuse ville.' ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter from Courselles to the prefect of the Meuse, Verdun, 4 January 1811.

⁴⁸ Danielle Quintin and Bernard Quintin, *Dictionnaire des Colonels de Napoléon* (Paris, 2012), p. 796.

⁴⁹ Ellison, *Prison Scenes*, p. 23; Robert James, *Ten Years a Captive*, quoted in Edward Fraser, *Napoleon the Gaoler, Personal Experiences and Adventures of British Sailors and Soldiers during the Great Captivity* (London, 1914), p. 153.

monument in his honour.⁵⁰ ‘Nearly the whole body of the English, attired in full uniform or deep mourning, attended the funeral’, wrote Boys, ‘thus showing that it matters not in what country a good man is born, for reason will dispel all prejudice, and constrain even his enemies to venerate his virtues and his memory.’⁵¹ His successor, Major de Meulan, was equally praised for his career as ‘a gallant soldier’ and received a sword from the captives in 1814, as a mark of esteem.⁵²

Conversely, Louis Wirion entertained ambivalent relations with the captives, owing to the fact that he embodied a professional corps that prisoners saw as revolutionary *parvenus*: the *gendarmerie*. Captives perceived *gendarmes* as ‘minions of the oppression’, mainly because they had to route them to Verdun.⁵³ Wirion’s temperament, career and political views fuelled these prejudices. As a ‘zealous republican’ from a lawyer’s family, and the founding father of the Belgian *gendarmerie* in the 1790s, Wirion had strong opinions about his mission: ‘the national *gendarmerie* corps is a force instituted to ensure order and the implementation of the law within the Republic. A continuous repressive surveillance constitutes its essence.’⁵⁴ His publications led him to be chosen to regulate the management of prisoners locally, yet his convictions also led him to progressively grant himself full control over the depot.⁵⁵ In 1809, he ascribed himself the sole right to give permissions to go out of the gates, to change the frequency of *appels*, decide mass transfers and suspend parole.⁵⁶ Captives saw in him a tyrant, a personification of ‘Hamlet’s uncle’ and a ‘villain’ of the Revolution.⁵⁷ He was often described as wearing ‘a red woollen cap, and a grey frieze jacket and pantaloons ... [filling] the room with a cloud of smoke from a great pipe’.⁵⁸ Like Courselles, a *gendarmerie* colonel, he was said to be ‘gross and brutal ... the darling child of Jacobinism’.⁵⁹ The

⁵⁰ ADM-Bar, 2E558(59), ‘Registre d’état civil de Verdun’, January-December 1813, death entry 133; Jean Tulard, *Napoléon et la Noblesse d’Empire: avec la Liste des Membres de la Noblesse Impériale (1808- 1815)* (Paris, 2003), p. 301

⁵¹ Similar accounts in the *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 4 April 1813; Edward Boys, *Narrative of a Captivity, Escape, and Adventures in France and Flanders During the War* (London, 1863), pp.290-2.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 292; Louis Gabriel Michaud, *Biographie des Hommes Vivants, ou Histoire par Ordre Alfabétique de la Vie Publique de Tous les Hommes Qui Se Sont Fait Remarquer par Leurs Actions ou Leurs Ecrits* (4 vols, Paris, 1816), IV, p.422.

⁵³ ‘The *gendarmerie* is the completest system of despotism ever organised. It has some resemblance with the holy brotherhood established by the Inquisition in Spain.’ James Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun, or the English Detained in France* (2 vols, London, 1806), I, pp. 101, 243-4.

⁵⁴ ‘Le corps de *gendarmerie nationale* est une force instituée pour assurer, dans l’intérieur de la République, le maintien de l’ordre et l’exécution des lois. Une surveillance continue et répressive constitue l’essence de son service.’ Wirion’s publications are quoted in the seminal study of the French national *gendarmerie* conducted by Louis Larrieu. See Louis Larrieu, *Histoire de la Maréchaussée et de la Gendarmerie* (Ivry-sur-Seine, 2002), p. 36.

⁵⁵ Wirion was also the superintendent of Givet and Bitche. He wrote the ‘Règlement’ mentioned above.

⁵⁶ ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Ordre de Police du Général Commandant supérieur en cette Place’, Verdun, 1 April 1809.

⁵⁷ See chapter 7 for an analysis of this comparison.

⁵⁸ Andrew Thomas Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey Through Spain and France* (2 vols, London, 1814), II, p. 154.

⁵⁹ Ellison, *Prison Scenes*, p. 225.

legitimacy of his title was questioned, not being a commandant *per se*, but ‘a sort of glorified policeman’ from a family of ‘pork dealers’.⁶⁰

Commandants at Verdun	Information	Time at Verdun
Général Louis Wirion (1764-1810) <i>Married to Jeanne Marguerite Raclot</i> (1768-1829)	Gendarmerie Previous position: <i>Général inspecteur-général de gendarmerie</i> in the former Belgium, and the Rhine departments, fought alongside Napoleon at the Battle of Valmy in 1792. Titles: Commandant de la Légion d’Honneur Reason for departure: trial for extortions, suicide	December 1803-8 April 1810
Lieutenant-Colonel Courselles	Gendarmerie Previous position: second in command of the depot Reason for departure: trial for extortions	8 April 1810-September 1811
Colonel Jacques Pierre Soyer (1765-1813)	Garde nationale and field army (retired on 25 October 1810) Previous positions: fought in the <i>Armée du Rhin</i> , colonel 39 ^e régiment d’infanterie, fought in Spain and Poland in 1807. Titles: Baron de Beauchesne (1808) Reason for departure: death following a long illness	September 1811-27 mars 1813
Général Dumolard	Gendarmerie Reason for departure: interim	March-April 1813
Major de Meulan	Field Army Reason for departure: Closure and removal of the depot to Blois and Guéret before the liberation of prisoners in April 1814	April 1813-12 January 1814

Table 15: Commandants of the depot, 1804-1814

His baseness was judged alongside the comportment of his wife nicknamed ‘*la vivandière*’ and ‘*Madame Angot*’.⁶¹ As a former camp follower, she was accustomed to wash her laundry in public, and ride a horse like a man, thus offering, in Lieutenant Dillon’s words, a shockingly ‘good view of her left leg’.⁶² Her coarse manners and language were seen as similar to the ‘Cyprian corps’ and ‘Dolly Tearsheet’ which collided with the captives’ conceptions of female honour in chastity and politeness.⁶³ Yet, the main point of contention was the system of taxation the couple created, by which Wirion’s ‘confidence’ was to be gained in monetary terms.⁶⁴ Every captive’s ball, club, and horse race was illegally taxed by Wirion, who, once his corruption was made public in 1811, ‘blew out his brain in the *Bois de Boulogne*’.⁶⁵ Whilst prisoners interpreted it as testament to his faulty

⁶⁰ ‘Wirion was the son of a *charcutier* or pork-dealer in Picardy: and though an attorney’s clerk before the Revolution, he on every occasion affected the most sovereign contempt for his ancient calling. No gentleman of the highest nobility could have looked down with more hauteur than this man when in his regimentals upon the robed lawyer and every civilian.’ William Henry Dillon, *A Narrative of My Professional Adventures, 1790-1839*, quoted in Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives*, pp. 125-6.

⁶¹ These names were borrowed from popular plays of the time, particularly French revolutionary plays such as *Madame Angot*. See Philippe Bourdin, and Gérard Loubinoux (eds), *Les Arts de la Scène et la Révolution Française* (Clermont-Ferrand, 2004), pp.425-7. Lawrence dedicated a whole chapter to Madame Wirion as ‘worthy to figure in a novel of Fielding’. Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, I, p. 154.

⁶² ‘a riding habit which was not similar to that used in England, as I have often had a good view of her left leg when she has been passing’. Dillon, *Professional adventures*, quoted Lewis, *Napoleon and his British captives*, p. 127.

⁶³ Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, I, pp. 155-64. Doll Tearsheet was a reference to a character in *Henry IV* (Part II), and prostitutes were known as members of the Cyprian Corps.

⁶⁴ ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Règlement concernant le service de surveillance et de police à établir à l’égard des prisonniers anglais dans la ville de Verdun en exécution de l’arrêté du Gouvernement 1er Frimaire An 12’, Verdun, December 1803.

⁶⁵ Boys, *Narrative of a Captivity*, pp. 56-8.

honour, the event suggests that financial means strongly impinged interactions between captives and captors.

Honourable means

In 1803, Varaigne wrote to the *sous-préfet*, Louis Lefebure, to alert him that the arrival of prisoners had led to a general inflation. The Revolution and a series of bad harvests encouraged many inhabitants to seek profit by captivity.⁶⁶ Whilst ‘farmers increased the price of food ... town-dwellers rent[ed] and [sold] them expensive apartments, which went from 30 to 80, if not 100 Francs per month; the cost of living [rose] accordingly.’⁶⁷ Within a year, the price of rent was multiplied by one hundred, leading Napoleon to intervene and threaten the mayor with removing the depot.⁶⁸ Amongst these opportunistic landlords featured members of the local authorities: the deputy-mayor Varaigne and the mayor himself, Huguin, lodged British prisoners, whilst the *Sénateur-consult* Vimar rented out his properties for their balls and clubs.⁶⁹ These agreements extended to the mayors of the surrounding villages, which created tensions between the military and civil authorities in charge of the captives’ surveillance. Already criticised by Wirion in 1805, these arrangements were denounced by Courselles to the *sous-préfet* in 1810 as inducing the ‘lightness with which the mayors of surrounding villages deliver passports’.⁷⁰

Booksellers and *écrivains publics* equally traded their skills with prisoners. The printers Villet and Pricot published seditious pamphlets penned by captives, along with fake American certificates for them to regain their liberty, when in 1807 the American government requested the liberation of

⁶⁶ Forbes recorded the inflation in a table attached to one of his letters to his sister in 1804. ‘The expectation of our freedom has however a very different effect upon the generality of the Verdunois, especially the shopkeepers who are fattening at our expense; having raised the price of their commodities almost double since our arrival.’ Forbes, *Letters from France*, II, p.238.

⁶⁷ ‘le cultivateur enchérit les denrées ... le citadin leur loue et leur vend cher un appartement de 30 F par mois, on le leur fait payer 80 et même 100; la vie a augmenté dans cette proportion.’ ADM-Bar, 9R2, Report of Varaigne-Perrin to the *sous-préfet* of the Meuse, Verdun, 18 December 1803.

⁶⁸ ‘Ecrivez au maire de Verdun que, si les habitants de cette ville taxent à un trop haut prix le logement des Anglais, et si la municipalité ne prend pas des mesures pour empêcher que les logements, qui se louaient 36 francs quand les Anglais sont venus à Verdun, soient loués aujourd’hui 300 francs, ils contraindront le ministre de la guerre à placer les prisonniers anglais dans une autre ville’. See ‘Lettre à A. M. Fouché, Fontainebleau, le 3 Frimaire an XIII (24 novembre 1804)’, in *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, Publiée par Ordre de l’Empereur Napoléon III* (19 vols, Paris, 1862), X, p. 57

⁶⁹ AMV, uncatalogued ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, Police report, Verdun, 16 Vendémiaire an XIII (8 October 1804).

⁷⁰ ‘la légèreté avec laquelle les maires des communes qui avoisinent Verdun délivrent des passeports’. ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter from the prefect to Courselles, Bar-sur-Ornain, 25 November 1810, and letter from Courselles to the prefect, Verdun, 29 November 1810. In 1806, Wirion had noted: ‘Plusieurs intrigants cherchent à obtenir de l’argent des prisonniers en leur promettant de leur faire obtenir soit des passeports pour retourner dans leurs pays, soit un changement de résidence.’ Hauterive, *Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, II, pp. 73-4.

its 170 illegally captured citizens.⁷¹ Scribes, such as Alexis Page falsified French passports. His British client, Robert James, described the whole process and costs.⁷²

He, for a trifle purchased among the peasants, and others;—passports that had been used, and that served for the year:—He then spread them out on a board quite wet:—with a fine hair pencil, he took out all the writing excepting the Prefects signature—with a chemical preparation,—then filled it up, Just as it was wanted;—and would even accompany the person and see him out of the country for twenty guineas.⁷³

Page had the monopoly of such commerce, yet he was the object of suspicions from the *gendarmerie*, and was arrested for forgery in 1812.⁷⁴

Whilst landlords were requested to provide intelligence about their British tenants, many refused to cooperate.⁷⁵ Landlords ‘[did] not want to receive *gendarmes* in their homes’, and *gardes champêtres*, otherwise zealous in arresting deserters from the conscription, not only did not capture British fugitives but hid them in summer cottages.⁷⁶ Conversely, farmers helped British captives owing to lack of means and as a form of protest against conscription which had caused the departure of their sons, decreasing their labour force, their morale and production. Female farmers in particular allowed captives to ‘regularly hunt on their fields, despite the damage to the crop’ in exchange of some guineas.⁷⁷ Transmitting correspondence and orchestrating escapes became a clandestine trade. As shown above, landlords and printers, particularly Villet who transmitted letters and money to Marlott, acted as correspondence agents for prisoners, who thus circumvented the isolationist plans

⁷¹ ‘*Les prisonniers de Verdun ont eu l’idée de faire imprimer des certificats américains. Villet, libraire, en fait imprimer par Pricot, qui a imprimé un pamphlet pour Jackson et en fait une spéculation.*’ Ibid., IV, pp. 56-7; SHD, FF2/10.

⁷² AMV, uncatalogued, ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, Investigation report on Alexis, 28 November 1811.

⁷³ James, *Ten years a captive*, quoted in Fraser, *Napoleon the Goaler*, p.159.

⁷⁴ ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Acte d’arrestation de Page ordonnée par la Police et la sous-préfecture de Verdun’, Verdun, 10 August 1812.

⁷⁵ ‘*Toutes les fois qu’un Anglais logé en ville n’aura pas couché dans son logement, le propriétaire ou principal locataire en donnera avis aussitôt au Commissaire de Police, qui en fera son rapport sur-le-champ au bureau de la place [...] afin de se mettre à la recherche du prisonnier.*’ ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Ordre de Police’, Verdun, 7 January 1804.

⁷⁶ In January 1811, Courselles complained that landlords ‘*ne veulent pas que la gendarmerie entre chez eux*’. ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter of Courselles to the prefect of the Meuse, Verdun, 4 January 1811.

⁷⁷ Farmers sometimes provided guns: ‘*Messieurs les Anglais ... se permettent de chasser au-delà de la distance de deux lieues qui leur est accordée pour leurs promenades ... Richard Fitzgerald ait été aperçu, fusil double à la main, chassant sur les terres du fermier Auberasse*’. The investigation showed that ‘*il venait assez régulièrement chasser sur son terrain même si le prisonnier souillait ses récoltes [le paysan n’avait pu s’y opposer] sur l’injonction de Madame.*’ This confirms existing research on the unpopularity of mass conscriptions amongst farmers under Napoleon. Alain Pigeard, ‘La conscription sous le Premier Empire’, *Revue du Souvenir Napoléonien* 420 (1998), pp. 3-20; AN, F/7/3310, Report of Lieutenant de Montenois, from the Dauvilliers brigade, to the commandant Wirion, Verdun, 15 September 1806.

of the Continental blockade in 1806.⁷⁸ As Wirion put it, prisoners ‘would easily find [help] in Verdun, by entertaining diverse ties of interest and sociability with many inhabitants’.⁷⁹ Itinerant merchants with strong connections with Holland following the commercial route of the Meuse – *voituriers, marchands de parapluie, marchands de paniers* – not only facilitated escapes but formed an organised network of moneyed assistance and camouflage, which necessitated the mobilization of three regional police forces to dismantle it in 1809.⁸⁰ Costumes of umbrella sellers or merchants from the Alps were designed in Verdun, sold to captives, before the arrival of peddlers who would arrange for them to ‘appear as their kin or servants’.⁸¹

This moneyed complicity led the military authorities to financially ‘encourage’ the locals to denounce fugitives, a measure which undermines any claim of a patriotic effort from the inhabitants in arresting captives (Fig.16). In 1807, a novel order was posted in the streets of Verdun and in neighbouring villages stipulating that ‘prisoners’ escapes will be announced by four cannon shots fired from the four cardinal points of the citadel ... the aid of the inhabitants, the rural police and forest guards will be encouraged by His Majesty who will award 50 Francs for every English prisoners caught and brought back to the depot.’⁸² However, money was an ambivalent incentive. Whilst the government sustained the war effort by monetary means, local traders placed equal financial trust in their British clients.

⁷⁸ See chapter 2.

⁷⁹ In 1806, Wirion noted that ‘*les prisonniers anglais, pour éluder l’exécution du décret impérial du 21 Novembre, cherchent à se procurer des intermédiaires, sous les noms desquels ils puisent entretenir leur correspondance [et qu’ils] en trouveront facilement dans Verdun, ayant diverses liaisons d’intérêt et de société avec plusieurs habitants de la ville.*’ Hauterive, *Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, III, p. 85. The problem persisted until 1811, when the Ministry of Police observed that ‘*il paraît constant ... que plusieurs habitants de Verdun se prêtent à faire parvenir furtivement des lettres aux prisonniers de guerre.*’ *Ibid.*, V, p. 46. ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter from the minister of Police to Courselles, Paris, 24 May 1811.

⁸⁰ ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘*Circulaire de Wirion aux commandants de gendarmerie des Ardennes, de Sambre-et-Meuse et de Meuse inférieure*’, Verdun, 13 May 1809; Letter from Mrs Levesconte intercepted by the police and translated by a captive interpreter, Weatherdone, Verdun, undated; Hauterive, *Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, V, p. 291.

⁸¹ ‘*Ils font passer les Anglais fugitifs* », poursuit-il, « *pour leurs parents ou domestiques et les affublent en conséquence de paniers ou de parapluies au moyen de déguisement qui les rendent méconnaissables au premier aspect ; et sous leurs auspices, les fuyards parviennent à échapper à toutes les poursuites dirigées contre eux et à passer en Angleterre toujours par la Hollande ... des déguisements sont fabriqués à Verdun et vendus aux prisonniers ... Mulvey et Clarke, médecins, se sont échappés déguisés en savoyards.*’ See AN, F/7/6462-9935, F/7/ 6398-4020; Goldworth Alger, *Napoleon’s British Visitors and Captives*, pp. 208, 248, 257; Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, II, pp. 179, 184; Richard Langton, *Narrative of a Captivity in France from 1809 to 1814* (2 vols, Liverpool, 1836), I, pp. 60, 246.

⁸² ‘*Toutes les fois que l’évasion d’un prisonnier de guerre aura lieu, elle sera annoncée par le tir de quatre coups de canons placés aux quatre points cardinaux de la citadelle ... Le concours des habitants du pays, des gardes champêtres et des gardes forestiers [are encouraged] by sa majesté [who] accorde une gratification de cinquante francs pour chaque prisonniers anglais repris et ramenés au dépôt.*’ ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘*Circulaire de gendarmerie*’, Verdun, 15 April 1807. This had already tried in 1805: ‘*Son Excellence [le ministre de la Guerre] ... persuadée comme vous que la distribution que vous leur avez faite sera pour eux un moyen d’encouragement pour la recherche des prisonniers qui s’évaderont, me charge de vous prévenir qu’elle approuve la conduite que vous avez tenu à leur égard et quelle va donner des ordres pour le remboursement de l’indemnité que vous leur avez fait toucher.*’ ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter of Wirion to the prefect of the Meuse, 26 August 1805.



Fig.16: Watercolour of the arrest of Donat Henchy O'Brien by gendarmes, 1807

(Hewson, *Escape from the French*, 1891)

Indeed, numerous prisoners borrowed money, on a daily basis, from their French tailors, wine merchants and butchers. The account books compiled by the municipality in 1819, which intended to chart unpaid transactions amongst the latter, provide an insight into what Margot Finn termed the 'character of credit', or the socio-cultural expectations that impinged on this financial nexus, in which captive customers and local traders were bound together by 'networks of mutual lending'.⁸³ They placed trust not merely in money but also kinship, as neighbours in Verdun. As will be further discussed in chapter 6, these account books were part of a retrospective enterprise of French claimants to request the payment of a 3.5 million franc debt left by captives. The total amount of debts contracted between 1803 and 1814 was calculated several times, and should only be regarded as indicative.⁸⁴ Although partial and inconsistent, this record reveals that British creditors and French lenders belonged to varied social backgrounds (Table 16).⁸⁵ Lenders were mostly artisans and traders, particularly '*négociant*' such as Messieurs Sauvage and Humbert, who claimed up to 609 159 F each. These huge transactions were the result of minor deferred payments in '*billets à ordre*' and '*lettres de change sur l'honneur*' (bills of exchange) which accumulated over a decade. Overall, these everyday agreements combined two cultures: a gentry 'culture of credit' amongst the British, and commercial traditions of a garrison town used to receiving military guests.

⁸³ Margot Finn, *The Character of Credit. Personal Debt in English Culture, 1740-1914* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 95.

⁸⁴ Léon Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun* (3 vols, Frémont, 1840) II, p. 243.

⁸⁵ AMV, uncatalogued, 'Les Anglais à Verdun', 'Bordereau des créances contractées par MM. les Prisonniers et Otages Anglais, pendant leur séjour à Verdun, Département de la Meuse, depuis leur arrivée en 1803, jusqu'à leur départ en 1814', Verdun, 1819. The socio-professional categories of the following table are taken from the categories designed by the municipality in this document.

Social categories of French creditors		Social categories of British debtors		Total money owned
	<i>number</i>		<i>number</i>	
Négociant, marchand(e) (merchant)	80	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l' Armée Capitaine marchand	238 232 174 218 52	2 122 381 Francs
Cabaretier, cafetier, aubergiste (innkeeper)	31	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l' Armée Capitaine marchand	54 64 48 75 27	68 854 F.
Libraire-imprimeur (bookprinter)	5	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l' Armée Capitaine marchand	7 26 17 5 19	61 359 F.
Ex-receveur, receveur (tax collector)	3	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l' Armée Capitaine marchand	4 11 4 5 1	26 249 F.
Orfèvre (Jeweller)	4	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l' Armée	21 16 8 11	22 149 F.
Boucher, traiteur, cantinier, charcutier (butcher and caterer)	22	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l' Armée Capitaine marchand	36 35 65 26 5	18 167 F.
Tailleur d'habit (taylor)	8	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l' Armée Capitaine marchand	32 14 30 13 6	15 099 F.
Confiseur (confectioner)	4	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l' Armée Capitaine marchand	3 6 3 4 1	10 418 F.
Brasseur, vigneron (brewer and winemaker)	4	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage	6 4	6 351 F.
Bottier, cordonnier, tanneur, marchand de cuir (tanner and shoemaker)	22	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l' Armée Capitaine marchand	11 5 10 13 3	6 158 F.
Rentier (person of independent means)	15	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l' Armée Capitaine marchand	11 5 5 8 8	4 967 F.
Marchand de bois (Wood merchant)	5	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l' Armée Capitaine marchand	5 15 6 11 2	3 218 F.
Enseigne de bâtiment (midshipman)	1	Otage	1	3 000 F.

Ties of honour

Vitrier (glazier)	2	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l'Armée	1 1 1 1	2 960 F.
Coiffeur, perruquier (hairdresser)	4	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Officier de l'Armée	4 1 2	2 888 F.
Architecte (architect)	1	Officier de la Royal Navy Aspirant Officier de l'Armée	2 9 1	2 497 F.
Horloger (watchmaker)	2	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Officier de l'Armée	3 2 3	2 363 F.
Boulangier, pâtissier (baker)	7	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l'Armée Capitaine marchand	3 4 5 4 2	2 163 F.
Marchand de meubles (furniture merchant)	3	Officier de la Royal Navy Officier de l'Armée Capitaine marchand	3 3 1	2 094 F.
Laboureur (ploughman)	1	Otage	1	1 700 F.
Blanchisseuse, couturière (seamstress, washerwoman)	5	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l'Armée Capitaine marchand	1 2 1 1 2	1 681 F.
Apothicaire (apothecary)	1	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Officier de l'Armée	4 5 9	1 653 F.
Juge au tribunal de commerce, avocat, avoué (judge and lawyer)	5	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant	2 1 1	1 029 F.
Sellier (saddler)	1	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Officier de l'Armée	1 3 3	733 F.
Menuisier, charpentier (carpenter)	2	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Officier de l'Armée Capitaine marchand	2 1 3 1	607 F.
Chapelier (hatter)	3	Officier de la Royal Navy Otage Aspirant Officier de l'Armée	1 1 5 1	446 F.
Domestique (servant)	2	Otage Officier de l'Armée	1 1	193 F.
Serrurier (locksmith)	1	Officier de la Royal Navy	4	172 F.
Lampiste (lamp maker)	2	Otage Officier de l'Armée	1 2	150 F.
Chef de bataillon (head of battalion)	1	Officier de la Royal Navy	1	76 F.
Charron (wheelwright)	1	Otage	1	56 F.
Musicien (musician)	1	Officier de l'Armée	1	56 F.
Garde forestier (forest ranger)	1	Aspirant	1	55 F.

Table 16: Social backgrounds of French lenders and British creditors at Verdun

Cosmopolitan ties: freemasonry and science

Under the motto 'Frank amity, now and forever', the masonic lodge 'Saint-Jean de l'Orient de Verdun' (Fig.17) formed a space where British prisoners developed ambivalent cosmopolitan ties with local administrators and merchants.⁸⁶ In the eighteenth century, freemasonry was conceptualised as 'a means to develop sincere amity conciliating people who, otherwise, would have never become familiar with each other'.⁸⁷ This followed specific regulations subduing individual willpower under that of the group, and creating tensions between two sets of laws: those of the order operating on a cosmic scale and promoting universal fraternity, and the temporal laws of a state at war.⁸⁸



**Fig.17: Seal of the masonic lodge 'Franche Amitié de Verdun
with their motto 'à la vie, à la mort', 1807**

(Archives Nationales de France)

Developed during the Revolution, the lodge was a well-regulated assembly, which by 1811, gathered key figures of the local administration (mayor, sub-prefect), wealthy merchants with judiciary responsibilities (tax collectors, judges), and local and Parisian army officers (Table 17). Amongst these featured names mentioned above: Varaigne who rented out properties to British captives, and Pricot who printed documents for the lodge. As evidenced by myriad certificates

⁸⁶ AN, F/7/331, Masonic certificates of British prisoners of war at Verdun, 1806-1809.

⁸⁷ Gérard Gayot, *La Franc-Maçonnerie Française. Textes et Pratiques (XVIIIe- XIXe siècles)* (Paris, 1991), p. 64.

⁸⁸ Loge de la Franche Amitié de Verdun, *Code des Statuts et Règlements pour le Chapitre de la Franche Amitié, Régulièrement Constitué à l'Orient de Verdun. Tableau des Francs-Maçons Composant la Loge* (Verdun, 1811), p. 3.

published by Pricot and the national Grand Orient in Paris, the lodge welcomed British captives based on an assessment of their judiciary ‘honour’: provided that they demonstrated ‘pure manners’ and were devoid of any criminal record sullyng their ‘public esteem’.⁸⁹ In 1807, sixteen master certificates were granted to British prisoners between the age of twenty and thirty. These included mostly naval men, along with two Irish gentlemen, two merchants and a language tutor.⁹⁰ Some might have previously been initiated, and recommended aboard ships, as was often the case during the Napoleonic Wars.⁹¹ Yet, the support of the Grand Orient bore witness to their eagerness to ‘facilitate the entrance of foreigners’, particularly British prisoners. This is evident in the language of ‘fraternal friendship’ and the masculine bond that permeated these certificates, and which materialised not only in masonic rituals but in escape projects.⁹²

‘If you were a mason, you would think of a brother as I do’.⁹³ These were the words of Lemaire, an innkeeper in the Faubourg-Pavé, who responded to the accusation made against him by Molhe, a local *maréchal des logis*, of facilitating the escape of a British mason, Yves Hurry, in 1806. Molhe reported to Wirion that, although Lemaire was not responsible for the escape, he fully supported it, claiming that he ‘was not upset about Harry’s escape; had he met him during his flight, he would have fulfilled his obligations to help him as a mason ... Harry was, he said, a brave man and he would have done the same, had he been in his position.’⁹⁴ Wirion had himself been initiated at Aix-la-Chapelle in the 1790s, and was well-aware that civilian authorities in Verdun were bound by the ties of freemasonry, which led him to petition national authorities to ban British prisoners from French lodges and confiscate their certificates to prevent escapes.⁹⁵ He received a muted response from the Ministers of Defence and Police, Clarke and Fouché, who were both free-masons. Until

⁸⁹ ‘L’Atelier ne doit être composé que de Maçons de mœurs pures et exempts de reproches ; celui qui aurait encouru quelque tache légale, que sa conduite aurait privé de l’estime publique, ne pourra être reçu aux grades supérieurs ni même être affilié ... Les affiliations seront ... sous la garantie de la justice et de l’honneur.’ Loge de la Franche Amitié de Verdun, *Code des Statuts et Règlements pour le Chapitre de la Franche Amitié*, pp. 7-8. Most of these certificated are now in the possession of descendants.

⁹⁰ BNF, FM2502, Correspondence of the lodge in Verdun with the Grand Orient in Paris; see also François Collaveri, *La Franc-Maçonnerie des Bonaparte* (Paris, 2007), pp. 281-300.

⁹¹ Collaveri, *La Franc-Maçonnerie des Bonaparte*, p. 282. See also Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, *L’Autre et le Frère. L’Étranger et la Franc-Maçonnerie en France au XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris, 1998).

⁹² ‘Le désir que nous avons de faciliter l’entrée des Orientés Étrangers et des loges régulières de France à ceux de nous frères qui nous paraissent dignes d’être admis, nous porte à constater leur été maçonnique, dans la douce confiance qu’ils épandront dans toutes les villes qu’ils parcourront l’esprit de liberté, de concorde et d’amitié fraternelle, qui fait l’essence de notre ordre.’ AN, F/7/3311, Masonic certificates of British prisoners of war in Verdun, 1806-1809.

⁹³ ‘Si tu étais maçon tu penserais à regard d’un frère tout comme moi.’ AN, F/7/6541-1835, Letter of Wirion to the ministry of police, Verdun, 9 July 1808; Léon Grasilier, ‘Évasions de Prisonniers de Guerre Favorisées par les Francs-Maçons sous Napoléon’, *Revue Internationale des Sociétés Secrètes*, 1913, p. 580.

⁹⁴ ‘il n’était pas fâché que Harry fût évadé, que même il ne croirait pas avoir manqué à ses devoirs si le hasard lui avait procuré l’occasion de le rencontrer dans sa fuite, de l’aider comme franc-maçon à la favoriser ... c’était un brave homme et qu’à sa place il en aurait fait autant.’ AN, F/7/6541-1835, Letter of Wirion to the ministry of police, Verdun, 9 July 1808.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

1810, they sent back and forth Wirion's report, refusing to be accountable on the question, which reveals the embarrassment and tensions it engendered between their duties as ministers and brothers.⁹⁶

Napoleon himself nourished these confusions by offering a Christmas dinner to the British masons in Verdun during one of his passages, giving to each of them a *demi-franc* with his effigy.⁹⁷ This occurred in other depots, leading Sergeant Nicol to observe that it was 'a fine thing to be a mason in France'.⁹⁸ Overall, as Philippe Mason and François Collaveri have shown for prisoners in Britain, whilst the reunion of masons in captivity was not a novelty, the Napoleonic Wars witnessed an escalation in the number of such assemblies, which blurred the line between amity and enmity.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ 'L'envoi qui en a été fait à votre Excellence était sans doute accompagné de renseignements sur les abus auxquels ces pièces avaient donné ou pouvaient donner lieu. Ce motif et la persuasion où je suis que Votre Excellence sait à quoi s'en tenir sur l'association maçonnique, me font penser que c'est à Elle à juger si ces diplômés peuvent être rendus', wrote the Minister of Defence. On 15 February 1810, the ministry of police replied: 'c'est à Votre Excellence seule qu'il appartient de juger si les motifs qui ont déterminé la mesure n'existent plus aujourd'hui, et si la demande du Sieur Barker, Mackenzie et Thomas peut être accueillie.' AN, F/7/6541-1835, Petition from British captive masons at Verdun named Barker, Mackenzie, Thomas (Abel Wantner), Verdun, 8 January 1810; Letter from the ministry of police to the Ministry of Defence, Paris, 28 January 1810; Letter of the Ministry of Defence to the Ministry of Police, Paris, 2 February 1810; Letter from the Ministry of Police to the Ministry of Defence, Paris, 15 February 1810. On the power of masonic friendships following the French Revolution, see the recent study of Kenneth Loiselle, *Brotherly Love: Freemasonry and the Transformation of Male Friendship in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, 2014).

⁹⁷ Robert Freke Gould, *Military Lodges: The Apron and the Sword of Freemasonry Under Arms* (New York, 2003), p. 65. On speculations about whether Napoleon was a freemason, see Jacques-Olivier Boudon, "Napoléon, Empereur des Franc-Maçons", *Historia* 676 (2003) [<http://www.historia.fr/content/recherche/article?id=6645>, accessed 08 June 2014].

⁹⁸ Nicol, *Diary of a British Prisoner in France with Napoleon at Waterloo, and Other Unpublished Documents of the Waterloo and Peninsular Campaign* (London, 1911), p. 215.

⁹⁹ On free-masonry amongst French POWs in Britain, see Bernard Williamson, 'Napoleonic Wars: A Mason's Word', *MQ.*, 16 (2006) [<http://www.mqmagazine.co.uk/issue-16/p-34.php>, accessed 08 June 2014]; Phillipe Masson, *Les Sépulcres Flottants. Prisonniers Français en Angleterre sous l'Empire* (Rennes, 1987), pp.29, 34.

Noms des F. F.	Qualités civiles	Grades maçonniques	Dignités dans le Chap.
Louis Lefebure	Sous-préfet	S:P:R: †	T:S:
Louis François Morlant	Greffier en chef du tribunal civil	S:P:R: †	1 ^{er} Surv:
Nicolas Jeandin	Négociant, Juge au tribunal de commerce	S:P:R: †	2 nd Surv:
Joseph Antoine Varaigne	Avoué	S:P:R: †	Orateur
Henry-Alexandre Béguinet	Licencié-Avoué	S:P:R: †	Secrétaire
Charles Laroche	Perceveur des contributions de Verdun	S:P:R: †	Très:
Nicolas-Thomas Viard	Négociant, Juge suppl ^t au tribunal de commerce	S:P:R: †	Garde des S: et Arch:
Louis Gand	Négociant, Maire de la ville de Verdun	S:P:R: †	M: des Cer:
Jean-Baptiste Antoine	Négociant, juge au tribunal de commerce	S:P:R: †	Arch:
Pierre-Antoine Houzelle	Propriétaire	S:P:R: †	1 ^{er} Exp:
Alexandre-Louis d'Allonville	Inspecteur des domaines	S:P:R: †	2 nd Exp:
Pierre-Charles Lespine	Docteur en chirurgie	S:P:R: †	Hosp:
Nicolas Périn	Négociant, Juge suppl ^t au tribunal de commerce	S:P:R: †	–
Labiffe	Major du 11 ^e Régiment de chasseurs à cheval	S:P:R: †	–
Amand Didier	Receveur des contributions	S:P:R: †	–
Jean-Marie Geofroy	Receveur des douanes	S:P:R: †	–
Mathieu Desirat	Colonel au 11 ^e Régiment de chasseurs à cheval	S:P:R: †	–
Julien Guinart	Chef d'escadron dudit Régiment	S:P:R: †	–
Charles-Antoine Bataille de Tancanville	Chef d'escadron dudit Régiment	S:P:R: †	–
Henry Elios	Ancien chef de Bataillon	S:P:R: †	–
Simon Gabriel	Substitut du Procureur Impérial	S:P:R: †	–
Antoine Vinaty	Receveur de l'arrondissement de Verdun	S:P:R: †	–

Table 17: French members of the masonic lodge of Verdun, 1811

Scientific networks further obscured this line in captivity. ‘Sciences are never at war’, wrote Edward Jenner in a petition to the Institute of France in 1803 for his friend and patron, Lord Yarmouth, sequestered in Verdun.¹⁰⁰ Jenner appealed for other captive scientists, who were liberated

¹⁰⁰ J.A. Nixon, ‘British Prisoners Released by Napoleon at Jenner’s Request’, *Proceedings of the Royal History of Medicine* 811:32 (1939), pp. 49-53

on account of their work and academic connections. The orientalist James Forbes was liberated with the support of Joseph Banks at the Royal Society and that of the French engineer and geometrician Lazare Carnot.¹⁰¹ Down the social ladder, Jenner obtained the liberation of modest surgeons, such as Francis Gold, a Bristol apothecary.¹⁰² Overall, the mere fact that an English physicist such as Humphry Davy, reputed for his work on the chemical effects of electricity, was invited to France by Napoleon to be presented with the Emperor's award in 1806, at the heart of a raging war, and was afterwards allowed to travel the country to discuss electrolysis for the separation of metal elements, suggests that Napoleon was eager to perform as an enlightened patron of the sciences and the arts.¹⁰³ Indeed, liberation of captives also concerned 'men of letters' such as the historian John Pinkerton, Chinese scholars and antiquarians.¹⁰⁴ These favours filtered through Verdun, where captive doctors, botanists and physicists obtained preferable treatment: they received permission to reside temporarily in provincial cities and in Paris, or in neighbouring villages, like Charles Taylor who bought a house in Clermont-sur-Argonne 'to study botany'.¹⁰⁵

The Hippocratic Oath placing them above martial antagonisms, British civil and naval doctors embraced the cosmopolitan nature of their profession and improved their medical knowledge by becoming their captors' physicians and engaging in humanitarian work in Verdun. Physicians, such as Moir, volunteered in the local hospital to provide free vaccination and cataract operations on the locals, at a time when such procedures were in their infancy in France.¹⁰⁶ Only twenty in 1806, the number of British doctors multiplied after the Russian campaigns, when the French army brought back typhus to the town. In the midst of the epidemics in 1813, the director of the hospital Bazennerye, requested that four British naval surgeons stay permanently in Verdun. The hospital would be 'much embarrassed, if [they] did not have them now, when all the medical personnel [were] indisposed by the task at hand.'¹⁰⁷ Many memoirs bear witness to the humanitarian efforts of British doctors towards French soldiers later in the year. These gestures were much appreciated

¹⁰¹ Copy of a letter from the Secretary to the *Institut National* at Paris, in Forbes, *Letters from France*, II, p. 284.

¹⁰² Nixon, 'Jenner's Request', pp. 54-55

¹⁰³ David Knight, 'Davy, Sir Humphry, baronet (1778-1829)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011 [<http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/7314>, accessed 8 June 2014].

¹⁰⁴ Dawson Turner (ed.), *The Literary Correspondence of John Pinkerton, Esq.* (2 vols, London, 1830), II, p. 317.

¹⁰⁵ ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter from Parent-Réal, Minister of Police to Charles Taylor, Paris, 24 June 1811.

¹⁰⁶ AMV, uncatalogued 'Les Anglais à Verdun', Letter from Dr Moir, who offered to gratuitously 'vaccinate' and treat once a week locals suffering from typhus, Verdun, 1812.

¹⁰⁷ 'J'ai l'honneur de vous demander s'il ni aurait pas de l'inconvenance à vous prier de demander à Monsieur de Meulan commandant leurs dépôts de permettre à Messieurs Gordon, Neiter, Amrstong et Krabbé de rester à Verdun. J'ai la persuasion que ces messieurs le désireraient. Nous serions fort embarrassés, si nous ne les avions pas en ce moment où tous les officiers de santé par suite de ce travail se trouvent indisposés.' Ibid., Note from the director of the hospital in Verdun to the mayor of the town, 1813.

throughout the period of captivity, the mayor holding banquets and formal ceremonies for any prisoner saving inhabitants from a certain death by disease, fire or drowning.¹⁰⁸ Detention provided a case study for surgeons, who, like John Bunnell Davis, employed his time to the study of asphyxia, premature burial and juvenile diseases. In 1806, he published a medical pamphlet in Verdun entitled *Projet de Règlement Concernant les Décès, précédé de Reflections*, which was discussed in the local newspaper.¹⁰⁹ These ‘reflections’ influenced his career, since he developed a project of a ‘Universal Dispensary for Children’ which materialised on his return to London in 1815.¹¹⁰ These Franco-British exchanges, beyond the experience of war, lay at the core of the cosmopolitan education many British doctors received in Paris, or in the case of Davis, Montpellier.¹¹¹ Knowledge transfers exceeded the medical sphere, as evidenced by the presence of copies of industrial patents prisoners collected in their portfolios, which invite us to consider the impact of such transfers in their daily lives.¹¹²

Everyday ‘cultural transfers’

‘Travelling takes off the vulgar prejudices’, wrote Seacome Ellison, reminiscing about his daily exchanges with the *Verdunois*.¹¹³ These relations can be perceived in light of what historians, literary scholars and sociologists have termed ‘cultural transfers’, following the pioneering work of Michel Espagne.¹¹⁴ ‘Cultural transfers’ describe the sociocultural processes by which transnational contacts induce not only a circulation of ideas and objects, as they are, but translations and assimilations of them – a ‘transfer’ – into new meanings and connections between agents. The ‘receiving culture’ thus plays an active role in building cultural ‘bridges’.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter by the Minister of Defence to the prefect of the Meuse, Paris, 19 September 1811.

¹⁰⁹ The *Narrateur de la Meuse* will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. John Bunnell Davis, *Projet de Règlement Concernant les Décès, Précédé de Reflections* (Verdun, 1806).

¹¹⁰ I.S.L. Loudon, ‘John Bunnell Davis and the Universal Dispensary for Children’, *British Medical Journal* 1 (1979), pp. 1191-4.

¹¹¹ Ann Thomson and Simon Burrows and Edmund Dziembowski (eds), *Cultural Transfers: France and Britain in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2010); Christelle Rabier, ‘Les Techniques Chirurgicales Autour de 1800 Entre France et Grande-Bretagne: les Enjeux des Echanges’, *Documents pour l’Histoire des Techniques* 19 (2010), pp. 65-71.

¹¹² MPV, Hamilton papers, 2006.0.25.13, ‘Brevet d’invention du 5 Vendémaire en 9 ... par le citoyen Abraham Louis Brequet’, Paris, 27 September 1800.

¹¹³ Ellison, *Prison Scenes*, p. 25.

¹¹⁴ Michel Espagne and Michael Werner (eds) *Transferts. Les Relations Interculturelles dans l’Espace Franco-Allemand (XVIII-XIX Siècles)* (Paris, 1988); Michel Espagne, *Les Transferts Culturels Franco-Allemands* (Paris, 1999); Michel Espagne, ‘La Notion de Transfert Culturel’, *Revue Sciences/Lettres* (2013) [<http://rsl.revues.org/219>, accessed 08 June 2014].

¹¹⁵ Wolfgang Schmale, ‘Cultural Transfer’, *European History Online* (2005) [<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/schmalew-2012-en> URN: urn:nbn:de:0159-2012120501, accessed 08 June 2014].

Verdun was a zone of cultural exchanges with the local elites, who proved eager to socialise with the British captives. The captives' races and balls offered to the newly returned *émigrés*, such as the Lalances, the chance to reappear on the social stage alongside the imperial administration, and deploy, as *sportsmen*, aristocratic honour in leisure activities.¹¹⁶ The owners of the Chateau de Ligny welcomed British guests, such as John Spencer Stanhope, who not only experienced from within the attempt of the post-revolution nobility to reinvent itself through a new domesticity in their castles, but also partook in the fusion of old and imperial elites.¹¹⁷ Spencer-Stanhope's sojourn amongst the LeVaillant family offered a space where two traditions of hunting merged; whilst the former was initiated to wolf-hunting, the practice was given a twist by incorporating his own techniques of fox-hunting.¹¹⁸ The monotony of a secluded life at the *château* was enlivened by the attention paid by the aristocratic couple to their garden, particularly its cottage 'dignified by the title of *La Ferme*', which served to restage their attachment to the land within the built property.¹¹⁹ Although initially dubious of Madame's 'ideas of rural felicity', Spencer-Stanhope nevertheless appropriated some elements of their *al fresco* breakfasts. Upon his return to Cannon Hall in Yorkshire, the 'kitchen gardens' were refashioned with ornaments *à la française*.¹²⁰ Members of the old aristocracy shared a taste and leisure *habitus*, which could nevertheless be challenged by the *nouveaux riches*, equally eager to socialise with captives, such as the already mentioned Chardon, Larminat and Godard, who ridiculed the effeminate affectations of the de Lalances. Their discourses percolated through the captive description of the old aristocracy as, in Spencer-Stanhope's words, 'belonging to a bygone day'.¹²¹

This led detainees to question their own genteel identity, by witnessing the industrial turn the French

¹¹⁶ ADM-Bar, 9R2, Interrogation of Charles-Joseph Migor by the *préfet*, 1 December 1811.

¹¹⁷ On the new domesticity of the aristocracy during the First French Empire, see Claude-Isabelle Brelot, *La Noblesse Réinventée. Nobles de Franche-Comté de 1814 à 1808* (Besançon, 1972); Margaret Darrow, 'French Noblewomen and the New Domesticity, 1750-1850', *Feminist Studies* 5:1 (1979), pp. 41-65; Robert Forster, 'The Survival of the Nobility during the French Revolution', *Past and Present*, 37 (1967), pp. 71-86; Robert Anderson, 'Aristocratic Values and Elite Education in Britain and France', in Didier Lancier and Monique de Saint-Martin, *Anciennes et Nouvelles Aristocraties de 1800 à Nos Jours* (Paris, 2007), p.268.

¹¹⁸ 'Another diversion at Ligny was *la chasse*. Monsieur M. was a great sportsman and very fond of shooting ... I was at *la chasse aux loups*. I had been so long deprived of the amusements of a sportsman that an invitation from Monsieur M., to accompany him on the following morning produced so much excitement in my mind that I lay awake half the night ... One day, we were out fox-hunting on foot, our business being to head the fox and horses ready to shoot him!' Stirling, A. M. W. (ed.), *The Letter Bag of Lady Elizabeth Spencer Stanhope* (2 vols, Whitefish, 2004), I, p. 249.

¹¹⁹ 'Our life was very uniform. At eight o'clock punctually we met at a little building at the end of the garden which Madame had dignified by the title of *La Ferme*, though it had not a pretension of any sort to such a denomination. It was in fact a small cottage consisting of a kitchen fitted up in cottage style, a small pantry, two bedrooms above, furnished with all the luxury of modern refinement so much for the cottage. From what books Madame V. had drawn her ideas of rural felicity I know not, but she deemed it more sentimental to breakfast in the cottage than to enjoy that meal comfortably in her dining-room, so to the ferme we were to go, and, whether the weather was hot or cold, to sit near the blazing fire in the little kitchen and enjoy the rural felicity of making our own toast. At one we dined, took a ride or walk in the afternoon, and at eight sat down to supper.' *Ibid.*, pp. 244-5.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, I, p.247.

¹²¹ 'a kind-hearted, gentlemanlike and amiable old man ... possessing the peculiar grace of manner belonging to a bygone day, and which he carries to such a point of exaggeration as often to render himself ridiculous.' *Ibid.*, I, p. 232; Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, I, pp. 95-6.

military elite took with beet sugar production, propelled locally by Maréchal Oudinot in Bar, and which Andrew Blayney, as a major and a peer, thought of exporting to his domain in Ireland in 1814.¹²²

Forced cohabitation equally altered what Bourdieu would term ‘social times’.¹²³ The captives’ races and fetes during the ‘Season’ reimagined the everyday of the inhabitants. In 1806, the local theatre changed its opening hours to coincide with British dining times.¹²⁴ Given their increased audience, they invited new entertainers: the *compagnie de Nancy*, Parisian map-makers, semi-bearded women, tongueless men, the ‘incombustible Spaniard’.¹²⁵ The *comedies de Metz* ‘swearing by the English and the English alone’, opened their own roulette, raising fear amongst the magistrates of a transmission of gambling habits amongst the locals.¹²⁶ ‘The inhabitants of Verdun are not fortunate enough to afford entertainment expenditures ... most of them play to emulate the English’, wrote the mayor, himself well-acquainted with the establishment.¹²⁷ By becoming the landlords of captives, locals of various ranks became *rentiers*. This raised concerns about the potential gentrification effects of the prisoners’ presence on the population and the development of a ‘rampant trend of wanting to enrich oneself without working’.¹²⁸

These transfers burgeoned in the domestic space, where languages were assimilated. Not all prisoners were fluent in French before their capture; sailors, in particular, had to acquire grammar books en route to Verdun.¹²⁹ The exchange of books, evoked in chapter 1, offered ‘a transnational social space’.¹³⁰ They were not only read and exchanged, *as they were*, but induced transformations and transmissions of ideas, as the captives translated them. Gold, mentioned above, translated writings on mountaineering, and the ‘physiological researches’ of Bichat, which he published in

¹²² Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey*, II, p. 260.

¹²³ Nicholas Brown and Imre Szeman (eds), *Pierre Bourdieu: Fieldwork in Culture* (Lanham, MD, and Oxford, 2000), p. 230.

¹²⁴ Marc Sorlot, *La Vie en Meuse au Temps de Napoléon Ier* (Metz, 1998), p. 84.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹²⁶ ‘*les comedies de Metz ne jurent que par les Anglais*’. AMV, uncatalogued, ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, Letter from the mayor of Verdun to the prefect, 26 germinal an 12 (16 April 1804).

¹²⁷ ‘*Les citoyens de Verdun ne sont pas assez fortunés pour faire des dépenses de spectacles ... beaucoup ... ne jouent surtout que par rapport aux anglais*.’ *Ibid.* Varaigne and the mayor Huguin both frequented the gambling house for British prisoners at Verdun. AMV, uncatalogued, ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, Police investigation report, 25 Thermidor an XII (13 August 1804).

¹²⁸ ‘*cette mode de vouloir s’enrichir sans travailler qui gagne de proche en proche*’ Quoted in Sorlot, *La Vie en Meuse*, p. 27.

¹²⁹ William Story, *A Journal Kept in France, During a Captivity of More than Nine Years, Commencing the 14th Day of April 1805 and Ending the 5th Day of May 1814* (London, 1815), p. 16.

¹³⁰ Thomson, Burrows and Dziembowski (eds), *Cultural Transfers*, pp. 65-7.

Britain after his liberation.¹³¹ The study of the history of Verdun, accompanied by numerous visits to the neighbouring Varennes-en-Argonne where Louis XVI had been arrested, enabled prisoners to place themselves in another national history. The letters James Forbes sent to his sister in Britain reveals his engagement as an oral historian of the Revolution, questioning his lodgers about their experience.¹³² The empathy captives nurtured for the *Verdunois* materialised in the diffusion of myths and songs about the ‘*Vierges de Verdun*’ in their memoirs.¹³³ Equally, landlords studied the rudiments of the English law and language, particularly to harmonise exchanges in the space of the shop.¹³⁴ A haberdasher like Madame Chatillon could get private tuitions from her tenant; others familiarised themselves with the captives’ language via ‘logogrìphs’ in the *Narrateur*.¹³⁵

Whilst Charles Throckmorton changed his eating habits, depending on the serving times of the inns, he was proud to convert his landlords to having tea on a weekly basis, and to exchange recipes with them.¹³⁶ Commensality affected the prisoners living in French families. A letter written by John Hyslop, a Scottish merchant officer to his brother, suggests that food was a privileged vector for these transfers:

You may tell Nanny when I return, I will teach her to cook some nice delicate French dishes; there is one in particular which I have eaten frequently, and which I dare say she will like very much, it is made from an animal called *Grenouille*, besides a number of more dishes quite as nice and savoury.¹³⁷

Whilst parolees could form an attachment to their landlords – eating and cooking with them, attending their weddings, christenings and funerals – a social hiatus developed with the rural

¹³¹ Nixon, J.A., ‘British Prisoners Released by Napoleon at Jenner’s Request’, *Proceedings of the Royal History of Medicine* 811:32 (1939), pp. 49-53.

¹³² ‘Near forty of the inhabitants of Verdun suffered under the guillotine, among whom were several young ladies of the first families; whose only crime was the having presented nosegays and confections to the king of Prussia, and danced with his officers ... The fate of Henrietta, Helena, and Agatha Wattrim, three amiable sisters, excited the commiseration of all parties, except the iron breasts of the sanguinary tribunal which condemned them; and we are sometimes in company with a lady, who, being then under the age prescribed by law for decollation, was compelled to stand upon the scaffold and behold her mother and two sisters beheaded, and afterwards remanded to prison until her next birth-day, when she was to suffer the same fate: the death of Robespierre saved her life, and she is now one of the most interesting and lovely women in Verdun.’ Forbes, *Letters from France*, I, p. 252:

¹³³ Paul Mérat, *Verdun en 1792, Episode Historique et Militaire des Guerres de la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1849); Gérard Canini, *Verdun Hier. Le Temps De L’isolement. De La Révolution à 1870* (Bar-le-Duc, 1982); Edmond Pionner, *Essai sur l’Histoire de la Révolution à Verdun 1789-1795* (Nancy, 1906).

¹³⁴ *Le Narrateur de la Meuse*, 9 October 1808.

¹³⁵ ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter of the *sous-préfet* to the *préfet*, Verdun, 21 June 1810; *Le Narrateur de la Meuse*, 10 November 1804.

¹³⁶ See following chapter.

¹³⁷ Dorothy Booth Hyslop (ed.), *Shepherd, Sailor and Survivor: the Life and Letters of James Hyslop, RN, 1764-1853* (Inverness, 2010), p.72.

population. Major Blayney disapproved of the ‘demi-savage ... peasants [speaking] a coarse and harsh *patois*, a dialect of ancient Languedoc’. The latter equally despised him, and petitioned against him for having damaged a cart with his horse at a crossroads.¹³⁸ Equally, James Forbes deplored Verdun’s rurality, its lack of pavements and, above all, its public hog-killings in the winter which gave the town a ‘most ensanguined and shocking appearance’.¹³⁹ Forbes’ judgment of peasant ‘savagery’ was based on a projection of his experience in India onto Verdun and its locals.¹⁴⁰ His oriental perception materialised in two watercolours (Fig.18), which illustrate his romantic anthropology of a new found land in the Meuse.¹⁴¹ Not only did Forbes orientalise the Verdun landscapes, but he compared the inhabitants to Brahmins.

I shall only observe that the female peasants ... in France ... have few traces of beauty ... Whether it proceeds from their very hard labour, or being exposed to more sultry sun ... they certainly are very different from the daughters of an English farmer, whose blooming countenances adorn the cottages in our native isle. They soon appear old and wrinkled, and often become much darker than the Brahmin women, and other high casts in Hindostan.¹⁴²

His description of the locals, explaining their physical appearance through climate and customs expressed an asymmetrical socio-cultural discrepancy – French farmers being associated with the Indian intelligentsia. This was modulated on an antecedent colonial antagonism between the English body and an Indian racial other, the metropolis and the empire, which was transposed into a French context. ‘The French peasantry’, wrote Forbes, ‘appear to be of a race altogether different from the

¹³⁸ Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey*, II, p. 402.

¹³⁹ ‘Every family that can afford it, purchase one or more of these animals from the country, while two or three of those in poorer circumstances unite to buy one in the market; and, during the months of February and March, from day-break until noon, these poor creatures are driven with noise and violence to the street-door, where they are placed upon an heap of straw, and deprived of life in no very expeditious or expert manner, amidst a concourse of women and children, with pans and pipkins to catch the blood: the air resounds with the shouts of the half-savage group, mingling with the dying groans of the victims; who, while their limbs are still quivering, are enveloped in blazing straw, and the whole street filled with smoke and stench from their broiling carcasses, which are immediately cut up, and preserved in various ways. But the morning regale ends not here; much of the blood escapes into the kennels, and mixing with the melting snows gives the town a most ensanguined and shocking appearance; and, being frequently condensed by hard frosts, continues, for several weeks together, a mingled contrast of purity and filthiness: it is a scene of blood shocking to every sense, and must tend to harden the hearts of the women and children who surround these funeral piles.’ Forbes, *Letters from France*, II, pp. 228-9.

¹⁴⁰ See introduction: ‘The lower part of Verdun, where we reside is pleasingly diversified with wood and water, fields and gardens ... a scene bearing resemblance to Dhirboy [Dabhoi] in the East Indies, where I so long resided among the peaceful Brahmins. Such is the place of our captivity.’ *Ibid.*, II, p.218.

¹⁴¹ James Forbes, *Interior view of Verdun from the ramparts and View of Verdun from the telegraph hill*, 1804. ‘Forbes was proud of his self-acclaimed and real status as the first English Romantic artist of India’. Hermione De Almeida, George H. Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance: British Romantic Art and the Prospect of India* (Aldershot, 2005), p.41.

¹⁴² Forbes, *Letters from France*, II, p.33.

inhabitants of the capital, and principal provincial towns.¹⁴³ The boundaries of transnational affinities were thus pliable and subject to past travelling experiences, as were the boundaries of parole itself.



Fig. 18: Forbes, Watercolours of Gujarat and Verdun, 1804

(James Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs and Letters from France*, 1806)

Severing ties: the boundaries of parole

In October 1804, Robert Wilson committed an ‘indecent act’ at the Verdun theatre, which ended his parole.¹⁴⁴

This Englishman was conversing with a loose woman during the interval, when he turned his back to the audience, who repeatedly yet quietly urged him to turn round ... a person shouted: Respect the audience! Mr Wilson, I must say it without judging his intention, lifted up the back of his coat and, bending over, showed his bottom.

¹⁴³ Ibid., II, p.33.

¹⁴⁴ ‘*Cet Anglais causant dans l’entre acte avec une femme de mauvais vie, tournait le dos au public: le parterre à plusieurs reprises et sans tumulte l’invita de se retourner ... un particulier au milieu des cris du public fit entendre ses mots: Respectez le parterre. Mr Wilson, je dois le dire sans me permettre de juger son intention, levant le pan de son habit et se baissant, montre son derrière.*’ ADM-Bar, 9R2, Report from Varaigne to the rapport sous-préfet, Verdun, 16 Vendémiaire an XIII (8 Octobre 1804).

Mooning was not an individual quirk of Wilson; it was a resurging form of protest and shaming during the period.¹⁴⁵ The practice had antecedents in medieval peasant culture, as an inversion of public thrashing. In the eighteenth century, the motif enjoyed a rising popularity in French Revolutionary prints, and amongst British cartoonists such as Gillray and Rowlandson. It was, in the words of Mikhail Bakhtin, an integral part of the charivari as a ‘common uncrowning gesture’, the grotesque of such physical demonstration being entrenched in the ‘carnavalesque’: the subversion of dominant behaviours, in language and space, through humour and chaos.¹⁴⁶ As a result of his action, Wilson was sequestered at the citadel and the gates of the town were shut for all prisoners for several days, which suggests that theatre was a space where the boundaries of parole and honour could be revised.¹⁴⁷

The municipal theatre offered a satiric stage for captives and captors wanting to comment on, if not invert, their current situation. There, busts of Bonaparte were the victims of many assaults. In 1806, Simpson, a naval surgeon ‘being rather fresh with champagne’ in the ‘dress boxes’, was reported to have ‘hissed’ and ‘groaned ... when the bust of the Emperor was brought forward [on stage]’. As a fellow prisoner put it, he thought ‘he might hiss or applaud as he did at Plymouth, or Portsmouth’, but was arrested and deprived of parole.¹⁴⁸ In France, turning one’s back to the stage, let alone hissing Napoleon, was considered as a dishonour and an offence leading to police investigation.¹⁴⁹ Other busts of Napoleon were stolen, broken, covered with chamber pots, and tried by British captives who, like three sailors in 1813, ‘sentenced him first to be shot, but ... thought that too honourable for him; then to be hanged, and lastly, to have his mischief-making head

¹⁴⁵ Angus McLaren, *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930* (Chicago and London, 2008), p. 186

¹⁴⁶ Michael Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (trans. by Hélène Iswolsky, Bloomington, 1984), p. 373; see also Vivian Cameron, ‘Political Exposures: Sexuality and Caricature during the French Revolution’, in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (Baltimore, 1991), pp. 93-4.

¹⁴⁷ AMV, uncatalogued, ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, Police report addressed to the mayor of Verdun, Verdun, 16 Vendémiaire an XIII (8 October 1804).

¹⁴⁸ ‘There is a custom in France, prevailing at all the Theatres—should any body turn their back to the stage during the performance, it is looked upon as a very great piece of rudeness [...] Mr. Simpson—surgeon of His majesty’s ship *Ranger*, a Scotsman by birth, and a prisoner at Verdun; he had not been long at the depot, consequently knew nothing of those rules or regulations;—he dined out one day with a friendly party, and being rather fresh with champagne went to the Theatre, and took a seat in the dress boxes:—he thought, that he might hiss or applaud as he did at Plymouth, or Portsmouth;—Once he turned his back on the scene;—which was looked over after a great deal of noise and confusion, made by the audience in the Pit,—But when the bust of the Emperor was brought forward; accompanied by the music playing his magnificent grand march;—he hissed, and groaned it, with all his heart and soul.’ James, *Ten years a captive*, quoted in Fraser, *Napoleon the Goaler*, p. 129.

¹⁴⁹ Hauterive, *Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, III, 11 December 1806.

chopped off by a case-knife'.¹⁵⁰ These theatrical inversions were also performed by the French, particularly local actors and *gendarmes* who penned and staged comedies on parole detention.¹⁵¹ In 1805, Chaillou, a sub-officer of the 25th regiment of infantry, wrote a vaudeville entitled *Le Retour de la Course, ou les Anglais à Verdun*.¹⁵² With the help of the local music tutor named Constantin, he had it published in Verdun and Paris. The plot relied on an inversion: the saddler Duval dressing up as an Englishman to seduce the daughter of a miserly magistrate. As the local newspaper noted, the play ridiculed both sides: 'we do not know what judgment the *Verdunois* and the English have on this; but it seems that none should be flattered to be depicted, for the former, as rapacious schemers, and the latter as gullible gluttons.'¹⁵³

Other spaces of tension reconfigured parole (taverns, bridges, fields and gambling houses), depending on the time of day and the stage of war. Altercations, sometimes violent, could occur on the town's bridges at night. On 18 April 1804, three local carpenters and a tanner threw a *détenu* over the *Pont des Minimes* at eleven o'clock in the evening.¹⁵⁴ Attempts at drowning captives were not isolated. In February 1809, Hodge and Turner were found in the Meuse, and the investigation revealed that they were 'forced into the water by three individuals, including Vidal'.¹⁵⁵ By insisting on Hodge's inebriation, the police report suggests that victims and criminals were drinking companions, or, at least, frequented the same taverns along these bridges. Inns witnessed many evening fights involving captives, who, like Deanne, brutalised a French merchant on account of his name 'Sering' – which sounded like the bird serin –, after 'throwing nuts at him' to convince him to sing, 'given that finches have lovely voices'.¹⁵⁶ Altercations could degenerate into mass affrays over

¹⁵⁰ Frederick Hoffman, *A Sailor of King George. The Journals of Captain Frederick Hoffman R.N. 1793-1814* (London, 1901), p.238; Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives*, p. 102.

¹⁵¹ See chapter 1 for a list of plays performed at Verdun and attended by prisoners.

¹⁵² B. Chaillou, *Le Retour de la Course, ou les Anglais à Verdun, Vaudeville en Un Acte* (Verdun, 1805).

¹⁵³ 'Nous ne savons quel jugement en portent les *Verdunois* et les *Anglais*; mais il nous semble que les premiers ne doivent pas être flattés d'y figurer en gents astucieux et rapaces, et les seconds en dupes et en gloutons.' Chaillou was the author of a second play, a successful comedy performed twice at Verdun entitled *Les ruses d'Arlequin. Narrateur de la Meuse*: 26 February 1805, 9 May et 16 July 1805.

¹⁵⁴ ADM-Bar, 9R2, Police report addressed to the mayor of Verdun, Verdun, 28 Germinal an XII (18 April 1804).

¹⁵⁵ Hauterive, *Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, IV, 17 February 1809.

¹⁵⁶ 'J'ai l'honneur de vous faire part que cette nuit environ onze heures, M. Sering, négociant à Lyon, se trouvant à l'hôtel des trois Maurs fut insulté par M. Deanne, prisonnier de guerre anglais qui soupait dans cette auberge avec plusieurs de ses compatriotes. D'après les renseignements que je me suis procuré, Monsieur le Sous-préfet, il paraît constant que ces Messieurs étant pris de vin, ont cherché à amener une rixe entre eux et les Français qui se trouvaient dans la même maison en leur tenant des propos vils et injurieux, en leur jetant à la tête des noix et amandes. M. Sering qui en avait été atteint plusieurs fois, se rendit près d'eux et les invita de cesser : le nom de Sering qui fut entendu de ces Anglais leur fournit une nouvelle occasion de le tourmenter, en voulant le forcer de chanter, attendu que les serins ont un joli gosier ; ne pouvant supporter patiemment une pareille insulte, M. Sering leur déclara qu'il ne chantait point en public, mais que si l'un d'eux voulait le suivre, ils feraient ensemble un duo : à l'instant M. Deanne aidé de ses camarades tomba sur le dit Sering et lui donna de si violents coups de poings sur la figure que non seulement le

several streets. On 18 April 1810, at half past nine in the evening, local ‘young people’ and ‘captive midshipmen’ fought with sticks outside a tavern. For Varaigne, this was merely a juvenile brawl: ‘everything suggests that this happens often, some English must have bumped into a Frenchman, whilst passing by, or vice versa; one or the other must have considered it insulting or disrespectful, and they came to blows.’¹⁵⁷ Prisoners equally understood brawls as demonstrations of masculinity: ‘the superiority of our countrymen at boxing and wrestling tended greatly to suppress the pugnacious disposition of the natives’.¹⁵⁸ Boxing served men of various nationalities, races and classes to perform male honour during the period.¹⁵⁹ Thus, for Varaigne, there was no harm done. This was not a patriotic outburst, or a breach of honour, but simple ‘*voies de faits*’ (battery), which, like mild vandalism, did not necessitate suspending parole.¹⁶⁰ Victims rarely put forward formal complaints, unless the offence involved theft, which, as evidenced by the pillage of a jeweller’s shop by Captain Hawker and Ramdsford in 1808, led not only to a fine but imprisonment for six to twelve months.¹⁶¹

Gambling and duelling, two ‘aristocratic vices’ attacked in the cultural skirmishes of the British middling sort, had different meanings in Napoleonic France, and shifted the boundaries of honour in detention.¹⁶² The emergence of gaming tables in captives’ clubs was much-discussed at Verdun. Wirion saw in them a source of profit but prohibited the locals from accessing them.¹⁶³ This fuelled suspicions of espionage amongst prisoners, especially as Irish captives were employed by the French authorities to report on the clubs. The latter were well-aware of the tensions between the Irish and the English, which led Wirion to shut the gates and asked captives to remain in their lodgings during the passage of the Irish Legion through the town in 1806.¹⁶⁴ Yet, tensions mainly occurred between prisoners and faro-bank keepers. In 1804, a prisoner challenged Balby, the owner of the gaming

sang en jaillie mais qu’il en fut tout défiguré. Comme il s’agit Monsieur de prisonniers anglais, j’ai cru devoir rendre compte officiellement de ce fait à Monsieur le Général Wirion. ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter from Varaigne to the *sous-préfet*, Verdun, 14 Vendémiaire an XIII (6 Octobre 1804).

¹⁵⁷ ‘*Dans la soirée du jour cité, il y a eu quelques coups de bâtons donnés et reçus par des Anglais et des jeunes gens de Verdun sans qu’il soit résulté ni pour les uns ni pour les autres aucune blessure ni contusion tant soit peu importantes ... ‘il y a tout lieu de penser que comme cela arrive assez fréquemment, quelque Anglais aura heurté en passant un Français ou réciproquement, que l’un ou l’autre aura pris cela pour une insulte ou un témoignage de mépris et que des paroles on en sera venu aux voies de faits.*’ ADM-Bar, Report of the interim *sous-préfet* to the *préfet* of the Meuse, Verdun, 21 April 1810.

¹⁵⁸ Joshua Done, *Sufferings of a British Prisoner Lately Arrived from France, with Various Anecdotes of the Cruelty Exercised By Gendarmes on British Captives* (London, 1814), pp. 27-8.

¹⁵⁹ See Adam Chill, *Boundaries of Britishness: Boxing, Minorities, and Identity in Late-Georgian Britain* (Ann Arbor, 2007).

¹⁶⁰ *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 13 January 1805.

¹⁶¹ Only male servants could be denied parole, see ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Règlement’, Verdun, December 1803; Hauterive, *Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, I, 18 February 1805; IV, 4 and 24 October 1809; V, 30 August 1809.

¹⁶² Donna T. Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery, and Gambling in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, 2013).

¹⁶³ AMV, uncatalogued, ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, letter from the *sous-préfet* to the mayor of Verdun, Verdun, 8 October 1806.

¹⁶⁴ Miles Byrne, *Mémoires d’Un Exilé irlandais de 1798* (2 vols, Paris and New-York, 1864), I, p. 429.

table at *Café Thiery*, to a duel. Hearing the news, the police shut him in the citadel. The measure was nevertheless opposed by Napoleon himself, who wrote to Wirion: ‘this decision is unfair. A prisoner can duel.’¹⁶⁵ Many duels between the captives themselves took place in a field outside the ramparts, despite changing attitudes towards duels and masculine violence in Britain during the conflicts.¹⁶⁶ Whilst at the dawn of the eighteenth century a gentleman was ‘by reason of birth, wealth, education’ expected to duel to repair offenses, the cachet of the *code duello* faded in Britain, where political and military duels were critiqued for privileging individual passions over the stability of society.

Women were at the centre of duels in Verdun.¹⁶⁷ In 1809, Wirion wrote that ‘the town [was] teeming with prostitutes, whom the presence of the English never ceased to attract.’¹⁶⁸ As described in chapter 2, *détenus* travelled with their concubines from the *Palais Royal*, who formed a visible group of ‘*femmes comme il en faut*’ in Verdun. The presence of prostitutes amongst prisoners was not a novelty. Rather, what appears striking is the discourse of female honour that developed around their presence *vis-à-vis* the town’s integrity. Most prostitutes came from Metz and Nancy, and the others from the town itself. Yet, for the civil and military authorities of the place, these ‘*mauvais sujets*’ had to be *from outside*.¹⁶⁹ Like gambling-house keepers, ‘*femmes galantes*’ were ‘strangers’ and had to remain so. In 1809, they were arrested and evacuated to surrounding villages.¹⁷⁰ The mayor Gand constantly refuted the existence of prostituted *Verdunoises*, despite obvious evidence to the contrary and contradictions in his own reports.¹⁷¹ What was at stake was the protection of a feminised ‘dignity’ of a town, in construction since the execution of the ‘Virgins of Verdun’ under the Terror, which relocated the honour of Verdun in female virginity.¹⁷²

To conclude, this chapter argued that honour did not lose its substance with the French Revolution. Rather, new forms of gendered and socio-professional honour were discussed,

¹⁶⁵ ‘*cette décision n'est pas juste. Un prisonnier de guerre peut se battre en duel.*’ See letter of Napoleon to the minister of Police, 4 Nivôse An XIII (5 December 1804) in *Correspondance de Napoléon 1er, Publiée par Ordre de Napoléon III* (Paris, 1862) X, p. 105.

¹⁶⁶ Andrew, *Aristocratic vice*, pp. 77-81; Robert Shoemaker, ‘Male Honour and the Decline of Public Violence in Eighteenth-Century London’, *Social History*, 26:2 (2001), pp. 190-208.

¹⁶⁷ AN, F/7/6461-9905, Police notes, Verdun, 17 fructidor an XIII (4 September 1805) and 20 Frimaire an XIV (11 December 1805); Hauterive, *Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, IV, p. 209; ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter of Parent-Réal to the *préfet*, Paris, 17 June 1808.

¹⁶⁸ ‘*La ville fourmille de prostituées que la réunion des Anglais ne cesse d’y attirer.*’ Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire*, II, p. 46.

¹⁶⁹ ‘*Il y a à Verdun beaucoup d’étrangers des deux sexes qui n’ont d’autre but, en venant, que de gagner quelques guinées par tous les moyens possibles.*’ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., II, p. 46; III, p. 123; IV, pp. 589-90; ADM-Bar, 9R2, ‘Etat des filles publiques arrêtées et détenus en prison civile de Verdun pour contravention à l’arrêté de M. Le Préfet du département en date du 11 Mars 1807, certifié par le sous-préfet de Verdun’, Verdun, 27 June 1809.

¹⁷¹ ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter from the mayor to the *sous-préfet*, Verdun, 14 July 1810.

¹⁷² David Hopkin, ‘Sieges, Seduction and Sacrifice in Revolutionary War: The “Virgins of Verdun”, 1792’, *European History Quarterly* 37:4 (2007), pp. 528-47.

challenged and reinvented in parole detention. The latter was redefined on an *ad hoc* basis, as rank and reputation were discerned through individual interactions, which meant that national antagonisms were superseded by social dynamics. The civil-military system of surveillance was not devoid of contradictions, particularly as municipal administrators shared other ties with the captives through cosmopolitan networks. By becoming the landlords, moneylenders, sometimes the freemasonic 'brothers' of their British prisoners, the locals developed paradoxical transnational relations which blurred the line between amity and enmity in a particular locale. Sociocultural boundaries, as much as those of parole itself, were pliable; and, even in case of conflict, the national was subdued to individual performances of masculinity and status, which leads us to consider whether religion fissured these exchanges with 'the other'.

The enemy within or without?

Catholicism in detention

Whatever the route they took, visitors arriving at Verdun had to ascend steep hills, at the top of which the ancient ecclesiastical city lent itself to contemplation.¹ From there, one could see four medieval abbeys, a dozen churches, dominated by a cathedral and an episcopal palace, perched on the rocky ridge of the upper town. Imbued with Jesuit and Benedictine traditions, and corseted by solid fortifications, the city displayed, even from a distance, its history as a counter-Reformation bastion. However, a closer look revealed that the glorious past of the Three Bishoprics had long faded away.² The landscape now bore the scars of the Revolution. Edifices seldom survived the Prussian Occupation unscathed: Saint-Sauveur church was reduced to ruins, the four towers of the cathedral lay decapitated, and Saint-Victor church, having served as an armoury in 1792, was in a similar state of decay. Inside the buildings lay vandalized interiors. Declared ‘national properties’ and sold to private owners until 1794, they had become secular spaces.³ The streets had also been renamed, losing their religiosity to a more patriotic and republican tone.⁴ Yet with the Concordat of 1801, this newly secularised Verdun was experiencing an ambivalent Catholic revival.⁵ Seventy-one

¹ Marc Sorlot, *La Vie en Meuse au Temps de Napoléon* (Metz: 1998), pp. 141-143 ; Gérard Canini, ‘Verdun sous la Monarchie Constitutionnelle: Aspects Economiques et Sociaux’, *Verdun: la Société Verdunoise du XVIIIème au XIXème Siècle. Journées d’Etudes Meusiennes du 5 au 6 Octobre 1974* (Nancy, 1975), p. 97; René Cazin, Marguerite Chagot and Guy Frémond (eds), *Verdun* (Colmar-Ingersheim, 1973), pp. 7-14; Léon Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun. De 1789 à 1870* (Verdun, 1939), p.7 ; Hyacinthe Langlois, *Itinéraire Complet de l’Empire Français, de l’Italie et des Provinces Illyriennes* (2 vols, Paris, 1812), II, p. 225; *Almanach du Commerce de Paris, des Départements de l’Empire Français et des Principales Villes de l’Europe. An XIII* (Paris,1805), p. 621; François D. Aynès, *Nouveau Dictionnaire Universel de Géographie Ancienne et Moderne* (3 vols, Paris, 1804), III, p. 325.

² Girault de Saint-Fargeau, *Guide Pittoresque du Voyageur en France* (3 vols, Paris, 1838), III, pp. 252-3.

³ The Episcopal Palace served as the headquarters of the local administration, the Augustine convent as an auditorium. See Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun*, p.142; David Hopkin, ‘Sieges, Seduction and Sacrifice in Revolutionary War: The “Virgins of Verdun”, 1792’, *European History Quarterly* 37:4 (2007), pp. 528-47.

⁴ Nicolas Roussel, *Histoire Ecclésiastique et Civile de Verdun: Avec le Pouillé, la Carte du Diocèse et le Plan de la Ville en 1745* (Bar-le-Duc, 1863), Vol. 1, p. 39; *Almanach du Commerce de Paris* (1805), p. 621; BL, Map of Verdun-sur-Meuse, from a sketch by Compagnot Félicité, 1739.

⁵ Heinrich Joseph, Wetzler, Benedikt, and Welte Johann Goschler (eds), *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de la Théologie Catholique* (Paris, 1865), vol. 24, p. 538.

émigré clergymen steadily returned to their parishes, regaining their possessions in the process. Whilst devotees placed new statues of the Virgin in sacristies, the local authorities symbolically donated three bells, a cross, a chalice and a censer to Saint-Catherine chapel. On 16 August 1802, the new bells pealed out, accompanied by the blasts of the citadel cannons, celebrating an invigorated clerico-military syncretism.⁶



Fig.19: Forbes, *View of Verdun taken from a hill on the Road to Valenciennes (1804)*

(Musée de la Prinerie, Verdun)

From their arrival in 1803, the British prisoners of war were immersed in this post-revolutionary Catholic environment. With its focus on a stone cross overlooking the town, the watercolour produced by James Forbes (Fig.19), a civil detainee, suggests that this landscape had a crucial importance in perception of their forced exile. Whilst Linda Colley has argued that ‘Britons defined themselves in terms of their common Protestantism as contrasted with Catholicism in Continental Europe’ during the period, the question remains to be determined to what extent navigating this Verdun milieu affected the identity of the predominantly Protestant captives.⁷ For they encountered a

⁶ Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun*, pp. 146, 168. See also Daniel Robert, *Les Églises Réformées en France (1800-1830)* (Paris, 1961); Patrick Cabanel, ‘Napoléon et les Protestants. L’Institutionnalisation du Pluralisme Religieux’, *Revue du Souvenir Napoléonien* 470:471 (2007), pp. 37-41

⁷ ‘What most enabled Great Britain to emerge as an artificial nation, and to be superimposed onto other alignments and loyalties was a series of massive wars between 1689 and 1815 ... Britons defined themselves in terms of their common Protestantism as contrasted with the Catholicism of Continental Europe. They defined themselves against France throughout a succession of major wars with that power’. Colley, ‘Britishness and Otherness: an Argument’, p. 316.

deeply altered Roman worship: a religious phoenix far different from the ‘protracted cross-Channel feud’, against which Britishness had been shaped since the 1700s.⁸

The first section of this chapter investigates how the prisoners’ religious views offer the opportunity of a bottom-up perspective, which complicates the truism of religious enmity, by revealing the tensions between discourses of national otherness and individual interactions. Parole depot constituted a religious contact zone, where social dynamics came to surpass the national antagonism in formation. The social hiatus between parole captives and the ‘children of the Revolution’ deeply coloured perceptions of the denominations present in Verdun, as the abhorrence of ‘*parvenu*’ atheism tended to supersede the old Roman alterity.⁹ These considerations seem paramount as the prisoners not only witnessed, but actively contributed to the religious transition in Verdun, and became the agents of an ambiguous secularity most of them had initially despised.

Furthermore, the captives were one of the first minorities to benefit from freedom of worship under Napoleon, which enabled them to establish a Protestant church in the depot.¹⁰ This raises a twofold issue. How did this right impinge on their interactions with their Catholic landlords and gaolers? And how did local priests perceive the introduction of Protestantism in the city?¹¹ The second section will suggest how, far from constituting ‘an alien and contemptuous culture’, and despite the counter-Reformation history of their orders, ‘Enlightened’ and Revolutionary French ecclesiastics facilitated the dialogue between the two faiths forced to cohabitate.¹² Botany, medicine and reading enabled knowledge transfers and inter-religious sociability to flourish. Furthermore, the analysis of the local newspaper, *Le Narrateur de la Meuse*, edited by a former priest converted to journalism, will provide an insight into local representations of the new British Protestant flock.

Conversely, Catholicism was not merely a phenomenon prisoners experienced from with-out, but an alterity with-in the community of captives. Members of the ‘old enmity’, namely British

⁸ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (Yale, 1992), p. 25.

⁹ Expression borrowed from Robert Gildea, *Children of the Revolution: The French, 1799-1914* (London, 2008).

¹⁰ Rodney J. Dean, *L'Eglise Constitutionnelle, Napoléon et le Concordat de 1801* (Paris, 2004); Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *Napoléon et les Cultes. Les Religions en Europe à l'Aube du XIXe Siècle (1800-1815)* (Paris, 2002); Marc Sorlot, *La Vie en Meuse au Temps de Napoléon* (Metz, 1998), Jean Tulard, *La Vie Quotidienne des Français sous Napoléon* (Paris, 1978).

¹¹ Jean-Baptiste Pruvot (ed.), *Journal d'Un Pasteur Protestant au XIXe Siècle* (Rennes, 1996), p. 17; ADM-Bar, 1 J 461, Maurice Bellefleur, *Les Protestants à Bar-le-Duc et dans le Barrois, leur Histoire aux XIXe et XXe Siècles, à Partir des Archives de l'Eglise Réformée* (1950).

¹² Gérard Michaux, ‘La Vie Intellectuelle dans les Abbayes Bénédictines de Metz au XVIIIe Siècle’, *Mémoires de l'Académie Nationale de Metz* 165:6 (1984), pp.97-114.

Catholics, were also sequestered in Verdun.¹³ How did this minority interact with their Protestant captive companions? Was being detained in Napoleonic France an emancipating experience for these Catholics? Through cosmopolitan interactions, detention was certainly an opportunity to assert socio-political status and to professionally train in sciences: prospects hardly achievable in a pre-Catholic Emancipation society in Britain.¹⁴ Inspired by the recent transnational turn in Catholic studies, which intends to revise the traditional ‘recusant history’ that has failed to appreciate cross-denomination exchanges, the third section of this chapter intends to elucidate, through a case study of Charles Throckmorton of Warwickshire, the agency Catholic prisoners demonstrated at Verdun, in shifting from the apparent margins of Georgian society to the centre of captive circles.

Throckmorton’s case illustrates two things: British Catholics in detention increasingly interacted outside the constraints of a Catholic bubble, and their engagements with continental coreligionists were more cosmopolitan than confessional. As Gabriel Glickman noted, if elements of this reflection can be found in recent works, no one has fully appreciated the prevalence of social performance over confession in such transnational connections during the period.¹⁵ The final section will further this idea by reflecting on the place of faith and religious otherness in detention, especially with regard to other denominations such as captive dissenters. By throwing into relief the importance of social antagonisms, this section will raise the question of whether the common religious enemy in Verdun was, in fact, a traditional socio-economic foe: the Jewish usurer.

¹³ Michael Wheeler, *The Old Enemies. Catholic and Protestant in Nineteenth-Century English Culture* (Cambridge, 2006).

¹⁴ The Emancipation Act was issued in 1826.

¹⁵ Historians have recently engaged with the traditional recusant school of thought, which had focused on anti-Catholicism and presented eighteenth-century Catholicism as in the shadows of British social life. Rather, these recent studies have highlighted that the English Catholic gentry were extremely socially active at home and abroad. In particular, Gabriel Glickman’s work has emphasized the necessity of this transnational turn and bottom-up perspective in Catholic Studies. He convincingly argued that this approach challenges the common assumption that eighteenth-century recusant lives were restricted to the national space, and ‘offers a new synthesis for the study of ...English Catholics: examined through their own writings, reflections and correspondence, but also in their involvements with the outside world encountered on both sides of the Channel.’ Gabriel Glickman, *The English Catholic Community, 1688-1745. Politics, Culture and Ideology* (Boydell and Brewer, 2009), p. 11. Other recent works suggest the importance of this historiographical trend in Catholic studies, as suggested the current research project undertaken by Dr Adam Morton (Warwick on ‘Encountering Babylon: English Experiences of Catholicism in Rome and Ireland, c.1550-1750’, and an edited collection of essays on Dutch-British transnational Catholic history: Benjamin Kaplan, Bob Moore, Henk Van Nierop and Judith Pollman (eds), *Catholic Communities in Protestant states. Britain and the Netherlands c.1570-1720* (Manchester, 2009). On revisionism in Catholic studies through an increasing attention to inter-faith marriages, see also Marshall, Peter and Scott, Geoffrey, *Catholic Gentry in English Society. The Throckmortons of Coughton from Reformation to Emancipation* (London, 2009), pp. 1-2; John Callow, ‘The Last of the Shireburnes: the Art of Death and Life in Recusant Lancashire 1660-1754’, *Recusant History*, 26 (2002-3), pp. 589-615.

The 'Fête Dieu' and old convents: Exploring a post-Revolutionary Catholic space

At Verdun I found myself enclosed in a small town, comprehending about the space of that iniquitous part of Oxford which surrounds the castle: the river is the same dimension and nearly in the same manner environed with mansions ... The ramparts afford agreeable walks ... which I have christened by the much loved names of Christ Church, Magdalen and such like denominations.¹⁶

This was the first account of the town Revd Lancelot Lee, a fellow of New College, gave in a letter to his cousin in 1804. Lee perceived the Verdun milieu through his past experience in Oxford, reclaiming this 'iniquitous' space by 'christen[ing]' his favourite parts with names of colleges. Describing himself as 'a man of notoriety', he deprecated less the town's prevalent Catholicism than its parochialism, licentiousness and isolation. He complained about being 'eternally enclosed within the gates of a petty town, situated at the extreme of kingdom, having little or no communication with the Metropolis, having no library but what may be comprised in a few dirty novels, historical memoirs and polemical discussions of the latter age, no society but our own provincial meetings'.¹⁷ It is the lack of societal refinement and 'conversation' that was condemned by the clergyman, suggesting the prevalence of a social hiatus over confessional tensions in his perceptions of the locals. Instead of indicting Catholicism, Lee was impressed by the educational work of local priests, and praised the church of Lunéville for its religious and social mission: 'the institution seemed admirable. Should a church ever fall to my lot, I am resolved on a similar mode of education.'¹⁸

Lee's case suggests that the mind-set of Protestant captives depended on their individual trajectories. Whilst most prisoners praised Bonaparte's efforts to terminate the anti-clerical excesses of the Revolution and '[restore] the public worship of God in that country', their reaction to a renewed Catholic devotion remained ambivalent. Their curiosity about the 'great ceremony' of Catholicism was combined with doubts about an 'ancient superstition': a dated cult seducing both 'the faithful and heretics' by the use of cheap booklets, in the words of the Presbyterian James

¹⁶ John Parry-Wingfield (ed.), *Napoleon's Prisoner: a Country Parson's Ten-Year Detention in France* (London, 2012), p. 29.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Forbes.¹⁹ Between endorsement of change and traditional prejudices about the nature of Catholicism, the prisoners' perceptions were embedded in socio-professional and generational dynamics.

The position of captive clergymen greatly varied according to their age, and their social and marital status. As Maurice Bellefleur argues, the absence of any existing Protestant community in Verdun constituted an anomaly in Lorraine.²⁰ Wolfe, a clergymen arrested mid-Grand Tour with his family, was disappointed in his expectations, given the proximity of Protestant heartlands in Germany and Switzerland, where he intended to travel.²¹ 'I had hoped that there might have been among the French those to whom my ministry might be useful. Two instances occurred during my stay at Verdun, in which such an opportunity appeared to present itself; and the result in both cases was anything but satisfactory', he wrote bitterly.²² Nonetheless, the bugbear of the clergyman was less Catholicism than the rampant atheism, or agnosticism, which pervaded French society.²³ He perceived it most acutely in the legislation on civil marriage.²⁴ He considered it as a public 'rejection of the truth, and denial of the Saviour', sullyng the private faiths of individuals and the French 'national character'.²⁵ This atheism was perceived as a source of licentiousness, paving the road to 'the demon of infidelity'. Differentiating it from the laudable devotional revival amongst the 'lower classes', Wolfe saw the 'contempt' or 'evas[ion]' of 'the truth' as rife amongst 'persons of the highest authority and distinction in the country', namely French government members, their local representatives and the new elites.²⁶ Wolfe hence viewed religious observance at Verdun as a social phenomenon as much as a religious practice in and of itself: poor believers as contrasted with elite atheists. Conversely, a young bachelor such as John Barnabas Maude, freshly awarded a Masters in theology at Queen's College, Oxford, developed a different language. He took the matter of

¹⁹ Forbes presented himself as reading the Bible every night, as a good Protestant should. Forbes, *Letters from France*, II, pp. 232-3.

²⁰ Protestantism had relatively been contained in the Meuse *département*. Some congregations were to be found near the limits with the Champagne region, the Moselle, as well as in the cities. Yet, the number of voters, namely men over thirty years old and approved by the Council of the Reformed Church in Bar-le-Duc, was inferior to ten in 1800. In 1809, a survey by the municipality of Bar counted seven Protestants. At Verdun, the Protestant congregation was formed by former British prisoners who remained on the spot. The flock was largely increased in the second half of the century, when 256 foreign workers joined the railway and canal works linking the Marne to the Rhine in 1861.

²¹ Reverend Robert B. Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France, Containing Observations on Their Manners and Habits Principally with Reference to Their Religious State, during Nine Years' Residence in the Depots of Fontainebleau, Verdun, Givet and Valenciennes* (London, 1830), p. 105.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

²³ *Ibid.* p.52.

²⁴ This question will be further developed in the following chapter, which will explore the 'captivity of the heart'.

²⁵ Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, pp. 52-3.

²⁶ Similar idea expressed by Forbes in February 1804: 'But while a revival of the ancient superstition spreads among the lower orders, Atheism, or something very like it, pervades the higher classes of society; and its fatal tenets give an unbridled loose to licentiousness, immorality, and those sensual vices so strictly prohibited and guarded against by Christian ethics'. Forbes, *Letters from France*, II, p. 233.

licentiousness more light-heartedly, consecrating numerous entries of the diaries to his own affairs with the local *belles*.²⁷ His journal shows that he was keen to attend Catholic events: the Midnight Mass and its ‘*great fête*’, the Carnival and its ‘very good masked ball’ which made it ‘a season of great gaiety’, the Assumption and its ‘splendid firework’, not to mention the confirmations at the Cathedral, which he found, in dogma and practice, as ‘nearly the same as in England’.²⁸

These public religious performances in the streets of Verdun crystallised ambivalent views of clerical and lay prisoners, who witnessed them ‘as spectator[s], if not as partaker[s]’.²⁹ One event epitomises this phenomenon, the *Fête Dieu*, of which James Forbes gave a full account to his sister in 1804.

The whole city was converted into a forest ... the market-place and open spaces were filled with bowers, hermitages, cascades, groves, and gardens, surrounding temporary altars, enriched with images, crucifixes, pictures, lighted candles, and all the appendages of the Roman worship. The whole was enlivened by living shepherdesses, selected from the prettiest children in Verdun, each having a lamb adorned with flowers and ribbons, and embowered in the verdant recesses ... The parishes vie with each other in the splendour and expense of their decorations, prepared for the religious procession from the cathedral ... This procession consists of all the clergy and choristers, attending the host, carried under a crimson canopy, with incense, banners, crucifixes, and all the pomp of former times.³⁰

Whilst Forbes was dazzled by the bucolic pageantry of the celebration and the return to a bygone era, a critique of the superfluous Roman Catholic ‘appendages’ and paganism permeated his account, which took the form of a long enumeration. His insistence on the military ethos underpinning a return to *Ancien Regime* devotions, suggests that these ceremonies epitomized, for the British spectator, contradictions derived from the Revolution:

²⁷ QCL, MSS 403-04, John Barnabas Maude, ‘Journal’, 30 August and 3 September 1803, 3 July 1805, 3 July 1808.

²⁸ ‘Great confirmation this morning at the Cathedral of all the children in Verdun and the neighbourhood; the ceremony was performed by the bishop of Nancy, a very venerable looking man – it is nearly the same as in England’. Ibid, 20 October 1804.

²⁹ Forbes, *Letters from France*, II, p. 272.

³⁰ Ibid., II, p. 303.

A military detachment, with a band of martial music, accompanies the show, playing solemn airs. At the beat of drum the host is elevated; when the officers, soldiers, and all the populace, kneel down in the streets to receive the benediction; which is repeated at every temporary altar. The whole concludes with a solemn rite at the cathedral. Among the choristers were two girls in nuns' habits; so that after all which has lately happened, I shall not be surprised at any revival in France; so rapidly do these people pass from one extreme to another.³¹

If these public manifestations were seen as illustrating a people of excess, and symptomatic of a revolutionary trauma, they encapsulated a religious versatility perceptible in the other visible landmarks of the Verdun milieu.

Perceptions of Catholicism were indeed coloured by diverse experiences of the environment. In particular, the young midshipmen's views were shaped by their episodic mass confinement in the abandoned Benedictine abbey of Saint-Vannes in 1805-1806.³² What with the constant smoke of the lamps, the 'bemoaning' and the stench, the medieval convent and its dilapidated church reminded these young naval men of Gothic tales.³³ In quest of adventure and certainly escape, they explored their new 'dormitory'.³⁴ They searched for secret passages and trap-doors in the floors.³⁵ Two episodes of persecution against monasteries thus converged in the captives' imagination, that of the Henrician Reformation and the French Revolution. Spending seven months in this building affected Seacome Ellison, who later described Verdun as 'enveloped in such a voluminous mass of monkish superstition'.³⁶ However, by moving from a corridor to the *entresol*, hiring a stove, a bed, and 'all [his] things brought up from [their] lodgings', 'he found [himself] quite at home'.³⁷ The convent became his lodgings, where he was visited by his friends. Starting the day with a concoction of milk

³¹ *Ibid.*, II, p. 303.

³² Ernest d'Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire, Bulletins Quotidiens Adressés par Fouché à l'Empereur* (3 vols, Paris, 1908), I, p. 196, 280; II, p. 113.

³³ Richard Blake, 'Transmission of the Faith and Transformation of the Fleet: the Religious Education of the Royal Navy (1770-1870)', *Actes du Colloque Foi Chrétienne et Milieux Maritimes (XV-XX Siècle)* (Paris, 1989); Alain Cabantous, *Les Citoyens du Large: les Identités Maritimes en France, XVIIe-XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1995).

³⁴ Seacome Ellison, *Prison Scenes; and Narrative of Escape from France, During the Late War* (London, 1838), p. 19.

³⁵ 'One day, in a room joining the cloisters, (which was generally locked up)', wrote Edward Proudfoot-Montagu, 'we discovered a small opening near the wall, and, upon moving a large flat stone, a flight of steps was found; these steps led to a kind of subterraneous passage, supposed to have been formerly a cellar. This created much curiosity'. Edward Proudfoot Montagu, *The Personal Narrative of the Escape of Edward Proudfoot Montagu: An English Prisoner of War, from the Citadel of Verdun* (London, 1849), p. 16.

³⁶ Ellison, *Prison Scenes*, p. 206.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.20-1.

and brandy, they seldom stayed sober and animated this former place of worship with much transgressive behaviour.³⁸ To fight boredom, they played fives, rackets, or cards and chess.³⁹ ‘Gamblers quarrelling, debtors exulting, and Romeos despairing ... the scene was truly entertaining’, noted Edward Boys.⁴⁰ Whilst the stay in Saint-Vannes was enforced, the prisoners thus actively transformed the place and contributed to its desecration.

Another former Catholic building was similarly, and yet more voluntarily, turned into a place of entertainment by the captive Grand Tourists: the Episcopal Palace. In 1805, Mrs Concannon rented the building, then owned by the Senator Nicolas Vimar, to hold a ball. One hundred and twenty guests were invited, according to British etiquette. After tea, the British and French guests were ‘conducted to a large room, fitted up as a theatre’, where amateur plays by the captives and performances for the local troops took place till noon.⁴¹ Perceiving and using Catholic edifices as sites of leisure was inherent to the Grand Tour experience. As Rosemary Sweet noted, travellers to Rome relied on guide-books which represented churches ‘less as places of worship, or even superstition, than as repositories of art ... “theatres” for the exhibition of architecture, painting and sculpture’.⁴² It was in this capacity, as artistic venues, that former churches were visited and used by *détenus*, who not only witnessed but actively contributed to a process of secularisation of religious edifices, which some of them might have initially despised.⁴³

Richard Blake has convincingly demonstrated that the early nineteenth-century Navy was deeply concerned with religion and morality, which dramatically contrasted with the eighteenth century.⁴⁴ Yet, once extracted from the ‘wooden world’, and in detention, officers’ and petty officers’ religious observance greatly varied, depending on generational and educational background. Whilst senior officers like the evangelist Captain Brenton intended to inspire their men with spiritual and charitable principles – which materialized in the creation of the Relief Committee analyzed in

³⁸ ‘The loss of common propriety in conduct and manners soon became the result of intoxication’. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

³⁹ Proudfoot Montagu, *The Personal Narrative of the Escape of Edward Proudfoot Montagu*, p. 17.

⁴⁰ Edward Boys, *Narrative of a Captivity, Escape, and Adventures in France and Flanders During the War*, (1827) (London, 1863), p. 60.

⁴¹ James Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun, or the English Detained in France from the Portfolio of a Detenu* (2 vols, London, 1810), II, pp. 246-7; Marc Sorlot, *La Vie en Meuse au Temps de Napoléon* (Metz, 1998), p. 82.

⁴² Rosemary Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour. The British in Italy 1690-1820* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 148.

⁴³ Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun*, pp. 71-6.

⁴⁴ Richard Blake, *Evangelicals in the Royal Navy, 1775-1815: Blue Lights and Psalm-Singers* (Woodbridge, 2007); Gareth Atkins, *Wilberforce and his Milieu: the Worlds of Anglican Evangelicalism, c.1780-1830* (Cambridge, 2009); Timothy Jenks, *Naval Engagements: Patriotism, Cultural Politics and the Royal Navy 1793-1815* (Oxford, 2006).

chapter 3 – younger captives were often less zealous. For them, the journey to Verdun had had a different taste. They had seldom been billeted out like their superiors, and had sometimes been accustomed to being shut up in churches at night, resting only for the decanal homage to the former ‘Goddess of Reason’.⁴⁵ This did not trouble fourteen-year old midshipman, Alexander Stewart. ‘Religion at that time I had none’, he wrote in 1819, looking back at his youth, having fled his family in Scotland only to be press-ganged in the Navy.⁴⁶ Other young civilians demonstrated a similar disregard for religion. Joshua Done, who had quitted London to study music in Paris, enjoyed provoking his consociates and captors on the subject of religion. Having been sent to Bitche, a correctional non-parole depot, for repeatedly refusing to sign the roll-call, he celebrated his return to Verdun by playing ‘God Save the King’ upon the organ at the cathedral, to the great delight of his close friends, yet causing concern amongst captive clergymen and senior officers.⁴⁷

Despite such ‘carnavalesque’ investment of religious edifices, the two strands of Christian faith were not merely juxtaposed, but ambiguously converged at Verdun, owing to the spatial constraints of detention.⁴⁸ Interactions with French Catholics influenced the captive Protestant congregation, in its dogma and practice. The prisoners acted in close relation with the local community to ensure the provision of divine service at the depot. Indeed, the captive clergymen Revd Maude ordered the publication of a ‘Book of Common Prayer’ in 1810 from a local printer, Louis Christophe, established in the former Carmelite convent of the *place d’Armes* (Fig.20).⁴⁹ One thousand and five hundred copies were printed and distributed to other depots via the charitable committee, which aimed to complement the pacifist and missionary efforts of the Birmingham Quakers and the Foreign Bible Society to facilitate access to the Scriptures on the Continent.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Stewart, Alexander, *The Life of Alexander Stewart, Prisoner of Napoleon and Preacher of the Gospel*, (London, 1948), p.23.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴⁷ Ellison remarked that he had heard ‘Rule Britannia’ and the ‘Duke of York’s March’ performed there by an Englishman. Done reported himself in the *New Monthly Magazine* in 1841 that ‘the British prisoners were highly delighted when [he] introduced the above tune in [his] closing voluntary, with the full power of the organ, which...had a fine imposing effect’. His patriotic bravado did not remain unpunished, and he was therefore to be sent again to the ‘castle of tears’ of Bitche. See Ellison, *Prison Scenes*, p. 208; Letitia Oliver Elton, *Locks, Bolts and Bars. Stories of Prisoners in the French Wars 1759-1814* (Edinburgh, 1945), pp. 206-9.

⁴⁸ The term ‘carnavalesque’ is borrowed from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, see chapter 4.

⁴⁹ The Quaker community of Birmingham launched a first local subscription in 1807 for a shipment of Bibles to the captives at Verdun. Their contribution was followed by a national subscription in 1811, organized by the Bible Society of London. In April 1813, twenty-five packages containing Bibles and Testaments were sent by the Society to France to be distributed among the prisoners, but they were confiscated in Morlaix. See John Barnabas Maude, *The Book of Common Prayer* (Verdun, 1810); Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun*, p. 170; Edward Fraser, *Napoleon the Gaoler, Personal Experiences and Adventures of British Sailors and Soldiers during the Great Captivity* (London, 1914), p. 48; John Goldworth Alger, *Napoleon’s British Visitors and Captives (1801-1815)* (London, 1904), p.265; AN, F/4/1527.

⁵⁰ See chapter 3.

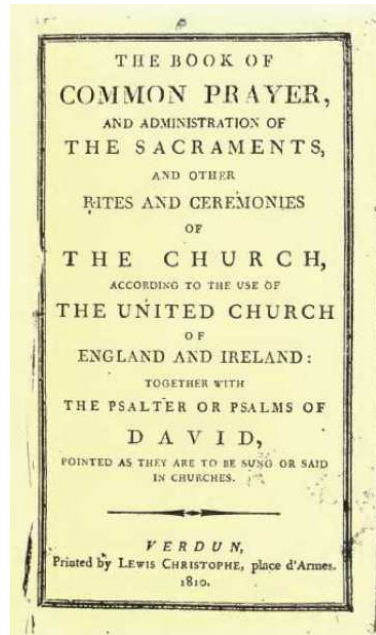


Fig.20: Maude (ed.), *Book of Common Prayer* (Verdun: Christophe, 1810)

(Bodleian library, Oxford)

As an object, the book unravels key aspects of inter-faith interactions in captivity. Notably, the British clergymen decided to anglicise the name of the French publisher, Louis becoming 'Lewis' to dissipate suspicions of a propagandist enterprise from the French government. A comparison with regular Books of Common Prayer and printed naval sermons reveals that the publication had a twofold purpose: reconstructing familiar mental and socio-professional environments, and addressing the temporal concerns of detention.⁵¹ Sermons on 'deliverance from an enemy' were inserted amongst the regular psalms, as well as 'thanksgivings after a storm' or 'a tempest', which suggest the influence of the 'blue lights' on the religious life in captivity.⁵² Overall, the content of these 'thanksgivings' strongly resonates with the sermons preached on board naval war ships. Even though the perils of the sea and combat were no longer part of their lives, the book served to provide spiritual comfort to both civilian and naval captives, by integrating the incantations that had cadenced their everyday afloat into their current lives ashore.⁵³

⁵¹ 1500 Copies of this Book were printed at Verdun. One copy of this Book of Common Prayer has been found in the British Library and analysed in comparison to other editions published in England during the period. John Barnabas Maude (ed.) *Book of Common Prayer* (Verdun, 1810).

⁵² The aforementioned sermons appeared in James Stanier Clarke, *Naval Sermons Preached on Board His Majesty's Ship The Impetueux in the Western Squadron, During Its Services Off Brest* (London, 1798). The expression 'blue lights' refers to evangelical officers in the Royal Navy, their set of beliefs and the religious fervour they inspired in the service during the period. See Blake, Richard, *Evangelicals in the Royal Navy, 1775-1815: Blue Lights & Psalm-Singers* (Woodbridge, 2008).

Furthermore, the prisoners' services took place in a desecrated Catholic building. For want of anything better, Wolfe and Gorden obtained permission to establish a Protestant church in the *Collège*, then vacant.⁵⁴ They 'fitted up for a church' the large prize room, situated on the left side of a Catholic chapel.⁵⁵ This transformation appears slightly ironic for a former Jesuit edifice, conceived in the sixteenth century as a bastion against the dissemination of the 'heresies of Luther and Calvin'.⁵⁶ The irony was enhanced in April 1808, as the Bishop of Nancy re-consecrated the building and resumed the services in an adjacent room, giving benediction to 'a considerable crowd' of local Catholics every Sunday.⁵⁷ This convergence in places of worship was however limited. As early as 1804, the captive clergymen, expecting the new Protestant church to be the object of undesired curiosity from the locals, decided to ensure its security. To do so, they obtained from Wirion 'a guard of two gendarmes ... paid for their attendance every Sunday' at the entrance, before moving to another former Catholic church in the suburb, then renamed '*la chapelle des Anglais*' (Fig.21).⁵⁸ This anxiety invites a closer examination of how the new Protestant flock were perceived by the local population.

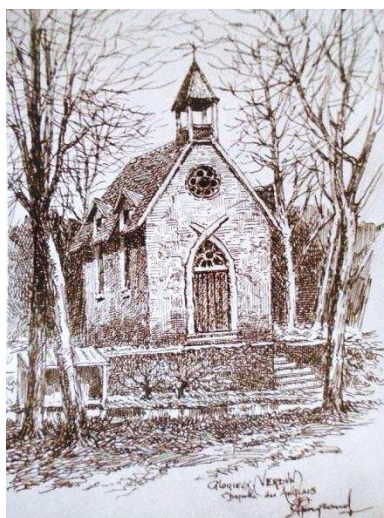


Fig.21: Gayraud, *Chapelle des Anglais*, dessin à l'encre (undated)

(Musée de la Prinerie, Verdun)

⁵⁴ 'On my arrival at his depot, I found the senior officer [Sir Jahleel Brenton] most ready to forward my wishes, as to the establishment of divine service. He went with me to the general, and we obtained a large room in the college, which I cause to be fitted up for the purpose.' Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, p. 41. See also Hewson, *Escape from the French*, p. 12; Raikes (ed.), *Memoir of Vice-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton*, p. 188.

⁵⁵ Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun*, p. 170.

⁵⁶ Nicolas Roussel, *Histoire Ecclésiastique et Civile de Verdun: Avec le Pouillé, la Carte du Diocèse et le Plan de la Ville en 1745* (2 vols, Bar-le-Duc, 1863), I, p. 39.

⁵⁷ Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun*, p. 169.

⁵⁸ 'As we were apprehensive that some interruption might be experienced', wrote Reverend Wolfe, 'from persons, who, through curiosity, might come in to see the service, we obtained a guard of two gendarmes, whom I paid for their attendance every Sunday'. Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, p. 41.

Heretics or eccentrics? Local opinion and interactions with Catholic scholars

I messed at one time in the house of an Englishman, together with a number of prisoners, where, when we were one day assembled at the dinner table, a servant, a nice, chubby-faced country girl, came in, with streaming eyes, and sobbing as if her heart would break. Upon inquiry, we found that she had been to a priest for the purpose of making confession, and requesting him to say some masses for the soul of her deceased brother, who, she had just heard, had fallen in battle; that he refused to confess her because she was living among heretics. We each gave her a trifle which soon dried up her tears and tranquilised her heart.⁵⁹

This episode of a French servant working for ‘heretic’ prisoners was related by midshipman Seacome Ellison – one of the ‘heretics’ in question – who observed the power the local ‘priesthood had regained ... on the minds of the females’.⁶⁰ Despite his indictment of the ‘cruel’ refusal of sacrament, Ellison proved sympathetic with the priests’ convictions, approving his conduct ‘if he believed that her constant way of life was in direct opposition to the rules of his church’.⁶¹ Whilst this testimony corroborates Revd Wolfe’s impression that his mission was shadowed by ‘the extreme jealousy of the priests’, religious rivalry with local clerics appears marginal.⁶²

The prisoners certainly provoked the curiosity of the local ecclesiastical community, rather than an overt animosity. An indication of that interest is to be found in the *Narrateur de la Meuse*. This popular newspaper was edited by Claude-François Denis, a revolutionary and opportunistic clergyman, who had abandoned the cloth to become an autodidact journalist in Commercy, some

⁵⁹ Ellison, *Prison Scenes*, p. 208.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 208-9.

⁶¹ ‘The conduct of the priests, upon a cursory view, appears cruel; but he could not, consistently with his profession, have confessed her, if he believed that her constant way of life was in direct opposition to the rules of his church: for the Catholics, as a body, are consistent; they believe, and justly believe, that there is only *one* true religion; and although there is not the one that is based upon the Rock of Ages, still they act up to it, and discourage everything that has a tendency to lead the mind from what they think the true faith. And as to the term heretic, in common parlance it means little more than a person who departs from the standard orthodoxy which the priesthood have established’. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁶² ‘The extreme jealousy of the priests’, he wrote, ‘rendered any efforts to be useful among the people extremely hazardous’. *Ibid.*, p. 47. The consultation of court records or parish records might be useful to establish whether this situation had precedents. No evidence of that animosity has been found in the French military or police archives. Most of the trials implicating prisoners’ servants concerned thefts.

thirty miles south of Verdun.⁶³ Denis was deeply interested in the British prisoners, devoting on average sixteen articles per year to their life at the depot (Table 18).⁶⁴

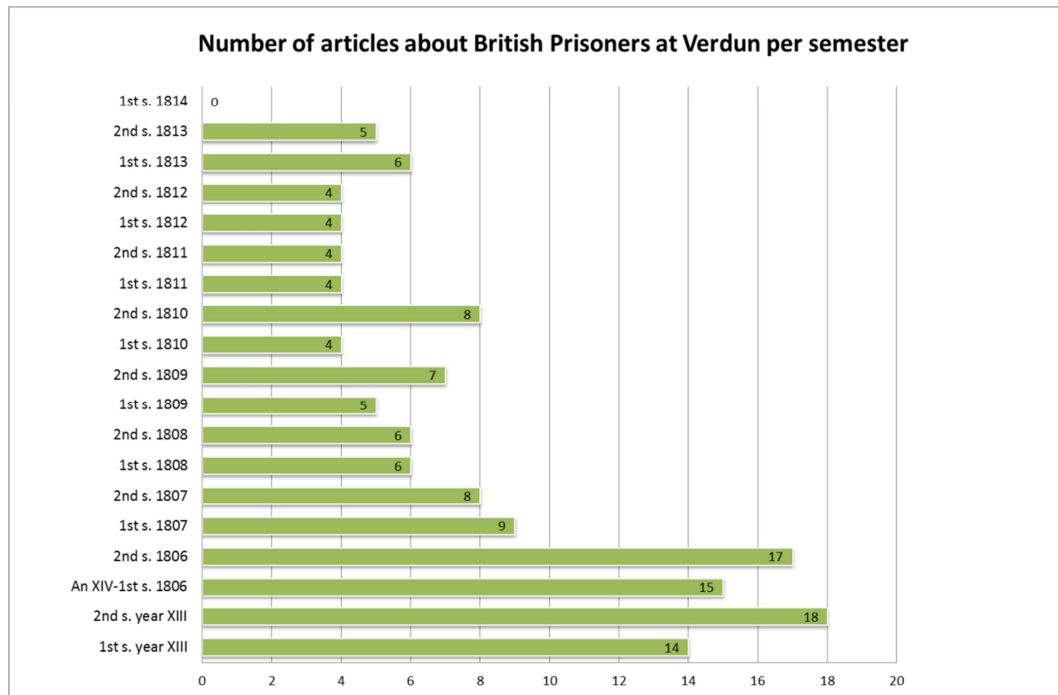


Table 18: Articles related to the British captives in the *Narrateur de la Meuse* (1804-1814)

(Bibliothèque Municipale de Nancy)

Unsurprisingly, the question of the prisoners' denomination occupied a prominent position in his investigations. As a Catholic, he seemed to have been deeply interested in Irish celebrations at Verdun, as is suggested by the enthusiastic account he gave of Saint-Patrick's day in 1806.⁶⁵ However, he displayed a deeper curiosity about Anglican rituals. In particular, he devoted a substantial article to the proceedings of the Tweeddale funerals in 1804, meticulously analysing the specificity of Protestant customs, from the homily to the 'Glass and Cake'.⁶⁶ The article focused on

⁶³ The popularity of the newspaper can be assessed in diaries kept by the French population in Verdun. In particular, the journal kept by Docteur Madin, who copied entries of the newspaper into his own narrative, reveals how the *Narrateur* shaped the minds of the readers. BEV, Rec422-1, Madin, 'Journal manuscrit', 1804-1806; Sorlot, *La Vie en Meuse*, pp. 141-143; Henri Labourasse, *Notice Biographique sur Claude-François Denis, Publiciste et Antiquaire* (Nancy: 1898), p.33; Charles Emmanuel Dumont, *Histoire de la Ville et des Seigneurs de Commercy* (Bar-le-Duc: 1843), III, pp. 239-240.

⁶⁴ Beyond the slight bias implied by the change of calendar, the following graph shows that the frequency of these articles evolved over time: they became less numerous as the war went on, and as the editor grew more accustomed to the captives' eccentricity until the temporary suspension of the newspaper in 1814. For instance, The amount of text regarding the amusements of the prisoners significantly shortened to extremely brief notes such as 'On danse à Verdun'. *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 27 December 1809.

⁶⁵ 'Ils avaient tous à leur chapeau, une branche verte. L'usage de porter ce signe, vient, ont-ils dit, de l'explication de la Sainte-Trinité, donnée par Saint-Patrice au moyen d'une branche ayant trois feuilles.' *Ibid.*, 20 March 1807.

⁶⁶ 'Une plaque de cuivre doré attachée sur le cercueil indique ordinairement le nom et les titres du défunt. Deux hommes vêtus en deuil se tiennent quelque fois en silence sur le seuil de la porte extérieure de la maison, tout le temps que le corps y est exposé. Ils portent à la main une croix élevée et couverte de taffetas noir, et accompagnent ensuite le convoi jusqu'au lieu de l'inhumation. Les

the behaviour and appearance of the clergyman, wearing a 'black robe similar to that of Catholic priests'. Yet, the comparison ended there. 'He does not sing, but recites prayers in a low voice', observed Denis, who emphasized the gravity and plainness of the ceremony. Denis seems to have enquired further on the administrative side of the funerals, explaining to his French readers that funerals would be 'proceeded only forty four hours after the death, and in some regions particularly in Ireland, only after three days'.⁶⁷ Rather than prompted by religious animosity, his enterprise proved to be an almost anthropological enquiry in the Anglican captives' everyday life.

From the very first issue, the focus was placed on the prisoners' extravagant and eccentric entertainments. 'Playing, gambling, horse- and cart-racing greatly appeal to them', wrote Denis on 27 September 1804.⁶⁸ The editor chronicled their most visible celebrations: their races, dinner-parties, balls, and ice-skating. In 1807, Denis was still surprised at the scale of the prisoners' social gatherings, describing a 'splendid carnival party', which 'lasted twelve hours' and gathered '300 individuals', wearing 'costumes and masks of extravagant value'.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, the idea of a cultural hiatus progressively emerged, as Denis diverted his readers with sensational news revealing the bizarreness of the captives' characters, through Mr. Chambers's misadventures in losing one of his ears in a bet, or the story of a mummified head found in a detainee's apartments.⁷⁰ Beyond his obvious interest in uncanny and gruesome detail, other practices such as outdoor bathing in the river supported Denis' perception of a cultural discrepancy. 'On the 14th of this month', he wrote in 1808, 'some Englishmen, always eccentric, bathed at Verdun, despite the cold and in the open air.'⁷¹ In this

personnes du cortège marchent deux à deux et se donnent le bras. Le ministre est avant d'eux ; pardessus son habit noir il a un surplis semblable à celui des prêtres catholiques, un rabat et une écharpe de soie noire. Il ne chante point, mais récite à voix haute des prières ; il cesse ses fonctions à l'instant où un peu de terre a été jetée dans la fosse, se dépouille alors de ses ornements, les remet à une espèce de bedeau, et retourne, ainsi que le cortège, sans ordre. Cependant trois commissaires restent au cimetière, pour dresser un procès-verbal d'inhumation. Celle-ci n'a lieu que 48 heures après le décès, et dans quelques contrées, en Irlande surtout, qu'au bout de trois jours. Etc. *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 15 August 1806.

⁶⁷ 'Celle-ci n'a lieu que quarante-huit heures après le décès, et dans quelques contrées, en Irlande surtout, qu'au bout de trois jours'. *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ 'Beaucoup d'entre les anglais détenus à Verdun, se livrent à l'étude, et beaucoup aussi aux plaisirs ... Le jeu, la table, les courses de chevaux et de chars, ont pour eux beaucoup d'attraits'. *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 27 September 1804.

⁶⁹ 'Les anglais ont célébré à Verdun, une fête brillante de carnaval le vendredi 6 du courant. On parle de costumes de masques de valeur excessive. L'ordre a régné, ajoute-t-on, dans cette fête qui a duré douze heures, et où figuraient 300 personnes.' *Ibid.*, 15 February 1807.

⁷⁰ 'Voici un trait qui prouve jusqu'à quel point la passion du jeu peut dégrader l'homme. Un de nos anglais ayant perdu son argent à la banque, s'écria : Goddeam ! je donnerais bien une de mes oreilles pour douze francs – Bonne plaisanterie lui dit un des banquiers-tailleurs – Non, morbleu ! si vous voulez me les compter, je me la coupe. Et, sans attendre l'acceptation, il tire de sa poche, une paire de ciseaux, se coupe à l'instant le bout d'une oreille, exige et reçoit les douze francs. Il joue, perd et va se coucher avec une oreille de moins et sans un sou de plus. Ses camarades de lui dire flegmatiquement: Good night; adieu, till we meet again (bonsoir, bonne nuit; adieu jusqu'au revoir.)' *Ibid.*, 17 January 1805.

⁷¹ 'Le 14 de ce mois, des anglais toujours originaux, se baignèrent à Verdun, malgré le froid et en plein air.' *Ibid.*, 18 March 1808.

respect, Denis' comments were fuelling the emerging association of Englishness with eccentricity – a previously aristocratic trait – in the French imagination.⁷²

Yet, despite the exoticism of their activities, the British appeared rather dull to Denis, who emphasized their different sense of humour: 'in every circumstance, even during their moments of gaiety, they keep a phlegmatic air which contrasts with French hilarity.'⁷³ If the question of 'British phlegm' permeated the articles about the depot, this judgment was less based on *a priori* prejudices than everyday observations. In fact, Denis's need to explain the expression 'John Bull' suggests that his readers were not familiar with the national pamphlets and caricatures that had diffused British stereotypes in the previous decade.⁷⁴ His portrayal of the captives' suicides illustrates this phenomenon. As these incidents occurred more frequently, Denis's discourse altered into an assessment of an essentially British romantic sense of spleen. In January 1813, he announced the decease of a British man, who 'found in death an end to his spleen', the spleen in question being presented as the 'national disease' in Britain.⁷⁵ 'It has been a long time since one of these insulars last escaped the depot of Verdun in this manner', he ended with dark irony.⁷⁶ Whilst the lack of Christian propriety demonstrated by suicidal captives was condemned by Denis, his perception was less confessionally-driven than socially-bound, as suicides were presented to the readers as eccentric 'amusements of rich idle people'.⁷⁷

Denis naturally praised conversions to Catholicism, as he did on 3 May 1812, when a merchant officer publicly abjured his Protestantism. 'In Notre-Dame Cathedral of Verdun', he wrote, 'an English officer has abjured during the solemn high mass in the hands of Mr Montardier, the venerable priest of this city. The ceremony, which offered a striking homage to the Catholic faith, drew a huge devotional crowd.'⁷⁸ Yet, his narrative did not oppose Protestantism and Catholicism,

⁷² Michèle Plaisant (ed.), *L'Excentricité en Grande-Bretagne au XVIIIe siècle* (Villeneuve d'Asq, 1976); Miranda Gill, *Eccentricity and the Cultural Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Oxford, 2009), pp.35-9.

⁷³ 'dans tous les circonstances, même dans leurs moments de gaieté, ils conservent un air flegmatique et un ton sérieux qui contrastent avec l'hilarité française', *Ibid.*, 27 September 1804.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 3 June 1810.

⁷⁵ 'la maladie du pays'. *Ibid.*, 21 May 1813.

⁷⁶ 'Un prisonnier anglais, fatigué de la vie, a trouvé dans la mort, un terme à son spleen le 29. Il y avait longtemps qu'aucun de ces insulaires n'avait déserté de cette manière le dépôt de Verdun.' *Ibid.*, 21 May 1813.

⁷⁷ 'amusements de riches oisifs'. *Ibid.*, 5 September 1813. 'Le 14 de ce mois, des anglais toujours originaux, se baignèrent à Verdun, malgré le froid et en plein air.' *Ibid.*, 18 March 1808.

⁷⁸ 'Le dimanche 3 mai; un officier anglais a fait à la paroisse Notre-Dame de Verdun, pendant la grand-messe abjuration solennelle entre les mains de Mr Montardier, vénérable cure de cette ville. Cette cérémonie, qui offrait un éclatant hommage à la religion catholique, avait attiré une foule immense et recueillie.' *Ibid.*, 10 May 1812.

but suggested their union in the experience of detention. In particular, Denis extolled Franco-British marriages solemnized at the depot, presenting the French brides as ‘new Sabines’, the future agents of a religious amity between the two nations at war: ‘someday we will see new Sabine Women, holding their children in their arms, stand on the battlefield between their husbands and their brothers, urging them to concord.’⁷⁹

The newspaper in itself became a space of dialogue with the prisoners. Denis regularly addressed ‘those Englishmen who take or read our newspaper’, inviting them to contribute.⁸⁰ The prisoners reacted to the information given in the newspaper in diverse forms, using poetry in particular, as is suggested by a ‘Sonnet against suicide composed in French by William Bienny, a former teacher and an English hostage at Verdun’.⁸¹ The dialogue was not merely concerned with detention and its deadly consequences, but its broader political frame. Significantly, a female captive, M.S. Hutchinson, married to Colonel Target, wrote an ode to Napoleon dedicated to Josephine (*‘Napoleon’s Glory’*), which was published in the *Argus* and then translated in the *Narrateur*.⁸² In this respect, it seems that the prisoners used the newspaper to their own ends, celebrating the merciful government as a preliminary step to obtain their release. Denis was somehow their accomplice in this enterprise, notably by publishing their petition to the Electress of Württemberg in 1805.⁸³ Such a space of dialogue created an eagerness amongst the French readers to know about the prisoners’ views on current affairs. In December 1806, a fortnight after the announcement of the

⁷⁹ ‘On pourra voir un jour de nouvelles Sabines, leurs enfants entre les bras, se placer sur le champ de bataille entre leurs maris et leurs frères pour les convier à la concorde.’ *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 14 December 1808. See chapter 6.

⁸⁰ The price of the subscription to the *Narrateur* was relatively low: eighteen francs a year, ten francs for six months, and six francs for three months. The newspaper was relatively successful. The frequency of publication increased following the return to the Gregorian calendar and the reform of the postal service. From 1806 onwards, the newspaper was issued and distributed three times a week (Sunday, Wednesday and Friday). The newspaper was sold in five bookshops in the *département*, two of them being in Verdun (François, Herbelet). The newspaper was also distributed outside the boundaries of the *Meuse département*, in Lorraine but also in other parts of France, especially in Paris and Rennes. The newspaper appears to have been quoted now and then in national learned reviews, certainly as a result of Denis’s personal archaeological research, which seems to have been well regarded. In particular, the *Narrateur* was quoted in the *Bulletin de l’Ecole de médecine de Paris* in 1810 concerning the treatment of epilepsy, and in the *Journal des Deux Sèvres*, with which Denis corresponded. See *Narrateur de la Meuse*, ‘Avis’, 27 September 1804; 4 July 1811; Professeur Pénel, ‘Rapport fait à la faculté de médecine, sur le traitement de l’épilepsie par un séjour prolongé dans une étable à vaches’, *Bulletin de l’Ecole de Médecine de Paris et de la Société Etablie dans Son Sein* (1810), II, p. 26; *Journal des Deux Sèvres, Politique, Littéraire, Commercial, de la Société d’Agriculture et de l’Athénée*, 4 March 1809.

⁸¹ ‘Le sage attend la mort dans la calamité/ L’insensé se la donne et périt dans le crime/ L’âme de l’un s’élance à l’immortalité/ Celle de l’autre, en deuil, se plonge dans l’abîme./ A ton poignard crois-tu joindre l’impunité ?/ Mortel, respecte-toi, quand le malheur t’opprime/ On s’en impose point à la Divinité/ Sa justice est par-tout pour venger la victime./ Vols qui serait alors ton nouveau désespoir/ Nul remède à des maux qu’on ne peut concevoir/ Un supplice sans fin, trop tard saura l’instruire./ Que ta bouche prononce au fort de la douleur/ Ce cri si naturel qui jaillit de ton cœur/ Grand Dieu ! tu me créa ! je n’ose me détruire !’, in ‘Sonnet contre le suicide. Par M. W.m Bienny, ancien professeur, otage anglais à Verdun’, *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 27 April 1805.

⁸² ‘La pièce suivante en langue anglaise, semble devoir être consignée dans un journal qui a pour lecteurs, beaucoup de MM. les anglais de Verdun. Elle a été composée et mise en musique par une de leurs compatriotes, madame S.M. Hutchinson, épouse du colonel Target.’ *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 9 July 1806.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 28 March 1806.

Berlin decree in the *Narrateur*, the editor received a request to know more about ‘the sensations the declaration of the blockade of the British Isles caused amongst the English prisoners at Verdun’.⁸⁴ Denis diligently answered that ‘this news seemed to them like a thunderbolt ... The interruption of any correspondence with England, makes them fearful of no longer receiving funds from their country, they are already exercising the strictest economy in their expenditure.’⁸⁵



Fig.22 : Noyer, Claude-François Denis, 1806

(Bibliothèque Municipale de Nancy)

As a local scholar, Denis (Fig.22) was also deeply interested in the medical and agronomic studies certain British captives undertook in Verdun. In 1805, he advertised Henry Browne’s brief agricultural guide entitled *Moyen Prompt et Facile de Réduire Toute Espèce d’Herbe en Engrais*, in which the captive presented himself as an ‘English cultivator’ and revealed his techniques for transforming weeds into fertiliser, in response to the complaints of local gardeners.⁸⁶ Similarly, in September 1805, Denis promoted John Bunnell Davis’s medical pamphlets on the treatment and prevention of asphyxia, which were later published by two printer-booksellers in Verdun: Christophe and François.⁸⁷ Davis’ enclosed letter with the brochure he sent to Denis suggests an acquaintance

⁸⁴ ‘On nous demande quelles sensation a fait sur les Anglais prisonniers à Verdun, la déclaration du blocus des Iles britanniques’. *Ibid.*, 7 and 21 December 1806.

⁸⁵ ‘Cette nouvelle a semblé être pour eux, un coup de foudre ; ce qui prouve en faveur de la mesure. L’interruption de toute correspondance avec l’Angleterre, leur faisant craindre de ne plus recevoir de fonds de leur pays, ils mettent déjà la plus stricte économie dans leur dépense.’ *Ibid.*, 21 December 1806.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 15 April 1805.

⁸⁷ ‘John Bunnell Davis, *Lettres à Un Magistrat, Suivies d’une Instruction Contenant des Moyens pour Rappeler à la Vie, les Asphyxiés ou Morts en Apparence, Brochure de 32 pages in-8°, qui se Trouve à Verdun, chez François, Marchand de Papiers Près les Gros Degrès*’. *Ibid.*, 27 September 1805.

beyond their correspondence.⁸⁸ Denis extolled Davis' work and his project of a local dispensary, remarking that 'all countries [were] a wise man's home'.⁸⁹ The cosmopolitan nature of sciences thus ensured a Franco-British entente, beyond religious or national antagonisms in Verdun. It could thus be argued that the very situation of Lorraine – at the nexus of Dutch, French and German enlightened influences – enabled such cosmopolitan and intellectual exchanges to be the foundation of amicable relations between British captives and Catholic scholars.

Indeed, the cosmopolitan erudition of the local enlightened Benedictine community offered a favourable terrain for intellectual exchanges crossing national and religious divides. As Gérard Michaux's seminal work on the religious life in Lorraine has shown, the Saint-Vanne congregation of Verdun was characterized by 'a love for study and a concern to open up to modern ideas, drawn from the sources of the French Enlightenment and the Catholic *Aufklärung*'.⁹⁰ The institution was essentially cosmopolitan, having developed an active 'commerce of ideas' with Luxembourg, Germany and Trèves. Furthermore, the late eighteenth-century Benedictines of Saint-Vannes were strong personalities. Born into the bourgeoisie, a new generation of Benedictines had emerged, having actively contributing to the Constitutional Church during the Revolution. These young activist monks perceived themselves as the 'thurifers of a culture useful to serve the public'.⁹¹ Amongst them featured radical philosophers, such as the Cajot brothers. The sons of a wine merchant of Verdun, they vehemently fought for a reformation of their order. As avid readers of Montesquieu and Rousseau, they had condemned in several publications, from the 1770s to the late 1780s, the anachronistic 'Gothic appearance' of the monks, their idleness, obscurantism and resistance to 'Reason and Sciences'.⁹²

⁸⁸ 'Monsieur, j'ai l'honneur de vous remettre un exemplaire d'un petit ouvrage dont vous avez promis de parler, il y a trois ou quatre semaines. J'ai cru devoir vous en adresser une copie, afin que vous puissiez en faire l'analyse pour seconder les vues de l'auteur, qui désire se rendre utile à la société, en indiquant contre l'asphyxie deux moyens efficaces. J'ai l'honneur etc. Signé J.B. Davis, médecin anglais'. Ibid., 27 September 1805.

⁸⁹ 'Un poète anglais a donc raison de dire: All countries are a wise man's home (*Nulle part le savant ne se trouve étranger*).' Ibid., 15 March 1807.

⁹⁰ 'Les quatre abbayes de Metz aux bibliothèques abondamment garnies, s'inscrivent dans la longue tradition bénédictine et parmi leurs religieux, elles comptent quelques fortes personnalités qui travaillent à faire fructifier l'héritage. Mais ils entendent également répondre aux impératifs du temps. Ils ont en commun leur amour des études et leur souci de s'ouvrir aux idées modernes, puisées aux racines des Lumières françaises et de l'*Aufklärung* catholique.' Gérard Michaux, 'La Vie Intellectuelle dans les Abbayes Bénédictines de Metz au XVIIIe Siècle', *Mémoires de l'Académie Nationale de Metz*, 165:6 (1984), p.97.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 111

⁹² Joseph Cajot, *L'Examen Philosophique de la Règle de Saint-Benoit* (Paris, 1767); Charles Cajot, *Recherches Historiques sur l'Esprit Primitif et les Anciens Collèges de l'Ordre de Saint-Benoit d'Où Résultent les Droits de la Dociété des Biens qu'Il Possèdent* (Paris, 1887); Michaux, 'La Vie Intellectuelle', p. 107.

These Benedictines took a particular interest in the British prisoners of war. Their interactions with them were twofold: they helped captives access their library and herbariums, allowing knowledge transfers to occur in applied sciences, most notably in botany. The Saint-Vannes Benedictines conceived their extensive library as ‘a core of intellectual exchanges ... widely opened to external influences.’⁹³ It is perhaps not surprising that they decided to provide the captives’ clubs with reading facilities. Dom Demangeot rented both his house and his personal books out to prisoners.⁹⁴ The books were mostly in French; however, ‘for those who understood not French, a number of English books’ were provided.⁹⁵ In 1805, he also lent items from his former order’s library to the Upper Club, which was progressively dedicated to the circulation of books and newspapers.⁹⁶

The organisation of this Franco-British circulating library of books occurred at a crucial time in the emergence of a municipal library in Verdun.⁹⁷ As other municipal libraries in France, that of Verdun was founded following the revolutionary confiscations of the clergy’s and *émigrés*’s collections between 1791 and 1792. Dom Cajot, Dom Ybert, and Dom Demangeot were in charge of collecting and classifying the books to be gathered in a public edifice during the First French Empire.⁹⁸ These were scattered in myriad buildings, which made the enterprise chaotic and inspired Dom Demangeot to appeal to the generosity of the prisoners to write the preliminary inventories.⁹⁹ The assistance of the British prisoners was acknowledged in the margins of a copy of the inventory printed in 1814, which contained 1502 books, classified in seventeen literary categories. One of

⁹³ Michaux, ‘La Vie Intellectuelle’, p. 111.

⁹⁴ Sorlot, *La Vie en Meuse*, p. 81.

⁹⁵ Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, I, p. 115.

⁹⁶ As the letters of Revd Lee suggest, this club ‘took the form of a library, the books and premises having been loaned by a former Benedictine monk, Dom Demangeot. There were over 100 members, who were able to enjoy tea, punch and spiced wine as well as the books. English newspapers were forbidden; *détenus* were thus dependent on the heavily censored French papers for news of the war and the outside world.’ See Parry-Wingfield, *Napoleon’s Prisoner*, pp. 12-3, and chapter 1 on this particular club.

⁹⁷ There is an extended and recent literature on the development of sociability through circulating libraries during the Georgian period. See David Allan, *A Nation of Readers: the Lending Library in Georgian England* (London, 2008).

⁹⁸ 32,721 volumes were then gathered in the deconsecrated Saint-Paul abbey, scattered in a dozen of cells, and ‘rot[ting] there, due the bad state of the roof’. It was only in 1803 that Dom Charles Cajot (1751-1807) and Dom Demangeot (1792-1805), were commissioned to draw up an inventory of the collections. Yet, the political instability delayed the project, and the books mouldered in the attics of the former Jesuit College for years. In 1807, Dom Ybert, the former general prosecutor of the Saint-Vannes congregation, and the head teacher of the Verdun *collège* since the Revolution, volunteered to transfer the books into the school and take over the project of creating a catalogue. However, in 1810, Dom Ybert would write to the Mayor that the inventory was still in his head and not yet put on paper. The library was in fact rather belatedly open to the general public, in 1820. Cf. BEV, ‘Notice sur l’Histoire de la Bibliothèque de Verdun’ (22 septembre 2011); Léon Techener (ed.), *Bulletin du Bibliophile et du Bibliothécaire*, 16 (Paris, 1865); Jean Ernest Godefroy, *Bibliothèque des Bénédictins de la Congrégation de Saint-Vanne et Saint-Hydulphe* (Abbaye Saint-Martin, 1925), p. 64.

⁹⁹ ‘Ce catalogue a été rédigé par des Anglais prisonniers de guerre à Verdun de 1804 à 1814. Il a été imprimé à Verdun. Dom Demangeot leur avait donné sa bibliothèque’. BEV, MSS1810, ‘Copie du catalogue imprimé des livres de la bibliothèque de Dom Demangeot, bénédictin, ancien bibliothécaire de la ville de Verdun (Meuse) 1804-1814’, p. 134.

them entitled '*supplément*', along with the dates and places of publishing of certain books, and the presence of English newspapers, suggest that prisoners not only used Demangeot's collections but donated some of their own personal readings to the library in formation.¹⁰⁰

Whilst the practice of reading and exchanging books offered an inter-faith space of discussion, other Benedictines were more interested in botany, which they shared with scientifically-inclined captives. Dom Cajot, in particular, lodged prisoners in his small country house, directing them to points of local interest to draw or botanize. James Forbes and his family benefitted from his advice and hospitality in 1804.

M. Cajot, the gentleman whose house we occupy ... having a perfect knowledge of the country, kindly points out everything that may be agreeable to our taste. To him I am indebted for most of my sketches, and particularly for a day of tranquillity and repose in the forest of Towane [sic], four or five miles from hence, which he described not only for the picturesque beauty of the woods, but for the ruins of an hermitage, an image of the Virgin venerated by pilgrims, and a sacred fountain springing among the rocks, and fertilizing the meadows of Bourraux, a farm in the adjacent valley, which we made our headquarters.¹⁰¹

Dom Cajot entertained equally close relations with Roman Catholics interested in botany, as is suggested by the vibrant sociability of a Catholic prisoner from Warwickshire: Charles Throckmorton.

¹⁰⁰ See categories detailed in chapter 1. *Catalogue of Books Belonging to the British Subscription Library, Place de la Cathédrale* (Verdun, 1806), p. 62.

¹⁰¹ Forbes, *Letters from France*, II, p. 299.

Being a captive Catholic: the case of Charles Throckmorton

Despite the religious détente, following the anti-clerical excesses of the French Revolution, which led to the Relief Acts of 1791, anti-Catholicism was still latent in early nineteenth-century Britain.¹⁰² Whilst English Catholicism was diminished in its otherness, as opposed to its Irish counterpart, Catholics remained at the margins of Georgian society, being excluded from political life and restricted in their professional aspirations. Even after the Emancipation Act of 1829, which gave civil rights to papists, ‘Catholicism retained its exotic, mildly dangerous flavour for most upright Englishmen’.¹⁰³ Extracted from this context, how did captive Catholics experience their stay in Verdun? Did they remain the old Popish enemy, a minority isolated from society, as recusant historians have long tended to assume?¹⁰⁴ Or was detention in a post-Concordat society an opportunity to practice their worship in comparative liberty, resume continental connections and further integrate mainstream Protestant circles?

Although numerically inferior, the Catholic captives were represented by four affluent gentry families from the Midlands (Throckmorton, Giffard), Hampshire (Tichborne) and Ireland (Sir James de Bath), who were sequestered as civilian *détenus* in Verdun.¹⁰⁵ A case study of one of them – and perhaps the most socially active in detention, namely the Throckmorton couple – provides an insight into their displacement in a country where Catholicism was regaining a new lease of life.¹⁰⁶ A close examination of the diaries Charles Throckmorton kept in detention, along with his commonplace

¹⁰² Numerous studies have shown that, by the end of the eighteenth century, the exacerbated anti-clericalism of the French Revolution and the subsequent emigration of French Roman priests to England had led to a softening of opinion towards Catholics in Britain. The moderation from the English Anglican Establishment materialised in the Relief Act of 1791, granting English Catholic the right to enter legal profession, and toleration for Catholic schools and private places of worship. See Peter Marshall and Geoffrey Scott (eds), *Catholic Gentry in English Society. The Throckmorton of Coughton from Reformation to Emancipation* (Farnham, 2009), pp. xiv, 27; Edward Norman, *Roman Catholicism in England from the Elizabethan Settlement to the Second Vatican Council* (Oxford and New York, 1985), pp. 58-82; Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-century England. A Political and Social Study* (Manchester, 1993), pp.3-11; Colin Haydon ‘Religious Minorities in England’, in H.T. Dickinson (ed.), *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 241-51.

¹⁰³ David Starkey, ‘Foreword’, in Peter Marhsall and Geoffrey Scott (eds) *Catholic Gentry*, p. xiv.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Wheeler, *The Old Enemies. Catholic and Protestant in Nineteenth-Century English Culture* (Cambridge, 2006).

¹⁰⁵ Numerous English Catholics were present in France during the Revolution and the peace of Amiens. Many members of the Turville family of Husbands Bosworth, a Catholic family with links to a number of other Catholic families in the Midlands, most notably the Talbots, earls of Shrewsbury, spent time in France either for education or travel especially from the 1780s through to at least 1804. Many of their letters were written from France and concern amongst other things events leading up to the French Revolution and the experiences of gentry families in France during that period. Leicestershire County Record Office, Catalogue of the Turville Constable-Maxwell Manuscripts, DG39/1088-2021, Personal correspondence of the Turville family, 1789-1804.

¹⁰⁶ Certain English Catholic households have been identified such as the Giffards, the Concannons and the Lemprières.

book and herbarium, informs us of the agency they displayed in ascertaining social status, developing professional aspirations, and carving out their place in an exiled British society.¹⁰⁷

Recent transnational studies of English Catholicism, especially those of Gabriel Glickman, have demonstrated how cosmopolitanism and exile had shaped its community in the previous decades.¹⁰⁸ As an ancient Catholic family of the landed gentry, closely anchored to the continent through Benedictine networks, the Throckmortons of Coughton Court in Warwickshire illustrate the importance of this cosmopolitan identity.¹⁰⁹ Congregationalism was a key feature of the family, who welcomed continental monks in their private chapel in Warwickshire.¹¹⁰ By acting independently of the Vicars Apostolic, these monks were part of an international middling sort, who buttressed the international ties of the English Catholic gentry and influenced their faith.¹¹¹ Indeed, Peter Marshall's study of the family in the *longue durée* suggests that by the 1780s the Throckmortons were deeply affected by currents of Gallicanism, the sons' education in exiled academies making them 'natural Whigs' and Francophiles.¹¹² In particular, Charles Throckmorton had spent his childhood in French Flanders, in the Benedictine College and University of Douai, where he read philosophy and medicine, before the Revolution tolled the death knell of the institution.¹¹³ This Francophile background was the cause of his capture, and strongly affected his experience of captivity. In May 1803, Throckmorton was arrested as a '*détenu*' with his wife Mary, whilst taking advantage of the new peace of Amiens to travel back to France, in search of a milder climate.¹¹⁴

Struck by the news of the 2nd *Prairial* decree, Throckmorton contrived to call on all clergymen and *émigré* acquaintances, who might have been of assistance throughout their journey to Verdun.¹¹⁵

In this respect, Throckmorton demonstrated agency in weaving a social network in face of adversity,

¹⁰⁷ WRO, Throckmorton Papers, CR 1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, Folder 56/1, 2-8.

¹⁰⁸ Glickman, *The English Catholic Community*.

¹⁰⁹ Patrick Doyle, 'The Origins of Recusancy: The Throckmortons of Coughton', *Worcestershire Recusant*, 13 (1969), pp. 2,8.

¹¹⁰ Marshall and Scott, *Catholic Gentry* p. 20.

¹¹¹ The Throckmortons had probably more ties with French Benedictine networks than to Warwickshire. They were an enlightened, rather than an ultramontane, family.

¹¹² 'The Throckmorton's advocacy of political Gallicanism led them towards what might best be termed Catholic Whiggery, defined as liberal support for political, social and religious reform, but always within a framework of respect for constitutional forms.' Marshall and Scott (eds), *Catholic Gentry in English Society*, pp. 21-3; Laurence Brockliss, 'Les Etudiants en Médecine des Iles Britanniques', in Patrick Ferté and Caroline Barrera (eds), *Etudiants de l'Exil. Migrations Internationales et Universités Refuges (XVIe-XXe s.)* (Toulouse, 2009), pp. 86-104.

¹¹³ Marshall and Scott (eds), *Catholic Gentry in English Society*, pp. 180-84, 248-53.

¹¹⁴ It seems that Mary's fragile health was one of the reasons of their presence on the continent in 1803, in addition to a curiosity for the new Bonapartist State. But there are few references to his wife in his diaries. Oddly enough, Sir Charles even fails to record her death in May 1825. He barely mentioned her name in his diaries, except for her making him acquainted with Dr Madin or other ladies in Verdun.

¹¹⁵ WRO, CR 1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 'Memoranda', 10 December 1803-15 January 1804.

which materialised in the form his diary took once arrived in the Meuse: a socialite's notebook. Indeed, the 'Memoranda' kept in Verdun consist of brief entries, mostly names of acquaintances and social activities described in a telegraphic style, for instance: 'Went to the races this morning. Drank tea with the Giffards. Old Nicholls called in the evening'.¹¹⁶ For tea, dinner or 'botanical expeditions', Throckmorton would meticulously list the names of his fellow countrymen and French locals who were 'of the party'. Whilst remarks on botany or medicine are slightly more extensive, the focus remains on the collective aspect of the activity and the identification of their actors. If the initial intentions motivating the enterprise of life-writing are problematic, Throckmorton's *Memoranda* clearly display a rupture in their rhythm, their interior 'music', in the words of the French theorist of autobiography, Philippe Lejeune.¹¹⁷ Once at Verdun, the diaries moved from the tropes of travel writing to serve a social purpose: collecting up to two hundred and fifty seven names of connections made in captivity.¹¹⁸

The very nature of the document suggested a quantitative analysis. Through the use of a database and social network analysis software, I drew three social maps, which throw into relief the connections Throckmorton established in detention.¹¹⁹ Collecting the names of his contacts, and the interlacing and frequency of their interactions, enabled me to create the first two graphs, which reveal the eclectic and extended nature of his Verdun network. The third serves an explanatory purpose, as a simplification illustrating the general process, by giving a sense of time and space. As these graphs suggest, Throckmorton's sociability was embedded in overlapping spaces (the woods where he botanised, spaces of entertainments and commensality such as the horse races and restaurants, and the charitable committee), connected by key 'mediators' of various denominations.¹²⁰ I will deconstruct these graphs and their inherent categorisation to demonstrate the significance of Throckmorton's networking strategies.

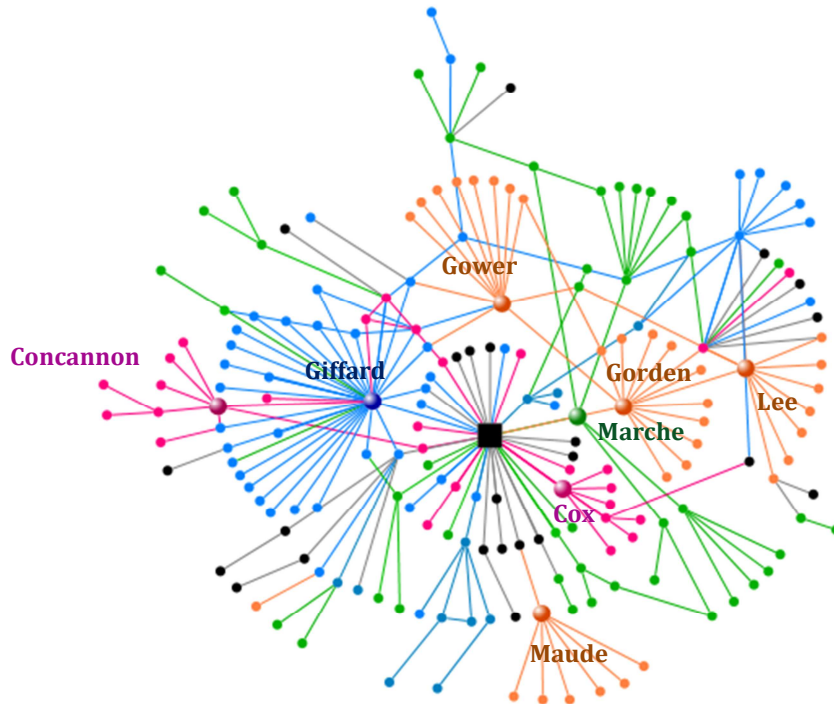
¹¹⁶ Ibid. 31 August 1805. This style could be found in other diaries.

¹¹⁷ See Philippe Lejeune and Catherine Bogaert, *Le Journal Intime. Histoire et Anthologie* (Paris, 2006); Philippe Lejeune and Catherine Bogaert, *Un Journal à Soi. Histoire d'Une Pratique* (Paris, 2003). Lejeune, Philippe, *L'Autobiographie en France* (Paris, 1971).

¹¹⁸ WRO, CR 1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 'Memoranda', 15 January 1804-10 May 1808.

¹¹⁹ I used NodeXL, a software based on an Excell open-source template. This instrument is used by sociologists to quantify social interactions, and was suggested to me by Dr Melodee Beals during the 'Numbers Are Your Friends: Network Science in Historical Research' workshop in the History Department, University of Warwick, 11 November 2011.

¹²⁰ The term 'mediator' is borrowed from the 'social geometry' theory developed by the sociologist Georg Simmel, an early proponent of social network analysis. Georg Simmel, 'The Sociology of Sociability. Translated by Everet C. Hughes', *American Journal of Sociology* 55:3 (1949), pp. 254-61.



Legend

The dots represent persons, and the vectors highlight their interplay.

Spaces of network:

- Spaces of commensality: teas and dinners in captives' lodgings and Jardin Fontaine restaurants.
- Committee and Protestant church.
- Botany network (including bird-hunting and fishing).
- Public entertainment (theatre, clubs horse and foot races).
- Other (spaces of contact not mentioned in the diary).
- Contacts for whom the spaces or circumstances of encounters are not specified.

Key 'mediators' between these spaces:

- Charles Throckmorton.
- General Cox (horse race), Lucuis Concannon (club and theatre).
- The Giffards (Catholics from Staffordshire).
- Marche, a Jersey botanist also member of the Committee.
- Protestant clergymen and members of the Committee: Gorden, Maude, Lee and Captain Gower.

Table 19: Spaces of network: Charles Throckmorton's captive contacts in Verdun

(Warwickshire County Record Office, Throckmorton papers)

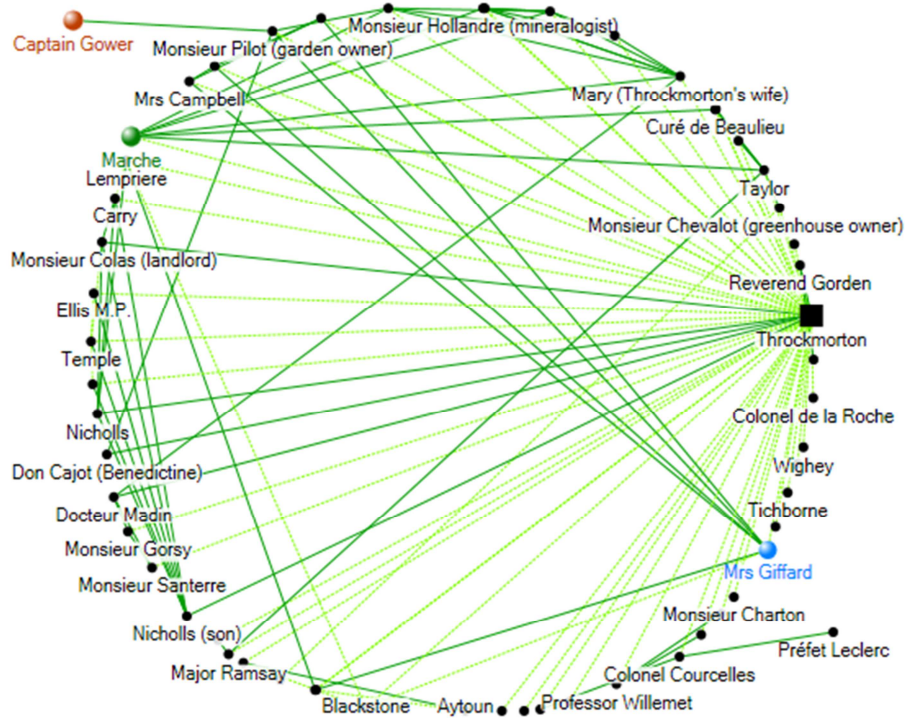
This graph (Table 19) includes the names of the captive connections Throckmorton noted in his dairy. It contains their common contacts, whose interplay was represented by vectors to highlight their concentric circles of acquaintance. In constructing this graph, I chose to focus on the spaces

where these circles emerged to emphasize their permeability across religious divides. For this purpose, I decided not to display these spaces separately on the graph. This would have made the visualization clearer but distorted the intricacies of Throckmorton's network, which this quantification aimed to illuminate. Whilst sociologists have shown the diverse benefits of social network analysis and quantitative approaches to sociability, such investigation has enabled me to identify the key 'mediators' in Throckmorton's social life at Verdun.¹²¹ These were persons whom he met regularly, and who acted as gateways to other social circles. These included other English Catholics, military men, botanical companions, and Protestant clergymen. For instance, as visible on the right side of the graph, Marche not only introduced him to French and British amateur botanists, but to Protestant members of the charitable committee, as he was himself in charge of the welfare of Jersey captives.¹²²

This approach is however limited. First, it is based on recorded names that Throckmorton deemed important, which does not comprehend the entirety of his everyday interactions. Secondly, it does not represent broken and asymmetrical links. Nor does it evaluate the strength and emotional meanings of these contacts. This is partly owing to the nature of the diary and its listing style. Nonetheless, one can presume that the frequency of contacts reveals the strength of the bond, and this is the premise on which the following social maps are based.

¹²¹ The term 'mediator' is borrowed from the sociology of sociability. See, amongst others, James B. Rule, *Theory and Progress in Social Science* (Cambridge, 1997); Mark Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', *American Journal of Sociology* 78:6 (1973), pp. 1360-80; Georg Simmel, 'The Sociology of Sociability' trans. by Everett C. Huges', *American Journal of Sociology* 55:3 (1949), pp. 254-61; Pamela Walker Laird, *Pull: Networking and Success since Benjamin Franklin* (Cambridge, 2006); Harrison White, *Identity and Control: a Structural Theory of Action* (Princeton, 1992).

¹²² Amongst these featured Pierre Marche, François Giffard, Philippe Mollet, Jean Clague, Pierre Priaulx, Pierre De Garis, N. Le Cheminant, Thomas Priaulx, Helier Marquand, James Woolcock, Isaac De Lisle, Jean Marquand, Nicolas Moullin, Thomas Pickame. See *Gazette de Guernsey*, 13 September 1813.



Legend

- - - ≤ 5 contacts per year (weak ties)
- ≥ 5 contacts per year (strong ties)
- Charles Throckmorton
- Connections
- Mediators

Table 20: Weak and strong ties in Throckmorton’s botanical network in Verdun

(Warwickshire County Record Office, Throckmorton papers)

This graph (Table 20) refines the previous overview by focusing on the contacts Throckmorton made whilst botanising in Verdun. The dots on the circle are Charles’ direct contacts, whilst the interwoven lines highlight common acquaintance and sociability.¹²³ The frequency of their meetings was included to evaluate his ‘weak’ and ‘strong ties’ amongst captives and captors.¹²⁴ The main

¹²³ By common acquaintance and sociability, we mean that these persons knew each other at Verdun. They could either meet separately on different occasions, or altogether.

¹²⁴ This was calculated per year, rather than season, as one can hardly botanise in winter.

finding of this analysis is that, in addition to the ‘mediators’ seen above, two other types of actors were determinant in Throckmorton’s sociability: genteel women (his wife, Mrs Giffard and Mrs Campbell) and neighbours of various denominations (including his landlord’s contacts, and the Lempriere and Nicholls families).¹²⁵ As Mark Granovetter noted, fleeting acquaintances – or ‘weak ties’ – have an important instrumental purpose in such networks.¹²⁶ For instance, Throckmorton met Captain Gower of the charitable committee through the intervention of Monsieur Pilot, a garden owner whom he met once. This poses a crucial question: how conscious was this network? Networking might not have been the prime concern of Throckmorton in detention. Yet, it could be argued, as Georg Simmel did, that socialising itself is the interest of any network.¹²⁷ On the whole, this quantification helps to visualise the vast and motley nature of a network that bridged religious and national differences, along with the nascent social-military divide identified by David Bell.¹²⁸ The remaining methodological problem of this quantitative approach is that it does not capture the movement inherent to such structure. To redress this, a timeline (Table 21) and a qualitative study of the progression of Throckmorton’s sociability, in light of other documents, seem necessary.

¹²⁵ Thomas Lempriere was a jersey banker and Nichols a Justice of the Peace. W. F. Ellis, ‘Lempriere, Thomas James (1796-1852)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography* [<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lempriere-thomas-james-2349/text3067>, accessed 10 August 2014]

¹²⁶ Mark Granovetter, ‘The Strength of Weak Ties’, *American Journal of Sociology* 78:6 (1973), pp. 1360-80.

¹²⁷ Georg Simmel, *Grundfragen der Soziologie* (Berlin, 1917).

¹²⁸ David Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon’s Europe and the Birth of Warfare As We Know It* (Boston and New York, 2007).

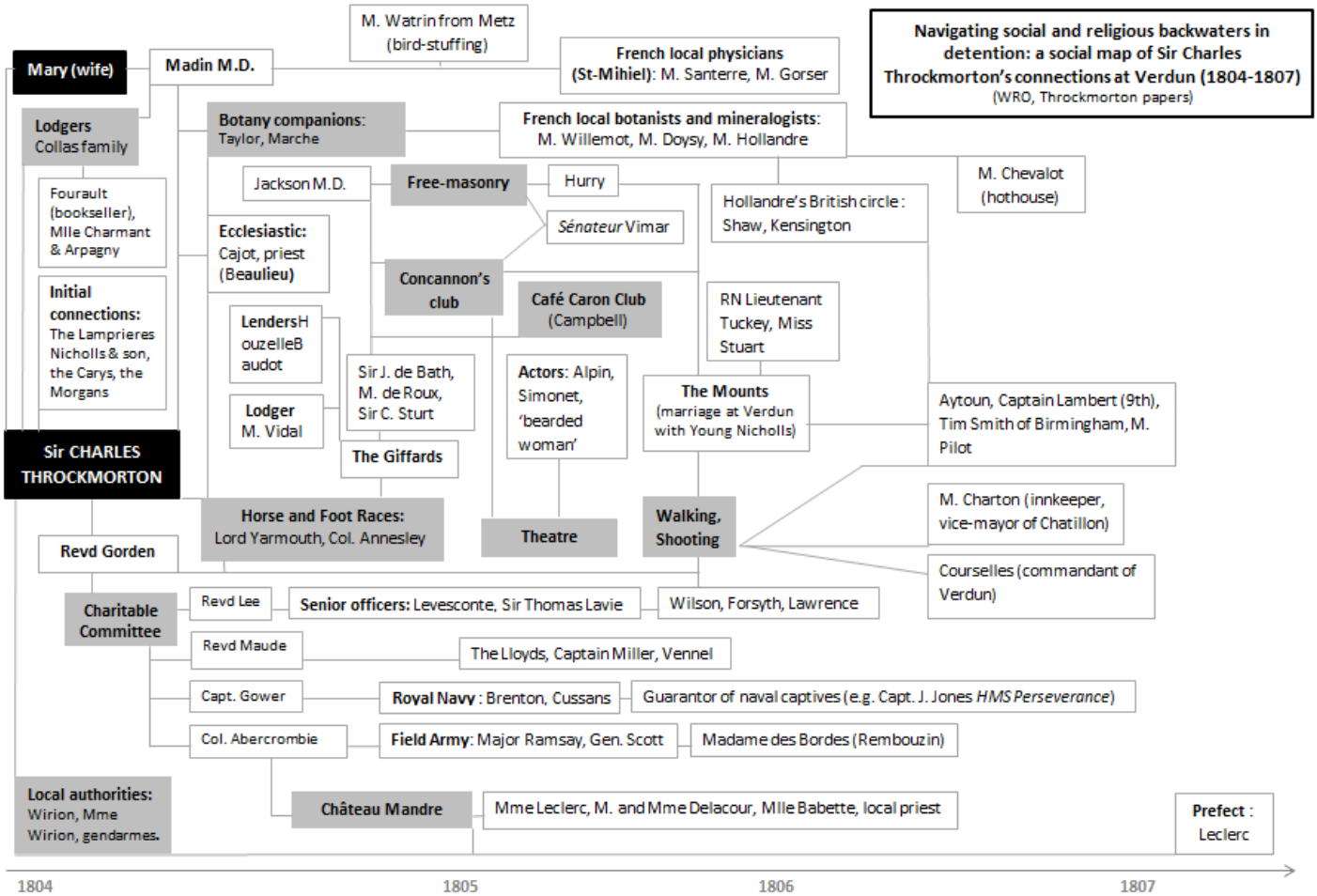


Table 21: Timeline of Throckmorton’s networking activities at Verdun

(Warwickshire County Record Office, Throckmorton papers)

When arriving at Verdun, after a night at the *Trois Maures* inn, the Throckmortons were billeted out and chose to lodge ‘at Monsieur Collas opposite the Cathedral at 4 ½ guineas per month’.¹²⁹ The lodgers’ social status seems to have been the driving factor in such a decision. The location of the house itself, in the upper town, suggests the upper middle-class status of the Collas family, which consisted of Jean Nicolas Collas, a lawyer, his wife and their only daughter Julie.¹³⁰ The English and French occupants kept separate apartments within the house. However, beyond the landlord-tenant relation, their interaction promptly became amicable. Madame Collas paid for the house linen and the maintenance of the fireplaces in their rooms, and Throckmorton invited them to ‘dine on oysters’ in *Jardin-Fontaine* and introduced them to having tea with his English neighbours (Nicholls,

¹²⁹ ‘Entered our lodgings at the N°21 Rue Voltaire chez le citoyen Collas’. WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 17 January 1804.

¹³⁰ I traced back the Collas family in the *Etat civil* registers through the obituary of Mme Collas. Cf. *Archives Départementales de la Meuse*, Bar-le-Duc, 2E 558(51), 1804/1805, 156: ‘Madame Marie Catherine Emerson, épouse de M Jean Nicolas Collas’ (7 Pluviose an XII, 27 Janvier 1805).

Lempriere), thus laying the foundations of a commensality which was to become the basis of a shared circle of acquaintances.¹³¹

Through dinners and tea gatherings, M. Colas introduced Throckmorton to the local bourgeoisie (mostly a bookseller, a schoolmaster and Dr. Madin), which resulted in Throckmorton's social and professional enhancement.¹³² By choosing to engage the services of a French doctor, the Collas family physician, instead of a British captive surgeon as was usually the case, Throckmorton opened the door to a social network beneficial to his scientific and professional aspirations. Dr. Madin became a close friend: he called on a weekly basis for tea, introduced Throckmorton to local physicians (Santerre, Gorsy) and became a regular botany companion. By introducing him to garden and greenhouse owners (Chaillot, Pilot, Chevalot), and renowned local botanists and mineralogists (Willemet, Doisy, Hollandre), he enabled Throckmorton to obtain the permission from Commandant Wirion to attend a two-month course in botany and a series of lectures in mineralogy in Nancy, and thus professionally train in these subjects.¹³³



Fig.23: Botanical specimens collected and arranged by Throckmorton at Verdun (1811)

(Warwickshire County Record Office, Throckmorton papers)

¹³¹ WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 30 January-26 May 1804, 5 October 1804.

¹³² WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 14 February 1804-11 July 1805.

¹³³ On 8 August 1806, he went to Nancy to attend the lecture Professor Willemet delivered on botany. In October, he joined Monsieur Hollandre's two-month course in mineralogy at Verdun, before botanising with him and M. Shaw on a regular basis. He even became intimate with Hollandre, for the latter invited him to his wedding. Furthermore, Charles visited Chevalot's hot-house in search of 'exotics', allowing knowledge transfers to occur. WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2: 23 June 1804; Société philomathique de Verdun, *Mémoires de la Société Philomathique de Verdun* (Verdun, 1841), p. 221

The herbarium and commonplace book Throckmorton kept in detention reveal the importance of these scientific exchanges for his social performance abroad. Throckmorton became an avid collector and examiner of vegetal specimens in Verdun, some of which he brought back to his domain in Warwickshire in 1814.¹³⁴ Considered as ego-documents rather than mere historical vegetation, these pressed plants (Fig.23) not only reveal Throckmorton's employment of time in detention, but his subjectivity as a cosmopolitan and genteel botanist, eager to cultivate socio-professional connections abroad. Indeed, if a herbarium is a personal production, a selection and arrangement revealing the collector's taste, interests and self, the botanical assemblage Throckmorton created in captivity is a remarkable domestic and scientific piece. Throckmorton meticulously selected samples of fern fronds, mosses and violet leaves, which appear peculiar not only because of their smallness but the symmetrical wreath in which he creatively arranged them.¹³⁵

Numerous studies have shown that botany became an 'obsession' in eighteenth-century Britain.¹³⁶ Myriad exotic specimens were brought from the empire, then grown at home in gardens, greenhouses and private conservatories. These exchanges were sustained by flourishing networks of importation, which aimed to respond to various scientific and domestic endeavours. Whilst the botanical frenzy turned Britain into 'a garden of the world', it affected Europe more broadly, as everyone was, in the words of Voltaire, encouraged to 'cultivate their own gardens'.¹³⁷ Yet, emerging scientific attempts at classification developed the practice of collecting, farming and appreciating plants beyond gender boundaries.¹³⁸ Amanda Vickery has argued that botany was an

¹³⁴ Some of these botanical specimens are now available in the family papers, others were donated to the museum attached to Queen's College Birmingham Medical School. Cf. Marshal, Scott (eds), *Catholic Gentry in English Society*, p. 252; *The British and Foreign Review* (1836), p. 207; *The Gardeners' Magazine* (May 1832), p. 518; *The Gardener's Magazine and register of Rural and Domestic Improvement* (1830), p. 518; Marshal, Scott (eds), *Catholic Gentry in English Society*, p. 252; Roger L. Williams, *Botanophilia in Eighteenth-Century France: The Spirit of the Enlightenment* (Dordrecht, 2001).

¹³⁵ The analysis of Charles' herbarium relies on the research made at the Natural History Museum Lecoq in Clermont-Ferrand (France) in December 2013, and the help provided by the professional botanists and specialist of the history of nineteenth-century botanical networks, Dr Elisabeth Cartoux.

¹³⁶ Andrea Wulf, *The Brother Gardeners: Botany, Empire and the Birth of an Obsession* (London and New York, 2011), p. 5. For a transnational analysis of botany networks between France and Britain in the eighteenth century, see Sarah Easterby-Smith, 'Propagating Commerce: Plant Breeding and Market Competition in London and Paris, ca. 1770 – ca. 1800', in Jean-Paul Gaudillière, Daniel J. Kevles and Hans-Jorg Rheinberger (eds), *Living Properties, Making Knowledge and Controlling Ownership in the History of Biology* (Berlin, 2009), pp. 11-20.

¹³⁷ On the impact of botany on European philosophy and language, see Williams, *Botanophilia in Eighteenth-Century France*; Amy M. King, *Bloom: The Botanical Vernacular in the English Novel* (Oxford, 2003).

¹³⁸ Sam George, *Botany, Sexuality and Women's Writing, 1760-1830: from Modest Shoot to Forward Plant* (Manchester, 2007).

empowering domestic activity for Georgian women.¹³⁹ They developed their own feminine botanical pursuit through decorative usages of plants, such as embroidery and paper collage, which functioned in unison with the aspirations of their male counterparts, by reinventing the representations of plants in ornamental settings.¹⁴⁰

Throckmorton's herbariums confirm this observation, as he was interested in both the aesthetical and scientific nature of botany. His practice was entrenched in domestic and decorative concerns, as evidenced by the creativity he displayed in his herbarium and his common place book, which contains various notes and recipes given by his landlady to purge weeds and bed parasites. Yet, the creative botanical plate he composed (Fig.23) contained an implicit classification, as the wreath served a holistic purpose in encompassing the endemic undergrowth of Lorraine woods. The very nature of the flora selected is meaningful, for Throckmorton seems to have developed an interest in cryptogams: a subject scarcely considered by European naturalists during the period except in Eastern France.¹⁴¹ These plants hence reveal a major knowledge transfer occurring at Verdun, for Throckmorton appears to have frequented not amateur but avant-garde botanists, who made Lorraine the epicentre of a new scientific trend. Indeed, both Charles Doisy (specialist in the Meuse flora), Professor Pierre-Rémi Willemet (director of Nancy Botanical Garden), François Hollandre (renowned military mineralogist and physician) were all connected to the prominent Vosgian scientist Jean-Baptiste Mougeot who introduced cryptogamology in France under Napoleon.¹⁴²

Throckmorton's botanical expeditions served his social performance on the Verdun stage, as an enlightened landowner priding himself on his knowledge of nature and applied science: key

¹³⁹ See Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 2000); Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London: Yale University press, 1998); Amanda Vickery, 'A stitch in time', *Guardian*, 17 October 2009 [<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/oct/17/amanda-vickery-handicrafts-delany>, accessed 08 June 2014].

¹⁴⁰ Military servicemen during the Napoleonic wars did collect botanical specimens during campaigns. They kept them by pasting specimens in full length on the back pages of *feuilles de routes*. On the gendered nature of botanical representations and herbariums, see Karin Nickelsen *Draughtsmen, Botanists and Nature: the Construction of Eighteenth-Century Botanical Illustrations* (Dordrecht, 2006).

¹⁴¹ There is an extensive literature on the development of cryptogamology in Eastern France during the period and its link with the cosmopolitan nature of botany. See Nicolas Robin, 'De L'Étude des réseaux et des pratiques naturalistes au dix-neuvième siècle. Biographie d'un médecin et naturaliste vosgien Jean-Baptiste Mougeot (1776-1856)' (PhD thesis, EHESS, Histoire des Sciences, 2003); Lucile Allorge, Olivier Ikor, *La Fabuleuse odyssée des plantes. Les Botanistes Voyageurs, les Jardins des Plantes, les Herbiers* (Paris, 2003).

¹⁴² WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 7 May 1806; Charles Doisy, *Essai sur l'Histoire Naturelle du Département de la Meuse* (Verdun, 1835); *Mémoires de la Société Philomathique de Verdun* (Verdun, 1840), p. 221.

components of an entrenched social identity flowering in detention.¹⁴³ Guided by a Frenchman to the episcopal garden in 1805, Throckmorton became himself a guide a fortnight later and presented the garden to a naval man. Far from a 'solitary reverie', his frequent 'botanical expeditions' were always associated with activities intrinsically linked to the pillars of his gentry status: agronomy, hunting, fishing. Arguably, the Verdun woods and ponds became an exiled substitute for the public scene of Coughton Court, where he performed as the master of an extensive rural estate through the masculine practice of hunting (Fig.24). Indeed, Throckmorton's interest in zoology in captivity was coupled with a fondness for hunting, as is suggested by his drawings of bird traps and his commerce with local merchants, such as Watrin from Metz, whom he invited to his lodgings to learn techniques of wolf and bird stuffing.¹⁴⁴ Throckmorton's diaries, daily weather reports, botanical recipes and commonplace book confirm that his interest in plants was selective. In addition to cryptogams, field flowers, forage, and clover seeds chiefly caught his attention. Whether discussing recipes for rat poison and vitriol-based solution for flower preservation, or evaluating the quality of the local substitute for potatoes, the earliness of harvests or the lateness of the carrot crop, Throckmorton's botanical visits and discussions almost invariably concerned agronomy and the domestication of nature. Furthermore, his commonplace book suggests that he was keen to perfect his knowledge of the natural realm through reading.¹⁴⁵ This knowledge served him to ascertain his social status as a landowner, distinguishing himself at dinner parties from the embattled old French elite, embodied in Monsieur de Lacour, whom he disregarded for his lack of agronomic knowledge: 'The proprietor has a large tract of land in his own hands, but seems to understand nothing about the management of it'.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ On the centrality of agricultural concerns in Catholic Enlightenment in Europe, see David Jan Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton, 2008); Ulrich L. Lehner and Michael O'Neill Printy (eds), *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe* (Leiden, 2010).

¹⁴⁴ WRO, CR 1998/CD/Drawer 8/12, Charles Throckmorton, 'Commonplace book', 1795-1808, p.125; David Allan, *Commonplace Books and Reading in Georgian England* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 69.

¹⁴⁵ WRO, CR 1998/CD/Drawer 8/12, Charles Throckmorton, 'Commonplace book', 1795- 1808.

¹⁴⁶ WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 3 June 1805.



Fig.24: Laurence Cossé, *Sir Charles Throckmorton, 7th Bt* (1820)

(National Trust Collections, Coughton Court)

Resuming Benedictine connections proved essential for Throckmorton's social performance in Verdun. In this respect, captivity was a liberating experience. At Coughton Court, the family had relied for centuries on Continental monks to orchestrate the daily practice of their faith inside the property. The family church had been transformed into an Anglican site following the Henrician Reformation.¹⁴⁷ The public practice of their faith was even more complicated after the Gunpowder Plot was hatched in their home, which meant that Charles had had to practice his faith in the secluded, hidden space of the family home. On the other hand, in Verdun, he could use various Catholic edifices at leisure, employ servants of his own faith in his lodgings, and publicly and freely affirm his religion. There, he regularly attended masses and concerts in the Cathedral, which led him to frequent with eagerness the local *curés* and former Benedictine monks.¹⁴⁸ As early as June 1804, he began to botanise with Don Cajot, with whom he studied and collected plant specimens in the episcopal gardens.¹⁴⁹ Significantly, these 'botanical expeditions' were an opportunity for them to discuss the impact of the Revolution in the town.¹⁵⁰ Don Cajot guided him through Sainte-Catherine hospital, the new orphanage for 'abandoned children', along with the derelict convent. During these walks, they found they held comparable views on the influence of the Terror on the locals' morals

¹⁴⁷ It was only in the 1850s that Charles's nephew, the first Catholic MP of the British Parliament, commissioned the erection of another Catholic Church to be used by the family on the property.

¹⁴⁸ WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 24 December 1804, 19 March 1805.

¹⁴⁹ WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 15, 22, 23 June, 11 August 1805.

¹⁵⁰ Don Cajot made him acquainted with other local priests, such as in Beaulieu, where 'the *curé* accompanied us in the Evening at the Ponds in the neighbourhood, five in number of which used to supply the abbey with fish...near one of these lakes we found the *Impatiens noli tangere* in tolerable abundance.' WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 29 August 1805

and the decreased revenues of the new bishops.¹⁵¹ Throckmorton carefully noted down Don Cajot's comments that 'since the Revolution the number of bastards is increased about two thirds'.¹⁵² Such a socially-bound perception, based on the abhorrence of parvenu licentiousness, reveals that Throckmorton and Don Cajot shared similar views to those expressed by British Protestant captives.

Common visions of the Revolution, along with common leisure activities, cemented inter-faith interactions at the depot. Indeed, not only did Throckmorton share views but also private and public social activities with captive Protestant circles. In July 1804, Throckmorton invited Don Cajot to the British captives' horse races, where they mingled with Protestant clergymen and members of the 'blue lights'.¹⁵³ Theatricals and British clubs also offered favourable spaces for a sociability transgressing national and religious tensions. 'Most of the English of note attended', wrote Throckmorton with enthusiasm in referring to a ball in 1805.¹⁵⁴ Little attention has been paid so far to the gender dimension of Catholic sociability abroad. Yet, the case of Verdun suggests a reappraisal of the role of women in these social developments, for Throckmorton was able to access Protestant circles, and especially selective clubs, through the industrious sociability of Mrs Giffard, a Protestant lady from Staffordshire linked by an inter-faith marriage to the Throckmortons.¹⁵⁵ In October 1805, she introduced him to Mr Campbell, who the following month 'presented' him to be 'admitted as a member of the Caron Club'.¹⁵⁶ Through the Café Caron society, Throckmorton met John Maude, a Protestant theologian from Queen's College, Oxford, with whom he developed such a close relation that Maude considered him and his wife Mary as 'a most worthy and amiable couple' and regretted in his diary their 'great loss to us' when they left the depot.¹⁵⁷

The most astonishing element in Throckmorton's sociability remains his involvement in the charitable committee founded by Protestant clergymen. The committee was funded by the Lloyds Patriotic Fund, which Jim Gawler has presented as a deeply patriotic and Protestant institution

¹⁵¹ WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 15, 22, 23 June 1804; 11 August 1804.

¹⁵² WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 23 June 1805, 2 December 1804

¹⁵³ WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 2 July 1804.

¹⁵⁴ WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 28 December 1805.

¹⁵⁵ Michael W. Greenslade, *Catholic Staffordshire 1500-1850* (Leominster, 2006), p. 184; James Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun; or, the English Detained in France, from the Portfolio of a Détenue* (London, 1810), vol.1, p. 97

¹⁵⁶ WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 1 December 1805.

¹⁵⁷ QCL, MSS 403-0426, John Barnabas Maude, 'Journal', V, 26 April 1808, 10 May 1808.

intending to support widows, orphans and prisoners.¹⁵⁸ Throckmorton's involvement complicates this vision, for the Committee was nonetheless open to Catholic members, as long as they were of genteel status. In April 1804, Charles attended the first Protestant services organised by Revd Gorden.¹⁵⁹ 'I heard a charity sermon by Gorden', he wrote, 'about 60 guineas were collected at the door besides the private donations'. The two men became very close indeed, which enabled Throckmorton to become an active member of the Committee. He took an active role in keeping its records and in petitioning the Electress of Wurtemberg. This led him to extend his social network to other Protestant clergymen, such as Wolfe and Lee, but also to Navy and field army senior officers such as John Abercrombie and Thomas Lavie, with whom he regularly dined.¹⁶⁰ In May 1805, his new connections with R.N. Captain Leveson Gower led him to take on new responsibilities, in offering his patronage to young midshipmen confined in the citadel.¹⁶¹

Ultimately, navigating the higher circles of captive society opened doors to the French old and new elites. Once acquainted with Colonel Abercrombie, Throckmorton regularly visited him in the Château de Mandre, where he resided amongst a family of the old elite; the De Lacours.¹⁶² Throckmorton appears to have used their commerce and freemasonry ties to expand his network to the local authorities after 1806.¹⁶³ Indeed, through the De Lacour dinner parties, Throckmorton became closely acquainted with the new elite, embodied in M. Bellisles (a wealthy watchmaker), Madame Leclerc (the prefect's wife), and the Commandants of the depot.¹⁶⁴ Henceforth, by inviting them to hunt or dine with him, Throckmorton placed himself in the same social echelon, and secured their benevolence, reversing power relations between captives and captors to obtain a most extreme

¹⁵⁸ See chapter 3 for a further engagement with this assumption. Jim Gawler, *Britons Strike Home: A History of Lloyd's Patriotic Fund 1803-1988* (London, 1993).

¹⁵⁹ Charles and Mary had met Rev. Gorden at the *Hotel du Parc*, in Chalons, while he was making his way from Lyon to Verdun. They took separate routes to Join Verdun, as Rev. Gorden was escorted by gendarmes, his *protégé*, the young gentleman Storer, having escaped. WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 6 January, 1 April, 7 August 1804; CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/3, 31 October 1805.

¹⁶⁰ WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 3-12 June 1805.

¹⁶¹ 'Became responsible to the General for the following Captains of vessels, detained in the citadel, vig. David Howell, John Davies belonging to Adams and Ryles of Plymouth and Georges Rogers of the Union 90 tones, belonging to Hughes of Carmather'. WRO, R1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 29 May 1805.

¹⁶² WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 3 June 1805; Claude Mazauric and Jean-Paul Rothiot (eds), *Frontières et Espaces Frontaliers du Léman à la Meuse: Recompositions et Echanges de 1789 à 1814* (Nancy, 2004), p. 346.

¹⁶³ Charles was a mason master from the lodge of Edinburgh. WRO, CR 1998/Box 85, Freemasonry appoints and certificates of members of the Throckmorton family.

¹⁶⁴ WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/2, 26 December 1805.

favour in 1808: a parole residence in Paris, which lasted until 1811, where he further polished his botanical skills.¹⁶⁵

Charles Throckmorton's situation reveals how detention abroad constituted less a suspended time than a liminal stage in the prisoners' social lives. Indeed, his professional advancement in captivity crystallised upon his return home, when he re-entered society with panache at Bath.¹⁶⁶ He developed his reputation locally and nationally, owing to the botanical collections he brought back from Verdun, and which he donated to the museum of Birmingham Medical School (Queens College) in 1836.¹⁶⁷ His socio-professional trajectory culminated in obtaining a degree from the University of Edinburgh, and at his death in 1841, regardless of religion, he was portrayed as 'a true old English gentleman' in a laudatory article in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.¹⁶⁸ Throckmorton's case is thus representative of two phenomena: the erosion of confession in determining sociability in the late-eighteenth century, and the rising importance of cosmopolitanism for Catholic families, which were never hermetically sealed entities but open to inter-faith and transnational influences.

The openness of Throckmorton's captive sociability had a political significance. First, he eagerly resumed a local connection with the iconoclast Thomas Giffard of Chillington and his Protestant wife, also sequestered in Verdun. As Michael Greenslade argued, the Giffards were the most prosperous Catholic family in Staffordshire, but Thomas the younger had broken conventions by marrying a non-Catholic, Charlotte Courtenay, who played a prominent role in Throckmorton's captive network by being the only multimodal 'mediator' of his connections (Table 19).¹⁶⁹ The novel inter-marriage strategies of the Giffards to access political office was frowned upon in the Midlands, but supported by the Throckmortons who could thus cast their social net wider amongst Protestant circles. What appears striking is that both Clive and Don, two of Throckmorton's and Lady Giffards' connections at Verdun, defended the project of Catholic Emancipation following their liberation,

¹⁶⁵ WRO, CR1998/CD/Drawer 8/3, 10 May 1808; CD/Drawer8/4, 1 September 1808-2 July 1811. During his stay in Paris, Throckmorton attempted to escape, but was recaptured and remained in France until 1814. His wife, Mary, was sent back to Britain in 1811, on account of her poor health.

¹⁶⁶ WRO, CR 1998/CD/Drawer 8/5, Memorandums, 18 June 1814-31 May 1818.

¹⁶⁷ Marshal and Scott (eds), *Catholic Gentry in English Society*, p. 252; *The Gardeners' Magazine*, May 1832, p. 518.

¹⁶⁸ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, January-June 1841, p. 201.

¹⁶⁹ John Goldworth Alger, *Napoleon's British Visitors and Captives (1801-1815)* (London, 1904), p. 64; Michael Greenslade, *Catholic Staffordshire 1500-1850* (Leominster, 2006), pp. 159-90.

which further suggests the political outcomes of these cross-religious interactions in captivity.¹⁷⁰ Whilst political sympathies seem to have crystallised in Verdun, especially amongst friends of reform, Throckmorton's sociability confirms the need to re-evaluate the way in which British Catholics attempted to 'be integrated into mainstream society' during the period.¹⁷¹ These inter-faith exchanges have long been beclouded by recusant historians, who have developed a history of a 'self-conscious minority' embattled and isolated from the 'master narrative of national history' in Britain.¹⁷² Rather, this case study is aligned with the growing scholarship that aims to shift away from 'the society of Catholics' to realign them *in* society, at home and abroad.

Othering faiths? Nonconformists and anti-Semitism

Whilst captive Catholics successfully intermingled with their Protestant counterparts in Verdun, religious fault lines were exacerbated amongst Protestant captives. Specific provisions were made for various denominations, leading to devotional tensions between prisoners of the Anglican faith and dissenters. This was most notable amongst captive Methodists, who formed a visible and proselytising community in various depots. In Longwy, their 'zeal in making converts' caused strong concern and exasperation amongst their fellow captives, even those who assisted them in local hospitals.¹⁷³ In Givet, devotional practices were said to be 'confined to some twenty Methodists, who were the objects of the most painful persecution, and often the innocent cause of the most dreadful blasphemies ... abus[e] and sometimes ill-treat[ment]'.¹⁷⁴ In Besançon, the captive Wesleyans were equally opposed by their fellow captives, and the local French priesthood, who

¹⁷⁰ Edward Bolton Clive had already broken with the familial Tory line, upheld by his father and his brother, by espousing the Whig views of his wife's family, and joining the Society of the Friends of the People in 1793. This had led him to cross the Channel with her in 1802, and his time in Verdun reaffirmed his position as 'a friend of reform'. Edward Bolton Clive, *History of Parliament*, George Clive (1805-1880), his third son born in captivity, followed a similar liberal line, in assisting the Poor Law commission and serving Lord Palmerston as Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department in the following decades.

¹⁷¹ Marshall and Scott (eds), *Catholic Gentry in English Society. The Throckmortons of Coughton from Reformation to Emancipation* (London, 2009), p. 2.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁷³ 'The sectaries, generally Methodists, were numerous. They began the day in prayer, which was repeated more than once or twice in loud orisons. They were sober and regular in their habits, and zealous in making converts, by which pious work they often succeeded in saving from impending ruin great sinners, such as they allowed themselves formerly to have been. As a professional man, I thought that they pushed their zeal too far in calling on the sick without knowledge. After frequent expostulations on the propriety of attending to the health of the body as well as the soul, they had at length the good sense to desist.' Farrell Mulvey, *Sketches of the Character, Conduct and Treatment of the Prisoners of War at Auxonne, Longwy & from the Year 1810 to 1814* (London: 1818), pp. 24-5.

¹⁷⁴ Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, p.62.

feared their missionary endeavours in the locality.¹⁷⁵ Whilst the local response attested to what Sebastien Fath identified as a growing competition in charity provision in France, the rejection Methodists experienced from their fellow captives was embedded in a more complex phenomenon.¹⁷⁶ Misty Anderson has offered a compelling study of the place of Methodism in eighteenth-century British imagination and came to the conclusion that most contemporaries held ‘paradoxical admiration for and scepticism about Methodism’, as this ‘heart religion’ destabilised burgeoning ideas of modernity, subjectivity, and an enlightened ‘identity of consciousness’.¹⁷⁷ These anxieties culminated in the act of conversion: ‘the warming of the heart’ distinguishing Methodism as an ‘anti-modern and sensuous experimental religion’, which explains the captives’ concerns about Wesleyan missions in detention.

However, the organisation of separate meetings in captivity did not preclude occasional ecumenical endeavours on the part of Anglican clergymen in Verdun. Revd Wolfe certainly led the way by establishing joint services for both denominations in the hope of encouraging ‘among them a single eye to Christ’.¹⁷⁸ By this gesture, he also hoped to contain the influence of free-masonry amongst his flock, as the order ‘began to speak of it altogether as a religious institution’ at the depot.¹⁷⁹ Despite the fact that certain captive Wesleyans and Calvinists entered masonry, the letters of a Cornish Methodist captive named McLelean confirm the frequency of these cross-denominational services.¹⁸⁰ Their success was partly owing to the recreational companionship the spiritual gatherings offered to prisoners, especially as the routine of ‘prayer, preaching and Bible-

¹⁷⁵ G. G. Findlay and W.W. Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society* (5 vols, London, 1921), I, p. 111.

¹⁷⁶ See Sébastien Fath, *Du Ghetto au Réseau: Le Protestantisme Évangélique en France (1800-2005)* (Genève, 2005).

¹⁷⁷ Misty G. Anderson, *Imagining Methodism in the Eighteenth Century. Enthusiasm, Belief and the Borders of the Self* (Baltimore, 2012), pp. 1-33

¹⁷⁸ Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, p. 81.

¹⁷⁹ ‘At first, indeed, it was only the careless, and those who did profess to be serious, who became freemasons. But, in a short time, they who had at first condemned it, were themselves ensnared. They began to speak altogether as a religious institution, boasting of its antiquity, as if it came over Jordan with Joshua; and even the Methodist minister, who had spoken loudly against it, became himself a member. Nothing ever made so much havoc amongst those who professed the gospel.’ Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, p. 130.

¹⁸⁰ ‘This is a great privilege and we now enjoy many comforts which we were before debarred of, we are still privileged with room to worship, and are protected by the Commander of the Depot, and we have a preaching and prayer meeting every morning and evening throughout the week, and on Sundays three services and class-meetings in the week after prayer meetings, so you see my dear that our Spiritual blessings are very great, and though in a captive state we have no need to hang our harps in the willows as the children of Israel when captives in a foreign land, but we can tune them to the praise of Love Divine. Oh what reason have I to be thankful unto the Lord for his distinguishing mercy towards me who daily loadeth me with the benefits and crowneth me with His loving kindness and tender mercies. Oh what reason have I to praise Him for His distinguishing mercy, I that am the most unworthy and most undeserving to be thus distinguished, Bless the Lord O my Soul and forget not all His benefits.’ Royal Institute of Cornwall, Courtney Library, the Wesleyans of Mevagissey papers, Letter from Nicholas Lelean, Verdun, 23 June 1809. See chapter 2 on his religious correspondence with his wife in Cornwall.

reading' went hand in hand with the creation of an orchestra, a choir, and a school.¹⁸¹ Success was also due to a flourishing alliance between clergymen and the Navy in captivity. This manifested itself in the charitable committee and Book of Common Prayer mentioned previously, but also in the ways Wolfe persuaded Methodists to join in 'after the fashion of the groups meeting at sea', with the support of the Admiralty.¹⁸²

This ecumenical largesse in Verdun might explain why captivity was a place of spiritual awakening for many naval and army prisoners of Methodist, Baptist or Independent sympathies. As discussed in chapter 3, the religious endeavours of the Committee were inclusive, and aimed to further nonconformist beliefs, which were on the rise in Britain during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.¹⁸³ Minutes of captives' meetings were sent to non-conformist newspapers, and discussed in missionary assemblies in Britain, which suggests the vivacity of their actions and interactions.¹⁸⁴ Given this active correspondence, and the consequent information that percolated through religious communities in Britain about captives' churches in France, it is perhaps not a coincidence that, from 1810 onwards, Methodist missionaries began to see in French prisoners of war a prime target for evangelisation in Britain.¹⁸⁵ Overall, whilst nonconformist and Anglican captives revalued the common evangelistic core of their faiths, another confessional community became the foe against which captives and captors of all denominations allied: the Verdun Jews.

The Jewish community had a long and ambivalent history in the locality. Since the eighth century, the town had hosted Tosafist scholars and merchants who had contributed to its economic prosperity.¹⁸⁶ Yet after unsuccessful petitions to the Council of Basel in 1434 and the later annexation of the Three Bishoprics to France in 1559, all rights of residence and transit in Verdun were forbidden to the Jews.¹⁸⁷ Letters patent could allow the Jews of Metz to sojourn for very brief periods, yet these measures were opposed by local guilds of tailors and goldsmiths. From 1755 to

¹⁸¹ Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, p. 111, 127.

¹⁸² Richard Blake, *Evangelicals in the Royal Navy, 1775-1815: Blue Lights & Psalm-Singers* (Woodbridge, 2008), p. 244; Michael Snape, *The Forgotten History of the British Soldier from the Age of Marlborough to the Eve of the First World War* (London, 2013), pp.144-5.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp.144-5.

¹⁸⁴ *Baptist Magazine*, June 1813; *Evangelical Magazine*, February 1812; *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences from the First Held in London by the Late Rev. John Wesley, A.M., in the Year 1744* (London, 1813), III, p. 386; *The Methodist Magazine*, April 1818.

¹⁸⁵ Gareth Lloyd, 'The Papers of Dr Thomas Coke: A Catalogue', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 76: 2 (1994), pp. 205-320.

¹⁸⁶ Jean-Luc Fray, *Villes et Bourgs de Lorraine: Réseaux Urbains et Centralité au Moyen Âge* (Clermont-Ferrand, 2006), p.33. The Tosafot are medieval commentaries on the Talmud. The authors of these glosses are known as Tosafists.

¹⁸⁷ 'Verdun', *Jewish Encyclopedia Online* [<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14676-verdun>], accessed 08 June 2014].

1789, no Jewish family was recorded as living within the walls of the town.¹⁸⁸ With the French Revolution, they ceased to be expelled; however, as the historian Ester Benbassa noted, their ‘emancipation preceded [their] integration’.¹⁸⁹ The ambivalence of the newly-introduced freedom of belief – which led to the closure of synagogues in 1793 – crystallised in the East, particularly in the ‘Franco-German nexus’ of Alsace-Lorraine where ‘antireligious struggle turned into anti-Jewish unrest’.¹⁹⁰ As numerous studies have shown, the Napoleonic era furthered this ambivalent emancipation by developing the religious organisation of the Jewish community between 1805 and 1809, yet restricting its legal status in France and the conquered provinces.¹⁹¹ In Verdun, the Jewish community became increasingly visible: a synagogue was erected in 1805 where the *couvent des Jacobins* used to stand, leading to a dramatic increase of the congregation which gathered 217 members in 1806, before the community was affiliated to the consistory of Nancy in 1808.¹⁹² Most of these migrants came from Metz, yet others had moved from Paris to practice minor trades such as pawn-broking in the depot. However, by relegating them ethnically as a ‘people [rather] than a faith’, the French State and local communities continued to hold prejudices against them.¹⁹³

Given this context, it is perhaps not surprising that the writings of both captives and captors in Verdun were marked by anti-Semitic discourses. These permeated the correspondence of the French local authorities, who blamed the ‘*école des vices*’ (school of vices) emerging from the Jewish money-lending trade with prisoners in the town.¹⁹⁴ An equally blatant animosity featured amongst British captives, were they Protestant or Catholic. ‘Jews are doubly Jews in Verdun’, wrote Revd Lee in his letters to his cousin in Britain.¹⁹⁵ The accusation echoed the religious and ethnic animosity which, as Michael Ragussis argued, led to the exclusion of English Jews from the staging of British

¹⁸⁸ Léon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-semitism: From the time of Christ to the Court Jews* (3 vols, Philadelphia, 2003), p. 42

¹⁸⁹ Esther Benbassa, *The Jews of France: A History from Antiquity to the Present* (Princeton, 2001), p. 85. .

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-90; see also Béatrice Philippe, *Etre Juif Dans la Société Française du Moyen-Âge à Nos Jours* (Paris, 1997).

¹⁹² Website of the Verdun synagogue [<http://www.verdun.fr/Terre-d-Histoire/Verdun-aujourd-hui/Patrimoine/Synagogue>, accessed 08 June 2014].

¹⁹³ The impact of Napoleon’s own prejudices against the Jewish community in France and the conquered provinces has fuelled many debates amongst historians. Two opposite arguments have, however, dominated the discussions: those of Richard Ayoun and Pierre Birnbaum. Whilst the former claimed that Napoleon ‘despised the Jewish population’ but acted ‘as an opportunistic politician’ and ‘surpassed his own opinions to gain new supporters’; the former argued that Napoleon’s prejudices betrayed the spirit of the Revolution and resulted in a ‘regressive turning point’ for the Jewish community. Richard Ayoun, *Les Juifs de France: De l’Emancipation à l’Intégration, 1787-1812* (Paris, 1997), p.143; Pierre Birnbaum, *L’Aigle et la Synagogue: Napoléon, les Juifs et l’État* (Paris, 2007) ; see also Jean Tulard, *Dictionnaire Amoureux de Napoléon* (Paris, 2012), p.75.

¹⁹⁴ ‘Ils utilisent les moyens les plus immoraux pour y attirer la jeunesse : les vins et les liqueurs leur sont prodigués gratuitement et des enfants de douze et quatorze ans y sont admis et y jouent.’ AMV, uncatalogued, ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, police report to the mayor of Verdun, Verdun, 28 Brumaire an XIII (19 November 1804).

¹⁹⁵ John Parry-Wingfield (ed.), *Napoleon’s Prisoner. A Country Parson’s Ten-Year Detention in France* (Ilfracombe, 2012), p. 61.

national identity as an ‘outlandish’ archetype during the period.¹⁹⁶ This was particularly perceptible in the recurring indictments prisoners made against the *Argus* and its editor’s flickering loyalty as ‘an English Jew’.¹⁹⁷ References to the ‘wandering Jew’ populated the poetry of Thomas Dutton, who used this ‘Christian legend’ to comment on a ‘notorious swindler’ acting under ‘his illustrious sire, Beelzebub’ in detention.¹⁹⁸ Such categorisation thus served to further construct Jewishness as a social-economic foe in detention.

Usury had long been the focus of anti-Semitic comments in Europe, and it seems that the act of writing crystallised such conceptions in captivity. As will be discussed in chapter 7, life-writing was employed by prisoners to justify their debonair life in confinement, their escapes, and most importantly in the case of anti-Semitic narratives, the prodigious debts they left behind in 1814. Writing was both a ‘confessing tool’ and a platform for self-exculpatory claims.¹⁹⁹ Every street and club in ‘Verdun was then full of accommodating Jews, who lent money on personal security at a hundred percent’, wrote Major Blayney in an attempt to legitimise his myriad debts.²⁰⁰ Anti-Semitism discourses were even more potent in letters and published memoirs than in diaries, as the first two addressed a potentially critical audience: their families, and more widely the British State and society.²⁰¹ It is thus no accident that, the Jewish foe became a prominent character in published fictional works about Verdun, such as the play written by James Lawrence in 1813.²⁰² This inspired Victorian plays – such Douglas Jerrold’s character of Boraz, a greedy money-lender from Alsace – along with the disparaging comments against ‘Jew money-lenders [as] the curse of Verdun’ published in later newspapers.²⁰³ In this case, as in the case of Charles Throckmorton’s sociability, and indeed various interactions with Catholic priests mentioned above in this chapter, it seems that social and economic tensions superseded apparent religious divisions in captivity. Captive’s written productions fuelled long-lasting religious prejudices based on socio-economic tensions, which diminished Christian inner divisions to highlight distinctions from Jewishness.

¹⁹⁶ Todd M. Endelman, *Theatrical Nation: Jews and Other Outlandish Englishmen in Georgian Britain* (Philadelphia, 2012).

¹⁹⁷ A comment made by Charles Sturt, and then repeated in *émigré* newspapers in London, such as *L’Ambigu*. See Charles Sturt, *The Real State of France, in the Year 1809; with an Account of the Treatment of the Prisoners of War, and Persons Otherwise Detained in France* (London, 1810), p. 62; *L’Ambigu: ou Variétés Littéraires et Politiques*, 20 July 1805.

¹⁹⁸ Dutton, Thomas, *The Captive Muse* (London, 1814), pp.51-100.

¹⁹⁹ See Chloë Taylor, *The Culture of Confession from Augustine to Foucault: a Genealogy of the ‘Confessing Animal’* (New York and London, 2009).

²⁰⁰ Andrew Thomas Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey Through Spain and France* (2 vols, London, 1814), II, p. 173.

²⁰¹ See chapter 7 for a more detailed analysis of the question.

²⁰² James Lawrence, *The Englishman at Verdun or, the Prisoner of Peace. A Drama in Five Acts* (London, 1813).

²⁰³ *All the Year Round: A Weekly Journal*, 24 September 1870.

To conclude, this chapter aimed to demonstrate how cosmopolitanism, commonality of experience and social dynamics superseded Christian and national antagonisms in captivity. Neither enemy within or without, the British and French Catholics in Verdun were above all social actors weaving complex networks, which prevents the historian from considering captives and captors as two homogenous and hermetic groups. In particular, the fluidity with which Throckmorton navigated a post-Revolutionary Catholic society and his Protestant consociates' circles, illuminates the agency prisoners displayed in shaping their experiences of detention.²⁰⁴ His case reveals how Verdun became a space of transnational encounter, which challenges the truism of colliding French and British identities, forged on a religious dissonance exacerbated by the experience of war. Overall, spiritual guidance in detention was embedded in naval practices and an ecumenical spirit which proved inclusive of all Christian faiths yet excluded Judaism as the religious, economic and ethnic foe. However, a tension appears in the ways religious enmity was articulated between manuscripts and ego-documents printed *after* 1814.²⁰⁵ This suggests the importance of the aftermath of detention as an integral part of the experience, which the final two chapters of this thesis will investigate.

²⁰⁴ The importance of POWs' agency has recently been emphasized by Felicia Yap. Felicia Yap, 'Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees of the Japanese in British Isles: the Similarities and Contrasts of Experience', *Journal of Contemporary History* 47:317 (2012), p. 318.

²⁰⁵ This tension will be explored in chapter 7 on the 'captive muse'.

Homecomings

The aftermath of captivity

‘In essence, I found myself almost a stranger in my native land, not only the loss by my father’s death, but many other valued friends had departed this life, which placed me in a truly awkward position. I knew not to whom I would apply to assist me in my professional advancement. In short, I had to commence life again’.¹ William Henry Dillon, a naval midshipman, found himself at a loss for connections upon his return to London.² His letters reveal that home was a lattice of emotional, relational, geographical and professional ties, which had been severed by war, his absence in captivity and, more broadly, the passing of time as he grew old and his kin perished. Dillon also expressed an anxiety which permeated the prisoners’ writings at their liberation in 1814: the prospect of ‘commenc[ing] life again’. Indeed, they described captivity as both an ellipsis in their lives and careers, and a transformative cycle introducing them to a new existence. They dramatized this estrangement by reference to Homer’s *Odyssey*, Virgil’s *Aeneid* but also to Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey* and Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*.³ These texts served them, at least those who chronicled their experiences in letters and memoirs, to align their individual trajectories with that of *Bildungsroman* and epic characters who shaped them in alienation. Like them, they had left a familiar space in search of experience of the world, and come back to the initial point, yet not quite in the same

¹ NMM, Lewis papers, LES/6/7/4, Manuscript letter-book of William Henry Dillon, letters to John, September 1807. I consulted the original letters instead of the compendium made by Michael Arthur Lewis in 1962, because this passage has interestingly been omitted in the published version. The account of Dillon’s captivity was truncated and paraphrased, which reveals the importance of readers in crafting the voices of captivity. This point will be discussed in chapter 7.

² Gregory Fremont-Barnes, *The French Revolutionary Wars* (New York, 2001), pp. 67-71; Sam Cavell, *Midshipmen and Quarterdeck Boys in the British Navy, 1771-1831* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 139.

³ George Vernon Jackson, “‘Damn’em, Jackson, They’ve Spoilt My Dancing” 1809-1812’, in Dean King (ed.), *Every Man Will Do His Duty. An Anthology of First-Hand Accounts from the Age of Nelson 1793-1815* (London, 1997), p. 275; Andrew-Thomas Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey Through Spain and France* (2 vols, London, 1814), I, p. 341; James Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun, or the English Detained in France* (2 vols, London, 1814), I, pp. i, 154; Thomas Dutton, *The Captive Muse* (Verdun, 1806), p. 1. See the following chapter for more examples.

cultural, social and moral state as when they had left it. Captivity, in this cycle, was both a rupture and a liminal stage.

This chapter aims to investigate this tension in light of what historians and literary scholars have identified as an early nineteenth-century longing for home.⁴ Franco Moretti has argued that the period saw the emergence of a new ‘way of the world’ in Western culture, as novels became a powerful mediator through which a sense of the evanescence of youth and home emerged. The characters’ search for home – which reflected and forged that of their readers – consisted in a socio-cultural vortex that necessitated leaving the comforts of home to return to it after an initiatory journey. This would change, estrange yet confirm the values they initially held. These narratives were imbued with a romantic sense of loss following the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, which, as Peter Fritzsche argued, reformulated Westerns notions of time and space, and made home ‘less a particular place than a longing’.⁵

By resituating the prisoners’ homecomings within this broader cultural and social phenomenon, this chapter argues that the aftermath of captivity formed an integral part of the experience of detention. Considering the aftermath as being part of an event is a fairly new approach, at the nexus of history and memory studies.⁶ This perspective is anchored in an interest in the problematic ending of captivity in POW studies. The growing scholarship on veterans and memorialisation, along with works on the educational and labour policies regarding WW2 ‘prisoners of peace’ has proved crucial in this regard.⁷ Though extremely valuable, these studies have utilised the aftermath of detention as a mere ‘vehicle to write a comparative ... *post-war* history’.⁸ They focus on the reintroduction of captives in their native land as visible testaments of defeat and military violence, leading to the continuation of war in peace. Subsequently, these studies equate home to *home-land*, which obscures the prisoners’ composite sense of belonging. However, archaeologists such as Gilly Carr have

⁴ Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: the Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London and New York, 2000), p. 23.

⁵ Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (London and Cambridge, MA, 2004), p. 77.

⁶ For a brief historiographical reflection the ‘aftermath’ in war and POW studies see Frank Biess, ‘Histories of the Aftermath’, in Frank Biess and Robert Moeller (eds), *Histories of the Aftermath: the Legacies of the Second World War in Europe* (Oxford and New York, 2010), pp. 1-10.

⁷ Amongst others, see Megan Koreman, ‘A Hero’s Homecoming: the Return of the Deportees to France, 1945’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 1 (1997), pp. 9-22; Barbara Hatley-Broad, ‘Coping in Britain and France: a Comparison of Family Issues Affecting the Homecoming of Prisoners of War Following World War II’ in Bob Moore and Barbara Hatley-Broad (eds), *Prisoners of War, Prisoners of Peace: Captivity, Homecoming, and Memory in World War II* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 141-50; Michael J. Allen, *Until the Last Man Comes Home: POWs, MIAs, and the Unending Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill, 2009). On the Napoleonic Wars, see also Philippe Masson, *Les Sépulcres Flottants. Prisonniers Français en Angleterre sous l’Empire* (Rennes, 1987).

⁸ See Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton, 2006), p. 1.

recently extended investigations of home-seeking, as a material and imaginary space constructed and deconstructed by detention.⁹

This chapter is aligned with this perspective, and aims to provide a fresh contribution by engaging with the trope of the 'return' in POW studies. Whilst most of the work on post-Verdun lives has been conducted by biographers and genealogists, they offer a fragmented picture of a compound process, which necessitates the prism of several trajectories rather than the lens of one life. Many studies cited above focus on 'the return', which does not keep tally of how captivity affected both captives *and* captors. Nor does this approach do justice to the importance of non-returns, because of death and the formation of transnational households, which this chapter aims to ascertain by placing the emphasis on home-*comings* as a multifaceted process. It is not about 'home' per se, although, as Karen Adler noted, the term offers an interesting polysemy in the English language – combining in one word the place of residence and the sense of being in it and belonging to it.¹⁰ As an analytical category, the notion is full of tangled meanings, which this chapter does not aim to unravel or dispute.¹¹ Rather, it aims to consider how the *quest* for home occurred at Verdun, though the experience of dying out of place, and the captivity of the heart. This was prolonged after 1814 through military tourism, the recollection of captive childhoods and the romantic refashioning of Verdun as a 'ruined' town. The estrangement from political and professional networks, suggested by Dillon, poses the question of having been 'othered' in the eyes of the British State and the Admiralty. This will be discussed towards the end of the chapter, which is concerned with the liminality of detention for the captives' identities, connections and careers. Finally, it has to be emphasized that this chapter is not the last. Its conclusion lies in the following one, since home, I will argue, was sought in the act of writing about and musing on detention.

⁹ Gilly Carr, "'My Home Was the Area Around My Bed': Experiencing and Negotiating Space in Civilian Internment Camps in Germany, 1942-1945", in Harold Mytum and Gilly Carr (eds), *Prisoners of War: Archaeology, Memory and Heritage of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Internment* (New York, 2013), pp. 189-204.

¹⁰ Karen Adler and Carrie Hamilton (eds), *Homes and Homecomings: Gendered Histories of Domesticity and Return* (Hoboken, 2011).

¹¹ The length of the entry for 'home' in the *Oxford English Dictionary* suggests the various meanings entangled in the term. 'Home, n.1 and adj.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2014 [Online version accessed 4 May 2014]. In war studies, the tension between home and front has often been emphasized, home being associated with the household, the families of soldiers, along with the recreation of domestic patterns in campaign life. See Catriona Kennedy, 'Bringing the War Back Home', in *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 160-86.

Returns to dust

Finding home in the grave is a rather sombre thought to contemplate. Yet, in the case of early nineteenth-century captivity, a romantic longing for home crystallised in the non-return: the observation of the transience of life, time and spaces, which led to enduring expressions of nostalgia.¹² In this section, three ‘returns to dust’ will be considered: dying out of place, the military tourism that developed around the depot’s graveyards, and the residence of the Verdun ‘stayers’ after 1814.

The municipal records attest to the deaths of two hundred and fifty four British prisoners at Verdun between 1803 and 1814.¹³ The number was proportionate to the local mortality rates, with high child mortality.¹⁴ Yet, it was far lower than that recorded for their French and Spanish counterparts, whose detention was synonym for deadly epidemics.¹⁵ The causes of adult deaths were varied: dysentery (‘the Prussian run’ as it was nicknamed in the locality after 1792), malignant fevers, fatal wounds caused by capture, along with marginal duels and suicides.¹⁶ As mentioned in chapter 4, the latest deaths resulted from the typhus scourge that followed the retreat of the Great Army to Verdun after the battle of Leipzig in 1813.¹⁷ These deaths give us an insight into the contemporary state of medicine and the varied violence of detention. And this is how they have been perceived.¹⁸ However, one important element has received little attention: the implications of dying out of place. Indeed, whilst the work of Philippe Ariès has revealed a shift to intimacy and romantic attitudes in European cultures of mourning during the period, one is left to wonder about the repercussions, for these prisoners and their kin, of dying abroad, moreover on Catholic ground.¹⁹

¹² Nostalgia, in itself, is a learned formation of a Greek compound, consisting of *vóσtoς*, meaning ‘homecoming’, a Homeric word, and *ἀλγος*, meaning ‘pain, ache’.

¹³ ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (50-60), Registres d’état civil de Verdun, 1803-1814, 11 vols.

¹⁴ Jean Tulard, *La Vie des Français Sous Napoléon* (Paris, 1978), pp. 97-107.

¹⁵ Gavin Daily, ‘Napoleon’s Lost Legions: French Prisoners of War in Britain, 1803-1814’, *History* 89:295 (2004), pp. 361-380; Jean René Aymes, *La Déportation Sous le Premier Empire: les Espagnols en France (1808-1814)* (Paris, 1983); Nicole Gotteri, ‘L’Intégration des Prisonniers Ibériques Dans la Société Française Après 1814, d’Après les Demandes de Naturalisation’, in Sylvie Caucanas, Rémy Cazals, Pascal Payen, Odon Abbal (eds), *Les Prisonniers de Guerre dans l’Histoire: Contacts Entre Peuples et Cultures* (Paris, 2003), pp. 245-255; Patrick Le Caravèse, ‘Les Prisonniers Français en Grande-Bretagne de 1803 à 1814’, *Napoleonica. La Revue* 3:9 (2010), pp. 118-52.

¹⁶ On the question of suicide and the debates it generated amongst the local population and the prisoners, see chapter 5 on Catholicism. On the question of dueling, see chapter 4 on ‘ties of honour’.

¹⁷ See timeline in the appendices.

¹⁸ Didier Houmeau, ‘Les Prisonniers de Guerre Britanniques de Napoleon 1^{er}’ (PhD thesis, Université de Tours, 2011), pp. 277-84.

¹⁹ Philippe Ariès and Michelle Vovelle transformed our understanding of Western cultures of death by observing death through a threefold angle: *la mort subie* (death as measured), *la mort vécue* (death as perceived), and *le discours sur la mort* (death as discourse). See Patrick Hutton, *Philippe Ariès and the Politics of French Cultural History* (Amherst, MA, 2004), Peter Homans (eds), *Symbolic Loss: the Ambiguity of Mourning and Memory at Century’s End* (Charlottesville VA, 2000).

Dying as a captive was first a financial and legal issue for their families. This explains the eagerness with which prisoners drafted or amended their wills at Verdun, and sent copies to the Admiralty.²⁰ Yet, falling abroad had different meanings for civilian *détenus* and military prisoners, for whom death hovered over their everyday. Whilst naval men could be expected to perish at sea, and redcoats on the battlefield, the families of noble civilians requested the repatriation of their dead captive kin.²¹ In this respect, the case of the seventh marquis and marchioness of Tweeddale is illuminating. This Scottish couple had crossed the Channel in search of a milder climate for their health in 1803. They were highly unsuccessful as they both succumbed, after an interval of three months, to ‘*cholera morbus*’ in Verdun in 1804.²² The marchioness’ corpse was placed in a leaden coffin in a sealed crypt of the citadel, as her husband wished that she should later be ‘transported to his father’s vault, in their homeland’.²³ After his death, the ‘extraordinary expenses’ for the transportation of their remains to Edinburgh via Rotterdam were negotiated by Captain Gerrard, a former EIC serviceman who acted as the family’s procurator.²⁴ This was conducted with the assistance of a local lawyer.²⁵ Most notably, the couple’s twelve children requested the transfer for motives that were more sentimental and social than financial, since the inventories made by the French authorities revealed that the couple had little portable wealth: two boxes containing dresses, an oak wardrobe, and a marble inlaid chest of drawers holding personal papers.²⁶ The journey was more costly than its profit.²⁷ The measure was exceptional, owing to the ‘distinguished’ and

²⁰ These wills are now scattered in national and county record offices. See TNA, PROB 11/1546/51, 1550/409, 1515/323.

²¹ The Book of Common Prayer mentioned in chapter 5 reveals that the corpses of dead naval men were, for practical reasons, rarely repatriated, naval men being expected to die at sea.

²² NLS, Tweeddale Papers, MS.14527/235, Report of the death of the Marquis of George Hay by François Marchal, Verdun, 20 Thermidor an XII.

²³ NLS, Tweeddale Papers, MS.14527/233, Report by Marchal, Commissaire de Guerre, Verdun, 21 Floréal an XII (11 May 1804): ‘*le dépôt ... doit être fait aujourd’hui d’un cercueil de plomb contenant le corps inanimé de Madame la Marquise de Tweeddale dans un caveau à la citadelle, jusqu’à ce qu’un changement dans la situation de Monsieur Tweeddale son Mari ... lui permette de le faire transporter au tombeau de son père, dans sa patrie*’.

²⁴ The correspondence of Captain Gerrard quoted above suggested that the expenses were initially paid for by the gendarmerie. This appears unusual, especially as no other mention of these costs has been found in French records. The family might have provided a refund once the transfer completed, as Captain Gerrard was to return to Verdun.

²⁵ The lawyer in question was Joseph Regnault ‘M Le Grand Bailly de Bar-le-Duc’. NLS, MS.14527/252, Letter of Perin Grand Sauvage to Captain Gerrard Verdun, 14 October 1806. On the ambiguous link of the Regnaults with the Revolutionary and Napoleonic State, see Fernand Braudel, *Les Débuts de la Révolution à Bar-le-Duc* (Bar-le-Duc, 1989), p. 102; Pierre Serna, *La République des Girouettes* (Paris, 2005), pp. 287-98.

²⁶ The marquis and marchioness had left their carriage to the French authorities at Boulogne. This was an extremely valuable possession, as evidenced by the deposit given by George Hay to the local customs to keep it temporarily before the resumption of the hostilities. NLS, Tweeddale Papers, MS.14527/228, letter by George Hay to the French customs, Boulogne, 4 Vendémiaire an XI (26 September 1802). Two inventories of their possessions at Verdun were made, one was given to their heirs and another was kept by the French authorities. NLS, MS.14527/239-240, Inventory of the possessions left by the Marquis of Tweeddale at his lodgings by Jean Louis Déperonne, justice of the peace, Verdun, 21 Thermidor an XII; MS.14527/243, Letter of Marchal, to Captain Gerrard, Verdun, 2 Fructidor an 12 (20 August 1804). The personal papers included in the chest of drawers included literary pieces such as the Prologue to the *Beaux Stratagem* cited in chapter 3, and George Hay’s parole certificate cited in chapter 4.

²⁷ The wills of the couple were held in Scotland, and no changes to their content appear to have been made in captivity.

'illustrious' nature of the family, and the French State did not authorise such transfers in the following years.²⁸

Rather, captives were to be buried locally. Letters arrived late and newspapers suffered from the disinformation of the French government, which might explain the paucity of claims made by widows of sailors to the Admiralty during the war and its aftermath.²⁹ Common sailors and soldiers were buried sometimes to the ignorance of their kin at home, whilst the death of civilian parolees and officers had greater chance of being announced in the press. In Britain, the families of the latter sometimes copied verbatim obituary articles on the plaques they commissioned for the absent dead. This was the case for Dr John Jackson, for whom a brass on stone was erected by his grieving father in the parish of Kirby Stephen, Cumbria, in 1807.³⁰ The epitaph was taken from an article in *The Times*, which was itself a translation of a 'short tribute' made in a Parisian newspaper, probably the *Moniteur*, which described the amicable Franco-British ceremony that had occurred during Jackson's burial in Verdun. A ceremony had been organised by the local masonic lodge, the *Franche Amitié*, with the intention of lamenting the death of a 'young captive', whose home was not one country but a universal fraternity.³¹ The funeral oration, published in the same year with an account of the service, placed the emphasis on his 'premature death', which the romantic themes of the *Lodoïska* opera and *Romeo and Juliet* accentuated.³² What appears striking is that the lodge chose to solemnise his death with the construction of a 'cenotaph' which, by definition, made the burial an abstract ritual, the celebration of an empty tomb.³³ Therefore, although Jackson's remains were interred in the parish of his captive lodgings; symbolically, his death was sanctified in two places, in

²⁸ NLS, MS.14527/252, Letter of Perin Grand Sauvage to Captain Gerrard, Verdun, 14 October 1806.

²⁹ TNA, ADM 6/325/1640/1841-203/4, Compassionate fund and compassionate list.

³⁰ This brass on stone and low stone edging is still visible in the parish church of Kirby Stephen, Cumbria. The epitaph reads: 'John Jackson M.D. d. Janry 2d 1807 aged 29. Reader blame not a Father for recording the death of a Son in the words of the public papers of the day, as follows. "We are sorry to announce the death of our Countryman, Dr. Jackson, at Verdun, in France where he was a prisoner of war. The following short tribute to his memory we extract from a Paris paper of the 21st of January. Verdun January 15, "Dr. Jackson the English Physician d. here the 2nd Inst. of a putrid fever. His funeral was attended by all his Fellow-countrymen who are prisoners of war, as well as by the Medical Gentlemen and the Inhabitants of Verdun, whose esteem and friendship he had gained by the benevolence which he displayed towards the unfortunate of every description; He delighted to rescue the wretched from the bed of sickness and death, and afforded them both medical and pecuniary assistance!"' This extract was taken from *The Times* on 7 February 1807.

³¹ *Procès-Verbal des Honneurs Funèbres Rendus par la Loge de la Franche Amitié, à l'O.: de Verdun, Meuse. Au T.: C.: F.: John Jackson, l'Un de ses Membres, Docteur en Médecine, Né à Kirby-Steven, dans le Comté de Westmorland, en Angleterre, le 10 Août 1778, et Décédé à Verdun, le 2 Janvier 1807* (Verdun, 1807).

³² 'Aussi-tôt la musique exécuta la romance de Lodoïska. Cet air touchant et généralement connu présentait une allusion sensible à la mort prématurée du Docteur Jackson ... A peine entré dans la carrière de la vie, le tombeau s'est ouvert sous ses pas ... Oh ! Quelle est affligeante la mort de l'homme de bien ! Qu'elles sont amères les larmes que fait couler la perte d'un ami ! Mais, c'est moins sur toi que nous devons en répandre, respectable jeune homme, que sur nous-mêmes. Si tes jours ne furent pas nombreux, tu sus les illustrer par tout ce qui rend l'homme recommandable.' *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8.

³³ The word derives from the Greek *κενοτάφιον* meaning empty tomb. *Procès-Verbal des Honneurs funèbres*, pp. 4-5, 29.

Verdun and Cumbria, and the universal non-geographical home of the cenotaph, where he was to meet 'the Creator'.³⁴

The last example suggests the importance and ambivalence of religion in these deaths. Whilst the Second Epistle to the Corinthians 5:8 – 'we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord' – was on the mind of captive clergymen, they faced difficulties in offering a final home for their captive flock.³⁵ The revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685 had led to the exclusion of Protestants from established cemeteries.³⁶ Despite Bonaparte's efforts to restore freedom of religion, by shifting the question of burial from confessional to administrative terms, graveyards were still to be separated in 'municipalities where several cults were practiced' leading to the multiplication of private Protestant cemeteries.³⁷ As discussed in the previous chapter, Verdun did not have a Protestant congregation before the arrival of the prisoners, which led them to negotiate burial plots within existing churchyards, provided that they would separate them by 'walls, edges or ditches'.³⁸ No official Anglican burial in Verdun was mentioned in Revd Gorden's report to Canterbury until 1806.³⁹ However, Revd Maude's manuscript diary reveals that practical reasons superseded spiritual concerns, as captives were buried, without distinction, in Catholic churchyards in 1804.⁴⁰

This fuelled imaginings of dying out of place amongst captives. Lawrence, for instance, dedicated a chapter of his memoir to the 'deaths' in captivity.⁴¹ There, the story of the Tweeddales was re-appropriated and construed as a romance: that of 'disconsolate and broken-hearted marquis' who died of sorrow for the loss of his wife, far away from Scotland.⁴² This narrative appeared in

³⁴ Ibid., p. 26.

³⁵ A reflection on finding home in the grave featured in a sermon made by Reverend Wolfe in Verdun: 'the scene of labour is closed, and the grave has put a final term to every work and device connected with salvation. This common home has already received many who were collated in that place. May we who remain, be induced to take an useful retrospect of the time, too little improved, which we passed there, and redeem that which is thus peculiarly continued to us, to lay hold of the promise of everlasting life!' See Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, p. 59.

³⁶ Penny Roberts, 'Contesting Sacred Space: Burial Disputes in Sixteenth-Century France' in Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (eds), *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 131-148.

³⁷ Jacqueline Thibault-Payen, *Les Morts, L'Eglise et l'Etat dans le Ressort du Parlement de Paris aux XVIIème et XVIIIème Siècles* (Paris, 1977), Daniel Robert, *Les Eglises Réformées en France (1800-1830)* (Paris, 1961); Nicolas Champ, 'L'Eglise Réformée de Saintes au XIXème Siècle', *Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* (2007) 153:148, p. 408.

³⁸ The decree of 23 Prairial an XII (12 June 1804) stated: 'Dans les communes où l'on professe plusieurs cultes, chaque culte doit avoir un lieu d'inhumation particulier, et dans le cas où il n'y aurait qu'un seul cimetière, on le partagera par des murs, haies ou fossés, en autant de parties qu'il y aura de cultes différents avec une entrée particulière pour chacune et en proportionnant ces espaces au nombre d'habitants de chaque culte.'

³⁹ Details of these ceremonies feature in the appendices.

⁴⁰ QCL, GB/NAF/P144289, John Barnabas Maude, 'Journal', 28 February 1804.

⁴¹ Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, II, pp. 214-28.

⁴² Ibid., II, pp. 114-15.

other memoirs and the press, which suggests the wide circulation of this romantic version of their death.⁴³ ‘The *détenus* who died at Verdun were usually buried in the cemetery there’, deplored Lawrence, ‘but their tomb stones have often been defaced by some mischievous boys, so that whenever peace takes place, few vestiges of them will shortly after remain.’⁴⁴ As a remedy for oblivion, he suggested the construction of a ‘monument, containing the names of all the *détenus* deceased in France ... on the Dover road ... in the form of a pyramid’.⁴⁵ The project had a twofold purpose: dissuading travelers from crossing the Channel for fear of another mass arrest, and commemorating, in the popular ‘Egyptian’ manner, the forgotten demise of fellow captives. Both of them bore witness to a fear of effacement of captivity that echoed contemporary tropes of romantic ruins.⁴⁶

Romanticism strongly inflected the ways in which prisoners came to terms with the end of detention. Certain prisoners revisited Verdun after their liberation. They perceived the journey as a nostalgic pilgrimage, culminating in the visit of the graves of their fellow captives, which became sites of military tourism after 1814. In 1827, after rising to the rank of post-captain in the Royal Navy, Donat Henchy O’Brien and his wife embarked on a Grand Tour with the intention of visiting the ‘scenes of [his] former woes’: the *Trois Maures* hotel, his former apartments, the citadel, the *Tour d’Angoulême*, ‘traver[sing] many parts of the towns, Haute and Basse’.⁴⁷ Yet, the main purpose of his visit was the graveyard, more precisely a lost graveyard. ‘I had expected to find in the old burying ground of the English prisoners, tombs and epitaphs to many of my departed friends’, he wrote, ‘but the site had been covered with stately edifices, and the bones of my countrymen had been removed, many years back, to a cemetery, *aux faubourgs* not far from Belle Ville. The mind is hurt at the desecration of the hallowed ground in which we have deposited the remains of those we loved and esteemed’. The grave was meant to be the immutable place where a new Romantic Self could (re)inscribe itself in the past experience of the war.⁴⁸

⁴³ *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 15 August 1806.

⁴⁴ Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, II, p. 227.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, II, p. 228.

⁴⁶ I will develop the question of ruins towards the end of this chapter.

⁴⁷ Donat Henchy O’Brien, *My Adventures During the Late War* (2 vols, London, 1839), II, pp. 411-2.

⁴⁸ This complements David Bell’s argument on the importance of romanticism as inscribing the Self in the experience of war during the Napoleonic conflicts. David Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon’s Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It* (Boston & New York, 2007). See also, Philip Shaw, *Suffering and Sentiment in Romantic Military Art* (Farnham, 2013).

Writing about the missing grave served a similar purpose, and led to other forms of military tourism, since nineteenth-century authors and historians, who read published accounts of captivity, visited the town to glean its last remnants between 1820 and 1860.⁴⁹ Previously known for its Vauban fortifications and the suicide of Beaurepaire, Verdun was now visited for its British graves, where travellers further reflected on the tragedy of dying abroad and the transience of time.⁵⁰ “I went to *la cimetière* [sic.]”, wrote a reporter to *Notes and Queries* in 1857; ‘there were three or four stones erected to the memory of those who died in captivity; but the stone itself was of so soft a nature, that time and weather were fast operating to render the inscriptions on them illegible ... I left the ground grieved that such “frail memorials” only should mark the spot where my countrymen lie’.⁵¹ The visit prompted nostalgia for something that they did not experience, an ache to find home in a distant yet familiar past. This, as will be discussed in the next chapter, led historians to chronicle life at Verdun in a similar vein to the objects of their study.

Later graves unfold the trajectories of the captives who stayed at Verdun after their liberation. The *Faubourg du Pavé* cemetery suggests that the ‘stayers’ successfully integrated into the locality. During his captivity, Revd Edward Newenham married into the local bourgeoisie, with whom he was buried in 1867. The location of the ‘*Famille Newenham*’ vault at the heart of the elite quarter, close to the mayors’ tombs, reveals the status he acquired after 1814 (Fig.25). It also highlights that the displaced graveyard O’Brien visited was more a socially segregated space than a confessional place of burial, since Revd Newenham was interred amongst Catholics.⁵² This is confirmed by the tomb itself, which offers a syncretism of the two families’ symbols linked by an enchained heart and epitaphs from the New Testament in French. This complicates the account given by most historians of Newenham, as the spearhead of the captives’ Protestant faith and a patriotic effort to introduce it in Verdun.⁵³ Whilst it appears evident that Newenham was actively involved in his congregation and the maintenance of the *Chapelle des Anglais* until the mid-nineteenth century, a diary kept by the

⁴⁹Normich Duff, *Commander Norwich Duff's European Tour Journal* (1819) [http://www.kittybrewster.com/ancestry/Norwich_Duff_Journal_Intro.htm, accessed 2 May 2014]; *Notes and Queries*, 31 October 1857; Edward Hain (ed.) *Prisoners of War in France from 1804 to 1814, Being the Adventures of John Treggerthen Short and Thomas Williams of Saint-Ives* (London, 1914), pp. 17-19.

⁵⁰ On Vauban and the Verdun fortifications, see introduction and chapter 1.

⁵¹ *Notes and Queries*, 31 October 1857.

⁵² This appears unusual, as there was still a religious segregation at the time. See Nicolas Champ, ‘L’Eglise Réformée de Saintes au XIXème Siècle’, *Bulletin de la Société d’Histoire du Protestantisme Français* (2007) 153:148, p. 408.

⁵³ ADM-Bar, Archives privées de l’Eglise réformée, paroisse de Bar-le-Duc (1826-1984), 1 J 461, Maurice Bellefleur, ‘Les Protestants à Bar-le-Duc et dans le Barrois, leur histoire aux XIXe et XXe siècles, à partir des archives de l’Eglise réformée’, manuscript document, 2003.

first French Protestant vicar in Verdun reveals that his proselytism was a late enterprise. It commenced only in the 1850s, when, together, they attempted to gather the sporadic Protestants in the vicinity.⁵⁴ Newenham's stay at Verdun was a combination of three factors: the death of his grandfather, an anti-Catholic MP in Ireland, the financial dispute it caused between the claimants to his fortune, and Edward's union with a French woman.



Fig.25: Catholic tomb of Reverend Newenham with his French family

(Verdun, Cimetière civil du faubourg)

Newenham's case was not unique. In 1819, the *Narrateur* welcomed the return of fourteen prisoners who decided to reside in the town after their liberation.⁵⁵ 'Some English families came to settle in Verdun and its surroundings', wrote Denis; 'it is believed that far more will follow suit. Several causes are given for this emigration: the suppression of the *droit d'aubaine* in France, the fear of imminent and serious troubles in England, and the advantageous prospect of our French country for the captives who so long resided there.'⁵⁶ These arrivals were motivated by financial,

⁵⁴ The chapel was still visible in 1925. Jean-Baptiste Pruvot, *Journal d'Un Pasteur Protestant au XIXe Siècle* (Lille, 1996), pp. 240-77.

⁵⁵ For a list of the returned prisoners, see Léon Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun* (3 vols, Frémont, 1840) II, p. 52.

⁵⁶ 'Quelques familles anglaises sont venues habiter Verdun et les environs, on prétend que beaucoup d'autres vont les imiter. On attribue cette émigration à plusieurs causes, savoir : à la suppression du droit d'aubaine en France, à la crainte de troubles sérieux imminents en Angleterre, à l'idée avantageuse de notre pays français donné par les Anglais qui si longtemps ont été otages ou prisonniers.' *Narrateur de la Meuse*: 20 August 1819. On the '*droit d'aubaine*' and its suppression in 1819, see Peter Sahlins, 'La Nationalité Avant la Lettre. Les Pratiques de Naturalisation en France sous l'Ancien Régime', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*,

political and mostly familial incentives, since Verdun had led to another lasting form of captivity, that of the heart.

The captivity of the heart

In 1808, the editor of the *Narrateur* offered his accolade to the captives' marriages at Verdun, conferring the French brides the mission of bringing amity between the two nations at war.⁵⁷ The prisoners equally saw in these French women the recipients of an embellished memory of their detention.⁵⁸ Romantic sociability, love and the birth of children formed what I would term a triangular 'captivity of the heart', a positive form of detention, according to the persons involved in this captivity. This section aims to explore how these emotional links survived or eroded over time and, more precisely, how couples negotiated the formation of transnational homes, during and after detention.

Marriages were a thorny issue for captive clergymen. Revd Wolfe considered them as a source of moral and professional embarrassment, since he had to transgress his duties away from his home parish. Yet, in 1805, he agreed, 'in the sight of God', to solemnise these sacraments in Verdun.⁵⁹ This consisted in giving 'the sanction of religion' to French civil contracts made at the town hall, by acting as a witness and co-signing the document.⁶⁰ He nevertheless deplored it as reducing a holy union to an administrative formality.⁶¹ This was then followed by a religious ceremony at the captives' Protestant chapel. Most notably, the reverend did not serve as a witness for Franco-British unions, but he solemnised their unions *a posteriori* in the Chapel, sometimes with some delay. Robert Hawlins and Marie Michaud, for instance, waited for eight years between their civil union in

(2000) 55, p. 1083; Patrick Weil, 'Nationalité Française (débat sur la)', in Jean-François Sirinelli (ed.), *Dictionnaire Historique de la Vie Politique Française (XXe siècle)* (2nd edn., Paris, 2003), pp. 719-21.

⁵⁷ See previous chapter: 'On pourra voir un jour de nouvelles Sabines, leurs enfants entre les bras, se placer sur le champ de bataille entre leurs maris et leurs frères pour les convier à la concorde.' *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 14 December 1808. Denis was, without doubt, referring to Jacques-Louis David's *The New Sabine*, painted in detention in 1795.

⁵⁸ Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, I, p. 245.

⁵⁹ Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, pp. 50-52.

⁶⁰ From 1792, and in accordance with French law, all births, marriages and deaths taking place in France, regardless of the nationality of the individual were required to be registered within three days at the town hall. See Suzanne Desan, *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2006); Sophie Wahnich, *L'Impossible Citoyen: l'Etranger dans le Discours de la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1997), p. 69.

⁶¹ Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, pp. 51-52, 54; ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (51), Registre d'état civil de Verdun, 1804-1805, Outhwaite and Andrews (11 Prairial an XIII), Walter and Morgue (7 Messidor an XIII); 1806, Nicholls and Mount. The latter was solemnized by the Protestant vicar on 30 April 1806.

1803 and receiving the Protestant sacrament in 1811.⁶² Revd Gorden, his colleague and the head of the Charitable Committee for prisoners, kept tally of the Protestant ceremonies to report to the Bishop of London, to whom they were subordinated as ‘clergyman ... officiating out of the British dominions’.⁶³

Despite receiving the approval of the Church of England after due consultation with ‘ecclesiastical lawyers’, the validity of these unions was much-debated in Britain, as evidenced by a series of articles in *The Times* and the *Monthly Mirror* in 1805. These related the accusations made by ‘remainders’, namely the family of civilian prisoners, who were concerned with two issues: clandestine marriage and the negotiation of familial property abroad. These concerns were anchored in contemporary cultures of adultery, dispersed by novels and plays as much as personal experience, and which depicted France as a place of elopement for illegitimate couples, who could hope to live ‘*maritalement*’ there, out of the family and societal gaze.⁶⁴ Certain captives were, in fact, arrested following such romantic escapes. This was the case of the redcoat Captain Thomas Rainsford who fled with the disowned Jane Hannay, and those of the nobility such as Lord Yarmouth who joined, in defiance of his father, an Italian courtesan of illegitimate birth in Paris.⁶⁵ More broadly, their concerns crystallised colliding conceptions of marriage in formation at the time, as a public or private act, an emotional or financial contract, a spiritual or a lay union.⁶⁶ *The Times* spelt out these anxieties yet empathised with the ‘dilemma’ faced by the Verdun captives:

various marriage have been celebrated, from some of which children have been born. In consequence of these events, the state of much property in possession and reversion is affected in this country, and the persons in remainder contest the validity of these marriages, upon the ground of their not having been performed according to the law of

⁶² The reason for such delay is unknown. The departure of Reverend Wolfe to Givet in 1805 might have played a role in this. Society of Genealogists, London, FRA/R6/73007, ‘Register of births, marriages and funeral of English prisoners at Verdun’.

⁶³ ‘Every clergyman, who officiated out of the British dominions, was considered under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London ... His Lordship stated, that it was his own opinion, and this one of the first ecclesiastical lawyers in England, whom he had consulted, concurred, that the marriages ought first to be legalized according to the rites of the country in which the individual were living ; and that he had no doubt, every marriage so entered into, would be perfectly valid in point of law. I might then, without the least apprehension, give to such marriages the sanction of religion.’ Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, pp. 51-2.

⁶⁴ Allan Pasco, *Revolutionary Love in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century France* (Farnham, 2009).

⁶⁵ Julie Garland McLellan (ed.) *Recollections of My Childhood: the True Story of a Childhood Lived in the Shadow of Napoleon Bonaparte* (London, 2010); T. J. Hochstrasser, ‘Conway, Francis Ingram-Seymour-, second marquess of Hertford (1743-1822)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2008 [<http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/25167>, accessed 8 April 2014]

⁶⁶ Lawrence Stone and Jeanne Fawtier, *An Open Elite: England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1986), p. 30.

England (the Chapel not being consecrated and the Clergymen ordained, or for some other legal defect), or to the laws of France.⁶⁷

Revd Gorden and Revd Wolfe addressed these accusations via the press. Their plea was relayed by Capel Lofft, a radical and Unitarian writer, who intervened in their favour.⁶⁸ Lofft responded to allegations made in the *Mirror* regarding the illegality of captives' unions, by emphasizing the alignment of such 'contracts' with English 'municipal law' and the 'laws of nations', being 'solemnised as near as possible to the laws of England. Full as nearly as Scotch Marriages of English subjects'.⁶⁹ This comment highlighted the contradictions in the British system, and the Scottish exception.⁷⁰

The confusion around captive unions was obvious in Britain and France alike, as they had to be validated a second, if not a third time. The annotations penned in the margins of French civil records reveal that prisoners re-solemnised their union with French women in Anglican churches upon their return. For instance, George Hanbury Dine and Anne Antoinette Crouzevier remarried 'in the Royal chapel of His Very Christian Majesty in London, on 20 July 1816'. This was 'transcribed in the marriage records of the town of Verdun [in] 1825 ... following the marriage certificate issued ... by the vicar of Marylebone parish, Middlesex'.⁷¹ Whilst local parishes and the groom's family might have initiated the double act, the French Ministry of Defence had also a say in the matter. This is shown by the marital vicissitudes of Mr Ross and Mademoiselle Michaud, whose banns were

⁶⁷ *The Times*, 5 March 1805.

⁶⁸ Like Hazlitt, Lofft was a warm admirer of Napoleon Bonaparte. While remaining committed to strictly constitutional methods of proceeding, he refused to be deflected by a fear of popular pressure. As he told Wyvill in 1809: 'No violence, even of Mr Cobbett, shall make me other than a Friend to right Principles whencesoever [*sic.*] they come' G. M. Ditchfield, 'Lofft, Capel (1751-1824)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/16930, accessed 13 March 2014]

⁶⁹ The tone of the response was vehement: 'Though I am obliged to write in my bed, an article in your *Mirror* compels me to write. It relates to the marriages of English Prisoners there. Marriages celebrated in a Protestant Chapel which they were permitted by the French government to use. And it is said the Persons in remainder mean to dispute the validity of those marriages. If so I am sorry for them: and more sorry for their advisers. Shall the validity of such a Contract as Marriage, the most important of all private Contracts to the individuals present and future, and to the Community, ever be disputed in such circumstances? On what grounds of equity or conscience, of Municipal Law or the Laws of nations? I take it no one will say that these marriages were contracted with a view of evading the laws of the place, or our laws. They are the marriages of persons whose detention could not be foreseen, and solemnised as near as possible to the laws of England. ... those who would dispute such marriages, and the legitimacy and every interest of the issue, have small Right to impute perfidy to any other person.' *Monthly Mirror*, 5 May 1805.

⁷⁰ Maureen Waller, *The English Marriage: Tales of Love, Money and Adultery* (London, 2000).

⁷¹ 'célébré dans la chapelle royale de sa Majesté très chrétienne à Londres, le 20 Juillet 1816, transcrit aux registres des actes de mariages de la ville de Verdun à la date du 23 Juin 1825 n°43 à la suite de l'acte de mariage rédigé le 4 mars même année 1816 par Monsieur le Curé de la paroisse de Marylebone dans le comté du Middlesex.' ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (50), Etat civil de Verdun (1804-1805), 243, Anne Antoinette Dine, note du greffier, 1825. Notably, the note was not placed along their marriage certificate. It updated the record of their daughter born in Verdun, who seems to have cemented their link to the town. Parents of the bride might have reported their wedding to the town hall.

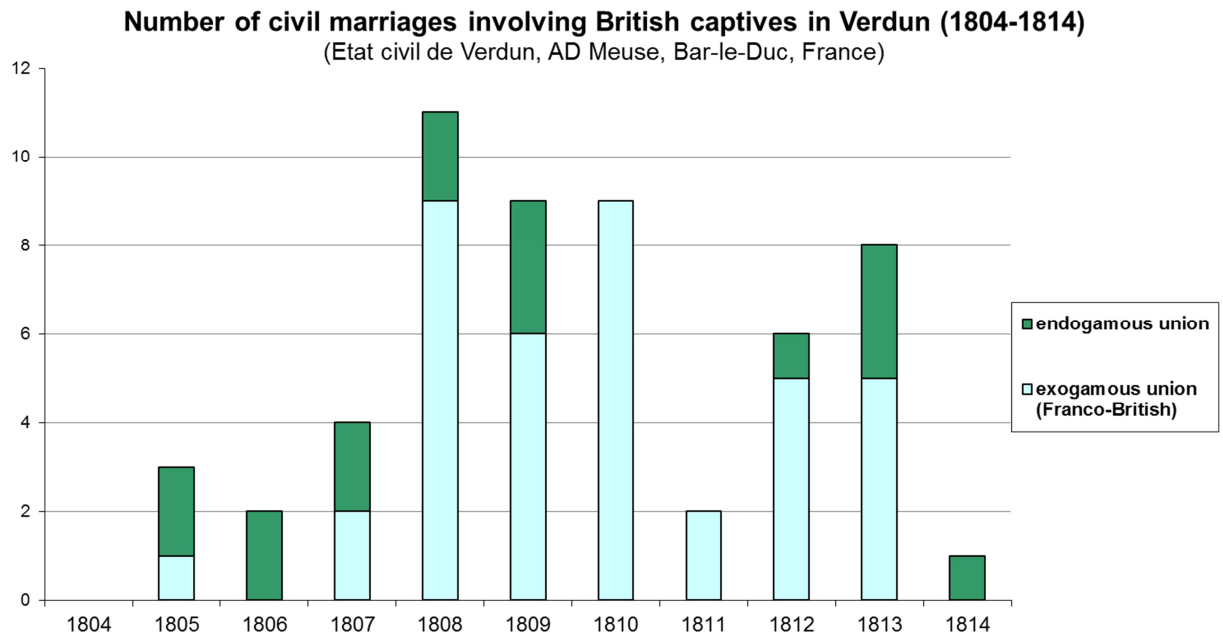
announced, forbidden, then announced again and officialised in 1810.⁷² In the case of Franco-British marriages, the bride's family expected a Catholic celebration, which led to triple-act marriages. The case of Suzanne Sophie Soldé and William Bravinder, a captain of the merchant navy, is apt. After his transfer from Longwy to Verdun, they got married at the town hall on 17 October 1812. On the same day, they tied the knot religiously both at the Catholic parish of Saint-Victor, where they lived, and at the captives' Protestant church.⁷³ Seemingly, captives espoused pragmatic views about marriage as a sacrament and a contract, which confirms the point made in the previous chapter about the prevalence of social concerns over religious delineations. The line between Catholicism and Protestantism was made rather porous in these weddings, as unions necessitated the validation of various parties on both sides of the Channel.

A closer consideration of the marriages solemnised in the Protestant Chapel and the Verdun town hall unravels the social issues at play in the captives' unions, at home and abroad. The following tables (Table 22) highlight the discrepancy between endogamous and exogamous civil unions at the town hall, and their evolution over time. The debates on the validity of the captives' marriages affected their frequency until 1808, when the number of unions increased significantly before dropping in 1810-1811. This year coincided with Napoleon's efforts to reduce female migration across the Channel, as seen in chapter 2, and the suicide of Wirion, which led to a period of uncertainty for the captives who expected being sent to other depots.⁷⁴

⁷² ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (56), Etat civil de Verdun, 1810, entries 95, 99.

⁷³ Society of Genealogists, London, FRA/R6/73007, 'Register of births, marriages and funeral of English prisoners at Verdun'.

⁷⁴ See timeline in the appendices.



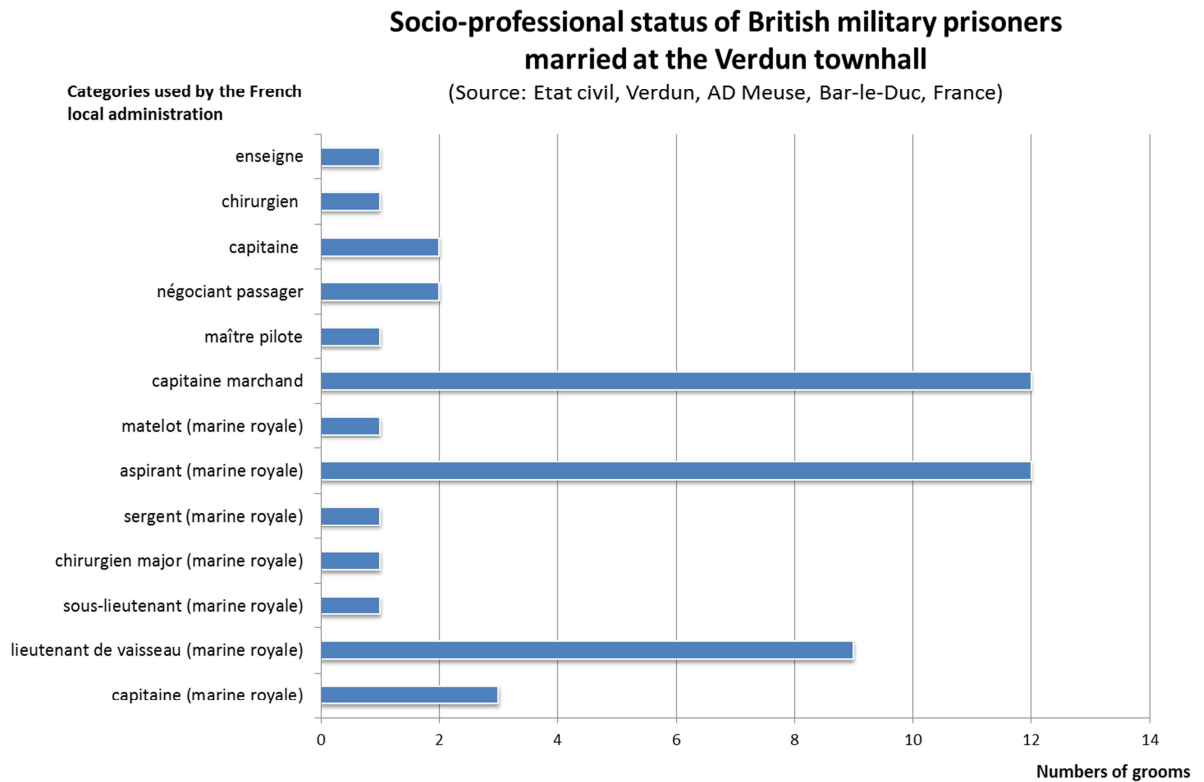
Nationality of women who married captives in a civil contract at Verdun		Number
French		41
British		17
German		2
Dutch		1
Captive status of prisoners married in a civil contract at Verdun		
Civilian arrested in 1803		14
Military prisoner captured under arms		47
Total civil marriages involving prisoners at Verdun		61

Table 22: Number of civil marriages involving British prisoners

These unions were mostly exogamous (Franco-British) and involved military captives, particularly naval officers who became predominant at the depot (Table 23).⁷⁵ Before detailing the sociology of the spouses, it seems important to emphasize that we are here dealing with social categories that were constructed at the time, by the French State, and used at a local level by the mayor and its administrators. I chose not to translate these categories in the following quantification, because they reveal the problematic social ‘place’ of the captives abroad, a question lying at the core of this thesis. In terms of the marriage record itself, no differentiation was made between foreign and local unions. The procedure had been the same since 1793, which explains the use of French

⁷⁵ There was only one marriage of a British woman with a French man. 77 per cent of British married men in Verdun had been captured under arms.

categories to situate the prisoners within an emerging administrative language of identity, which Vincent Denis has recently illuminated.⁷⁶ In this terminology, and given the martial context, the word '*Anglais*' was used inclusively to refer to English, Welsh, Scottish, Irish, Maltese, Swedish and Canadian spouses.⁷⁷ Whilst close attention was given to the French brides marrying captives – most of them being local – the municipality was less consistent with British brides. Out of the twenty-seven marriages, the status of only eight British brides was detailed: two were identified as daughters of military servicemen (*filles de militaires*), two as widows (*veuves*), one as a servant (*domestique*) and another as the daughter of a landowner/farmer (*fille de cultivateur*). They consigned the age of the future spouses with equal inconsistency (Table 24), depending on the *greffier de mairie*.⁷⁸



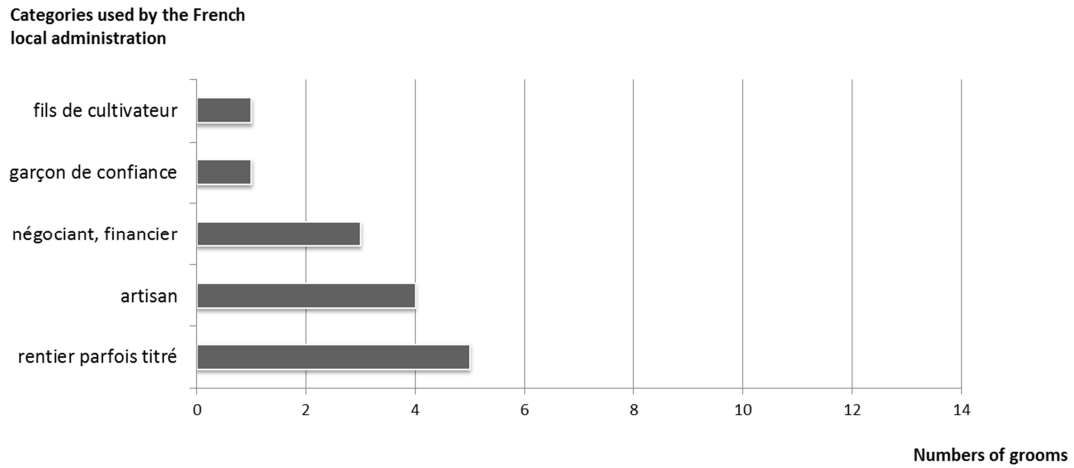
⁷⁶ Vincent Denis, *Une Histoire de l'Identité: France 1715-1815* (Paris, 2008).

⁷⁷ ADM-Bar, 2E558 (51), Etat civil de Verdun, 1805, entry 60, Augustin Waller.

⁷⁸ These records are also partial since the age of the brides and grooms was not regularly reported between 1805 and 1806. ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (50-60), Etat civil de Verdun, 1803-1814, 11 vols.

Socio-professional status of British civilian prisoners married at the Verdun townhall

(Source: Etat civil, AD Meuse, Bar-le-Duc, France)



Socio-professional status of French women married to British prisoners at the Verdun townhall

(Source: Etat civil, AD Meuse, Bar-le-Duc, France)

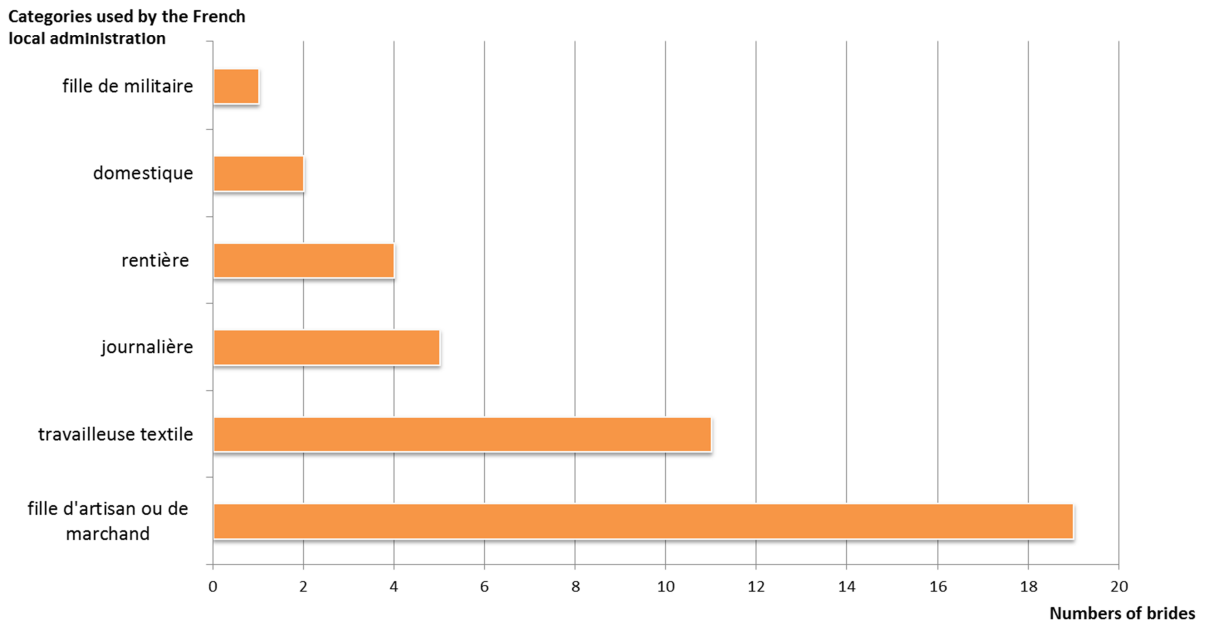


Table 23: Social backgrounds of spouses

These tables reveal patterns in the captives' unions at the town hall. They suggest that the anxieties voiced by genteel families at home were well grounded, since prisoners married slightly below their rank. The French brides were mostly daughters of shopkeepers, artisans and merchants (Table 23). As seen in chapter 4, shops were spaces of contact, which explains why several within

the same merchant family, such as the Carage sisters, married British prisoners, who were most likely to be their clients.⁷⁹ Whilst captivity enabled them to spread their matrimonial net wider, prisoners nevertheless cultivated a social reproduction in matrimony. This is evidenced by the propensity of naval sub-officers to marry French tailors and day labourers, as opposed to the captains marrying into a higher strand including daughters of tradesmen and landowners. The same phenomenon occurred amongst civil detainees. Sir Edouard Barry, a '*chevalier baronet*', married Anne-Marguerite Sornique, '*fille majeure de Monsieur Jean Sornique, Bourgeois*'.⁸⁰ Affinities in status occurred in endogamous unions: daughters of shoemakers such as Elisabeth Andrews married shoemakers, whilst '*filles de gentilhomme*' such as Frances Charlotte Mount married '*gentilhommes*', and daughters of merchant family such as Suzanne Speck married into the merchant service.⁸¹ Proximity, which Lawrence Stone has identified as a drive to matrimony for eighteenth-century families, was measured more in social than geographical terms in detention, allowing, for instance, Elisabeth Andrews from Southampton to marry a shoemaker from Kirby Lonsdale.⁸²

There is a tendency in POW studies to assume that, because marriages happened out of place and despite martial antagonisms, these unions were affectionate rather than arranged. This is nuanced by the continuation of marital networks and strategies of genteel families in detention. First, not all marriage prospects were suspended for naval officers under the 'persuasion' of their fiancées' families at home, as was the case for Anne Eliot in Jane Austen's novel.⁸³ In 1807, Suzanne Speck travelled from London to Verdun to marry Captain Simon Miller, once captivity evicted him from the theatre of war.⁸⁴ Their engagement, arranged *ante bellum*, enabled her to obtain permission to travel through the country.⁸⁵ Furthermore, genteel families detained as hostages took advantage of captivity to further develop their marital network, as was the case of James Tichborne from Hampshire who married into the Seymour family following the arrangement made by his father, Sir

⁷⁹ Therèse Carage, the daughter of Jean Antoine Pierre Carage, a local locksmith and landlord, married her father's tenant, Jeremiah Gahagan, on 4 mars 1812. Her sister, Anne Marie Carage married another prisoner, William Westlake, on 21 June 1813. ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (54), Etat civil de Verdun, 1808, entry 53.

⁸⁰ ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (54), Etat civil de Verdun, 1808, entries 17, 22, 53; 2 E 558 (59), Etat civil de Verdun, 1813, entry 63.

⁸¹ ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (51), Etat civil de Verdun, 1804-1805, entry 50; 2 E 558(52), Etat civil de Verdun, 1806, entry 56; 2 E 558 (54), Etat civil de Verdun, 1808, entry 6.

⁸² Stone and Fawtier, *An open elite*, p. 30; ADM-Bar, 2E558 (51), Etat civil de Verdun, 1804-1805, entry 51.

⁸³ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey and Persuasion* (London, 1818).

⁸⁴ ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (54), Etat civil de Verdun, 1808, entry 6.

⁸⁵ Ernest d'Hauterive, *La Police Secrète du Premier Empire* (11 vols, Paris, 1908-1964), III, p. 460; IV, p. 32; Society of Genealogists, London, FRA/R6/73007, 'Register of births, marriages and funeral of English prisoners at Verdun', 13 January 1808.

Henry Tichborne, also detained in Verdun.⁸⁶ The greater age difference in the captives' endogamous unions, in comparison to Franco-British unions (Table 24) might confirm the continuation of marital arrangements despite the distance.

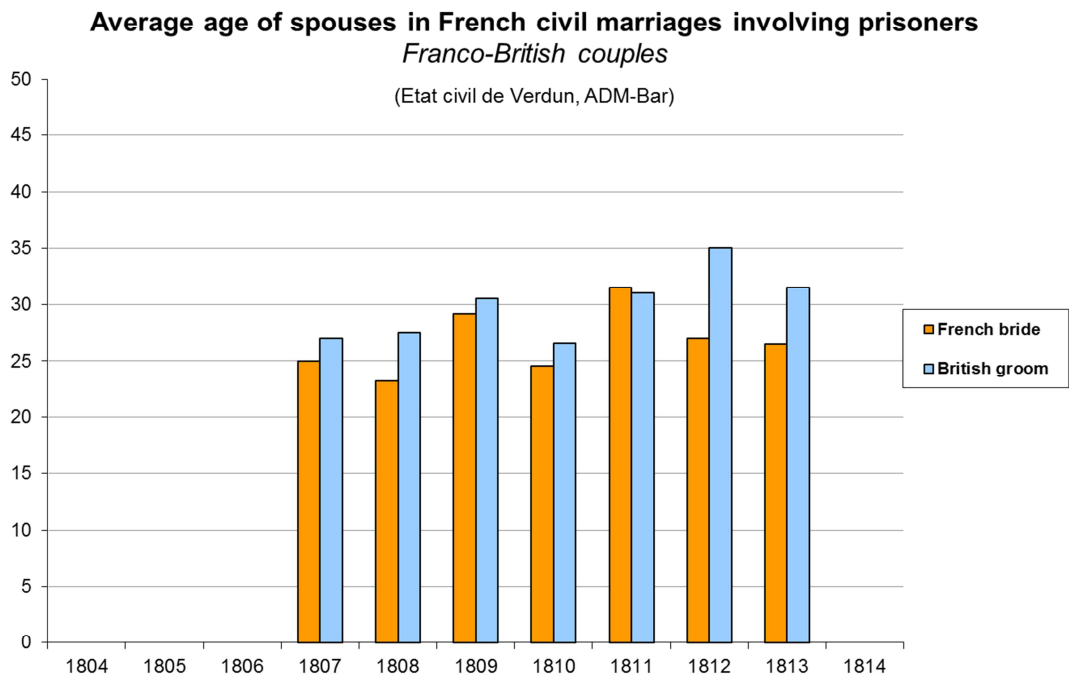
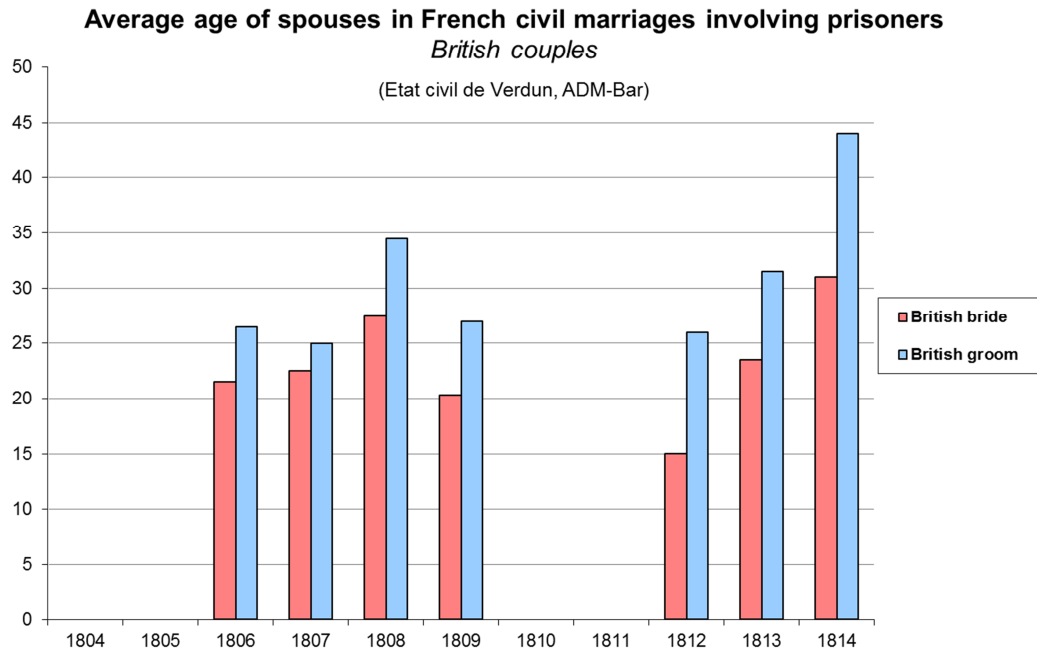


Table 24: Average age of spouses

⁸⁶ Rohan McWilliam, *The Tichborne Claimant* (London, 2007), p. 7.

Yet, there is an inherent difficulty in assessing sentiment in the past, which social and cultural historians have illuminated.⁸⁷ A case study sheds some light on the matter, as sentimentality manifests itself more vividly in ego-documents than in administrative records. Here I intend to trace the mechanics of courtship, the language of sentiment and the transnational lives of one particular couple through the correspondence and gifts they exchanged before and after 1814 (Fig.26) in order to show that home could be sought in the heart.⁸⁸ The couple in question is the one formed by William Hamilton and Claudette Rebière, the daughter of his landlord in Verdun. Material testaments to their love have recently been donated to Verdun, where their romance dawned.⁸⁹ The collection offers a precious insight into the articulation of emotions and how this couple fashioned a home between two countries, two legal systems and various familial, political and professional imperatives.



Fig. 26: Portraits of Claudette Rebière and William Hamilton (c. 1810-1814)

(Musée de la Prinerie, Verdun)

William Hamilton (1789-1877) had entered the Royal Navy as a midshipman two years before his capture in 1805.⁹⁰ The son of a distinguished Scottish family – his father was a medical doctor in West Lothian – he had been sent with the rest of his crew's officers to Verdun, where he found

⁸⁷ John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: the Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1990); Carolyn Steedman, *Master and Servant. Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age* (Cambridge, 2007); Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter* (New Haven, 2003).

⁸⁸ Daniel Miller, 'Learning Love', in *The Comfort of Things* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 57-65; Sally Holloway, 'Romantic Love in Words and Objects during Courtship and Adultery c. 1730 to 1830', PhD thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2013).

⁸⁹ These objects were donated to the *Musée de la Prinerie* by a descendant in 2006.

⁹⁰ Andrew Jampoler, *Horrible Shipwreck!* (Annapolis MD, 2013), p. 59

lodgings amongst the Rebières, a family of tapestry merchants in the *rue Chevert*.⁹¹ There, he formed an attachment to their youngest daughter, Claudette (1794-1876), which led to nine years of courtship before they could marry in 1814.⁹² Despite living under the same roof, they commissioned and exchanged portraits of each other (Fig.26). In Claudette's case, this took the form of a miniature painted by a captive artist named Halpin.⁹³ Hamilton bestowed on her other tokens of his affection. In particular, he offered her a cotton handkerchief embroidered with her nickname 'Annette' delicately framed in a foliage wreath and white lace featuring a series of two hearts, which suggests their intimacy (she could keep it close to her at all times) as much as his emulation of genteel cultures of gift giving.⁹⁴ On her birthdays, he penned acrostics and songs in French in her honour, following the codes of pre-nuptial address (Fig.27).⁹⁵ In these compositions, he celebrated her person and 'nature' as embodying the allegory of love itself, by means of a rhetorical apostrophe 'Amour!'.⁹⁶ He articulated his elation as a 'délire', the medical condition of a self in love which echoed the contemporary 'flowering of sentimentalism' in France and Britain.⁹⁷ This was further suggested by the choice of offering her a piece of sheet music entitled 'romance' to be played following the '*andantino espressivo*', an Italian tempo slightly more rapid than a walking pace and inflected by an expressive 'emotion', to take up the musical lexicon of the time, which gave the piece a serenading tone.⁹⁸ Overall, these tokens reveal the transnational refinements and language of courtship that a naval man could cultivate to seek the affection of a French woman in confinement.⁹⁹

Whilst we do not know how Claudette received and consumed these gifts, it appears striking that these objects reiterated one main anxiety: her youth. Despite the support of both families, their bond

⁹¹ It is unclear whether her father, M. Rebière, was the M. Ribière who emigrated under the Terror. See 'Verdun' in Arthur Chuquet, *Les Guerres de la Révolution* (Paris, 1792), pp. 238, 256.

⁹² ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (60), Etat civil de Verdu, 1814, entry 12.

⁹³ MPV, Hamilton Papers, 81.1.219, 'Portrait de Annette Claudette Rébière', 1812; 81.1.106, 'Portrait de William Hamilton', 1807.

⁹⁴ As Leora Auslander argued, courtship was a key 'transitional moment' marked by the transmission of objects. Leora Auslander, 'Beyond Words', *American Historical Review*, 110: 4 (2005), pp. 1015-45. On the use of textiles to attract a spouse, see John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 2007), pp. 310-314.

⁹⁵ 'Eh! qui pourrait la voir, l'entendre sans l'aimer! / Brulant de former le plus sacré des Liens. / Inspiré par ses Charmes, arbitres de mon Destin. / Entraîné par l'Espoir d'un Présage fortuné. / Rempli de l'ardeur que me causent tant d'attraits. / En ces vers J'ose exhaler mes secrettes [sic.] Pensées'. MPV, Hamilton Papers, 2006.0.25.16, 'Sur le Mariage'.

⁹⁶ David B. Morris, 'A Poetry of Absence', in John Sitter (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 225-48; 'The Flowering of Sentimentalism (1700-1789)' in William M. Reddy (ed), *The Navigation of Feeling: a Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 141-72.

⁹⁷ 'The spectre of illness is but a sharp reminder of the ambiguity of that sensibility which became a vogue for the refined and the educated to cultivate in the eighteenth century'. Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability*, p. 17. On the 'délire', see Jean-Baptiste-Augustin Hapdè, *Thérèse et Faldoni, ou le Délire de l'Amour* (Paris, 1809).

⁹⁸ This tempo was used in romantic sonatas and preludes during the Romantic period. See Peter Le Huray, *Authenticity in Performance: Eighteenth-Century Case Studies* (Cambridge, 1990), Don Michael Randel (ed.), *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Harvard, 2003) p. 43.

⁹⁹ Margarette Lincoln, *Naval Wives and Mistresses* (London, 2011).

could not be solemnised in the sight of God or the French State. This was not owing to the different nationalities and confessions of the spouses, but the fact that she had not reached the legal age of marriage imposed by the *Code Napoléon*. Hamilton petitioned the Ministry of Justice in 1805 to obtain derogation and voiced his anxieties about having to navigate the legal subtleties of marriage between the two countries.¹⁰⁰ In particular, he reconfigured his own views on the subject in the act of writing poetry. One of them entitled ‘On Marriage’ discussed the social enchainment attributed to the sacrament before concluding: ‘But I maintain that love/ In marriage finds home/ And accompanies forever/ The Spouses united in the Heart.’¹⁰¹

This language of love, essentialising home in matrimony, which emerged from the difficulties the couple encountered in officialising their union, did not preclude a carnal relation. In 1812, they had a son whom they ‘abandoned’ to St-Catherine hospice.¹⁰² The midwife brought the child to the local orphanage, where he was given a name, education and care. One can speculate about the intentions of Claudette’s parents in this affair, since pre-nuptial pregnancy could serve to secure marriage for daughters of working and middle-class families.¹⁰³ What is certain is that his parents ‘wrapped [him] in a piece of cotton, decorated with a white ribbon and a stripe of white cloth. His head was covered with a bonnet of floral *Indienne* printed on white cloth with red lines embroidered with lace.’¹⁰⁴ This valuable textile strongly resonated with the material of their own romance and enabled the couple to reclaim the child in 1814 when, after his liberation, Hamilton obtained permission from the monarchist authorities to marry Claudette. Pierre-Guillaume, the child, was renamed William and received close attention from his mother and grandmother, for his father said he was ‘spoilt given the circumstances’, namely his abandonment and the deaths of his two siblings in their infancy.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ MPV, Hamilton Papers, 2006.0.25.27-28, Letters of William Hamilton to the Ministry of Justice and Finance, Verdun, 1805. With the help of Claudette’s mother, he then petitioned the Ministry of Finance.

¹⁰¹ ‘*Mais moi je soutiens que l’amour/ Chez l’Hymen fixe sa demeure/ Et qu’il accompagne toujours/ Les Epoux unis par le Cœur*’. MPV, Hamilton Papers, 20006.0.25.16, ‘Sur le Mariage’.

¹⁰² ADM-Bar, 2E558 (58), Etat civil de Verdun, 1812, entry 122.

¹⁰³ This was an increasing phenomenon in both Britain and France from 1750 onwards. See John R. Gillis, *For Better, For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (New York and Oxford, 1985), pp. 110-11, 179-180; June K. Burton, ‘Human Rights Issues Affecting Women in Napoleonic Legal Medicine Textbooks’, *History of European Ideas* 8:4 (1987), pp. 427-34; Adrienne Rogers, ‘Women and the Law’, in Samia Spencer (ed.) *French Women and the Age of Enlightenment* (Bloomington, 1984), pp. 33-48.

¹⁰⁴ ‘*il a été apporté audit hôpital par dame Lucie Mirgon, Epouse du Sieur Burté, accoucheuse en cette ville, un enfant qu’il nous a présenté, et que nous avons reconnu être un garçon âgé d’environ deux jours. Lequel était emmailloté dans un morceau de coton blanc, garni d’un ruban blanc, avec une bande de toile blanche. Sa tête était couverte d’un bonnet d’indienne fond blanc et rayes rouges garni de dentelles*’. ADM-Bar, 2^E558 (58), Etat civil de Verdun, 1812, entry 122.

¹⁰⁵ ‘*N’oubliez pas de soumettre à votre chère Maman ainsi qu’à votre bon frère que j’aime de tout cœur, et n’oubliez non plus de faire autant de ma part à mon pauvre petit William et dites lui que j’ai le plus grand soin de rapporter avec moi un quelque chose*

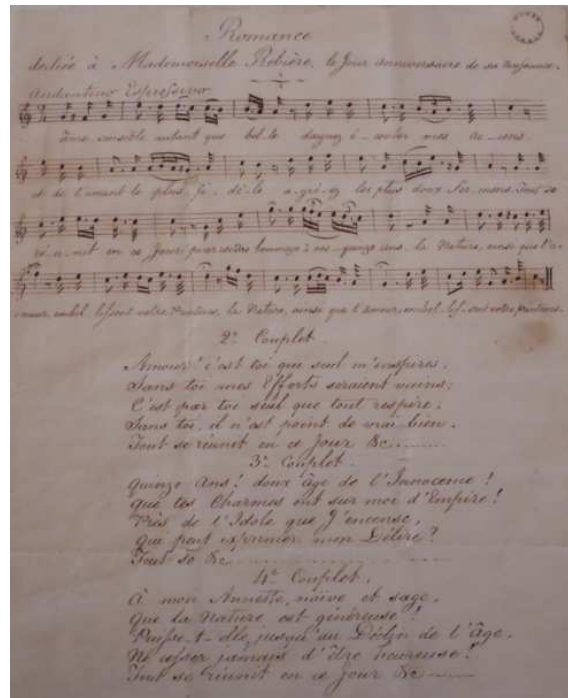
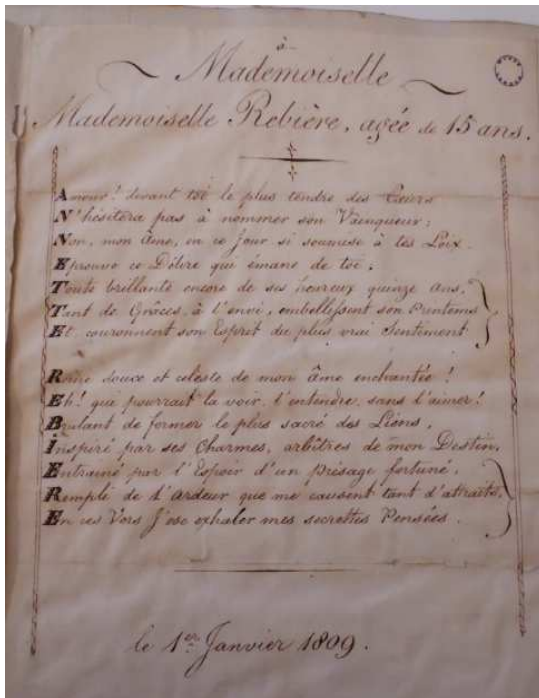


Fig.27: Handkerchief, poem and song composed by William Hamilton for Claudette Rebière's birthdays

(Musée de la Prinerie, Verdun)

pour le corriger s'il est gâté ce que je crains fort considérant les circonstances dans lesquelles vous avez été placé pendant mon absence'. MPV, Hamilton papers, 2006.0.25.25.

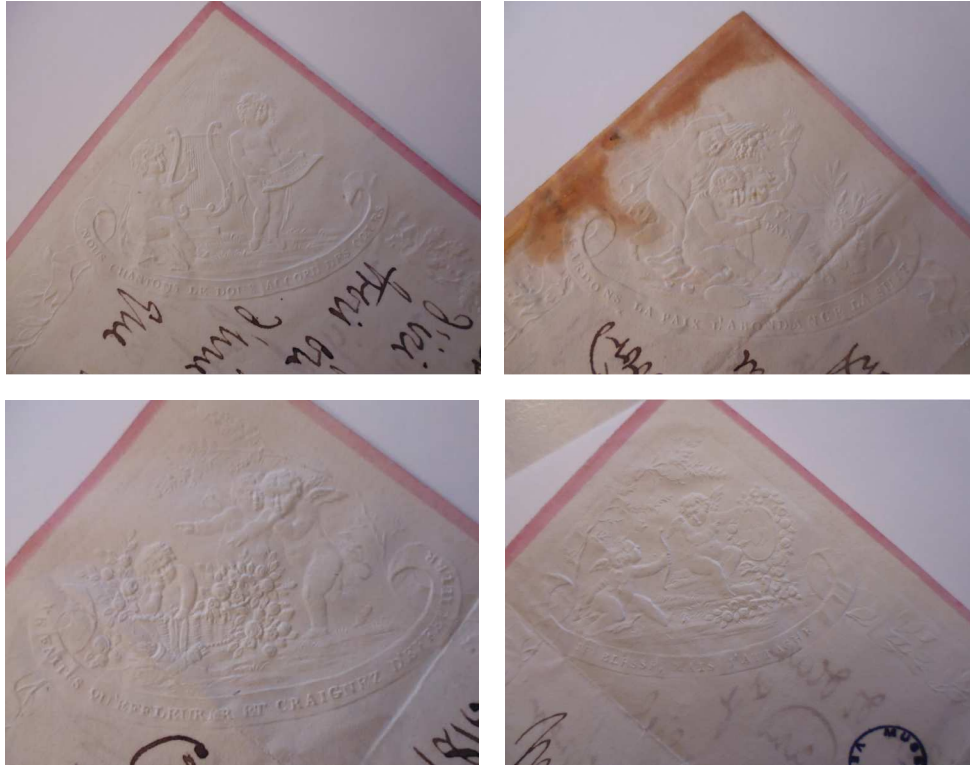


Fig.28: Pink-edged writing paper with Cupid scenes and French inscriptions used by William Hamilton in his correspondence with Claudette Rebière after 1814

(Musée de la Prinerie, Verdun)

William settled back in his lodgings between 1814 and 1817. During this time, he acted as a correspondence agent between London and Verdun, and developed his network amongst the local elites who recommended him to the Bourbon government. This allowed him to shift from naval to diplomatic duties – which would allow him to stay on the Continent – and in 1817 he received vice-consular positions in Low Country ports.¹⁰⁶ The amorous correspondence Hamilton kept up after resuming his career for the British government further suggests that the culture of sentiment, which soared in prestige in the eighteenth century, superseded socio-professional and national imperatives. Indeed, William immediately penned a touching poem entitled ‘*Sur l’absence*’, in which he lamented the absence of his ‘idol whom [he] adore[d]’ who had stayed in Verdun.¹⁰⁷ The poem

¹⁰⁶ Jampoler, *Horrible Shipwreck*, p. 59.

¹⁰⁷ MPV, Hamilton papers, 2006.0.25.5, ‘*Sur l’absence*’: ‘*O toi pour qui mon Cœur sincère/ Brûle d’une ardeur toujours nouvelle;/ Toi seule possèdes mon âme entière;/ Je te serai toujours fidèle!/ Ah! loin de toi, mon Cœur soupire;/ Tu es mon souverain Bonheur;/ Si tu ne veux pas que J’expire/ Reviens mon Ange Consolateur!/ Dans ce moment. Dieux! quel délire/ S’empare déjà de tous mes sens/ Reviens soulager mon Martire [sic.]/ Reviens consoler ton amant/ Ah! loin de toi D° [sic.]/ Amour! qui veilles sur nous sans cesse/ Prends pitié de mon triste sort/ Fais moi goûter ton ivresse/ Près de l’idole que j’adore/ Ah oui! loin d’elle mon sang soupire/ Elle est mon souverain Bonheur/ Si tu ne veux pas que j’expire/ rends moi mon ange Consolateur.*’

echoed contemporary discussions about ‘the poetics of absence’, the ruins of one’s soul in separation from ones’ beloved, which equated to a loss of life of the author.¹⁰⁸ The quality of the French writing paper he used to correspond with her in 1818 (Fig.28) tells us something about the strength of their bond, despite displacement and professional obligations, as he garnished his words with representations of Cupid.¹⁰⁹ He confessed to her moving from one port to another in hope of obtaining his parents’ blessing for the union. They seemed less concerned about Claudette’s nationality than making sure, by the means of a visit to Scotland, that her character corresponded to the traits Hamilton had described to them.¹¹⁰ In his letters to her and his closest male friends, he also confessed seeking a more favourable post where he, Claudette and the ‘poor little William’ could live together again, and which he finally in Boulogne in 1826.¹¹¹



Fig.29: Miniatures of Alexander and Claudette Hamilton, 1831

(Musée de la Prinerie, Verdun)

¹⁰⁸ Michael O’Neill, ‘Poetry of the Romantic Period: Coleridge and Keats’ in Corinne Saunders (ed.), *A Companion to Romance from Classical to Contemporary* (Oxford, Malden and Carlton, 2004), pp. 305-20.

¹⁰⁹ The letter’s corners formed an tetrptych of angels performing romantic and pacifist commandments : ‘*Ne faites qu’effleurer et craignez d’effleurer*’, ‘*Le blesse mais l’attache*’, ‘*Gardons la Paix l’abondance la suit*’, ‘*Nous chantons le doux accord des cœurs*’. Clearly French writing paper that he kept whilst writing from his journeys to different ports in Flanders.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. ‘*ils m’ont témoigné toutes espèces d’amitiés, et pour vous ma chère amie ils sont tout impatients de vous voir que le Bon Dieu veut qui continuent après vous avoir vu leurs bons opinions de vous, car il est très flatteur à présent et moi je ne doute nullement de la continuation.*’

¹¹¹ Ibid. ‘*A Anvers terminer s’il est possible mon affaire avec Monsieur Annesley d’une manière ou l’autre car je veux être certain et li n’y a pas d’autre moyen plus sûre que d’aller chercher la réponse soit-même [sic.] si je suis assez heureux d’avoir cette place nous serons assez bien et si non il faut que je fasse mon mieux [sic.]*’.

Following his appointment, they commissioned a local artist to compose this diptych (Fig.29) which crystallised the social and marital status they had achieved after William's liberation. With their bodies and hands symmetrically aligned, and harmoniously inclined towards each other in a sitting pose, the couple now formed a complementary entity. The piece was painted on ivory, a precious commodity which signified their elevated status, as much as the delicacy of their clothes (particularly Claudette's fur muffler, floral black dress, ribbons and the lace-edged bonnet covering her finely curled hair).¹¹² Interestingly, the backgrounds inverted those of the original portraits they had commissioned in Verdun: Claudette now silhouetted against a neutrally brown domestic interior, whilst William turned his back against a distant sky and bucolic landscape framed by a classic column which, by reflecting tropes of Grand Tour representations and with the use of a red velvet chair, indicated his new position at the British Consulate. Ultimately, the posture of their hands drew the attention to an object that had embodied their bond since 1814: the letter. Whilst William kept a folded letter in his hands, Claudette held the red wax that had sealed it. Yet, the content of the letter was not disclosed, perhaps inducing the intermingled political and romantic purposes of the correspondence he kept whilst on consular duties, which he pursued with her in Boulogne until 1873.

The case of the Hamiltons suggests that home could be sought in sentimentality, a sophisticated culture of affection which corroborates Margaret Lincoln's argument to reconsider the love lives of naval men abroad.¹¹³ Indeed, the common vision of seamen with 'wives in every port' is a trope often transposed to captivity. It has mostly been constructed by their co-sufferers from the Field Army, such as Major Blayney who ridiculed the 'partiality of the *beau sexe*' for the midshipmen.¹¹⁴ Whilst the trajectory of the Hamiltons is illuminating in various ways, captive households and romantic bonds proved more fragile constructions for others, especially out of wedlock. We do not know how many prisoners cohabited with French women, despite the fact that some of these

¹¹² At the back of the portrait, Claudette is referred to as 'Lady Hamilton'.

¹¹³ Margarette Lincoln, *Naval Wives and Mistresses* (London, 2011).

¹¹⁴ 'The midshipmen, above all presented a singular and not uncanny sight, from the *bizarrierie* of their costumes and equipage, which gave to the scene more the appearance of a masquerade than a march. These young gentlemen, to use one of their own phrases, "were up to every thing;" and such seemed to be the partiality of the *beau sexe* for them, that few were without a French female companion, many of whom had made a greater progress in *plain English* than I could have supposed; having perfectly at command the choicest selection of sailor's oaths and cant sayings, which they applied in the slang stile, and with a tone and manner as if they had received their education at the back of the Point at Portsmouth.' Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey*, II, pp. 284-5.

households were under scrutiny.¹¹⁵ We do not know, either, how many of these women followed their companions in Britain.¹¹⁶ But it seems that those who refused to do so, or who were left behind, were often attached to servicemen of the merchant service and the field army. Peter Sutton, a lieutenant-major in the ninth regiment of infantry, left his French companion and their nine children in Calais whilst he pursued his military career between 1818 and 1824, before retiring, alone, in London in 1840.¹¹⁷ Marriage did not cement these unions either, as exemplified by the will of Jeremiah Cahagan, which was sent to Verdun in 1826 with a request to find his abandoned wife.¹¹⁸ Cahagan had returned to India with the EIC after his liberation, where he died, having made the request that his possessions should return to Thérèse Carage, on the condition that she had not remarried during his absence.

Extramarital relations could have tragic consequences when involving concealed pregnancy, as evidenced by the case of Betty Amplet. The illegitimate daughter of a Worcestershire family, she travelled to France with her 'uncle', a shoemaker who tried his luck in France in 1802. She followed him to Verdun, where she became intimate with another prisoner.¹¹⁹ In 1809, she crossed the Channel and sought shelter with an aunt, who, upon discovering her pregnancy, sent her to an asylum.¹²⁰ 'The reception she met with there', reported the press, 'was such, that she left the place soon after her delivery, and became a wandering outcast' before being accused of infanticide. In 1810, she was tried at the Gloucester assizes, hanged, and her body given for dissection.¹²¹ Such accusations were not unusual.¹²² The singularity of her case was that she was found guilty and executed, whilst infanticide cases normally did not result in conviction. Promiscuity in France did not inflict the sentence, but her 'denial of God' and her unmarried status did. Her case suggests that

¹¹⁵ See chapter 4 on the prisoners' cohabitation with prostitutes.

¹¹⁶ The passport records available at The National Archives (HO2 series) have proved incomplete in this regard.

¹¹⁷ I used the research conducted by a family historian on the Sutton family [http://genmugo.free.fr/index_fichiers/Page589.htm, accessed 2 May 2014].

¹¹⁸ AMV, uncatalogued file, Correspondence between Ignace Depape, mayor of Bourbourg (Nord department) and the townhall in Verdun about the execution of Cahagan's will, letters from 23 July 1826, 21 August 1826, 8-12-20 February 1827, 19 March 1827.

¹¹⁹ The name and rank of this prisoner have not been identified.

¹²⁰ She was taking advantage of Napoleon's new directives on female migration. See chapter 2.

¹²¹ Betty's execution led to vehement reactions in the press. *Edinburgh Annual*: 21 August 1810; Ivy Pinchbeck, Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society: from the Eighteenth Century to the Children Act 1948* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1973), p. 596.

¹²² 'Throughout the eighteenth century, many unmarried women who concealed their pregnancies and gave birth in secret, and whose newborn children were later found dead, were suspected by their neighbours of having murdered those children at birth. A large percentage of those women suspected of murder were subsequently prosecuted in the assize courts ... In the eighteenth century, most women indicted for murdering their new-born children were either discharged by a grand jury or acquitted by a trial jury'. Mark Jackson, *New-Born Child Murder* (Manchester and New York, 1996), p. 3.

homecoming was perhaps the most problematic for the children conceived, born or educated in captivity.

Captive childhoods

Between 1803 and 1814, the municipality recorded 296 births involving British prisoners at Verdun.¹²³ This included 107 legitimate children of British parents, and 47 of Franco-British unions. It also included what the French authorities termed the '*enfants naturels*': the children conceived outside wedlock, by two unmarried parents who could recognise them at the town hall. The 'natural child' was a medieval socio-juridical concept of divisible filiation that the Revolution had revalued, by aligning their rights with those given to legitimate children, yet without changing the discrimination made against the 'bastard' offspring of adultery.¹²⁴ At Verdun, 122 'natural children' of Franco-British parents were recorded, to which 9 recognitions were later added, along with 9 'natural' children recognised by British parents.¹²⁵ Overall, the prisoners altered the local demography by doubling the number of such births in Verdun.¹²⁶ This was a direct and indirect effect of their presence, since the *gendarmes* in charge of their surveillance also fathered children.¹²⁷ However, the records are limited: some prisoners were not aware of the legal obligation to declare the child at the municipality, and some illegitimate children were abandoned, which makes it impossible to trace their filiation in the archives.¹²⁸

Recognitions of paternity in captivity did not follow the patterns identified by Lisa Zunshine in Britain during the period. In her compelling study, she differentiated the illegitimate 'bastards' who remained an illegitimate out-of-wedlock child, with the seemingly illegitimate 'foundling' ultimately recognised by a parent. She concluded that the legitimate or illegitimate status of the child was constructed on a gender basis: the 'bastard' being typically a male character, and the 'foundling'

¹²³ ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (50-60), Etat civil de Verdun, 1803-1814, 11 vols.

¹²⁴ This persisted with the *Code Civil* until 2005.

¹²⁵ ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (57), Etat civil de Verdun, 1811, entry 139.

¹²⁶ Between 1808 and 1813, 484 '*naissances naturelles*' were recorded in Verdun, instead of 281 after their departure between 1821 and 1826. *Mémoires de la Société Philomatique de Verdun* (Verdun, 1850), IV, pp. 172-6.

¹²⁷ For an example of foundling recognised by *gendarmes*, see ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (56), Etat civil de Verdun, 1810, entry 150; 2 E 558 (58), Etat civil de Verdun, 1812, entry 151.

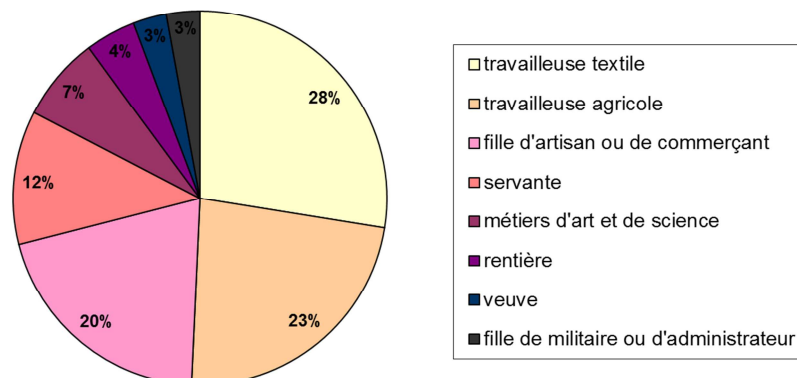
¹²⁸ ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (53), Etat civil de Verdun, 1807, entrée non chiffrée, Anna O'Kely, née le 4 juillet 1806. Only one case of abandonment involved an English mother. ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (55), Etat civil de Verdun, 1809, entry 199; 2 E 558 (55), Etat civil de Verdun, 1813, entry 456; *Société Philomatique de Verdun*, IV, p. 177.

more generally female.¹²⁹ Yet, at Verdun, captive fathers seem to have recognised their children irrespective of their gender: 51 per cent of the foundlings were male and 49 female.¹³⁰ This did not necessarily lead to a maintained contact between the child and the father. Whilst Blayney came back from Guéret in May 1814 to buy a property, officially for his future leisure but also as a gift to the illegitimate daughter he had with a French servant, the later records of the *état civil* show that at least seventeen children lost contact with their fathers. In particular, the wedding record of Marie Emilie Simons in 1835 stated that ‘her father William Simons is absent, and she has had no news from him for twenty years’.¹³¹

This was partly owing to the social discrepancy between the British fathers and the French mothers. The former were on average eight years older, and generally naval officers or gentlemen (Table 25). The latter were mostly textile workers, day labourers on farms (*journalières*), daughters of shopkeepers, artisans and servants. The records suggest that some had followed prisoners from one depot to another: Adélaïde Lanor migrated from Arras, Victoire-Joseph Marchand from Béthune, Camille Augustine Bernard from Valenciennes.¹³² Amongst them featured prostitutes, such as Marie Anne Desprès from Paris, also referred to as the ‘*filie Desprès*’ by the local authorities.¹³³

**Social status of the French women
who had ‘foundling’ children with British captives at Verdun (1803-1814)**

(Source: Etat civil de Verdun, AD Meuse, Bar-le-Duc, France)



¹²⁹ Lisa Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundling: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century England* (Columbus, 2005), pp. 14-6.

¹³⁰ ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (50-60), Etat civil de Verdun, 1803-1814, 11 vols.

¹³¹ ‘son père William Simons est absent sans nouvelle depuis vingt ans’ Ibid., 2 E 558 (81), Etat civil de Verdun, 1835, entry 37.

¹³² Ibid., 2 E 558 (54-56-57), Etat civil de Verdun, 1808, entry 205; 1810, entry 188; 1811, entry 294.

¹³³ Ibid., 2 E 558 (59), Etat civil de Verdun, 1813, entry 52.

**Sociology of British male captives
who had 'founding' children with French women at Verdun (1803-1814)**

(Source: Etat civil de Verdun, AD Meuse, Bar-le-Duc, France)

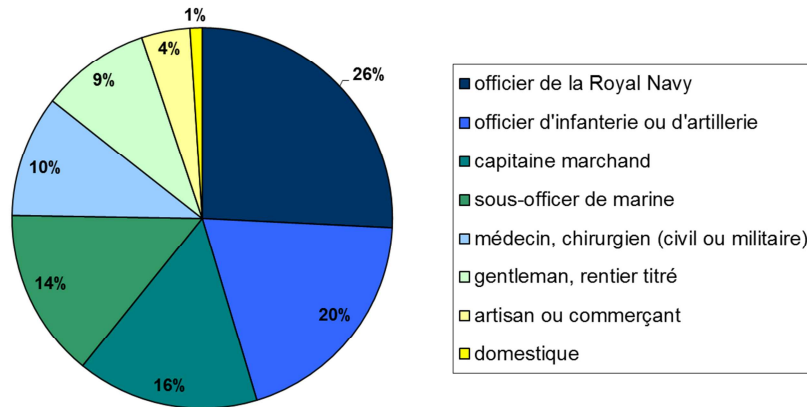


Table 25: Sociology of parents

Naming a child is a 'symbolic gift', in Michel Bozon's words.¹³⁴ Whilst Franco-British children unsurprisingly bore either French or British first names, it seems remarkable that British parents chose popular local names such as Aurore Marguerite Henriette Ruding, which confirms the cultural transfers evoked in chapter 4. Yet, the records should not be taken at face-value, since the *greffier* frenchified certain names: William was turned into Guillaume, John into Jean, and Mary into Marie.¹³⁵ It is only by comparison with the baptism records kept by Revd Gorden that one realizes the duality of these Franco-British identities, children having both official French and informal English names.¹³⁶

The education and sociability of these young people was a greater concern amongst captives. As seen in chapter 3, education was a priority for the captive clergymen and naval officers involved in the Charitable Committee. They created a school, where children of civilian captives and young naval men were taught literacy, numeracy, and other relevant professional skills such as navigation. As Captain Brenton puts it, 'these young captives were clothed as well as instructed, and were making so rapid a progress that it was remarked that their captivity might be considered rather as a

¹³⁴ Michel Bozon, 'Histoire et Sociologie d'Un Bien Symbolique, le Prénom', *Population (édition française)*, 42:1 (1987), pp. 83-98; ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (50), Etat civil de Verdun, 1804-1805, entry 251.

¹³⁵ ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (51), Etat civil de Verdun, 1804-1805, entry 61.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, Etat civil de Verdun, 1808, entry 86. He was known as Francis Annesley in Gorden's record dated 13 March 1808.

blessing than a calamity'.¹³⁷ 'Youth' began to embody a 'troubled' modernity during the period.¹³⁸ This perhaps explains the importance the Committee gave to the education of young captives to further their future integration in British society, the naval service in particular. There was a strong sense that the leisure time they gained in detention had to be controlled, so that they would not succumb to the sirens of the Great Army or idleness.¹³⁹ In fact, some naval men had difficult relations with their children, which the school aimed to alleviate.¹⁴⁰

Self-education was encouraged, and midshipmen hired private tutors in French, music and dancing in their lodgings.¹⁴¹ With lesser means, John Wingate, from Portsmouth, entered the local *collège* and won a prize in Latin.¹⁴² Conversely, prisoners offered tuition to local merchants and their children, leaving lasting marks on French households. Dillon, for instance, gave English lessons to the daughter of 'Madame Chatillon', a haberdasher to whom he was customer. After his departure, the daughter sent him a letter of congratulation on his return home.¹⁴³ These exchanges led many children, on the captives' or captor's sides, to develop transnational educations. This was the case of captive daughters who were educated at home, by contrast with the sons of captive gentlemen who, such as Clive and De Bath, obtained permission to join public schools such as Harrow.¹⁴⁴ Whilst cosmopolitanism was fostered in minor genteel families to acquire the essential polite accomplishments – namely music, drawing, literature, and the art of conversing in different languages, letters and societies – the education of daughters had sometimes motivated the journey to France in the first place.¹⁴⁵ In 1803, James Forbes had set off on a Grand Tour to give the 'last polish' to the education of his daughter, Elisa.¹⁴⁶ Captivity did not interrupt this project, as she was

¹³⁷ Jahleel Brenton, *The Hope of the Navy; or, The True Source of Discipline* (London, 1839), p. 222.

¹³⁸ John Gillis, 'Troubled Youth: the Consequences of Modernization, 1770-1870', in *Tradition and Change in European Age Relations 1700-Present* (New York and London, 1974), pp. 37-93.

¹³⁹ 'Among other institutions formed for the benefit of the prisoners, there had formerly been a seminary for the junior midshipmen of the navy, established by Captain Brenton and Woodriff, and this class of young men were again permitted to become their own masters, and consequently ran into every species of excess ... a number of lieutenants and the young midshipmen were again drawn from the vicious and idle course they were running' in Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey*, II, pp. 237-38. For other examples of such discourses on the captive youths, see Hoffman, *A Sailor of King George*, p. 238, Boys, *Narrative of a Captivity*, pp. 49-50.

¹⁴⁰ ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter of complaint by George Wallace's son against his father to Wirion, Verdun, 5 April 1809.

¹⁴¹ Hoffman, *A Sailor of King George*, p. 238; O'Brien, *My Adventures in the Late War*, I, pp. 94-95; Hewson, *Escape from the French*, p.66.

¹⁴² *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 15 September 1813.

¹⁴³ ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter of the *sous-préfet* to the *préfet*, Verdun, 21 June 1810.

¹⁴⁴ Henri Fauville, *La France de Bonaparte Vue par les Visiteurs Anglais* (Aix-en-provence, 1989), p. 241 ; John Goldworth Alger, *Napoleon's British Visitors and Captives (1801-1815)* (London, 1904), p. 231.

¹⁴⁵ Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998); Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin (eds), *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain: Beliefs, Cultures, Practices* (Farnham, 2009).

¹⁴⁶ The work of Rosemary Sweet has redressed the gender bias that permeates accounts of the Grand Tour, by highlighting the frequency of educational tours for girls during the period. Rosemary Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour. The British in Italy 1690-1820* (Cambridge, 2012).

attended by four French tutors in Verdun.¹⁴⁷ Writing to his sister, he described how Elisa's study maintained his daily routine in detention, and expanded his social networks in captivity through 'the clubs, dances, and other innocent recreations of which she part[ook] in company with ten or twelve other English ladies, who move[d] in the upper circle of captivity'.¹⁴⁸ Elisa thus obtained the transnational refinements that cemented the arrangement of her marriage with a French émigré in Britain after her father's liberation.¹⁴⁹

These transnational trajectories even affected infants born at the end of detention. Born in Verdun in 1811 of a Franco-British union, Charles Cumberworth travelled with his parents and two brothers to Britain in 1814.¹⁵⁰ His time in France inspired him, aged fourteen, to learn sculpture under Jean-Jacques Pradier in Paris, which led him to enter the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* and exhibited at the *Salon* between 1829 and 1848.¹⁵¹ He won the 'Prix de Rome' in 1842 for a religious piece, but 'was disqualified when it was discovered that he was not a Frenchman'.¹⁵² What appears striking is that, as a response, Cumberworth went back to Verdun in that year and donated the sculpture to the parish church where he was baptised, before continuing his work for artistic displays in England.¹⁵³ Despite having spent only two years of his infancy in Verdun, Cumberworth was still attached to his birthplace, which he revisited to reclaim his transnational identity.¹⁵⁴

Seemingly, children felt the tensions of home-seeking more acutely than their captive parents.¹⁵⁵

Also born in detention, Frances Sophia Rainsford and her brothers experienced conflicting feelings

¹⁴⁷ 'We have ... been able to procure music, drawing, French, and dancing-masters, for my daughter. Parisian excellence is not to be expected in Verdun masters: Vestris demanded a Louis per lesson for dancing at Paris; here, M. Boriquet, the first professor in the place, humbly asked only ten sous: the drawing master, having studied six years at Rome, expects fifteen pence, and for music we are to give a shilling a lesson. Mons. Harpin, the French master is professor of the *belles lettres* in the college ... The singing-master has been forty years one of the choristers at the cathedral.' Forbes, *Letters from France*, II, p. 221

¹⁴⁸ 'About nine o'clock, after attending the *appel*, we breakfast a *l'Anglaise*. My daughter then attends to her studies. Her mother looks to her domestic engagements; and my hours pass on in a succession of reading, writing, and drawing.' *Ibid.*, II, p. 248

¹⁴⁹ She married the Comte de Montalembert. See Anne Bulley, 'Forbes, James (1749-1819)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/9830>, accessed 4 May 2014]

¹⁵⁰ His father was a language tutor. He married the daughter of a French carpenter at Verdun.

¹⁵¹ Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun*, p. 210; ADM-Bar, Etat civil de Verdun, 1811, entry 79.

¹⁵² William Curtis, 'Charles Cumberworth', in the Louvre database 'Cross-Channel: British Art in French Public Collections', [http://musee.louvre.fr/bases/doutremanche/4200.php?page=4200_1&l=C&id=145&type=artiste, accessed 02 May 2014].

¹⁵³ TNA, HO 2, 168-1277, Passport delivered on 25 May 1848; Charles Cumberworth, *La Flagellation*, 1842, Eglise Saint-Sauveur, Verdun, France.

¹⁵⁴ 'Charles Cumberworth', *Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851-1951*, University of Glasgow History of Art and HATII, online database 2011 [http://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/view/person.php?id=msib7_120644 8432, accessed 02 May 2014]

¹⁵⁵ Julie Garland McLellan (ed.) *Recollections of my Childhood: the True Story of a Childhood Lived in the Shadow of Napoleon Bonaparte* (London, 2010). Another rare testimony was penned by Clarissa Trant, the daughter of a redcoat, but her parents were not sent to Verdun and were allowed to stay in Valenciennes. Clarissa Trant, *The Journal of Clarissa Trant, 1800-1832* (London, 1925).

on returning to Britain, a home they had never seen before. Recollecting her passage from Calais to Dover in 1814, she wrote:

There I first saw the sea. My Father took me to walk on the sands and I was charmed with the small corals and shells and the fisherwomen. He pointed out to me where England was ... We scarcely lost sight but we had a long rough passage, and arrived very sick and wretched at Dover. Everything looked so dreary there and most of us wished ourselves back to France. My little brother exclaiming 'Is this England? Oh! Take me back to France!'¹⁵⁶

Their clothes became a stigma on their way to London: 'whenever we went out we were hated on account of our dress – the high-crowned bonnets and short waists showing at once that we were French.' Her accent was presumably different and the songs she knew were those composed for the birth of the King of Rome in 1811.¹⁵⁷ In fact, until the 1841 census, Frances Sophia was identified by, or at least for, the British State as 'British subject, France'. This administrative record is however limited. The historian can hardly expect to read national sentiments in what was essentially a procedure, and Frances might not have had a say about the category into which she was deemed to fall.¹⁵⁸

But she chose to write retrospectively a 'recollection of [her] childhood', in which she specifically addressed the 'lasting impression' captivity made on her.¹⁵⁹ Detention in Napoleonic France was 'where [she] made [her] appearance on the stage': this opening remark suggests how she considered her childhood as the prime moment when she developed a sense of her self, in time and space.¹⁶⁰ Her father, a redcoat arrested as *détenu* in 1803, rented a house for his family outside the city walls, and visited them daily before returning to the depot at night. Reminiscing about her

¹⁵⁶ Garland McLellan (ed.), *Recollections of my Childhood*, pp. 18-19.

¹⁵⁷ She associated the song with the return of her elder brother and sister to Verdun, and she still remembered it at the twilight of her life: 'Soon after their return there were great rejoicings at the birth of the little king of Rome in 1812, and I still remember sketches and songs composed upon the occasion, particularly two or three lines of one beginning "*Napoleon te voila Père [sic.], tes désirs sont tous cumplis [sic.]*'. Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁵⁸ On the limitation of the categorisation of the census, see Richard Lawton, *The Census and Social Structure: an Interpretative Guide to Nineteenth-Century Censuses for England and Wales* (London, 1978).

¹⁵⁹ 'I shall endeavor to put down what I can remember of a time that was very eventful, but being only a little girl I can give only a childish account of what made a lasting impression upon me'. She stopped writing about her life at the moment she left school. Garland McLellan (ed.), *Recollections of my Childhood*, pp. 7, 47.

¹⁶⁰ As Carolyn Steedman has shown in *Strange Dislocations*, childhood was an intricate concept, a physiological prism through which a 'sense of insideness' developed in the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century. Carolyn Steedman, *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority, 1780-1930* (London and Cambridge, MA, 1995), p. xi. The interlacing of childhood and captivity will be further explored in the following chapter.

attachment to him at Verdun, and at Saint-Helena where he later found employment after her mother's death, she found singularity in her upbringing in a military and male environment: 'a curious education for a small child (a little girl); but a time that I look back upon with pleasure'.¹⁶¹ Frances chronicled with great enthusiasm the 'perfect paradise' of Madeira, the 'beautiful flowers ... wild animals ... at oranges at the Cape' on her passage to Saint-Helena. These were bucolic sceneries that outshone the 'beautiful garden and orchard' she associated with Verdun, and which she had longed to find in London.¹⁶² There, she had been disappointed by 'a pokey lodging without any garden' and 'houses with very small garden in front': an urban space that did not correspond to her 'country' upbringing in detention.¹⁶³ Frances' perspective confirmed the contemporary longing for home in the countryside, the French and Italian bucolic landscapes through which Grand Tourists sensed their belonging to an 'old country'.¹⁶⁴ Yet, in her narrative, this 'old country' was not England, but the 'emotional household' of a rural France in which she grew up.¹⁶⁵

After the death of her father, Frances and her sisters dreaded their return to London, following a long sea voyage: 'One day the Captain announced that we should soon see England, but it was not very cheering for us, for the ship had been our home, and the rough kind old Captain our only friend'.¹⁶⁶ As Agnes Heller has argued, home is in a constant mobility, a re-alignment between the familiar and the self-navigation of the world, which made Frances transfer her sense of belonging afloat. This moving 'home' was cemented in the keeping of pets – 'two cats in a basket, a cage full of birds and a cockatoo' – acquired in Verdun, and with which they had traversed the Channel and the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁶⁷ As Carolyn Steedman observes, 'little things' fashion identities, and these

¹⁶¹ Garland McLellan (ed.), *Recollections of my Childhood*, pp. 21, 35. The position at Saint-Helena was offered by another POW.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 10. See chapter 7 on the association between captivity and the garden.

¹⁶³ The perfect example would be the vineyards. 'The grapes were hardly ripe, and instead of being in vineyards as we had been accustomed to see them in France, they were beautifully trained'. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁶⁴ On the late eighteenth-century longing for home and national identity in the countryside, see Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London, 1973); Elizabeth A. Bohls, 'Crown Forests and Female Georgic: Frances Burney and the Reconstruction of Britishness', in Gerald Maclean, Donna Landry, and Joseph Ward (eds) *The Country and the City Revisited: England and the Politics of Culture, 1550-1850* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 197-212; Rosemary Sweet, 'British Perceptions of Italian Cities in the Long Eighteenth Century', in Kazuhiko Kondo and Miles Taylor (eds), *British History, 1600-2000: Expansion in Perspective* (London, 2010), pp. 153-76.

¹⁶⁵ The expression 'emotional household' is taken from Heller's theory of feelings, where she developed the idea that home was the nexus where the everyday sense of space converges. This includes a sense of security embodied by human relations, and a subjective self-understanding which Heller termed the 'emotional household'. The latter is constantly reformulated in tensions between the inner and the outer, which positions home in a constant mobility. Quoted in Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: the National Past in Contemporary Britain* (2nd edn., London and New York, 1991), p. 11.

¹⁶⁶ Garland McLellan (ed.), *Recollections of my Childhood*, p. 43.

¹⁶⁷ 'At last we arrived with all our pets at a little lodging at Northumberland Street'. *Ibid.*, p.44.

little animals were indeed part of Frances' sense of belonging.¹⁶⁸ But they caused trouble in finding lodgings – especially the swearing cockatoo.¹⁶⁹ Relatives thus sent her to a girls' school kept by a French *émigrée* in Ealing, until the latter left for Normandy to regain her possessions.¹⁷⁰ The fact that Frances described feeling like a 'wretched child' before leaving the capital poses the question of whether London was the place where anti-French sentiment proved most problematic for former captives.

Unforged Britons? Othering and the British State

Upon his return to Scotland, Alexander Don received a rather cold welcome from his connections. Gilbert Elliot hardly recognised him:

Young Don is just arrived from France, whether he has lived happily or not, I assure you that he has lived fast, for he looks almost as old as his father. We were all very much disappointed in him, for he certainly promised to turn out clever at one time ... I am afraid that he must aspire to no higher character than that of a rake, which he seems to have in great perfection ... In the seven years which he passed in France he has spent above £78,000; he has still about £900 a year of his estate remaining, so that he might do well if he is tolerably prudent, which he professes to intend.¹⁷¹

Aged, financially and morally dissolute, Don was perceived as having been alienated in detention, which led to his severing links with his friends and family. His close friend, Walter Scott, otherwise complimentary about Don' talents, denounced his 'gay habits' and 'indolence' exacerbated in detention. This was partly Don's own doing. He had been anxious to relate his 'racing concerns' in his letters home, chronicling his formidable bets, his attempt to console himself with quail hunting

¹⁶⁸ Carolyn Steedman, 'Englishness, Clothes and Little Things: Towards a Political Economy of the Corset' in Christopher Breward and Becky Conekin, and Caroline Cox (eds.), *The Englishness of English Dress* (Oxford, 2002) pp. 29-44.

¹⁶⁹ 'At last we arrived with all our pets at a little lodging in Northumberland Street, a back street running out of Devonshire Street. A cross-looking old woman received us at the door, and looked horrified when we all bundled out with our pets – two cats, a cage full of birds and a cockatoo, who immediately began to swear and, as his perch had been left on board he took possession of the back of a chair and began biting it to the dismay of the old woman, who seemed very much inclined to turn us all out. But two of our relations arrived and assured her that we should not be there long, for that some of us were going to school and the pets would be given away. This was not very pleasant intelligence to us and we all began to cry.' Garland McLellan (ed.), *Recollections of my Childhood*, p. 44.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

¹⁷¹ NLS, MSS11087, f. 184.

and a final escape, as he grew impatient of receiving Lord Melville's support for an exchange with a French officer.

Don's situation reveals the difficulties of re-entering society for young gentlemen involved in politics. Indeed, Gilbert Elliot's indictment of Don's licentiousness emanated from a political rivalry between the two men, as they both competed for the constituency of Roxburghshire in 1811.¹⁷² The critique was embedded in a rising debate on 'aristocratic vice', which, however, did not use the Francophobic language of otherness that Linda Colley identified as predominant during the Napoleonic Wars.¹⁷³ Don's unpopularity was less due to his exposure to French manners than his physical absence from the political arena and the accumulation of some awkward political moves. He experienced difficulties in navigating networks of patronage that had changed whilst he was away.¹⁷⁴ He presented himself as the 'Prince's friend', with the Regency in view, which displeased Lord Melville. Besides, he seemed unaware that his chosen patron, Buccleuch, was 'not in very good odour'.¹⁷⁵ Don was defeated in 1812 but the election was 'quite near run enough' to make Elliot feel 'a little anxious'. Under the advice of friends, he consolidated his network and resumed his local military functions, which led him to later obtain the constituency, and this time without any opposition.

The Verdun returnees constitute a fascinating test case for what Colley termed 'the invention of Britishness'.¹⁷⁶ It could be argued that Don's return occurred in what she, rather problematically, considered as the 'peripheries', and that London was the heart of a raging anti-French sentiment that might have affected the returnees to a greater extent.¹⁷⁷ To explore this question, this section focuses on two 'sinews' of the British State – the Parliament and the Admiralty, where British Francophobia

¹⁷² 'Alexander Don', History of Parliament online [http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/constituencies/roxburghshire, accessed on 04 May 2014]; Laughton, J. K.. 'Elliot, Sir George (1784–1863), rev. Andrew Lambert'. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/8657.

¹⁷³ Linda Colley, *Britons: forging the nation 1707-1837* (New Haven, 1992).

¹⁷⁴ Other captive politicians with strong parliamentary support found better opportunities. Whilst Robert Ferguson (1769-1840) was accused of ineligibility on his return to Fife 'on the ground of his being a prisoner of war on parole', the allegations were denied as he benefited from the strong support from his father, his club, and the government, having performed his ardent Foxism in his correspondence. Indeed, he had become an increasingly ardent Foxite at Verdun. Writing from the depot in 1803, he had reiterated to his father the family views: 'I wish to God Fox was our minister as well for the sake of England as of all Europe. He is much respected here'. Fox's efforts to secure the exchange of two *détenus* led Ferguson to hope that 'if not personal acquaintance, at least the greatest veneration for him as a public character might give [him] some plea'. The letter served as a testament to the maintenance of his political leanings in displacement, which his father promoted amongst 'Scottish Whig grandees', and which led him to re-enter the Whig Club and Brook's as a *protégé* of Fox after his liberation. His father was known to be his father, an 'opulent' and 'staunch Whig.' *Edinburgh Adviser*: 14-18 February, 5-6 December 1806.

¹⁷⁵ NLS, MSS11081, f. 234; SRO GD1/1/198/3/46.

¹⁷⁶ Colley, *Britons*, p. 1.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-32.

was at its peak. Whilst captivity could confirm, infirm or inflect political views and careers formed *ante bellum*, depending on the solidity of existing parliamentary ties, it seems that, although their detention led to investigations at the Admiralty, naval captives were not penalised by their French experience.

Captivity certainly complicated diplomatic and parliamentary careers. Tensions emerged during detention, when two prisoners – Lord Yarmouth and Lord Elgin – were appointed by Talleyrand and Fox as plenipotentiaries in the negotiations of their own release between 1806 and 1807. Whilst Lord Elgin’s marble reputation remained untouched, Lord Yarmouth’s diplomatic expertise was challenged in Parliament owing to his captive status. A formal investigation was launched by Montagu, who accused the government of ‘being forgetful that the noble lord was unpractised in State affairs, had been long absent from English conversation and English feelings, cooped up in the depot at Verdun’.¹⁷⁸ His ‘word’ was questioned, as he was perceived as a pawn on Tallerrand’s diplomatic chessboard. He was equally mocked for his connoisseurship, having spent his time in Verdun collecting art and ephemera of the Revolution, and enjoying the high life of Paris, which led him to be portrayed satirically in Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*.¹⁷⁹ The critique was in the similar vein as Elliot’s, and stemmed less from a patriotic anti-French sentiment than what Donna Andrew termed the late eighteenth-century ‘cultural skirmishes’ between the aristocracy and the middling sort.¹⁸⁰

Military captives also experienced a difficult return to the service. At Verdun, captives had already voiced concerns about the impact of internment on their anticipated life course. Shortly after his capture, Edward Boys thought captivity would be an ellipsis in his career by depriving him of an imminent promotion.¹⁸¹ Whilst the memoir of Catherine Exley has revealed how captive redcoats could rapidly sink into poverty upon their release, naval men had slightly better prospects. Certain sailors had passed the lieutenant examination in detention, which enabled them to avoid the

¹⁷⁸ Montague, *M. Substance of the Speech of the Hon. Mr. Montague, in the House of Commons, on ... January 5, 1807, in the Debate on the Conduct of the Late Negotiation with France* (London, 1807).

¹⁷⁹ ‘Perhaps the best known of all the Englishmen connected with Verdun in those eventful days is Lord Yarmouth, afterwards third Marquis of Hertford. He was subsequently immortalised in two novels as “Lord Monmouth” in Disraeli’s *Coningsby* and the “Marquis of Steyne” in Thackeray’s *Vanity fair*, one of the greatest novels in our language.’ *The Straits Times*, 29 April 1916.

¹⁸⁰ Donna T. Andrew, *Aristocratic vice* (New Haven, 2013), pp. 1-13.

¹⁸¹ Boys, *Narrative of a Captivity*, p. 8. This was not a trope of retrospective writing, as a similar frustration was expressed by Peter Bussell in the diary he kept in Arras, writing on 26 February 1806: ‘Only a few days back I was looking forward with a pleasing view of future things, and partly arrived to the submit of my wishes, but where are they now? ... I am a captive in the enemy’s country and the Almighty alone knows how long my state of captivity may be.’ See G.A. Turner (ed.), *The Diary of Peter Bussell, 1806-1814* (London, 1931), p. 5. See also, Farrell Mulvey, *Sketches of the Character, Conduct and Treatment of the Prisoners of War at Auxonne, Longwy & from the Year 1810 to 1814* (London, 1818), p. 21.

professional perils experienced by many junior naval men relegated to half-pay, as the Royal Navy considerably reduced its size after 1815.¹⁸² However, the reinsertion of captives into the Navy was complicated by the emerging bureaucracy of the fiscal-military State they had to navigate to resume their connections, as evidenced by the case of William Henry Dillon. He returned to London to face the daily bureaucratic grind of government, all the more difficult to negotiate as he had been arrested as a civil hostage in 1803, and was not considered as a lawfully detained prisoner of war. ‘My arrival in London was a new era in my existence’, wrote Dillon.¹⁸³ He was the subject of an informal inquiry at the Transport Board and the Admiralty, where, to regain employment, he was questioned about escapes and any other relevant intelligence about the French Army. ‘With Lord Mulgrave [he] left a memorial, stating what [he] suffered during [his] captivity and [his] loss of promotion’.¹⁸⁴ This ‘memorial’, along with the court-martial reports naval captains were compelled to write following their capture at sea, offers an insight into how life-writing was a requirement for re-entering the service. In Dillon’s case, the text ensured him a commission, yet the Admiralty and the Transport Office refused his application for the reimbursement of the money he had spent for his lodging in Verdun, which led him to question his loyalty to a government, which, he felt, ‘was sanctioning the oppressive act of the enemy’.¹⁸⁵

Yet, captivity proved to be an asset for naval prisoners who had cultivated their drawing, geographical and language skills at Verdun, as the Admiralty set course for new explorations in Africa and the Arctic after the Napoleonic Wars.¹⁸⁶ This benefited James Kingston Tuckey who was commissioned to chart the source of the River Congo, owing to the publication of a four-volume compendium of maritime geography he penned in detention.¹⁸⁷ It proved equally decisive for young captive midshipmen such as George Back, whose bilingualism and artistic skills acquired in captivity proved essential in finding employment on Canadian expeditions. Back had experienced detention as a child: he had toed the naval line as a volunteer at the age of twelve, and been captured the following year. In Verdun, he was attended by a French language and drawing master for five

¹⁸² See chapter 3 on the subject of the lieutenant examination at Verdun.

¹⁸³ NMM, Lewis papers, LES/6/7/4, Manuscript letter-book of William Henry Dillon, Letters to John, September 1807.

¹⁸⁴ NMM, Lewis papers, LES/ 6/7/4, Manuscript letter-book by of Dillon, Letters to John, September 1807.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. See following chapter for a detailed analysis of court-martial reports.

¹⁸⁶ Rosalind Pepall, ‘Icebergs, Ours Polaires et Aurores Boréales’, in Jean Clair (ed.) *Cosmos: du Romantisme à l’Avant-Garde* (Montréal, 1999), pp. 114-41.

¹⁸⁷ James Kingston Tuckey, *Maritime Geography and Statistics* (4 vols, London, 1815).

years. His advantage, thought his father in 1814, 'was the favour that would be shown to him for his having been a prisoner of war as a boy'.¹⁸⁸ After two positions on the Bulwark and Trent, Franklin chose Back for his Arctic Land Expedition in 1819, during which he promoted him to the rank of lieutenant. Back was chosen for his 'usefulness as an artist' and his ability to speak French and thus converse with their *Canadien* guides.¹⁸⁹ French and *Canadien* expressions permeated Back's logs, revealing his interest in the local culture which crystallised in his publication of French *voyageur* songs in 1823.¹⁹⁰ It also reveals the impact of his captive childhood on his outlook as a British explorer, for he considered himself as a 'European' against the Arctic climate and the first nation tribes.¹⁹¹ His fluency in French affected his perception of racial otherness, as he constantly referred to mixed raced people as '*métissés*' and '*bois brulés*'.¹⁹² According to the Canadian historians Houston and Netby, Back had shown 'affability' for the *Canadiens*, and a 'capacity for tipling with the Indians while feeling a genuine interest in their eternal salvation [which] reveals a catholicity of outlook of which few Englishmen in the immediate post-Wesley era were capable'.¹⁹³ Captivity certainly affected his 'artistic temperament', for his watercolours (Fig.30) demonstrated a singular combination of naval imperatives with expressions of neo-classicism and the Romantic sublime in vogue during his stay in France; they unravel the potency of transnational exchanges in his career and life.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ Montreal, McCord museum, Private collection, Letter of John Back to George Back, 14 October 1815; Ian MacLaren, 'The Aesthetics of Back's Writing and Painting from the First Overland Expedition', in Stuart Houston and Ian MacLaren (eds), *Arctic Artist: the Journal and Paintings of George Back, Midshipman with Franklin, 1819-1822* (Montreal and Kingston, London, Buffalo, 1994), p. 276.

¹⁸⁹ Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, MS395/70/3, Letter from John Franklin, Forst Esquisse, to George Back, 31 January 1821; Houston and MacLaren (eds), *Arctic Artist*, pp. xx-xxi.

¹⁹⁰ 'Back was the only officer who regularly spoke to the voyageurs in French'. *Ibid.*, pp. xxiv; McCord museum, Montreal, Fonds Sir George Back, P238/A.02, B.01, C.01; George Back, *Canadian Airs, Collected by Lieutenant Back, R.N., During the Late Arctic Expedition under Captain Franklin, with Symphonies and Accompaniments, by Edward Knight, Junior: the Words by George Soane, Esq., A.B.* (London, 1823).

¹⁹¹ McCord Museum, Montreal, Fonds Sir George Back, P238/D.03, 'Aurora Borealis', p. 130.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁹³ Leslie Neatby, *In Quest of the North West Passage* (Toronto, 1958), pp. 57-58; Houston and MacLaren (eds), *Arctic Artist*, p. xxxi.

¹⁹⁴ '[His] pen and brush go well beyond the normal response to wilderness Canada from travelers and explorers representing various British institutional interests ... It is as if both the naval officer's concern for accurate depiction and the picturesque traveller's interest in mood find expression.' Houston and MacLaren (eds), *Arctic Artist*, pp. 295, 309.

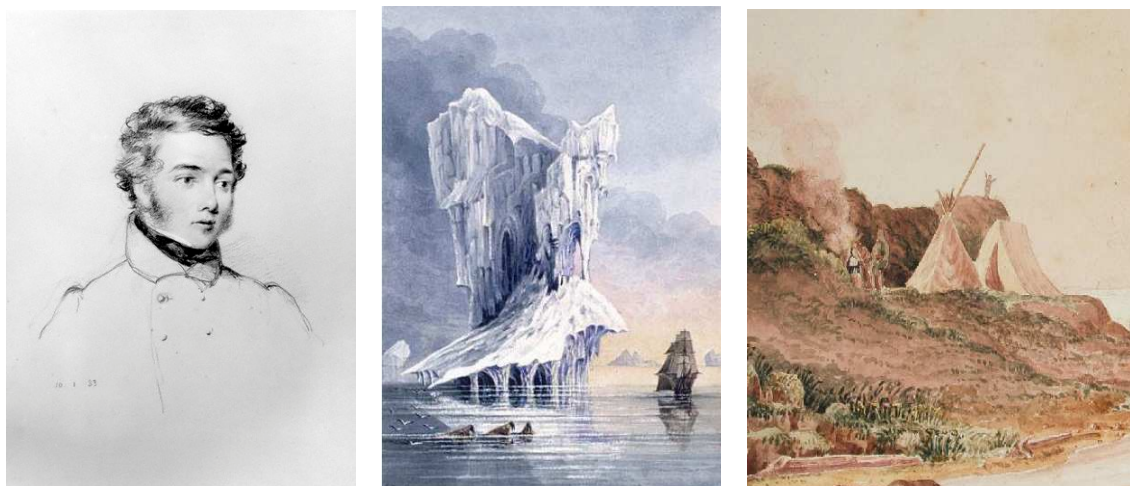


Fig.30: Portrait of George Back and two of his watercolours produced in Canada

(McCord Museum, Montreal and National Portrait Gallery, London)

Verdun ‘Ruins’

On the other end of the spectrum, three solicitors in Verdun penned and published a pamphlet entitled *De la Ruine de Verdun et de la violation du droit des gens* in 1818, in which they pleaded for the reimbursement of the 3.5 million francs debt left by the prisoners in 1814.¹⁹⁵ The pamphlet was later accompanied by the *bordereaux de créances*, a compendium of unsettled debts between the inhabitants and the captives. Most historians have focused on the sum requested and the probity of the creditors.¹⁹⁶ Yet, the documents in themselves – their language, the process and context of their creation – have received little attention. There are two possible ways of exploring this question. The first one is a social study of money-lenders and debtors, as was conducted in chapter 4.¹⁹⁷ The second is an analysis of the narration of a post-captivity Verdun as a ‘ruined town’. This section aims to explore the latter by considering how money-lenders and exiled *gendarmes* aimed to refashion their home after the war, by using a romantic language of ‘ruins’ that soared into prestige during the period.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Humbert Clausson and Lombard de Langres (eds), *De la Ruine de Verdun et de la Violation du Droit des Gens* (Paris, 1818).

¹⁹⁶ Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun*, p. 243.

¹⁹⁷ The question of how these books were made is discussed in chapter 4 along with a quantitative analysis of the French creditors and the British debtors, to evaluate the meaning of ‘honour’ in these transactions.

¹⁹⁸ As Peter Fritsche argued, ‘ruins featured prominently on the mental maps’ in Western Europe following the French Revolution. See Peter Fritsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge MA and London, 2004), pp. 92-130.

The request resulted from the anxieties of a population, who aimed to regain their homes after their captive tenants and customers had hastily left. In winter 1813-1814, the looming tide of invasion from the East after the battle of Leipzig, led to a prompt redistribution of prisoners fanning out towards the South West. The captives left for Blois, thence Guéret, in two convoys over two days, which left them with no time to repay their debts.¹⁹⁹ A week after their departure, Verdun received the retreating troops of Marmont followed by further remnants of a Great Army in full rout. The same week, the Meuse River flooded the lower town causing damage that superseded that of the great flood of 1740.²⁰⁰ After the Prussians gained Montmédy, Verdun avoided being occupied, but lost its garrison, and the local newspaper was suspended for four months.²⁰¹ When the garrison was restored in 1815, the inhabitants had to pay significant compensations, since the officers and soldiers living in their homes were to be fed by them.²⁰² Overall, the Restoration and the Hundred Days significantly contributed to the economic moribundity in Verdun which continued until the July Monarchy.²⁰³

It was in this context that the Verdunois relentlessly petitioned the French and British governments between 1817 and 1850.²⁰⁴ Indeed, *La Ruine de Verdun* featured in a long series of pamphlets, which commenced with the refusal of Lord Castlereagh, the British Foreign secretary, to respond to their quest in 1817, whilst Palmerson made the modest effort of paying 600 Francs for few military officers under his authority.²⁰⁵ In September 1818, negotiations were opened by the French Ambassador, but aborted owing to an old bone of contention: the British government refused to recognise civilian *détenus* as lawful prisoners of war and thus honour their debts. This nuances the

¹⁹⁹ 'All the minor bourgeois of the town crowded together at the gate ... to make a last attempt at recovering the money due to them by the young prisoners. Few, however, if any, were the instances of success; for several of those who had any money, contented themselves with letting their creditors look at it, merely to tantalize them, and, returning it into their pockets, told them, "they would be paid by the Cossacks!"'. Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey*, II, pp. 285-86.

²⁰⁰ Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun*, p. 240; 'Carte de la répartition spatiale des inondations de 1740, 1814 et 1844 à Verdun', 'Synthèse des principales crues historiques sur le bassin versant français de la Meuse, Etablissement public d'aménagement de la Meuse et de ses affluents (EPAMA)' [http://www.epama.fr/files_fr/epama_meuse/epama_meuse_histoire_archives.php], accessed on 4 May 2014]

²⁰¹ Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun*, p. 254

²⁰² 'Le matin, un verre d'eau-de-vie ou une bouteille de vin, une demi-livre de pain. A midi, potage, légumes, une demi-livre de bouilli, une demi-livre de pain, une demi-bouteille de vin ou une bouteille de bière. Le soir, légumes, une demi-livre de viande, une demi-livre de pain, une demi-bouteille de vin ou une bouteille de bière'. 'Règlement' cited in Chaize, *Histoire de Verdun*, p. 266.

²⁰³ Gérard Canini, 'Verdun Sous la Monarchie Constitutionnelle: Aspects Economiques et Sociaux', *Verdun: la Société Verdunoise du XVIIIème au XIXème Siècle. Journées d'Etudes Meusiennes du 5 au 6 Octobre 1974* (Nancy, 1975), p. 97; René Cazin, Marguerite Chagot and Guy Frémond (eds), *Verdun* (Colmar-Ingersheim, 1973), pp. 7-14.

²⁰⁴ They sent petitions in 1822, 1824, 1827 and 1850. See Marc Sorlot, *La vie en Meuse au Temps de Napoléon Ier* (Metz, 1998), pp. 90-1.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-9.

claim of a totalisation of warfare during the period made by David Bell, as the British government persistently refused to assimilate the civilian captives with their military counterparts.²⁰⁶

In 1818, the *Ruine de Verdun* was published by an English editor in Paris to alert the new monarchist authorities and the French society about the town's decline following the dissolution of the depot. The three authors (all lawyers from Verdun) used the theme of ruins, along with a romantic language of decay and death, to expose not only the financial loss, but the moral 'disaster' of the end of captivity:

The captives' debts in Verdun have reduced its inhabitants to the most deplorable state: they either died of sorrow, or they were incarcerated, or prosecuted, or have withered; all are suffering; and such is the recognition of the English who have misused promises and cast a funereal veil over the hospitable city. In this devastation, which hand will be strong enough to revive us from the grave?²⁰⁷

Lending money to 'a defenceless enemy' was described as a mark of the humanity and honour of the locals.²⁰⁸ They thus referred to the 'laws of nations', evoking the theories of Grotius, Puffendorf, Barbeyrac, Burlamaqui, Cumberland and Bacon, to obtain an enlightened treatment of their request.²⁰⁹ The main accusation made in light of these texts concerned the British State's behaviour, which was deemed 'unfair, contradictory, derisory and contrary to the laws of nations'. In this discourse, the emphasis was placed on the British State, which they considered as their 'direct debtor', rather than the prisoners themselves.²¹⁰ Their plea was vehement against the 'Kings of the Earths [deciding] the fate of its people' yet it exonerated the captives as individuals ensnared in the turmoil of war. This was certainly owing to the fact that Verdun still hosted former captives, such as Hamilton, who possessed a copy of *La Ruine*.²¹¹ Furthermore, although separated by the peace, certain captives kept contacts with their former landlords. Henri Randals, a Navy lieutenant,

²⁰⁶ David Bell, *The First Total War, Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare As We Know It* (Boston and New York, 2007).

²⁰⁷ 'Les dettes contractées par les otages dans Verdun ont réduit ses habitants à l'état le plus déplorable: ou ils sont morts de douleur, ou ils sont incarcérés, ou poursuivis ou flétris; tous sont souffrants; et telle est la reconnaissance de ces Anglais qu'ils ont méconnu la foi promise et jeté un crêpe funèbre sur la cité hospitalière. Dans cet anéantissement, quelle main assez puissante nous ramènera de la tombe à la vie?' See *De la Ruine de Verdun*, p. 15.

²⁰⁸ The rhetoric of honour was present from the very first line of the pamphlet, which further suggests the identification of the locals with the captive's parole status mentioned in chapter 4. 'En ce que de la réussite ou du non succès de cette réclamation, dépendent l'honneur, la vie et la fortune des habitants', *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.8, 15-6.

²¹¹ MEV, Hamilton papers, 2006.0.25.14, Personal copy of *De La Ruine de Verdun* of William Hamilton.

corresponded with Lemarque thirty years after his liberation, revealing to him that he had ‘always cherished a kind feeling towards the inhabitants of [his] town’, and even giving ‘50 francs for the benefit of the poor in Verdun’.²¹² Finally, some prisoners had also lent money to their fellow captives, and requested to be included in the petitions.

These strategies deployed to refashion Verdun as a post-captivity ‘ruin’ strongly resonates with how *gendarmes*, such as Antoine Latreille, searched for a new home in times of peace. For him, the termination of the depot marked the end of his career but, owing to the amicable relations he developed with prisoners under his surveillance, he decided to migrate to London in 1814 with his wife, eight children and his father. Antoine became Anthony, and published a memoir translated under that name in 1816. There, he exposed his ‘destitu[tion] of all means of support’ – his discharge, his ruin – following the end of captivity, and the injustice of a monarchist government favouring noblemen over a corporal of *gendarmerie* like him, despite his thirty-five years of service.²¹³ Socially and politically polemic, the memoir aimed to inspire the charity of the British public. It was also ‘partly in the hope that its sale may enable [him] to obtain employment on [his] return to France’.²¹⁴ The end of the pamphlet reveals that former prisoners assisted him in this project; since it contained a letter of commendation signed by fifty three senior officers who had been detained at Verdun, along with a proof of Major Blayney’s patronage. Was the memoir translated and published by former prisoners? This seems likely, especially as Latreille’s narrative was very much aligned with the claims made by former captives in their memoirs, particularly regarding Wirion’s corruption. Writing and publishing thus served captives and captors in a mutual quest to re-enter their earlier social and professional worlds.

To conclude, this chapter aimed to trace the various and varied homecomings of captives and captors following the dissolution of the depot in 1814. It argued that the aftermath of captivity formed an integral part of the experience, as prisoners expressed various forms of nostalgia for their fellow sufferers. Some returned to the town as tourists or husbands, yet not without difficulty, as transnational unions had to be validated by two legal systems, two religions, and two countries.

²¹² AMV, uncatalogued box, ‘Les Anglais à Verdun’, Letter from Henry Rendals to Marc Lemarque, 19 August 1845.

²¹³ Anthony Latreille (commonly called Black George), *Verdun, under Wirion, Courcelles, De Beauchene, and De Meulan* (London, 1816), p. 65.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. v.

Romanticism played a central role in the ways prisoners and ‘ruined’ captors came to terms with the end of detention, particularly the children born or educated in captivity, who felt the tensions of home-seeking more acutely. For them, home was less a place than a longing. Eleven years were a significant segment of time, yet the danger of observing the effect of internment on the captives’ lives lies in developing a determinist view. This chapter hopefully avoided this peril by highlighting the tension between rupture and liminality that the prisoners saw as underpinning their return. Whilst death marked the most obvious rupture, political and naval careers could also be at stake. Yet, it seems that they did not suffer from the anti-French sentiment prevalent in Britain after the war, and in fact, captivity sometimes propelled careers and networks. Many prisoners kept contact with each other: Dillon received the patronage of a former *détenu*, Hewson kept a correspondence with his captive messmates, whilst Ellison cherished a snuff-box that was given to him at Verdun as ‘a party present from poor Cecil’.²¹⁵ Placed ‘on [his] table’, the box prompted the writing of his life and the restaging of captivity in a memoir entitled *Prison Scenes*, which suggests, as the following chapter will develop, that the act of writing prolonged captivity and crystallised the prisoners’ quest for home.

²¹⁵ Hewson, *Escape from the French*, p. 66; Ellison, *Prison Scenes*, pp. 50-1.

'The captive muse'

Prisoners' creativity and writing 'in society'

In 1806, Mr Pricot, a bookseller in the *rue Mazel*, published a collection of poems penned by a British prisoner, Thomas Dutton, with the support of eighty-seven subscribers in the town.¹ As a compilation of elegiac odes to the everyday in confinement – the clubs, the races and any other semblance of their 'native shores' abroad – the volume claimed to be inspired by one collective voice, that of *The Captive Muse*. This 'captive muse', which served as a title for the book, was a character both praised and embodied by the author himself. 'Disguis'd, the other day I stroll'd the town,/ To catch report, and hunt opinion down', wrote Dutton before setting the indoor scene where the Muse could best express herself: 'Retir'd from view, I took my humble seat,/And watch'd at once the chamber and the street'.² Retreating to his room offered him a view on captivity, through which he could contemplate both individual and collective lives in Verdun. Considered as a *corpus*, Dutton's poems and other captives' works suggest that writings in detention were not meant to be simply introspections but had an instrumental purpose. They recorded events to be told in a week, in a year or in a decade upon their return home. This was a very practical aspect of the muse: a muse recording their experience from within, yet at a distance. This muse, the only one ever represented with a pen, was perhaps Clio, the muse of history.

Indeed, the prisoners positioned themselves as recorders of an immediate history, which strongly impinged the way their readers, historians in particular, conceived and further wrote about their experience. Defying children of a same 'Captive Muse', a feminine allegory of detention itself, captive authors and historians have long formed a chorus, chronicling in a rather similar vein the

¹ Thomas Dutton, *The Captive Muse* (Verdun, 1806). At the time, Pricot was mainly printing almanacs and popular plays, see *Bibliographie de l'Empire Français; ou, Journal de l'Imprimerie et de la Librairie* (Paris, 1812), p. 219.

² Dutton, *The Captive Muse*, pp. 13-4.

experience of military detention. As Pauline Turner Strong argues, scholarly historical works on POW experience have long ‘tended to be similar in literary form and ideological function to the narratives of captivity they interpret’.³ In particular, they have reproduced the ‘event-scenarios’ Robert Doyle has identified as a key element of captive writing, through a tripartite sequence of capture, resistance and escape.⁴ This resulted in the effacement of scholarly and professional discourse under the authority of autobiographies written by the protagonists of the detention, thus postponing the emergence of POW studies to the last twenty years or so.⁵ As a consequence, most historical works on Napoleonic captivity produced in the twentieth century are either anthologies, as is Letitia Elton’s *Locks, Bolts and Bars*, or contextual commentaries on memoirs, like Edward Fraser’s *Napoleon the Gaoler*, which reproduced in full length Robert James’s narrative.⁶

Letting the sources speak for themselves is a belief entrenched in an ‘archival romance’ and a sense of responsibility towards the dead inherited from the nineteenth century, which recent studies have tended to re-evaluate.⁷ As this chapter aims to demonstrate, these captive productions did not occur in a vacuum. They were part of what Raymond Williams terms ‘writing in society’: writing as a social practice.⁸ Whilst a recent scholarship has tended to differentiate history-writing from captives’ productions by unravelling the literary components of a ‘low literature’, the focus has mainly been on published narratives of capture and escape.⁹ Rather, I propose a holistic approach to keep tally of the whole process of captive productions in Verdun. In this chapter, I will not only look at creative writing, but all forms of writing: poems, memoirs, diaries, play scripts, graffiti, songs, letters, account books, court martial reports, common place books, and other personal notes. Instead

³ Pauline Turner Strong, *Captive Selves, Captivating Others: the Politics and Poetics of Colonial American Captivity Narratives* (Boulder, 2000), p.9.

⁴ Robert Doyle, *Voices from Captivity: Interpreting the American POW Narrative* (Westbrooke, 1994).

⁵ As Vasilis Vourkoutiotis points out, ‘the first major task of the student of ... prisoner-of-war history ... is to separate the popular [and autobiographical] works from the far fewer attempts to apply more rigorous historical assessments’ of the past detention.’ Vasilis Vourkoutiotis, *The Prisoners of War and German High Command: the British and American Experience* (Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 1-2.

⁶ Letitia Maynard Elton, *Locks, Bolts and Bars: Stories of Prisoners in the French Wars 1759-1814* (London, 1945); Edward Fraser, *Napoleon the Gaoler, Personal Experiences and Adventures of British Sailors and Soldiers During the Great Captivity* (London, 1914).

⁷ Carolyn Steedman, ‘After the Archive’, *Comparative Critical Studies* 8:2-3 (2001), pp. 321-40.

⁸ Raymond Williams, *Writing in Society* (London and New York, 1983); Jamal Eddie Benhayoun, *Narration, Navigation, and Colonialism: a Critical Account of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century English Narratives of Adventures and Captivity* (Brussels, 2006)

⁹ Linda Colley, ‘Going Native, Telling Tales: Captivity, Collaborations and Empire’, *Past and Present* 168:1 (2000), pp. 170-93; Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* (London, 2002); Linda Colley, ‘Perceiving Low Literature: the Captivity Narrative’, *Essays in Criticism* 3 (2003), pp. 199-217; Joe Snader, *Caught Between Two Worlds: British Captivity Narratives in Fact and Fiction* (Lexington, KY, 2000); Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013).

of separating them by genres – their literary contours and specificity will however not be denied – I will explore them in unison with prisoners’ sketches and maps as variations on a same perspective, a vision *at a distance* from Verdun. Through this prism, I will investigate the interlacing of different forms of self and collective expressions leading the captives to position themselves as ‘enforced’ historians of their immediate situation of captivity.¹⁰

Of course, I should say that I write myself ‘in society’ and therefore I offer only one prism through which these multifaceted captives’ productions can be read. In particular, my approach is influenced by recent socio-cultural POW studies, and the work of literary theorists and archaeologists, such as Gilly Carr, on material culture and ‘creativity behind barbed wire’.¹¹ This influence will be prominent in the first section, which aims to consider in unison the life-writing and visual culture of the prisoners in order to explore how they articulated their experiences in Verdun through a microcosmic lens. The second section will further question their historical consciousness by considering how record keeping in detention, either visual or textual, creative or administrative, was not entirely voluntary but fettered by professional practices (especially naval bureaucracy), education and the impact of French censorship. Following a case study on graffiti, the last section will expand on the place of the individual in the collective story through a closer analysis of published materials apprehended as a *corpus*. I will argue that the Muse – which was mainly male – was a multi-headed creature singing polyphonic, if not polemic, tunes about captivity. A study of the neglected role of publishers and readers of these texts will enable me to draw conclusions on the importance of this Captive Muse in the *longue durée*, and evaluate how she contributed to a progressive sentimentalisation of the Verdun captivity and the construction of its oblivion.

Contemplations in miniature

In 1806, James Lawrence, a Jamaican-born English civil detainee, published an aptly-named *Picture of Verdun*, in which he portrayed a town turned into a miniature of British high life:

¹⁰ My approach is inspired by the seminal work of Carolyn Steedman on ‘enforced narrative’. Steedman, Carolyn, ‘Enforced narratives’ in Tess Cosslett et al (eds), *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories, Methods* (London, 2000), pp. 25-39.

¹¹ Gilly Carr and Harold Mytum (eds), *Cultural Heritage and Prisoners of War: Creativity Behind Barbed Wire* (London, 2012); Gilly Carr and Harold Mytum (eds), *Prisoners of War: Archaeology, Memory, and Heritage of Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Mass Internment* (London, 2013); Gilly Carr, *Legacies of Occupation: Heritage, Memory and Archaeology in the Channel Islands* (London, 2013).

Verdun offered in a small focus the spectacle of all the extravagance and dissipation of a capital, and might for noise and bustle be considered a little London ... Being composed of persons of every rank of life, some of whom had inhabited every part of the globe, the conversation took a general turn ... There were few topics on which some one was not able to converse; few countries which some one had not seen; all national distinctions between Irish, Scot, and English ceased, and their only contest was to do the honors of their respective countries on their particular Saint's day with the most hospitality. All the clubs and messes were indiscriminately composed of the army, navy and civilians.¹²

This depiction of an all-encompassing and harmonious microcosm, where the boundaries of different selves dissolved in face of adversity, was clearly a dramatized and idealised vision of the everyday life at the depot. Lawrence's vivid account of Verdun as a circle of stories bridging the civil-military divide and encapsulating in one locale the vast array of experiences of prisoners gathered by the impact of war strongly resonated with eighteenth-century British pamphlets on polite society and cosmopolitan conversation with which, as a literary dilettante, he must have been familiar.¹³ Yet, this miniature motif permeated most of the published memoirs written by prisoners who, regardless of literary pretension or socio-professional status, almost invariably represented Verdun as a 'little London', 'a little Paris' or 'a world in miniature'.¹⁴

Whilst the work of Catriona Kennedy has suggested the instrumental nature of this trope in published narratives, it is important to note that this was not a mere aesthetic arrangement for publication.¹⁵ Prisoners thought and wrote about Verdun through a microcosmic lens. The letters Revd Lee sent to his cousin in 1804 confirm this outlook. Whilst Lee associated the town to familiar areas around New College, Oxford, he insisted on the littleness of the urban scenery: '[finding] himself enclosed in a small town, comprehending about the space of that ... part of Oxford which

¹² James Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun, or the English Detained in France* (London, 1810), I, pp. 90-91.

¹³ Katie Halsey and Jane Slinn (eds), *The Concept and Practice of Conversation in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1688-1848* (Cambridge, 2008).

¹⁴ For instance, see: Richard Langton, *Narrative of a Captivity in France from 1809 to 1814* (2 vols, Liverpool, 1836), I, pp 254-5; Andrew Thomas Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey Through Spain and France As a Prisoner of War in the Years 1810 to 1814* (London, 1814), II, p.197.

¹⁵ This vision was not particular to Verdun or the social elite of the captives, as it this trope was equally applied to other British POW depots in Napoleonic France. As Catriona Kennedy recently noted, low-rank prisoners such as John Robertson described the citadel of Arras as a 'little Town excluded from the rest of the world ... here we have a prison within a prison'. Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, pp. 125-6.

surrounds the castle ... the whole comprised in few narrow streets'.¹⁶ The weather was described as a microclimate, whose unpredictable variability differed from 'all climates that this round globe presents'.¹⁷ In his correspondence, he recurrently articulated his perception of space through a rhetorical paradox of *all in small* focus, reminiscent of popular plays of the time. 'All the vice of London and Paris', he wrote to his cousin in a reprobating tone, 'are found at Verdun ... [which] must recall to mind the inimitable piece entitled "High Life Below Stairs"'.¹⁸

As I intend to show in this section, this miniature perspective was both a literary trope and a visual culture forming a template, on which prisoners engraved their own descriptions of the social landscape of detention. First, these descriptions, either published or manuscript, were variations on existing literary models that the prisoners used to make sense of their situation and assert the 'unicity' of their experience. Indeed, as the work of Roger Chartier has shown, literature, either high or low, textual or buttressed by illustrations, read collectively or individually, has been a shaping force on the ways in which historical actors understood and narrated their experiences.¹⁹ The most obvious and overarching literary influence to inspire these Napoleonic narratives of war was certainly the microcosm genre, which was extremely popular during the period.²⁰ Numerous editors and lithographers mused about the 'microcosm of London [or] Great Britain', the latter being often portrayed as an insular prison.²¹ The explosion of the genre was the fruit of the Enlightenment, and the popularity of illustrated encyclopaedias, travel narratives classifying regional costumes and habits, and, in the case of Lee's readings, pamphlets and plays capturing in an encapsulating satirical way, the high and low life of the cosmopolitan metropolis.²²

More specifically, a combination of four sets of literary references underpinned the prisoners' writings: Ancient poems, Shakespearian plays, the *Bildungsroman* and the Scriptures. A significant portion of captives introduced their texts with epigraphs from Virgil, Horace and Ovid, which served

¹⁶ John Parry-Wingfield (ed.), *Napoleon's Prisoner: a Country Parson's Ten-Year Detention in France* (Ilfracombe, 2012), p. 29.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30. Lee was referring to a popular two-act farce presented at Drury Lane in 1759 by James Townley satirizing the life of servants below stairs. See Lynnette Eckersley, 'Townley, James (1714-1778)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/27606>, accessed 27 Nov 2013]

¹⁹ Roger Chartier, *Lectures et Lecteurs dans la France d'Ancien Régime* (Paris, 1987); Roger Chartier, *L'Ordre des Livres: Lecteurs, Auteurs, Bibliothèques en Europe entre XIV et XVIII Siècle* (Aix-en-Provence, 1992).

²⁰ Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, p. 126.

²¹ See William Henry Pyne, *Microcosm, a Picturesque Delineation of the Arts, Agriculture, Manufacture, &c, of Great Britain* (1803, 1806, 1808); Rudolph Ackermann, *Microcosm of London, or London in Miniature* (1808).

²² Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, p. 126.

to emphasize the epic and metamorphosing nature of their experience of capture as a breach in the laws of hospitality. References to the third book of Virgil's *Aeneid* in particular – the transitional part between the chronicles of Aeneas's hardships and those of Latium wars – served prisoners like Thomas Dutton and James Lawrence, in presenting captivity as a tale of heroic survival in displacement.²³ The conventional practice to use classical texts as epitaphs echoed the romantic reimagining of the epic in history-writing, and served to situate individual prisoners at the centre of a heroic 'sentimental journey'.²⁴ This, along with echoes to Hamlet's monologue to Yorick, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and verses of the Scriptures, framed existential questions about the captive's place in martial or celestial macrocosms, as suggested by Robertson's attempt to find explanatory signs of his lot in stellar configurations.²⁵ Overall, this reference to Shakespeare served to universally frame their individual forced journey: 'Sweet are the uses of Adversity;/ Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,/ Bears yet a precious jewel in its head'.²⁶ References to Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, *The Sentimental Journey to France and Italy* and the 'Captive' poetic vignette, further enabled prisoners to express this transformative impact of detention on sentiments often exceeding the power of words, through the use of intertextual humour and ellipsis. Indeed, they elaborated on a shared network of references with their reader, which was necessary to fully grasp the event narrated or, in the case of George Vernon Jackson's memoir, to fill the void of an unsaid depiction: "“*Ah vous...*”", wrote Vernon Jackson suddenly ceasing the narration of a dialogue before continuing: 'for the particular expression denoted by a blank here there is an authority in one of Sterne's narratives which may or may not be familiar to my reader.'²⁷ Sterne's novels were indeed well-known. They were all about France; the *Sentimental Journey*, for instance, opening with an amorous meeting over the counter of a glove shop in Paris: a romantic *en-counter* with France.

Ultimately, one novel, encapsulating the epic and sentimental features mentioned above, proved central: Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Robinson was the eighteenth-century archetype of forced

²³ Dutton, *The Captive Muse*, p. 1.

²⁴ On the question of the place of the epic in history-writing during the period, see Elisa Beshero-Bondar, *Women, Epic, and Transition in British Romanticism* (Plymouth and Lanham, 2011); Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: the Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca, 1990); Chloe Wheatley, *Epic, Epitome, and the Early Modern Historical Imagination* (Farnham, 2013).

²⁵ The comet of 1811 prompted prisoners to speculate about the cosmic signs of an imminent release. NMM, JOD/202, John Robertson, *Journal*, 74, 430.

²⁶ Dutton, *The Captive Muse*, p. 44

²⁷ George Vernon Jackson, "'Damn'em, Jackson, They've Spoilt My Dancing' 1809-1812', in Dean King (ed.), *Every Man Will Do His Duty: an Anthology of First-Hand Accounts from the Age of Nelson 1793-1815* (London, 1997), p. 275.

exile. It is then perhaps not surprising to see that captives internationalised the novel and identified with the main character, as suggested in Blayney's description of his first encounter with a fellow captive: 'Robinson Crusoe could not have been much more surprised at hearing his parrot cry "poor Robin" than I was at being addressed with an English voice'.²⁸ The more or less conscious reference to Robinson was entrenched in what Franco Moretti has identified as a Western culture of home-seeking forged through the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman*.²⁹ The idea of a liminal journey was certainly present in captives' writings through a three-act structure (capture/survival/liberation or escape). Yet, the most evident echo of the self-discovery of the industrious Robinson, contriving to maintain a microcosmic English society on his captive island, appeared in the prisoners' recurrent comments on the versatility of talents and occupations in the depot, which they saw as specimens of 'every trade' of their home society.

Imbued with these literary influences, the plays, songs and poems penned and performed by prisoners furthered their miniaturist perspective through a process of characterisation of the key protagonists of the detention. 'At Verdun there was I suppose the greatest jumble and admixture of character among the *détenus* ever collected in so small a space', claimed Maurice Hewson.³⁰ 'Here sat the grand tourist, there a country squire, a manufacturer ... Here sat a knowing one, who had the racing calendar by heart; and there a Cantab', wrote Lawrence. He echoed this categorisation in the titles of his chapters detailing the spatial and social replicates of British life: 'English ladies', 'clubs', 'races'.³¹ This classification was further developed in the play he wrote and produced after his escape to London in 1806. The play gathered comedy stock characters of the Verdun social stage: 'Trafford Count de Nordenstorm', 'General Vaurien', 'Polisson' (Naughty), 'Dr. Dactyl', 'Dr. Sangsue, French physician to the Detenus' (Dr Leech), 'Rouleau, Keeper of Gaming-table', 'Marie-Antoinette de St. Aldegonde', 'Mother Goujat, afterward H.M.S. Madame' (Mrs. Churlish), etc.³² This characterisation replicated his memoir in representing detention in a metonymical manner. This perspective deeply influenced the content and tone of scholarly studies of their experience, since professional historians such as Michael Lewis, Clive Lloyd and Didier Houmeau took at face value

²⁸ Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey*, I, p. 341. On reading Robinson Crusoe in the eighteenth-century, see Eric Jager, 'The Parrot's Voice: Language and Self in Robinson Crusoe', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 21:3 (1988), pp. 316-33.

²⁹ Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: the Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London and New York, 2000), p. 23.

³⁰ Maurice Hewson, *Escape from the French* (Exeter, 1981), p. 68.

³¹ Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, II, p. 90.

³² James Lawrence, *The Englishman at Verdun or, the Prisoner of Peace: a Drama in Five Acts* (London, 1813).

the microcosmic quality of Verdun as a humouristic ‘little Britain-beyond-the-seas’ gathering certain ‘types’ of captives.³³

Arguably, the main category in formation was that of the ‘*détenu*’, which was presented as a new historical entity.³⁴ As Jean-René Aymes argues, a linguistic perspective on POWs’ personal and official writings suggests that they took an active role in defining themselves, by reclaiming or contesting the status granted to them by their captors.³⁵ In the case of Verdun, it could be argued that the category of *détenu* was constructed *during* and *after* the experience of detention by the actors themselves in their writings, through their categorising vision. Indeed, although the term ceased to be used by the French in 1805, civil captive memoirists continued to use it, introducing its meaning to their audience in Britain and the English language during the years following their detention as a sequel to another recently popular French word: *émigré*.³⁶ James Lawrence, for instance, opened his memoir with the following definition:

DETENU. In order to distinguish him from the lawful prisoner of war, the traveller detained in France is throughout this work constantly stiled [sic.] a *Detenu*. The word indeed has not yet been naturalised; but the French, when they by their persecutions and other enormities obliged the most respectable part of their nation to emigrate, introduced the word *Emigré* into all foreign languages; and it is honorable to us, that we have no word of English growth to express a guest, arrested against the laws of hospitality, and the customs of civilised nations.³⁷

This unicity of experience and status as ‘*détenu*’ was buttressed by a personal appropriation of international law, understood through De Vattel’s *Laws of Nations*, a treatise widely disseminated, translated and simplified in England which made it even more popular than Kant’s *Project of*

³³ ‘Verdun itself had no counterpart. We had no comparable officer depot, and no *détenu* depot, having no *détenus*. Indeed, in the whole history of man there can have been very few prison-places like it. Verdun must be all but unique’ in Michael Arthur Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives* (London, 1962), p.136; Peter Clarke and Didier Houmeau (eds), *Hello Verdun, our les Détenus Britanniques à Verdun: Livret du Spectacle et Notes Historiques* (Verdun, 2006).

³⁴ See introduction for precedents of the 2nd Prairial decree.

³⁵ Jean-René Aymes, *La Déportation Sous le 1er Empire: les Espagnols en France 1806-1814* (Paris, 2001).

³⁶ ‘*détenu*’. *Oxford English Dictionary online*, 2013 [http://0-www.oed.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/Entry/51208?redirectedFrom=DETENU, accessed 27 Nov. 2014].

³⁷ Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, I, p. 3.

Perpetual Peace amongst literate, commercial and administrative classes in the country.³⁸ The identification with the text materialised in a pacifist rhetoric positioning the civilian prisoners of Napoleon as the ‘sports of war’, individuals dwarfed by the grand martial schemes of governments, a language reminiscent of the microcosm-macrocosm dyad permeating the visual culture of the depot.

As a portable representation of oneself or a loved one, miniature was commonplace in the eighteenth century, especially amongst travellers.³⁹ It is then perhaps not surprising that, with the presence of industrious artists such as Mr Halpin, the practice and trade of miniatures flourished in Verdun.⁴⁰ Arguably, the prisoners cultivated a microcosmic visual culture in detention, which materialised in a common pattern permeating their sketches, watercolours and maps, namely a view *at a distance* from the landscape of their detention. In particular, the recent acquisition made by the *Musée de la Princerie* in Verdun of five watercolours by James Forbes enables us to consider these drawings as a *corpus*. These are compositions of all-encompassing ‘views of Verdun’ from the hills, the telegraph or any other point of perspective placed outside the town’s ramparts – the physical signifiers of the enclosed space of captivity.

³⁸ Dan Edelstein, ‘War and Terror: the Law of Nations from Grotius to the French Revolution’, *French Historical Studies* 31: 2 (2008), pp. 229-62; Brian Richardson, ‘The Use of Vattel in the American Law of Nations’, *The American Journal of International Law* 106:3 (2012), pp. 547-71.

³⁹ Hanneke Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze: Intimate Vision in Late Eighteenth-Century Eye Miniatures* (Chicago and London, 2012).

⁴⁰ Some are now held in the Musée de la Princerie. Amongst the most industrious miniaturists in Verdun featured John Edmund Halpin, a famous Irish artist. See. L. H. Cust, ‘Halpin, Patrick and John Edmund’, rev. Anita McConnell, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. [<http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/12024>, accessed 27 Nov 2013].

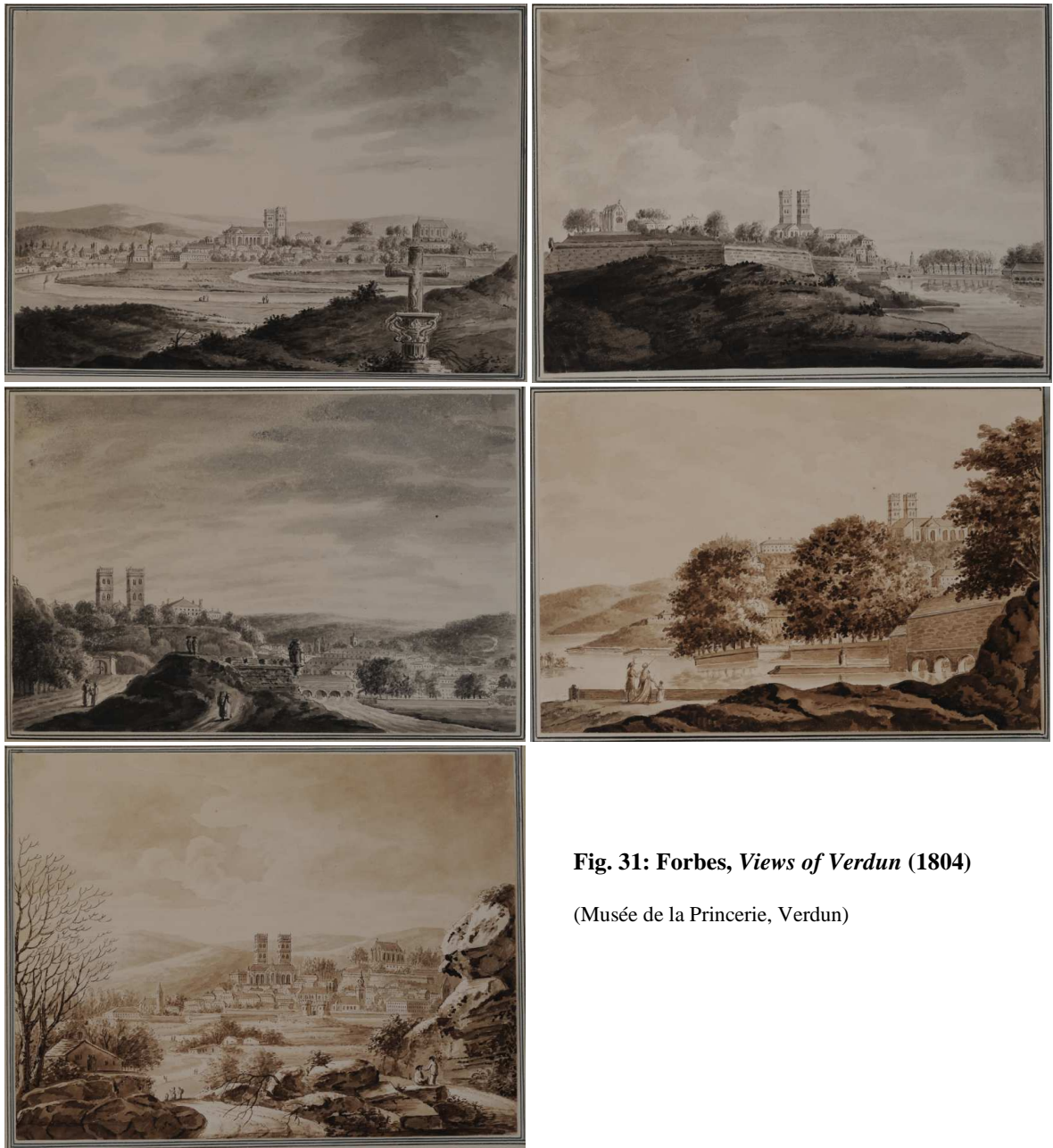


Fig. 31: Forbes, *Views of Verdun* (1804)

(Musée de la Prinerie, Verdun)

These perspectives (Fig.31) greatly differ from contemporary representations of the town by local French artists (Fig. 33). In those sketches or paintings, the focus was narrow, depictions being mainly circumscribed to the inner life of the town *inside* the ramparts.⁴¹ Forbes, on the other hand, depicted overviews from *outside* the town: a perspective characteristic of the ‘oriental romantic’ style he cultivated as an EIC civil servant in India before his capture.⁴² This vision manifests itself in dramatic rocks framing the distant collection of sublime and emblematic buildings in the town (the

⁴¹ The discrepancy became apparent when consulting French drawings and maps of the town made by local French artists during the period, such as Henri. See BEV, BCM156, maps and drawings of the town (c.1790-1816).

⁴² Anne Bulley, ‘Forbes, James (1749-1819)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* [<http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/9830>, accessed 19 November 2013].

cathedral and Saint-Vannes), behind which a faint impression of elevated hills silhouettes against a tormented sky. The river Meuse is vividly rendered: it is either too large or too meandering. Contradictions also appear in the localisation of buildings. Saint-Vannes, for instance, is either on the left or the right of the cathedral, despite the fact that all the views are from the South-East angle (Fig.31a). Objects and buildings are misplaced, such as bridges, which were copied and added in different pieces that do not reflect the physical physiognomy of the town. The cross (Fig.31) does not correspond to any sculpture located in the area. This is not to say that this was a mere figment of Forbes' imagination. Rather, one can speculate that, given the other elements repeated and re-arranged in these compositions, these watercolours are 'collections' of elements seen, or more accurately perceived in Verdun. The patterned cross might have appeared in his readings or in his conversations and promenades with his lodger, who was a *garde champêtre*.⁴³ Drawing on his correspondence, it seems likely that Forbes took sketches on the spot, and reworked them inside his lodgings to finalise his 'views'. Overall, these drawings rendered less the physical space of Verdun than an imagined and miniaturised landscape of captivity as it was conceived and visually translated by Forbes, but also other captives with a similar outlook such as Samuel Robinson (Fig.32).

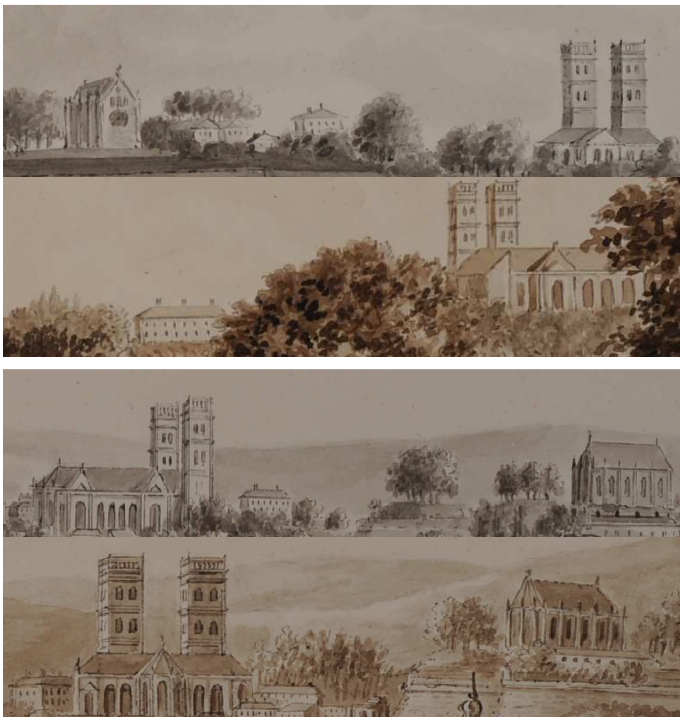


Fig.31 a: Close-up of Forbes' rendering of Saint-Vannes abbey as alternatively on the left and right side of the Citadel.

⁴³ James Forbes, *Letters from France Written in the Years 1803 and 1804, Including a Particular Account of Verdun and the Situation of the British Captives in that City* (2 vols, London, 1806).



Fig.31 b: Close up of the characters in Forbes' drawings



Fig.32: Robinson, A west view of the town of Verdun in Lorraine from the heights (1804)

(Bibliothèque d'étude de Verdun, V19bis)

In these drawings, the characters are miniaturised archetypes identifiable by their clothes or postures: the peddlers, the fishermen, the wine merchant, the soldier's family (Fig.31 b). This view confirms the process of characterisation, also at play in drawings produced by other captives, such as those of Seacombe Ellison, who published a memoir significantly entitled *Prison Scenes* containing six sketches produced in detention (Fig.34).⁴⁴ These represented an imagined microcosm. The first sketch, for instance, replicated the song of the 'Knights of the Round Tower', a captive fraternity gathering those who were detained at the *Tour d'Angoulême* in 1806.⁴⁵ Once a year they organised a dinner, during which they humorously identified with the characters of the legend of King Arthur and the recently assassinated Duke of Enghien, who, according to a rumour in Verdun, had been incarcerated there. Overall, these pictures captured mini 'event-scenarios' such as the escape, the

⁴⁴ Seacombe Ellison, *Prison Scenes: and Narrative of Escape from France, During the Late War* (London, 1838).

⁴⁵ There is a round tower denominated the Tour d'Enghien, having been expressly built for the confinement of that unfortunate prince'. Richard Langton, *Narrative of a Captivity in France from 1809 to 1814* (2 vols, Liverpool, 1836), I, p. 253.

daily promenade, in views capturing through exaggerated height differences and distances, power tensions within the sphere of the prison.⁴⁶



Fig.33: Henry, *Vue du Pont Saint-Airy à Verdun* (c.1805-1806) and *Porte de France à Verdun* (1815)

(Bibliothèque d'étude de Verdun, BCM 156, 182)

The development of optics and panoramic vistas in Britain between 1790 and 1810 deeply influenced these captive creations.⁴⁷ As Stephan Oettermann recently argued, the term panorama, and its use in a metaphorical sense, was a creation of the eighteenth century combining two Greek roots: *pan* (all) and *horama* (view).⁴⁸ This strongly resonates with the all-encompassing 'views' of the Verdun captives' works, and suggests that they were not simply microcosmic, as Catriona Kennedy suggested, but macrocosmic at heart.⁴⁹ In fact, the dichotomy between the two – the giant and the minuscule, the horizontal and the vertical – served to frame the visual and narrative articulation of their captive experience. Whilst the contemporary frenzy for hot-air ballooning widened, quite literally, horizons in Britain, France and Germany, it appears significant that prisoners decided to depict the depot from above. This is perfectly illustrated in a letter by Alexander

⁴⁶ Expression borrowed from Robert Doyle, *Voices from Captivity: Interpreting the American POW Narrative* (Westbrooke Circle, 1994).

⁴⁷ Robert Barker obtained a patent for his invention of 'the panorama' as an art form on 17 June 1787. The mere fact that a patent was given to him suggests that contemporaries perceived it as a novelty in Britain. In France, the panorama was not introduced until 1799. Most of the panoramic exhibitions and architectural creations following Claude Nicolas Ledoux's work on 'The Creating Eye' (1804) took place in Paris and Lyon, which explains why representations of Verdun were not marked by this panoramic turn between 1800 and 1814. For a complete analysis of the development of optics and panoramic views, see Stephan Oettermann, *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium*. trans. by Deborah Lucas Schneider (New York, 1997).

⁴⁸ Oettermann, *The Panorama*, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁹ James Forbes significantly entitled his paintings 'views' or 'perspectives', which confirms the impact of optics and panoramic vistas on his creations.

Don, a young member of the Scottish gentry detained as hostage, who envisaged a balloonist's view of the *Rue Mazel* in 1804:

I believe if Mr Garnerin was to teach here after one of his voyages he would see people walking about in boots and leather breeches in the rue Mazelle, which is termed Bond Street there, with the innumerable open carriages, homes of all descriptions *à l'anglaise*, cropped ponies [sic.], coaxers, warning grooms, and gentlemen standing at the doors of the clubs. He would certainly conceive himself landed in an English town.⁵⁰

This vista from the heights, linking through the sky the horizontal everyday of the depot with a vertical longing for home, further reveals the prison-panorama dyad in formation at the time. 'The experience of the horizon aroused a sense of hope, and the combination of the two became a common trope', noted Stephan Oettermann, before concluding that 'the counterpart of the Montgolfier is the dungeon [and] in the eighteenth century the prison or dungeon was a symbol of the world ... Horizon, hope, prison, Montgolfier, see-fever, see-sickness: the panorama could have been invented in no period but this one'.⁵¹ The experience of an open prison, that of a parole depot, offered the perfect setting to further reflect and identify with these tropes which, as Susan Stewart has argued, formed the basis of an inscription of the self into a totality in the late eighteenth-century.⁵²

Prisoners thus reproduced the aesthetics and linguistics of longing, rather than expressing an overtly patriotic view of the depot as an English town, as has often been assumed. Their productions were embedded in existing representations of prison scenes, which, as John Bender has argued, were widely disseminated in novels.⁵³ Prison scenes were not merely literary but visual, as novels contained illustrations, which deeply impinged British imaginings of penitentiary spaces from the eighteenth century to the dawn of the Victorian era, when Ellison published his own 'scenes' (Fig.34). The trope of towering arcades illuminated by a single source of light appeared in printed illustrations of fictional prison life (Fig.35) as much as in manuscript travel logs. The sketchbook of

⁵⁰ NAS, Montague-Douglas-Scott Papers, GD224/31/16, Letter from Alexander Don to Lord Dalkeith, Verdun, 6 July 1804.

⁵¹ Oettermann, *The Panorama*, pp. 18-21.

⁵² Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, 2003), p. xii.

⁵³ John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago and London, 1987).

a female contemporary, Mary Berry, shows that not only men but also women perceived French and Italian architecture through the lens of *The Monk* (1796) and the *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), which both depicted Gothic tales of imprisonment abroad. The reading of these novels inspired her to populate drawings of the buildings she visited with fictional monks and prisoners dwarfed by the vaults of a dramatized architecture.⁵⁴

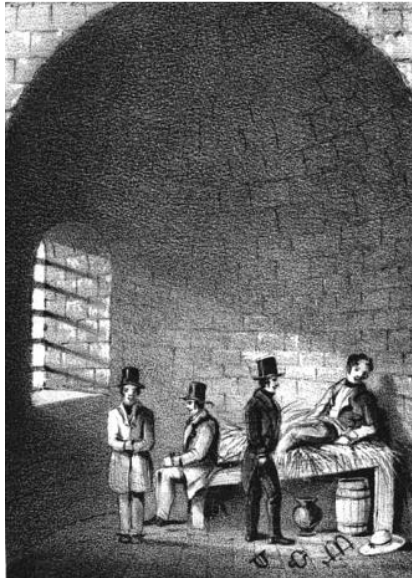


Fig.34: Ellison, *Prison Scenes*, 1838

⁵⁴ In October 1790, the Barry sisters were accompanied by their father on a year-long tour of Italy. Much to Walpole's relief, the Berrys returned via Basel, Augsburg and Brussels, thus avoiding the dangerous conditions in France brought on by the Revolution. The book contains original watercolours made during their travels, including some dramatic scenes. These reveal the potent spatial representations forged by Gothic novels and transposed to French landscapes during the period. For instance, see 'L'Escalier', depicting the inside of a Gothic church, with a monk dwarfed by the vaults (p. 9), and *le Prisonnier* depicting a fictional prisoner sitting on stone head in hand, again dwarfed by the vaults which are lit by a single diagonal source of light (p. 11). See Wilmarth S. Lewis, *Rescuing Horace Walpole* (New Haven, 1978), pp. 172-80; BL, Agnes Berry's correspondence, papers, and journals, Add. MSS 37726-37761, 'The big sketchbook', pp. 9, 11.



Fig.35: Illustration of a prison in Thackeray's *Barry Lyndon* (1844)

Maps were the ultimate materialisation of the prisoners' distancing from their captivity. Either based on first-hand observations or the consultation of existing maps, the mere attempt to chart the space of detention appears meaningful, especially when captives aimed to delimit its contours in circular maps. Round maps were a common way of rendering the topography and road infrastructures surrounding cities in Britain during the period, as evidenced by the popular 'Twenty-five miles round London' (1806).⁵⁵ Equally inspired by the microcosmic genre, the 'Scale of Six Miles' around Verdun (Fig.36) by an anonymous naval prisoner, not only records the villages, rivers and roads contained in their two-league perimeter, but it bears witness to a specific nautical outlook. Indeed, the map certainly had an instrumental purpose – identifying the places where they were allowed to go or not, using conspicuous landmarks such as churches and forests. Yet, the very few traces of folding found on the paper suggest that this map was handled and used with extreme care. This, along with the meticulous intricacy of the depiction and the status of its author, suggests that the piece was entrenched in a professional practice of map-drawing. This blue-inked map was not done in a day. It had necessitated multiple drafts and calculations. As suggested in the previous chapter, others naval captives, such as James Kingston Tuckey, spent their day cultivating their geographical skills through reading and drawing, hence reproducing a familiar quotidian from the 'wooden world' in detention.⁵⁶ In this case, creativity did not offer escapism through a view *beyond*

⁵⁵ See Miles Ogborn and Charles Withers (eds), *Georgian Geographies: Essays on Space, Place and Landscape in the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, 2004); Anon., *Twenty-five miles round London* (London, 1806), Biblioteca Virtual del Patrimonio Bibliográfico [<http://bvpb.mcu.es/es/consulta/registro.cmd?id=441189>, accessed 22 November 2013].

⁵⁶ James Kingston Tuckey, *Maritime Geography and Statistics* (4 vols, London, 1815).

captivity – as Gilly Carr argued for captive islanders in WW2 and their drawings of an ‘imagined home’ – but a retreat view *onto* captivity through the maintenance of professional practices.⁵⁷



Fig.36: ‘A Scale of Six miles around Verdun’ (c. 1804-1814)

(Musée de la Prinerie, Verdun)

Similarly, military captives sketched transfers of prisoners in a professional way (Fig.37). They often portrayed a side-on view of small and neat convoys marching with *gendarmes*, towered over by the elevated landscape of their future depot. The artistic rendering of French fortified towns as perched on unnaturally high hills was the fruit of these prisoners’ education and military practice. Indeed, the bizarre jelly-shaped hills were, in fact, echoing the format of both the territorial recognition naval men had to do ashore and the siege sketches field army regiments had to produce in campaign.⁵⁸ Ultimately, the combined influences of the British State and professional military practices in shaping these outlooks on captivity suggest that these representations were not entirely a voluntary act.

⁵⁷ Gilly Carr, *Legacies of Occupation: Heritage, Memory and Archaeology in the Channel Islands* (London, 2013).

⁵⁸ On the subject of professional representations of battle landscapes, see Harry Dickinson, *Educating the Royal Navy: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Education for Officers* (New York, 2007); Philip Shaw, ‘Dead Soldiers: Suffering in British Military Arts, 1783-1789’, *Romanticism* 11 (2005), pp. 55-69. Such tropes were also common in representations of Indian processions to temples made by East India Company servicemen.



Fig.37: Sketches by Ellison, Hewson, and Langton

(*Prison scenes*, 1838; *Escape from the French*, 1891; *Narrative of a captivity*, 1836).

‘Writing in society’: Civilian records and naval ‘enforced narrative’

On 18 December 1803, one month after the arrival of the prisoners in the town, the first *adjoint* sent an account to the mayor of Verdun detailing the situation of the new captives. ‘Perfectly indifferent to their situation’ he wrote, ‘the young captives jump and play at the pleasant thought of being in a different country, and promise each other to tell their comrades someday about their jolly French adventures as prisoners of war!’⁵⁹ The vision of boisterous captives eager to tell the stories of their experience abroad to their family and friends at home was replicated later in historical accounts of the detention. ‘The rare nature of the adventure was worth taking up the pen’, claimed the late-nineteenth historian Roger Boutet de Monvel, assuming that their awareness of experiencing a singular detention prompted the writing of their lives.⁶⁰ In the 1960s, Michael Lewis took up this trope and insisted on how ‘Verdun must be all but unique’, hence explaining the plethora of memoirs

⁵⁹ ‘Parfaitement insensibles à leur position les jeunes captifs sautent et jouent, ne connaissant que le plaisir d’avoir changé de pays, et se promettant bien sans doute de raconter un jour à leurs camarades ce qu’ils ont vu en France, y étant prisonniers de guerre!’ ADM-Bar, 9R2, Letter of the *maire adjoint* to the mayor of Verdun, 26 Frimaire an XII (18 December 1803).

⁶⁰ ‘La rareté de l’aventure valait bien qu’ils prissent la plume’. Roger Boutet de Monvel, *Les Anglais à Paris 1800-1850* (Paris, 1911), p. 16.

produced by former captives.⁶¹ More recently, Catriona Kennedy's work followed this trend, by tending to assume the historical consciousness of these captive writers who, as victims of a 'total war', related 'at once a profoundly personal experience, and one that was collective and shared'.⁶² On the whole, these texts have perpetuated a myth of origin about captive's writing as arising from a sense of *unicity of experience* characteristic of a post-Revolution historical consciousness.⁶³

However, these two notions are highly problematic for the twenty-first century historian and raise one paramount question: to what extent should we assume the voluntary nature of the prisoners' writing and creative work in captivity? This section aims to demonstrate that the act of recording one's life in Napoleonic Verdun was not solely the fruit of the prisoners' agency and historical consciousness. As the work of Carolyn Steedman has shown, ego-documents can be ingrained in an 'enforced narrative' process, which, in the case of the Verdun captives, manifested itself more vividly in the professional obligations of report writing endorsed by the British State. Indeed, for naval captives, life-writing was compulsory for re-entering the service after their liberation. Whilst civilian captives did not have such duties, they wrote 'in society'. Their record-keeping was provoked by three main obligations cadencing their everyday in detention: the daily registration, the censorship imposed by the French State which led prisoners to develop what I shall term a 'collecting mind', and expectations of intelligence in Britain, especially from their families, which prompted the writing of their lives as a form of self-justification.⁶⁴

The quotidian obligation of signing a register – queuing twice a day at the town hall to inscribe one's name on a long list of captives, a practice which lasted for up to eleven years – strongly

⁶¹ 'Verdun itself had no counterpart. We had no comparable officer depot, and no *détenu depot*, having no *détenus*. Indeed, in the whole history of man there can have been very few prison-places like it. Verdun must be all but unique' in Michael Arthur Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives* (London, 1962), p. 136.

⁶² Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, p. 24.

⁶³ As Damien Zanone argues, the trauma of 1789 led to the emergence of a fascination for the 'ego' forged through 'History'. Indeed, the recognition of a specific historical consciousness shaping the 'modern Self' was made in the late-eighteenth century, especially through Goethe's conceptualisation of self-formation as the result of 'the interplay of the Self and the world around the Self'. As Carolyn Steedman argues, this acknowledged historical consciousness provided the 'framework for the emergence of the autobiographical form', leading to the emergence of the 'memoir' as a genre in Britain around 1800. Sustained by an editorial boom in the aftermath of Waterloo, creating an avid audience through subscriptions on both sides of the Channel, a plethora of memoirs written by civil and military witnesses of the late 'Great War', as they called it, were published. Carolyn Steedman, *Past Tenses* (London, 1992), p. 48; Philippe Lejeune, *L'Autobiographie en France* (Paris, 1971), pp. 8-10. On the '*réagencement subjectif*' in travel-writing, see Jean Viviés, *Le Récit de Voyage en Angleterre au XVIIIe Siècle: de l'Inventaire à l'Invention* (Toulouse, 1999), p. 108.

⁶⁴ On the problematic notion of experience and the theory of 'enforced narrative', see Joan W. Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience' *Critical inquiry* 17: 4 (1991), pp. 773-97; Carolyn Steedman, 'Enforced Narrative: Stories of Another Self.', in Tess Cosslett and Celia Lury and Penny Summerfield (eds.) *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories, Methods* (London, 2000) pp. 25-39.

inflected the vision of the prisoners as being part of a group.⁶⁵ It is indeed significant that the first lines of the introductory poem of *The Captive Muse* by Thomas Dutton opens on this daily ritual: 'Disguis'd, the other day I stroll'd the town,/ To catch report, and hunt opinion down;/ The busy hour of signing just was o'er'.⁶⁶ Whilst the daily gathering at registration, like military muster, enabled the exchange of 'opinions' between captives, it also shaped the ways in which prisoners understood their place amongst the other British prisoners of war in France. For instance, the 'ticket' and 'number' obtained from the registration process prompted Richard Langton to speculate on the overall number of prisoners and position himself in the group.⁶⁷ This quotidian exercise also prompted some of the prisoners to further the process of registration and count each other. Here I want to explore a very specific type of writing, which stemmed from this daily ritual imposed by the French State, namely lists of captives drawn by the captives themselves. Three extensive lists compiled by prisoners have been found: a 'Private register' kept by Naval Cadet John Hopkinson listing around seven hundred names of his 'fellow prisoners' at Verdun from 1804 to 1814, the 'Private Memorandum Book' dated 17 July 1811 of Captain Fane compiling hundreds of captives' names, and 'A list of Officers belonging to His Majesty's Navy who have been Prisoners of War at the depot of Verdun since its formation in 1803' which was re-written by its original author, Lieutenant John Carslake, in 1830.⁶⁸ These lists vary in style, from an informal collection of names amended along with additional information on the social status or transfers of captives, to more complex assemblage with tables and socio-professional classifications as in the case of John Carslake's list, an organisation which might be the result of a re-writing after detention.

Significantly, most of the prisoners concerned to count their fellow captives were members of the Royal Navy, which is not accidental. Indeed, the archival depositories where these lists are now kept tell us something about their motives and uses. These lists were not destined to be merely '*private*

⁶⁵ See chapter 5.

⁶⁶ Dutton, *The Captive Muse*, pp. 9, 12. The second edition of the collection in London in 1814 insists on the importance of this daily practice: 'Their first duty was to inscribe their names, every morning, or at stated periods, (according to the latitude according to them, individually) in a Book, kept open for that purpose, at a place, denominated the Seminary'.

⁶⁷ 'I then signed the required parole, and received a ticket, bearing my description, on which the figures 1307, I took to indicate the precise number of prisoners then in the depot' in Langton, *Narrative of a Captivity in France*, I, p. 244.

⁶⁸ Hopkinson's 'Private register' reproduced in full length in Thomas James Walker, *The Depot for Prisoners of War at Norman Cross, Huntingdonshire 1796 to 1816* (London, 1913).

register[s]', for they were sent to the Admiralty or copied out there the year of their production.⁶⁹ Arguably, these lists were the fruit of a transposition of the professional education, discipline and social dynamics of the 'wooden world', into the situation of captivity. According to the rules of the Navy, lieutenants, such as Carslake, were expected to keep registers of the crew, which appears to have been extended to fellow captives in Verdun. Equally, the maintenance of the professional everyday of the ship ashore materialised in the continuation of ships' logs in captivity. After his capture on board of the *Jane* bound to Canada, William Story continued the ship's log and took notes – in a very similar way as he recorded their previous navigational progression – of their march from Saint-Jean-de-Luz to Verdun. Then, the diary practice slightly altered until his liberation, but was still performed daily with brief notes about the crew until his liberation in May 1814.⁷⁰ The case of William Story was not isolated, since similar ships' logs were kept by seaman of lower status such as Robertson and an anonymous Scottish seaman sent to Besançon.⁷¹ Whilst the *form* of these descriptions was clearly influenced by the *feuille de route* (itinerary description) they received from the French local authorities, the *act* of writing was undoubtedly initiated by their captain.

For Royal Navy captains, capture almost irremediably led to a court-martial evaluating the conditions of the ship's loss and the responsibility of the defeated crew. In particular, they had to report to the Admiralty to justify the vessel's capture, and support their account with sketches detailing the action. These reports were written on board the ships of their French captors and submitted once they had arrived in Verdun. In this respect, the 'Statement of occurrences' and sketch (Fig.38) drawn by Captain Daniel Woodriff are illuminating.⁷² They aimed to justify the capture of HMS *Calcutta* as necessary for the protection of the precious EIC merchant convoy he was in charge of escorting from Australia to England. A 'gale of wind', an unexpected assistance request from a 'leaky' and 'heavy' brig from Tobago which slowed their progression, and the ultimate appearance of the enemy in the dead of night: these were the external factors Captain Woodriff described in his five-page exculpatory report, in which he pre-empted accusations of professional failure or

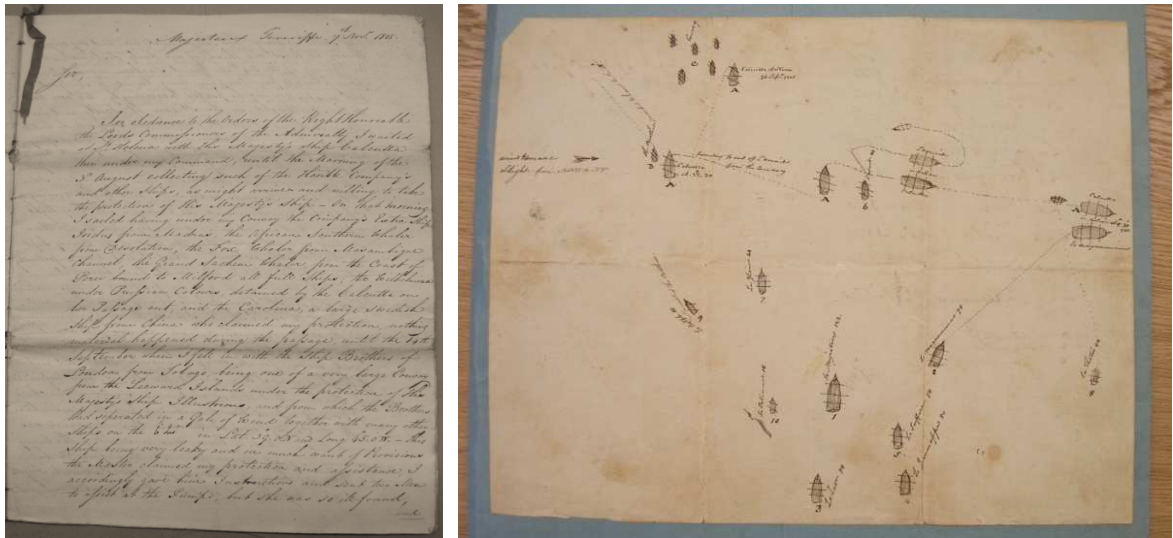
⁶⁹ TNA, PRO/ADM/103/468, Captain Fane, 'List of navy and army officers, masters of Merchant vessels, and detenus', 17 July 1811.

⁷⁰ William Story, *A Journal Kept in France, During a Captivity of More Than Nine Years, Commencing the 14th Day of April 1805 and Ending the 5th Day of May 1814* (London, 1815).

⁷¹ NMM, JOD/224/1, Journal of an unknown Scottish seaman pressed into the Royal Navy and detained in France, 1805-1814.

⁷² NMM, WDR6, Captain Daniel Woodriff, Map of Lat 49.34 Long. 9.010 N°3, 25-26 September 1805; 'Statement of occurrences on the 25th and 26th September 1805 n°1'.

pusillanimity.⁷³ In order to do so, he narrated capture as an unescapable violence, a portrait evidenced by an attached list of the dead and wounded in action.



**Fig.38: Captain William Otter, Map of Lat 49.34 Long. 9.010 N°3, 25-26 September 1805;
Statement of occurrences on the 25th and 26th September 1805)
(National Maritime Museum, Greenwich)**

Other types of writing were equally rooted in professional practices. Keeping an account-book, for instance, was entrenched in office practices, as suggested by the meticulous records kept by civilian members of the Charitable Committee.⁷⁴ As shown in chapter four, the prisoners created ‘a bureau’ in town which, as a contemporary noted, ‘had all the appearance of an English counting house’ and distributed monies from charitable funds to their fellow captives.⁷⁵ They had to keep records and report to these funds, which conditioned the keeping of a letter-book. As an object (Fig.39), this very neat tome reveals the professional dimension of their writing. It is a sturdy volume, containing 838 manuscript entries, comprising copies of letters sent and received by the Committee. One tiny element appears extremely significant in this book: its edge. Indeed, written on the edges of the leaves, so as to be read when the book is closed, feature the words: ‘From Jany. 1808 to Augt. 1809’, followed by the number ‘III’ suggesting that this tome was the third of a series.

⁷³ Ibid. ‘I made the necessary arrangements for the Escape of [his] convoy ... it was impossible ... to escape’.

⁷⁴ See chapter 3.

⁷⁵ ‘The sum collected in England for the distribution among the prisoners in the different places of confinement, were in the first instance transmitted here. An office was opened, and a committee formed to correspond with those of the different depots where the distribution had to be made. This bureau had all the appearance of an English counting house’, Langton, *Narrative of a Captivity in France*, I, pp. 245-6.

Yet, it seems surprising that this was not inscribed on the spine. The book was thus not meant to be put on a shelf. It was meant to be displayed horizontally on an office desk, as a demonstration of professionalism to their clients, as was the case in other offices and counting-houses of the period in England.⁷⁶



Fig.39: Letter book of the committee at Verdun for the relief of British prisoners in France

(Birmingham City Archives, Matthew Boulton Papers)

Similarly, letter-writing in captivity was engrained in domestic practices, especially as families in Britain longed for intelligence from Verdun. Letters had thus an instrumental purpose: the prisoners used them to manage their affairs, property and connections at home.⁷⁷ Yet, the act of writing to one's kin was performed with varying enthusiasm.⁷⁸ Writing to his cousin in Oxford in March 1804, Revd Lancelot Lee found himself at a loss for words to entertain his reader on what he perceived as a limbo between life and death. 'Something must however be told', he wrote with resignation, 'since letters are expected to be proportionally long to the distance of the writer'.⁷⁹ His lack of enthusiasm, along with his practice of writing letters – his letters were a compilation of several entries for a week – shows that, for Lee, writing to his family was an unequal dialogue.⁸⁰ Repeating the words of his addressee, he disputed that relevance of writing about Verdun: 'tho' everything may be interesting to

⁷⁶ On the subject of accounting and book-keeping in the eighteenth century, see Rebecca Connor (ed.) *Women, accounting and narrative: keeping books in eighteenth-century England* (London and New York, 2004).

⁷⁷ NAS, GD1/42/2/7, GD224/31/16-15/17, GD20/4/4. On the topic of letter-writing from captives in France, see Elodie Duché, 'The Missing Spouse: the Wives of British Prisoners of War in Napoleonic France, their Lives and Writings', in Rebecca Probert and Rebecca Earle (eds), *Catherine Exley's Diary: The Life and Times of an Army Wife in the Peninsular War* (Kenilworth, 2014), pp.111-28.

⁷⁸ The question of performance in letter writing has been discussed in chapter 2 regarding marital bonds in displacement.

⁷⁹ Parry-Wingfield, John (ed.), *Napoleon's Prisoner: a Country Parson's Ten-Year Detention in France* (Ilfracombe, 2012), p. 29.

⁸⁰ This passage indicative of that process: 'I have so long wandered from my subject that I know not where to take it up. It was my intention to have told you how we passed our time at Verdun, when the observations on weather destroyed the thread of my story, and the Race I'm afraid has baffled every attempt to find it.' *Ibid.*, p.38.

me from the land you live in, nothing can be so to you from that on which I exist'.⁸¹ 'One day tells another', he said as an introduction to his letters, articulating though a Scriptural reference that writing was a necessary record of boredom.⁸² He then chose to narrate his relationship with his new dog and the impact of the weather on his health.

Equally, children of captives were asked by their parents to write their lives in captivity to keep them 'rationally' active.⁸³ As a daily practice, this was meant to give the 'last polish' to Elisa Rosée Forbes' education, which her aunt could then observe upon receiving the letter in England. 'Eliza's letters, written with a liveliness and gaiety suitable to her years', wrote her father with contentment, 'give you an account of the clubs, dances, and other innocent recreations of which she partakes in company with ten or twelve other English ladies, who move in the upper circle of captivity'. 'She has early entered the vicissitudes of the human journey', he continued, 'and in these revolutionary days no foresight can calculate upon the thorns or roses of her future path'. Captivity, writing in captivity in particular, ensured the preparation of her life and the shaping of her character. The seven-year old's social and epistolary education was meant to 'enable her ... to amuse the many solitary hours necessarily attached to female life', and the letters thus initiated a gendered educational dialogue with her aunt.⁸⁴

Furthermore, isolation and censorship led some prisoners to write as a way of collecting information missing in the French press. 'Not an atom of news transpires from this place', wrote Lee in 1804.⁸⁵ As mentioned previously, after 1806, the 'reading world' in detention was fettered by the increasing Napoleonic control of the press and communications with England.⁸⁶ However, as we saw in chapter five, the captives had access to the former Benedictine library and the editor of the local newspaper, the *Narrateur de la Meuse*, developed good relations with the captives and was keen to disseminate knowledge and information, even after the blockade.⁸⁷ Yet, the captives' bugbear was the imposed reading of the *Argus*, a newspaper designed for them by an English émigré

⁸¹ Parry-Wingfield (ed.), *Napoleon's Prisoner*, p. 40.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁸³ Forbes, *Letters from France*, II, pp. 250-1. On the subject of children's letter-writing and hardships in the eighteenth century, see Hannah Newton, *The Sick Child in Early Modern England, 1580-1720* (Oxford, 2012), p. 112.

⁸⁴ 'it is now my principal aim to give that finish to her education.' *Ibid.*, p. 250.

⁸⁵ Parry-Wingfield (ed.), *Napoleon's Prisoner*, p. 40.

⁸⁶ See chapter 5; Dutton, *The Captive Muse*, p. 35.

⁸⁷ See chapter 4 and 7 on complicit publishers at Verdun.

commissioned by the French State.⁸⁸ Whilst most of the captives used their writings to criticise the propagandist paper as ‘evidently false’, others decided to counter its disinformation by transforming their diary into a repository of intelligence gleaned from rumours and other readings. This was so with Revd Maude, whose journal underwent a significant change between 1804 and 1808.⁸⁹ His diarist practice shifted from brief notes of social activities (balls, races, admission to clubs, dinners) and individual time-consumption (birthday, anniversary of capture) to a more elaborate system of extended news entries, in which he copied entire articles from newspapers from Strasbourg, rumours gleaned from other captives and the letters they received in Verdun, along with other thoughts he elaborated on diplomatic and political topics such as debates on Catholic Emancipation in Britain or engagements in the Mediterranean. However, the main source of investigation was the potential removal of the depot and exchange cartels, about which he reported to his family and friends in Oxford. Some letters, along with others penned by fellow clergyman, were published in newspapers in England, which made their authors into a kind of enforced war reporter.⁹⁰

Similarly, RN captains ordered their men to relate their stories at sea and use their drawing skills to counteract the French press’s claims of naval feats. The dissemination of the news about Trafalgar as a British victory – and not a French victory as claimed by the Napoleonic press – two months after the battle, is probably the most illuminating example.⁹¹ In his manuscript memoir, R.N. Lieutenant William Dillon related how he heard of the battle at the depot from an extract of Collinwood’s report to the Admiralty presented by a naval captive new to the Caron Club:

Lord Yarmouth, Col. Abercromby and several others of my friend seized hold of me as if by one accord, and, lifting me on the table, desired me to read in a loud voice, the official report of that splendid victory ... When I had finished it, three hearty spontaneous cheers were given by at least one hundred members present, and those who were not near the table closed up and requested me to read the account a second time, which I readily agreed to do. I was then requested by Lord Yarmouth to explain the manner in which that battle was fought, as they did not understand the nautical description of the disposal

⁸⁸ ‘Everything is in favour of themselves’, noted John Robertson. NMM, JOD/202, 141, 5 August 1808.

⁸⁹ QCL, GB/NNAF/P144289, John Barnabas Maude, *Journal*, 1802-14, 5 September 1808.

⁹⁰ *The Times*, ‘English Prisoners at Verdun’, 5 March 1805, p. 4.

⁹¹ See timeline in the appendices.

of the two fleets. I did so by placing a parcel of books that were lying on the table in the position of the adverse fleets.⁹²

Captain Leveson Gower then ordered Dillon to further translate the report into a map of the battle of Trafalgar, now held in the British Library.⁹³ This map, along with a network of local press and rumours from Verdun, enabled intelligence to filter not only through the depot but the whole French territory.⁹⁴ Overall, captivity itself was a temporal void partly filled by the regular practice of accumulating evidence to inform or entertain, which led the prisoner to develop a collecting mind in detention.⁹⁵ This manifested itself through the practice of redrawing. As part of their professional education, servicemen, particularly naval men, were trained to draw maps and views of battles and foreign lands – skills they often cultivated in captivity by hiring local drawing masters.⁹⁶ However, not all prisoners shared the same artistic talents. Others resorted to copying the production of their fellow captives and included them in their own portfolios, as suggested by a drawing donated by a prisoner’s descendants to the *Bibliothèque d’étude* in Verdun (Fig.40).



Fig.40: An., West View of Verdun, c. 1805

(Bibliothèque d’étude, Verdun, V 19)

WEST VIEW of VERDUN.

⁹² William Henry Dillon, *A Narrative of My Professional Adventures, 1790-1839* (London, 1962), II, pp. 38-56.

⁹³ BL, Map Collections, St Pancras Reading Rooms, MS. 15,496.20: ‘A Colored Plan of the Battle of Trafalgar, “Presented to Captain Gower by Capt. Dillon, Verdun, Dec. 1805”’ (Verdun, 1805).

⁹⁴ ‘Des lettres particulières ont répandu depuis quelques jours la nouvelle d’une bataille navale qui a dû avoir lieu dans les mers d’Espagne entre la flotte combinée et celle que commande Lord Nelson. La flotte franco-espagnole sortie de Cadix le 26 ou 27 du mois dernier aurait rencontré l’ennemi...Une violente tempête qui s’est élevée sur la fin de l’action aurait dispersé les vaisseaux...On dit que l’amiral Nelson et un contre-amiral français ont été tués, l’amiral Gravina dangereusement blessé. Mais ces rapports n’ayant aucun caractère d’authenticité, il est prudent d’attendre les nouvelles officielles pour fixer ces idées.’ See *Narrateur de la Meuse*, 14 November 1805 ; Roy Adkins, *Trafalgar: the Biography of a Battle* (London, 2004); Marc Sorlot, *La Vie en Meuse au Temps de Napoléon Ier* (Metz, 1998), p.8.

⁹⁵ ‘I am collecting materials to entertain my friends in England’, wrote Lee in a letter to his cousin in November 1804. Parry-Wingfield (ed.), *Napoleon’s Prisoner*, p. 44.

⁹⁶ Edward Proudfoot Montagu, *The Personal Narrative of the Escape of Edward Proudfoot Montagu: an English Prisoner of War, from the Citadel of Verdun* (London, 1849), p.28.

This landscape is a copy drawn with a soft pencil on tracing paper, which was then glued and framed on vellum paper around 1805.⁹⁷ The title underneath was frailly and hesitantly reproduced between guiding lines, which suggests the amateur nature of the copy. The distant nature of the view suggest that this reproduction was not that of a French drawing, but probably that of a drawing made by another prisoner. If the origin of the original piece remains uncertain, the mere fact that this drawing was copied indicates that the purpose was to save the view, to collect it. Similarly, meteorological reports and commonplace books – gathering miscellaneous extracts of newspapers, books, songs, notes on local plants or recipes to ‘get rid of bugs’ given by their landlords – were kept in Verdun, as evidenced by the private papers of Charles Throckmorton (Fig.41) which further reveals the collecting mind in captivity.⁹⁸ It is perhaps not surprising that memoirs published after liberation were then presented as re-worked ‘portfolios’ gathering extracts from newspapers, orders from the French local authorities, or poems that had been posted up on the walls of the depot, which made their writing a testimony to the life as a group.⁹⁹ Whilst Catriona Kennedy has argued that war constituted a loss of a status signifier for those who were displaced, I would extend this approach and suggest that this collective writing through collecting was perhaps inherent to the codes of travel writing in times of war, and what Jamal Eddie Benhavoun described as an ‘ontological deranged’ self in eighteenth-century displacement, which the act of accumulating evidence and traces could have aimed to re-compose, or at least articulate.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Tracing paper was a relatively recent invention, mass produced in the late-eighteenth century, and propelled by State subsidies under Napoleon for the technical enhancement of the ‘Canson-Montgolfier’ factory, which explains the easiness of procuring such paper in Verdun. Yves Deforge, *Le Graphisme Technique: Son Histoire et son Enseignement* (Paris, 1981) p. 106.

⁹⁸ WRO, Throckmorton Papers, WRO, CR 1998/CD/Drawer 81B.

⁹⁹ Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, I, p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ In forced displacement, writes Benhavoun, the ‘self ... belongs somewhere else, and he is ontologically deranged, for he articulates his identity and lays claims to his self outside the very space within which that identity is constructed and perceived, ie. Travel.’ Jamal Eddie Benhavoun, *Narration, Navigation, and Colonialism: A Critical Account of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century English Narratives of Adventures and Captivity* (Brussels, 2006), p. 160. See also Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, pp. 114-5.

Fig.41: Throckmorton's weather records in captivity

(Warwickshire Record Office, Charles Throckmorton Papers)

The last form of imposed expression I would like to explore in this section is a material one: the graffiti masters of merchantmen and midshipmen carved in the walls of the citadel during their occasional seclusion there (Fig.42). Numerous historians, sociologists and archaeologists have concluded that the act of appropriating or degrading the material space of confinement was a transformative experience for prisoners, who turned the physical barriers to their liberty into 'walls of empowerment'.¹⁰¹ Graffiti are thus often read as a material literacy enabling even the less literate to leave a trace of their experience and express protest. I would like to nuance and further this point in the case of Verdun. The act of carving one's captive life in stone at the citadel was undoubtedly a response to a mass confinement, which however, should less be considered as a form of empowerment than an enforced expression of the self into the collective writing of seclusion in this locale. What they wrote is illuminating: a name and the address of their lodgings in Verdun – 'RUE DES MINIMES – or a date – '1813'. They carved these inscriptions most likely with metallic spoons in the porous stone replicating, through the use of capital letters and personal details, the format of existing graffiti from their Prussian predecessors, with whom they now merge in a fresco of

¹⁰¹ On the theory of the 'walls of empowerment', see Guisela Latorre, *Walls of Empowerment: Chicana/o Indigenist Murals of California* (Austin, 2008).

patronymic carvings chronicling the time and space of their passage in Verdun.¹⁰² They were thus inscribing their individual episode in a broader script written by other historical actors secluded in the place. The place where they wrote these inscriptions is even more interesting. They carved on the walls and corner pillars of the *Bastion de la Reine* corridor and foyer, an alcove where prisoners gathered around the fireplace, which confirms the collective context of this individual expression.¹⁰³



Fig.42: Graffiti of early-nineteenth prisoners of war

(*Bastion de la Reine*, citadel of Verdun)

Published ego-narrations and collective selves: Reception, competition, oblivion

‘My arrival in London was a new era in my existence’, wrote Dillon before chronicling that, upon his return from Verdun, he was interrogated by the Admiralty and the Transport Office, which both refused his application for employment and the reimbursement of his lodging expenses in captivity.¹⁰⁴ The publication of the narrative of his detention was then a response to their refusal.¹⁰⁵

Dillon’s polemic intentions were both individual and collective. His memoir contextualised captivity

¹⁰² On the carving of holes in the citadel by prisoners, see Proudfoot Montagu, *The Personal Narrative*, p. 18.

¹⁰³ This case study is limited, as I was not permitted to visit the Bastion de la Reine, owing to the danger of the site. I used professional photographs commissioned by the town hall, and information gleaned from archeologists and fieldwork notes on the building.

¹⁰⁴ Dillon, *Professional Adventures*, II, pp. 187-9.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, II, p. 189. See chapter 6.

in a larger focus, that of his *Professional Adventures* and the situation of the Navy during the Napoleonic Wars, which raises paramount questions: to what extent were these published ‘ego-documents’ meant to reflect the life of prisoners as a collective entity?

The first intriguing question, which is often neglected is ‘when?’ When does captivity start and end in these published writings? How did actors place this segment in the timeline of their life and that of the group of ‘companions in misfortune’? As Alon Rachaminov has observed, the moment of capture often constitutes a pivotal moment at which the narrator assumes a new identity as prisoner.¹⁰⁶ As mentioned above, the professional and bureaucratic ‘duty’ of describing the ship’s loss to the fiscal-military State in Britain filtered through published memoirs of naval captives, who dilated the time of narration to emphasize the heroic resistance before capture – an honourable surrender which made them prisoners and not deserters. Yet, I would argue that elements anterior to capture served the Verdun captives in relating the story of their individual and collective selves in detention, and these elements were engrained in their childhood. Of course, for certain captives, childhood *was* the time and space of detention. This was the case of Frances Sophia Rainsford, who published much later in her life a little memoir on ‘what [she] did when [she] was a little girl’, reminiscing about the first years of life with her captive parents in Verdun.¹⁰⁷ In this little document, she associated the time of captivity with one specific space where her first memories lay – a garden belonging to ‘two old French ladies’ who rented their house to Frances’s family:

The first thing I remember is living in a nice house in the country. There was a beautiful garden, and orchard, and a green sloping bank with a burn at the foot where the elder ones used to dabble ... the apples were kept in a press or armoire at the end of a long passage, and the first thing I remember was your uncle Bill trotting after the old ladies and his first words were ‘pommés, pommés’, and the old ladies gave him apples.¹⁰⁸

Frances’ personal account was addressed to her children, yet she inscribed her individual story into that of the ‘*detenus*’, extrapolating her faint memory that her father ‘did not sleep’ in the house to explain the passport system at Verdun for prisoners renting houses outside the two leagues.

¹⁰⁶ Alon Rachaminov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (London, 2002), pp. 44-5, 146.

¹⁰⁷ Julie Garland McLellan (ed.), *Recollections of My Childhood*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Overall, she conceived her story ‘of a time that was very eventful’ as ‘a childish account of a what made a lasting impression upon [her]’.¹⁰⁹ As Carolyn Steedman has shown in *Strange Dislocations*, childhood was an intricate concept, a physiological prism through which a ‘sense of insideness’ developed in the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century.¹¹⁰ It is then perhaps not surprising to see that prisoners, who were adults in Verdun, used childhood recollections to articulate their experience. ‘Attendance of the morning and evening *appel* gives to the man a boy’s sensation, who is incessantly in fear lest he should neglect a master’s summons’.¹¹¹ If the recollections of the school years were an allegory of power relations in the depot, the idea of reliving childhood haunted Lee’s letters, especially after he decided to establish a mess with his ‘friend and former schoolfellow, Sir Thomas Lavie’.¹¹² Childhood was a point of reference that could enable their reader to relate to what they felt in Verdun. This reference was not universal but marked by social and gender differences, as suggested in Lawrence’s parallel between Verdun and the public school:

To a *detenu*, that time that he passed at Verdun seems like the repetition of his school years, and he will always meet his fellow sufferers with the same pleasure than an Etonian or Wickamite enjoys at an anniversary.¹¹³

As a former Etonian, Lawrence created an abstract and collective entity of ‘THE detainee’ out of his own personal experience, which suggested that attempts at narrating a collective self were individual projections of one’s own social and gendered past, onto the group.

As rewritten diaries, published memoirs about Verdun bear witness to an ‘emplotment’, a subjective reorganisation in chronological, thematical or anecdotal coherent patterns to ensure the flow of the narrative and the significance of their testimony. ‘In whatever point of view we consider the detention of the English in France’, wrote Revd Wolfe, ‘it will be admitted, that it is an anomaly in the history of civilised nations, and bears a character of originality, which gives an interest to everything connected with it. It appeared to me that the impression called forth at this moment should not be allowed to pass away ... It may call some pleasing recollections to the minds of them

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 10-11.

¹¹⁰ Carolyn Steedman, *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority, 1780-1930* (Cambridge MA, London, 1995), p. xi.

¹¹¹ Wingfield (ed.), *Napoleon’s Prisoner*, p. 42.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 76.

¹¹³ Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, II, pp. 228-9.

who were connected with this extraordinary captivity.¹¹⁴ The prisoners' historical consciousness was claimed by them to be based in a dialogue with their French hosts. James Forbes dedicated two pages of his letter to his sister to the history of Verdun from the Romans to the present day of his captivity.¹¹⁵ His summary was a narrative of successive military conquests, in which the British captives could inscribe their names along that of great historical figures. 'Verdun', he concluded, 'is not the most uninteresting place in Europe. From the conquest of Julius Caesar, and his successors, in ancient Gaul, it has always been mentioned as a respectable fortress in the French annals: its last military anecdote, in the historic page, is its conquest by the Prussians, and their speedy retreat in 1792; and it may perhaps furnish a future paragraph, as the spot selected for the unjust captivity of the English'.¹¹⁶ Forbes' sense of being part of History through captivity was entrenched in his daily practice of questioning his French landlords and their recent experience of the Revolution, playing, as it were, the part of an oral historian. He asked them about the inflation, which he recorded in a detailed table of prices in Verdun between 1789 and 1804 he sent to his sister.¹¹⁷ He learnt about the famous guillotined '*Vierges de Verdun*', and empathised with the dead 'Henrietta, Helena, and Agatha Wattrim' of his landlords' family, whose tales of suffering became his and, along with another anecdotes about Revolutionary France and 'its present state', legitimized the publication of his correspondence in England in 1806.¹¹⁸

Whilst in the *captatio benevolentiae*, authors often portrayed themselves as merely narrating a defining moment in history which legitimized the publication of memoirs to sustain the collective memory, this rhetoric of *vera et pura narratio* (or 'unvarnished narrative' to use a common phrase) hid a variety of implicit argumentative intentions. Indeed, more than what is actually said, what is interesting in these memoirs is what is *not* said. If Charles Sturt does not boast himself about having escaped thanks to his dog Coco, neither does Lord Blayney mention the fact that he had an illegitimate daughter with a French woman, which could have endangered his family inheritance.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Wolfe, *English Prisoners in France*, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ 'I will endeavour to give you a short history of a place, in which you truly say, that you not only feel, but that every loyal Englishman must, at this moment, feel, a very tender interest', Forbes, *Letters from France*, II, p. 223-4.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

¹¹⁸ Charles Sturt, *The Real State of France, in the Year 1809; With an Account of the Treatment of the Prisoners of War, and Persons Otherwise Detained in France* (London, 1810).

¹¹⁹ ADM-Bar, 2 E 558 (59), Etat civil de Verdun, 1813, entry 246, Victoire Blayney, enfant naturel; Blayney, *Narrative of a Forced Journey*, II, pp. 451-5: 'After quitting Paris I again visited Verdun, to look after some property I had left there, consisting of two houses, wine, furniture, etc., and found they escaped much better than I could have expected ... I purchased the château at Arnumon,

These are personal untold stories, and yet, as Karine Rance points out, what is generally *not* said in all these texts remains the process of justification that underlies the very enterprise of publishing one's memoir.¹²⁰ Why such a debonair life in confinement? And why escape if life was not that harsh in Verdun? Former captives implicitly address these unasked questions upon their return home, using the stories of other captives to legitimize their own narratives.

In this respect, all these memoirs constitute a 'sea of stories', to take up a term from the Indian tradition of story-telling, that is a space in which stories are exchanged and merged into one another at the crossroads between orality and the written word.¹²¹ It is this process of sedimentation of memory in 'transpersonal life writings' that I would like to explore.¹²² First, the temporality of the group affects the individual writing, for memoirists consistently make use of literary devices such as analepsis and prolepsis to integrate their life in the broader account of their fellow captives' lives. 'As there may be some readers desirous of knowing what transpired in Verdun after my departure, I have thought it necessary to add the following particulars', writes midshipman Edward Boys, before narrating in the free indirect speech the escape of one of his fellow captives, which he obviously did not witness but which served to legitimize his own escape.¹²³ A few years later, the friend in question, Seacome Ellison praised Boys in return: 'My friend, Captain Boys, in the "Narrative of his captivity and Adventures in France and Flanders", published in 1831 a narrative detailing as much, if not more, cool courage, determined perseverance, and severe suffering, as any narrated under similar circumstances.'¹²⁴ Read as a diptych, Boy's and Ellison's testimonies reveal how memoirs of escape would function as a celebration of male friendship in adversity.

where I formerly resided. It is an ancient building, beautifully situated on the borders of the Meuse ... The gardens belonging to the château are very extensive, in addition to which I purchased a tolerable quantity of land. I have besides the entire liberty of the chace, and the right of cutting more wood than I can possibly burn in the course of the year. This estate, where I can bathe and fish in the Meuse, may afford me, I conceive, a pleasant retreat for a few months in the summer season, or whenever I may feel inclined to visit France'.

¹²⁰ Interpretations of the work of Foucault have led to the acceptance that human beings are 'confessing animals'. Yet, the mechanics of that confession – as a complex and not necessarily voluntary act – remain neglected for Napoleonic captivity writings. As Karine Rance argues, memoirs often constitute a justification, and the former captives almost invariably contrived to justify either their escape or their debonair life in confinement, away from the privations at home or their duty as combatants. They aimed to re-integrate the displaced and embattled anti-heroes within the national narrative of a victorious Britain by presenting themselves as 'free born Britons' victims of the French oppression. See Karine Rance, 'Mémoires de Nobles Français Emigrés en Allemagne Pendant la Révolution Française: la Vision Rétrospective d'Une Expérience', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 46:2 (1999), pp. 245-62 .

¹²¹ Salman Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (London, 1990).

¹²² Bruno Blanckerman, 'Identités Narratives du Sujet, au Présent: Récits Autofictionnels/ Récits Transpersonnels', in Carole Dormer (ed), *Se Raconter, Témoigner* (Caen, 2001), pp. 73-81.

¹²³ Boys, *Narrative of a Captivity*, p. 285.

¹²⁴ Ellison, *Prison Scenes*, p. 234.

Memoirs constitute a chain of shared anecdotes, either experienced directly or by hearsay. Those concerning the disciplinary ‘Mansion of Tears’ in Bitche, which most of the Verdun captives did not experience, suggest that the writing of a life relied on the spoken stories that had been circulating in the depot.¹²⁵ This collective set of anecdotes thus suggests that these individual writings were anchored in what Paul Ricœur terms *ipse*-identity: an identity based on a maintenance of oneself in interactions with others, making life accounts entangled with one another not only through oral but written anecdotes.¹²⁶ Indeed, it appears quite obvious that the memoirists read each other’s works. Looking at their texts as a *corpus* hence offers the possibility of unraveling the dynamics of a ‘*communauté d’auteurs-lecteurs*’ among former prisoners, that is a community in which each author is a reader and consequently every narrative a response to the previous and an address to the ensuing account of the detention. In this community, authors constantly quoted or echoed each other through a metanarrative, as is suggested by the disconcerting resemblance of these three passages written by Lawrence, Dillon and Montagu on Commandant Wirion.

Like Hamlet’s uncle, he could smile, and smile, and be a villain ... General Wirion was the son of a *charcutier*, or pork-dealer in Picardy; and though an attorney’s clerk before the revolution, he, upon every occasion, affected a contempt for his ancient calling. No ancient *gentilhomme d’epee* could have looked down with more *fierté* on an *homme de robe* than this Bow-street officer in regimentals did upon every civilian.¹²⁷

General Wirion was the son of a *charcutier* or pork-dealer in Picardy; and though an attorney’s clerk before the Revolution, he on every occasion affected the most sovereign contempt for his ancient calling. No gentleman of the highest nobility could have looked down with more *hauteur* than this man when in his regimentals upon robed lawyer and every civilian.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Robert James, *Ten Years a Captive: What a Naval Officer Went Through. The Imprisonment and Attempted Escapes of Lieutenant R. B. James*, quoted in Edward Fraser, *Napoleon the Gaoler, Personal Experiences and Adventures of British Sailors and Soldiers During the Great Captivity* (London, 1914), p. 150.

¹²⁶ Paul Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris, 1990).

¹²⁷ Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, I, p. 172.

¹²⁸ William Henry Dillon quoted in Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives*, p. 125.

General Wirion was a shrewd man, polite, and affecting condescension ... but he might be compared to hamlet's uncle, he could smile, and smile, and be a villain. The General was a son of a *charcutier*, or pork dealer, in Picardy: and though an attorney's clerk before the revolution, no ancient *gentilhomme d'épee* could have more pride.¹²⁹

Not only do these three authors express the same vision of this son of Jacobinism, but they phrase it in a very similar language: 'Hamlet's uncle', 'son of a pork dealer', who 'looked down upon every civilian'. An authorial filiation becomes apparent, for if Dillon has apparently read Lawrence, Proudfoot Montagu seems to have synthesized their respective accounts in his own writing, which through this unacknowledged appropriation raises the issue of the demarcation line between brazen plagiarism and collective authorship.¹³⁰

These published writings were variations on a similar theme, giving the reader an active role in their dialogue; which somehow illustrates a death of the author.¹³¹ 'How far this supposition is correct', writes Langton, 'I shall leave the reader to decide'.¹³² The captives did actually engage with each other over the reliability of their account, leading less to the emergence of a collective captive 'Voice' than competing memories of the detention. First, it could be argued that whilst former prisoners use the pronoun 'we', the unitary discourse appears as a polemic projection of one's particular destiny onto the group, as the aforementioned case of the Etonian projection of James Lawrence suggests. Furthermore, considered as a *corpus*, these memoirs constitute 'a labyrinth where memorialists address, name, contradict each other, and contradict themselves', in Karine Rance's words.¹³³ These memoirs tell us something about tensions occurring between certain spheres of British society after 1814, the Navy and the Field Army in particular. In this respect, the case of Naval Captain Frederick Hoffman's attack against redcoat Lord Major-General Blayney and his cookery book, speaks for itself: 'Lord Blayney, who once wrote a book, principally on the best mode of cooking ... was a good-natured but not a very wise man. He could not bear the midshipmen, because, he said, they cheated him out of his best cigars and made him give them a dinner when he

¹²⁹ Proudfoot Montagu, *Personal Narrative*, p. 13

¹³⁰ On the ambiguity between plagiarism and collective authorship during the period, see Tilar Mazze, *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period* (Philadelphia, 2011).

¹³¹ Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", *Image-Music-Text*. trans. and ed. Stephen Heath (London, 1977), pp. 42-8.

¹³² Langton, *Narrative of a Captivity in France from 1809 to 1814*, I, p. 251.

¹³³ '[Les mémoires considérés en bloc, en corpus] trace[nt] les lignes d'un véritable labyrinthe [où] les mémorialistes se répondent, se citent et se nomment mutuellement, se contredisent les uns et les autres, se contredisent eux-mêmes.' Karine Rance, *Mémoires de nobles émigrés dans les pays germaniques pendant la Révolution française* (PhD thesis, Paris I University, 2001), p.338.

did not wish for their company.’¹³⁴ Hoffman’s personal attack on an aristocratic redcoat, who received much more social recognition and financial support after his return than a naval captain of obscure birth, demonstrates that diverging social backgrounds and regimental identities were at stake in these writings. Civilian *détenus* launched similar criticisms against each other, Lawrence accusing Forbes of ‘render[ing] no service to his countrymen’, by presenting a ‘mild’ picture of the Verdun prisoners in his published letters, and therefore ‘rendering our government less interested about their fate’.¹³⁵ Relating a case of denunciation at the depot, Boys remarked that ‘the following circumstances however must not be omitted, because it has been incorrectly mentioned in other publications’.¹³⁶ Overall, the former captives’ dialogue did not result in the creation of a ‘fusion of horizons’, in Hans-Georg Gadamer’s words.¹³⁷ There is not one single memory of the detention or a unitary captive ‘voice’, as a collective narrative entity. Rather, it is the kaleidoscopic nature of these individual writings that enabled a dialogue, sometimes in a polemic manner, between former prisoners.

The role played by publishers and readers in these authorial dynamics is neglected in the existing literature. However, they shaped the form these narratives took and their consumption as patriotic fiction. As seen in the first section, there was a patriotic aesthetic linked to miniaturism in these writings: memoirists showed a real fascination for the ‘motley assemblage’ of prisoners, which captured in a nutshell the varied horizons of a global empire and thus made the British ‘imagined community’ a tangible and personal experience in detention.¹³⁸ However, the patriotic nature of the prisoners’ writings should not be taken at face value. I am not certain that Steven Schwamenfeld is right in assuming the veracity of Lord Blayney’s account of the ‘pugnacious sense of patriotism’ of the Field Army captives in Verdun, knowing the retrospective nature of the text.¹³⁹ It seems important to note that certain publishers incited authors to fictionalise their memoirs to give them a more patriotic tone that would appeal to a war-fiction market in London. Thomas Hookham, for

¹³⁴ Frederick Hoffman, *A Sailor of King George: the Journals of Captain Frederick Hoffman R.N. 1793-1814* (London, 1901), p. 128.

¹³⁵ ‘Upon his arrival in England he published an account of the treatment that the English received at Verdun, and he [...] rendered no service to his countrymen there, by representing it equally mild [...] as it rendered our government less interested about their fate; and when the work appeared at Verdun, the surprise and indignation of the *détenus*, who were every day suffering.’ See Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun*, II, pp.56-60. Another civilian *détenu* named Edmond Temple voiced a similar accusation against James Lawrence. See Edmond Temple, *The life of Pill Garlick: Rather a Whimsical Sort of Fellow* (Miller, 1813), p. 300.

¹³⁶ Boys, *Narrative of a Captivity*, p. 61.

¹³⁷ Hayden White, ‘The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory’, *History and Theory* 22 (1984), pp.1-33.

¹³⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York, 2003).

¹³⁹ Steven Schwamenfeld, *‘The Foundation of British Strength’: National Identity and the British Common Soldier* (Ann Arbor MI, 2007), p. 59.

instance, one of the two largest booksellers and publishers in the capital by 1800, published within two year two editions of Lawrence's *Picture of Verdun*.¹⁴⁰ First, he published it anonymously as 'a détenu's portfolio', but given the rapid success of the piece, a second edition followed which included the name of the author, and used his success to further the patriotic nature of his writing by asking his readers to contribute to the Lloyd's Patriotic Fund.¹⁴¹ After being staged in London in 1812, a play based on the memoir was circulated by Hookham, who advertised it as a patriotic fiction through a sample of its most nationalistic reviews in the press. Significantly, this chauvinistic review from the *Monthly Mirror* appeared on the first page of the book: 'the contents of the present work will be interesting to most readers. It must make every *Englishman's blood boil in his veins*'.¹⁴² Additionally, some publishers re-edited pieces published in captivity in France, yet with alterations. Significant changes were made to Thomas Dutton's *Captive Muse* between its first release at Verdun in 1806 and its second edition by the successful London-based circulating library, Lowndes, in 1814. Verses were added and rewritten, and a subtitle was designed to frame the patriotic tone of the whole collection ('A collection of fugitive poem ... illustrative of the cruel treatment of the British prisoners of war'), and which the typographical layout emphasized (Fig. 43).¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ *Catalogue of Hookham's Circulating Library* (London, 1829); Peter Garside, 'Popular Fiction and National Tale: Hidden Origins of Scott's *Waverley*', *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 46:1 (1991), p. 46.

¹⁴¹ Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun* (2nd ed.), II, p. 262.

¹⁴² Two other patriotic reviews were selected: 'This is an amusing work, and throws considerable light on the actual state of France, and the corruption and tyranny of its present government. *Critical Review*', 'The author is a man of sense and education; he writes with facility and with spirit, and intersperses his curious narrative of facts with pertinent observations and judicious reflections. *Antijacobin Review*.' See Lawrence, *The Englishman at Verdun, or the Prisoner of Peace* (London, 1813).

¹⁴³ Thomas Dutton, *The Captive Muse* (London, 1814), p. 82: 'The following six lines, commencing with 'Rush youth', were omitted in the Verdun copy'.

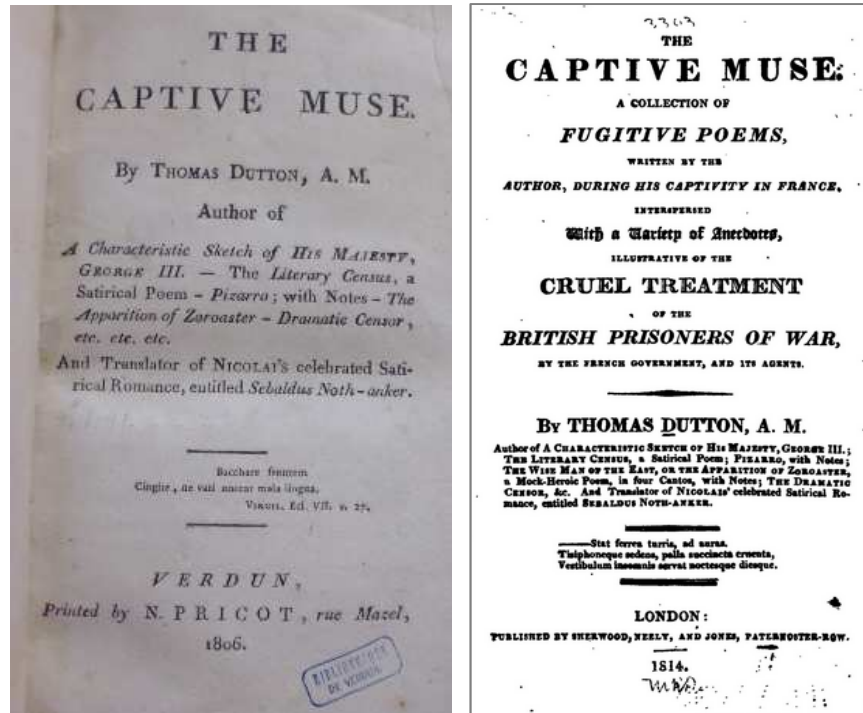


Fig.43: Two editions of Thomas Dutton's *Captive Muse* (1806, 1814)

Newspapers had an equally important role as the 'serialisation of fiction' burgeoned during the period.¹⁴⁴ Resurrected after Waterloo, the *London Magazine* published Joshua Done's memoir, in which the episode of captivity in Verdun was reduced to a single introductory paragraph before the author detailed a long tale of epic escape.¹⁴⁵ Each section functioning as a cliff-hanger, the text aimed to entertain and instruct the readers in a dramatic manner. Done framed it as a male patriotic fiction, through the use of anecdotes on the captives' wrestling and boxing talents, and their superiority over the French natives.¹⁴⁶ This was meant to remind 'the public' in 1820 of his 'suffering' and support his request for an 'indemnification' from the British State.

However, the ways in which these published materials were disseminated, consumed and reused furthered their oblivion in the *longue durée*. The publication of captives' works certainly inspired various fictions, such as plays and novels, penned in the margins of canonical literature in France, Britain and North America during the long-nineteenth century. These works centred on what we called the 'captivity of the heart' in the previous chapter, and sentimentalised the memory of their

¹⁴⁴ Graham Law, 'Serials and the Nineteenth-Century Publishing Industry', in Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (eds), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism* (London, 2009), p. 567; Graham Law, *Serializing fiction in the Victorian press* (New York and Hampshire, 2000).

¹⁴⁵ Joshua Done, 'Narrative of Done's Imprisonment in France' in the *London Magazine*, January 1826, pp. 26-37.

¹⁴⁶ The text was then quoted in Proudfoot Montagu, *Personal Narrative*, p. 74.

captivity. In particular, Balzac found inspiration in Verdun and wrote a novel *La Femme de Trente Ans* (Fig.44) narrating the romance of an English aristocrat and a French lady, a story troubled by war and tuberculosis.¹⁴⁷ This novel was part of the ‘Private Scenes’ in the *Comédie Humaine*, and therefore aimed to explore the social and emotional tensions arising from the situation of forced cohabitation, which crystallised in the creation of two stock characters. As Dominique Millet-Gerard argued, the prisoner, Arthur Grenville, became a de-contextualised type of ‘dandy’ and Julie, his French lover, an archetype of ‘*grande coquette*’.¹⁴⁸ From the 1840s to the 1970s, myriad novels and plays – such as William Douglas Jerrold’s *The Prisoner of War, a Comedy in Two Acts* (1842), Henry Cokton’s *The Sisters* (1844), Léon Monier’s *Les Anglais à Verdun ou l’Art de ne pas Payer Ses Settes* (1933) and more recently Meriol Trevor’s *The Civil Prisoners* (1977) (Fig. 44) – followed this trend and used captivity only as background for sentimental tales.¹⁴⁹



Fig.44: Illustrations to sentimental novels on captivity at Verdun penned by Balzac and Trevor

Ultimately, the way tales and memoirs of captivity filtered through family histories further suggests this effacement through sentimentalisation. In this respect, the interview of two descendants of RN Captain Michael Read conducted by the BBC in 2006 is illuminating. ‘It goes back to 1989’, explained one of them, ‘when I discovered that my aunt had a ship’s log. It came into the keeping of

¹⁴⁷ Honoré de Balzac, *La Femme de Trente Ans* (Paris, 1869).

¹⁴⁸ On the subject of Balzac and English characters, see Pierre Charreton, *Regards Populaires sur l’Anglo-Saxon: Drôles de Types* (Saint-Etienne, 2003), p. 10; Patricia Baudouin, ‘Balzac et l’Angleterre: de l’Anglophobie Epidermique à l’Anglophilie Instrumentale’ in Sylvie Aprile and Fabrice Bensimon (eds), *La France et l’Angleterre au XIXe Siècle* (Paris, 2006) p. 207; Raymond Sullivan, ‘*La Femme de Trente Ans*: Quelques Emprunts de Balzac à la Littérature et à la Vie Anglaises’, *L’Année Balzacienne* (1967), pp. 107-14; Dominique Millet-Gerard, ‘Dandys et Grandes Coquettes: de Pouchkine et de Balzac à Lermontov’, *L’Année Balzacienne* 14 (1993), pp. 41-63.

¹⁴⁹ See also Annette Marie Maillard, *The Compulsory Marriage, and Its Consequences* (3 vols, London, 1851), I, pp. 42, 164.

my great great grandfather, Captain Read. And there'd been this sort of history handed through the generations saying that he was a ship's captain and that he was running contraband across to France'.¹⁵⁰ Despite being distant cousins who barely knew each other before the interview, the two descendants shared the same dramatic story of a 'pirate' who had been captured by Napoleon and marched 'with his wife ... overland to Verdun'. The banal story of a sea captain trading oats to London had been transformed into an adventurous story, involving piracy and complicated love, for which Verdun served as a distant, if not completely erased background.

A muse 'in society'

In 2011, upon starting my doctoral project, I ordered a copy of a 1931 edition of the diary Peter Bussell kept in detention under Napoleon. When opening the packet, I was surprised to find a handwritten dedication at the back of the cover: 'von einem anderen Kriegsgefangener'.¹⁵¹ The message suggested that the journal had been given as a gift from 'another prisoner of war' – perhaps a German prisoner of war from the Second World War – to a friend, someone who would relate to the content of this captive diary. This re-writing of one story onto another further suggests the perpetuation of Dutton's *Captive Muse*. Yet, it also suggests its effacement. We do not know how published and manuscript memoirs were consumed amongst family and friends, years and decades after their detention. Some have kept these objects in their own collections, and one must accept that some voices have simply been lost. For these captives, the Muse, who Dutton presented as a public voice for the detainees, has fallen silent.

This chapter aimed to reflect on the significance of this Verdun 'captive muse', its construction and effacement in the *longue durée*. I aimed to frame the various and varied productions made by captives through a holistic approach considering in unison writings and visual creations of all kinds made during detention. I have argued that literary templates and a visual culture shaped the microcosmic way in which most of the prisoners perceived and described the social of landscape of captivity as a 'little Britain-beyond-the-seas'. This miniaturist lens placed captive authors and artists at a distance from their immediate experience of detention: a position magnifying the historical

¹⁵⁰ BBC Radio 4, 'Home Truths', 'French Debt', 2006 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/hometruths/0329repay_debt.shtml], accessed on 26 Nov.2013].

¹⁵¹ Geoffrey Auvie Turner (ed.), *The Diary of Peter Bussell with Illustrations from Original Drawings by the Author* (London, 1931).

significance of their experience. Yet, their historical consciousness needs to be nuanced, since these creations were not necessarily utterly voluntary. They mused about detention as a social practice fettered by education, professional practices and censorship, which made writing a form of collection. Publishing was equally problematic, as the prisoners entered an authorial dialogue in which publishers and readers had a significant role in constructing their oblivion through a sentimentalisation of their experience.

CONCLUSION

The Verdun palimpsest

The parole depot of Verdun has long been considered as a world apart, a historical anomaly of prisoners 'living happily together', and suffusing the space of their captivity to the point of metamorphosing the town into a 'little Britain-beyond-the-seas'.¹ This thesis has offered a different picture by relocating their decade-long internment at the heart of the Napoleonic conflicts and their cultures, which, as David Bell and Linda Colley argued, inaugurated a totalisation of warfare and crystallised the construction of Britishness in opposition to Frenchness.² Far from being a distinct segment of time in the captives' lives, parole detention was a passage coloured by past travelling experiences, where perceptions and interactions with the French enemy were challenged and renegotiated by individual interactions within a space of forced cohabitation.

One question remains open: was Verdun as 'unique' as the naval historian Michael Lewis observed it was in 1962?³ Parole, as a system of military coercion, was not an innovation of Napoleonic France. It had various and varied antecedents in world history. The Carthaginians had developed a custom of paroling Numidian and Roman captives in a return for a pledge of honour not to bear arms again.⁴ The practice was also identified in medieval Europe for knights ineligible for ransom, and across the Atlantic during the American War of Independence. But, the system was not merely an early modern phenomenon. Between 1899 and 1902, Boer guerrillas were noted for paroling British captives, and equally, the British offered a limited form of free circulation for their hostages in the Orange Free State. Parole was marginally used in Britain and the United States during the First and Second World War, particularly as captured enemies were allowed to labour on farms near their place of internment. However, the terms and conditions of parole status were never the same. Parole had an elastic meaning,

¹ Seacombe Ellison, *Prison Scenes: and Narrative of Escape from France, During the Late War* (London, 1838), p. 40.

² David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare As We Know It* (Boston & New York, 2007); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven, 1992).

³ Michael Arthur Lewis, *Napoleon and his British Captives* (London, 1962), p. 136. See introduction to this thesis.

⁴ Brown, Gary, 'Prisoner of War Parole: Ancient Concept, Modern Utility', *Military Law Review* 156 (1998), pp. 202-3.

involving various spatial and social restrictions. It could be synonym for a temporary abandonment of military activity or an obligation to remain in the country of the captor with little correspondence with home. Parole was used for ideological as much as practical purposes, especially as the scale of increasingly global wars obliged many privateers to release captives, owing to a lack of food and water on their ships.⁵

The specificity of Verdun, as a parole detention place, lies in the fact that all British parolees were, almost without exception, gathered *there*, instead of being dispersed in small communities, as was the case for French parolees in Britain during the period. Permission to temporarily reside in Paris and other cities could be granted, yet the Verdun prisoners were still affiliated to the depot, and could be re-transferred at any time.⁶ This geography enabled parolees to develop a sense of themselves as a group, a motley gathering of civilian and military detainees, men and women, adults and children. The prisoners' numerical importance in the town also distinguished the contacts they made with the French population. Fraternisation with the enemy in captivity was – and still is – not new. Individual interactions in detention create, in the words of Remy Cazals, a 'paradoxical link' between captives and captors'.⁷ As the recent work of Ian MacDougall has shown, the Scottish population received rather amicably prisoners of various nationalities during the Napoleonic Wars. French, Scandinavian, Italian, Dutch, Belgian, Spanish, Polish, West Indian, and American captives detained there, between 1803 and 1814, developed close ties with the locals, leading contemporaries to note that 'all men are brethren' in detention.⁸ But, what was peculiar about the British parolees' contacts in Verdun was their scope (1500 prisoners constituting ten per cent of the population), their duration (more than a decade, as some decided to stay) and perhaps most importantly, their context. Indeed, these Franco-British interactions occurred at a pivotal moment of nation-building, when, in the words of Linda Colley, enmity between the two nations was understood as a synonym for 'otherness'.

In this respect, Verdun functioned as a transnational 'contact zone', in the postcolonial sense of the term: a space of exchanges between people of socially, culturally and confessionally diverse

⁵ Ibid., p. 205.

⁶ Patrick Le Caravère, 'Les Prisonniers Français en Grande-Bretagne de 1803 à 1814', *Napoleonica. La Revue* 3:9 (2010), pp. 118-52.

⁷ See Sylvie Caucanas, Rémy Cazals, Pascal Payen and Odon Abbal (eds), *Les Prisonniers de Guerre dans l'Histoire: Contacts Entre Peuples et Cultures* (Paris, 2003).

⁸ MacDougall, Ian, *All Men are Brethren: French, Scandinavian, Italian, German, Dutch, Belgian, Spanish, Polish, West Indian, American, and Other Prisoners of War in Scotland, 1803-1814* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2008).

backgrounds.⁹ Looking at the repercussions of such contacts, from both sides of the encounter, offers a precious insight into the ambiguities of nationally defined identities and frontiers. Indeed, this thesis has demonstrated that captives developed more amicable relations with the locals than is often assumed. Botany, medicine, freemasonry, readings, theatricals, food, clothing, trade and the quotidian use of a shared space became vectors of cultural transfers, which complicated ideas and feeling of home. Romanticism, the introspective power of ‘little things’ – tokens of friendship and love, items of clothing, the scent of an orchard and visions of ruins in Verdun – served captives and captors in fashioning their individual and collective identities during detention and its aftermath.¹⁰ The case of Verdun is thus a powerful reminder that early nineteenth century people utilised other means than sentiments of otherness to define themselves. Religious communion ‘in remembrance’, the cosmopolitan ties of science and knowledge, the memories of childhood served those involved in this detention to relate to, rather than oppose each other. Furthermore, the study of the ‘captive muse’ has revealed that patriotic claims of ‘free-born Britons’ restaging a ‘home-away-from-home’ were self-justifications pre-empting accusations from their intended readers, and were embedded in literary and visual tropes of microcosmic and panoramic genres.¹¹ Prisoners *saw* captivity: the visual element of ‘experiencing’ detention should not be underestimated.¹² Their perceptions were coloured by voyages afloat and ashore, real or imagined, in Britain, Europe or India, rather than shaped by the propagandist caricatures and prints that mutually vilified the two nations at war.¹³ In this respect, this thesis confirms what Cuvelliers and Crépin have observed in a study of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais, namely that ‘the sound and fury of official propaganda often obscure a very different quotidian reality’.¹⁴

Tensions did occur, particularly between prisoners and *gendarmes*, midshipmen and local young men, eccentric gentlemen and farmers. Yet, these conflicts did not express enmity per se. Rather, they emanated from performances of masculinity, along with socio-professional and generational tensions. Like French parolees in Britain, the depot formed a ‘social laboratory’ where people of different social

⁹ See the seminal work of Mary Louise Pratt on ‘contact zones’ and the ‘colonial frontier’. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992), pp. 4-6.

¹⁰ Carolyn Steedman, ‘Englishness, Clothes and Little Things: Towards a Political Economy of the Corset’ in Breward, Christopher and Conekin, Becky and Cox, Caroline (eds.), *The Englishness of English Dress* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 29-44.

¹¹ Thomas Dutton, *The Captive Muse* (London, 1814).

¹² On the visual nature of experience, see Joan Scott, ‘The Evidence of Experience’, *Critical Inquiry* 17: 4 (1991), pp. 773-97.

¹³ As mentioned in chapter 5, the mere fact that the local newspaper felt the need to clarify expressions like ‘John Bull’ to his readers suggests that anti-British prejudices found little echo in localities such as Verdun.

¹⁴ Annie Crépin, Vincent Cuvilliers, ‘Le Discours Anti-Anglais des Autorités: Mythes et Réalité dans les Départements Septentrionaux’, in Mark Philp (ed.) *Resisting Napoleon. The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 14, 205-216.

backgrounds could interact and destabilize their 'places'.¹⁵ Overall, the main finding that has arisen from this work is the predominance of social dynamics over national, martial and religious antagonisms, which nuances the truism of colliding French and British identities during the period.

Captivity was not merely reflective but causal of socio-cultural dynamics between the two nations in conflict. In this respect, emerging POW studies offer new avenues for a sociocultural study of war. In the case of Verdun, these complicate the paradigm of 'the first total war' enunciated by Bell, from which prisoners are virtually absent. The creation of a specific category for civilian prisoners – the '*détenus*' – reveals the ambivalence of the process he identified, since civilian *détenus* were not recognised as lawfully detained prisoners by the British government, nor was their treatment aligned to that of military captives by the French State, despite being initially arrested as potential agents of the militia. Furthermore, moving beyond the common assumption that the concept of honour lost its substance in France after 1789, this thesis argued that parole detention in Verdun was based on gendered and *ad hoc* practices of internment, which syncretised *Ancien Regime* and Revolutionary understandings of the notion. Conceptualised on a principle of reciprocity, parole detention at Verdun was not an anomaly or a complete novelty. Rather it was a historical *entre-deux*, a transitory passage in the culture of warfare.

This thesis aimed to re-consider the experience of Napoleonic detention as a 'passage', to engage with a conventional '*histoire-batailles*', which so frequently places the question of military captivity within the rigid frame of a three-staged experience (capture, confinement, liberation) – a trope inspired by memoirs penned by the captives themselves. Borrowed from the nautical lexicon, the term served to explore the *process* of navigating this forced cohabitation for the captives, the local inhabitants and relatives in Britain. By putting emphasis less on *being* than *becoming* a captive, this perspective has situated military detention in a wider temporal framework, including the aftermath of 1814 and life-writing as part of the experience. This perspective has enabled me to highlight, in chapter 6 and 7, the importance of romanticism and life-writing as a kind of homecoming: the ways in which prisoners longed for, reclaimed and redefined earlier social, professional and cultural places.

¹⁵ Renaud Morieux, 'French Prisoners of War, Conflicts of Honour and Social Inversions in England, 1744-1783', *Historical Journal* 56:1 (2013), pp. 55-88.

The transnational connections the British parolees developed for charitable purposes further suggest that Verdun was not a world apart. The depot centralised monies raised in Britain, and orchestrated their distribution in eight depots for common sailors and soldiers, with whom British prisoners in Verdun kept financial, religious and professional ties. As the first focused study of the Verdun depot, this thesis has thus highlighted the neglected relationships parole prisoners maintained with non-parole captives detained in other fortresses, which, as suggested in the map of British POW depots in the appendices, were all contained in one singular zone in North-East France. Their location facilitated such contacts, as much as the chronic transfers that animated all these depots, and which meant that parole status was never a *fait accompli*. Not only did these transfers induce a circulation of persons and monies, but they also encouraged a circulation of ideas amongst prisoners of all sorts, who wrote their experience ‘in society’. The expression ‘writing in society’, coined by Raymond Williams, has been used in chapter 7 to highlight the ways in which captives wrote *socially*, as a social practice. Instead of focusing on what they wrote *about* detention, the penultimate chapter has explored the very *act of writing* in and after detention. As Williams argues, there is a tendency to consider the content of the writing on its own, without its social context of production. This obscures the fact there are ‘changing methods of telling a story ... an important history of *forms of composition*’.¹⁶ Naval men made cartographic accounts of their detention; others used the popular tropes of the panorama and travel writing to ‘compose’, in the words of a contemporary, ‘a picture of Verdun’ for their intended readers.¹⁷

This thesis thus confirms what historians and archaeologists of twentieth-century captivity have recently emphasized: the agency of prisoners in shaping their own experience of detention.¹⁸ Overall, whilst the system and experience of detention in Verdun were not unique per se, what appears remarkable is the competing and supplanting memories enshrined in this town. Indeed, Verdun is what I would term ‘*le haut-lieu d’une mémoire palimpseste*’, a site of multi-layered historical commencements of modern warfare, from the Napoleonic conflicts to the trenches.¹⁹ Despite the fact that this detention inaugurated Protestantism, horse racing and romantic practices of military tourism in the locale, Napoleonic prisoners only form one faint link in the town’s memorial chain. Its oblivion was not merely

¹⁶ Williams, Raymond, *Writing in Society* (London and New York: Verso, 1983), p. 2.

¹⁷ James Lawrence, *A Picture of Verdun, or the English Detained in France* (2 vols, London: Hookham, 1810).

¹⁸ Felicia Yap, ‘Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees of the Japanese in British Asia: Similarities and Contrasts of Experiences’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 47:317 (2012), pp. 317-46.

¹⁹ The expression ‘*haut lieu de mémoire*’ is borrowed from the seminal work of Pierre Nora.

the fruit of the passing of time, but it was constructed by competing memories, which this object encapsulates (Fig.45).²⁰



Fig.45: Watch-stand made by a ‘marine prisoner’ in France’, 1806-1814

(National Maritime Museum, Greenwich)

This watch-stand depicts captivity as a house populated by key protagonists: a soldier stands in the doorway, a juggler and harlequin perform in the window above, watercolours of botanical specimens ornate the window panes, and a female figure carved in bone stands alone at the front, where many others used to be, as suggested by marks left by their removal. This object is said to have been crafted by a British naval prisoner captured during the Peninsular War and sequestered in France. The piece reveals the contacts between redcoats and jovial civilians, whiling the time away with entertainments,

²⁰ Roger Boutet de Monvel saw in Verdun the precursor of British leisure class colonies in France after 1815. See Roger Boutet de Monvel, *Les Anglais à Paris 1800-1850* (Paris, 1911); NMM, AAA0001, Wooden watch-stand made by a marine prisoner in France, 1806-1814.

through the shared 'rage' for botany: activities that have been discussed in this thesis.²¹ It also suggests something that has long been neglected by historians, namely the importance of women in this experience. In this piece, the bare female body suggests that femininity permeated the captives' imaginations, both erotically and symbolically. However, women were not only present in the minds and hearts of prisoners, but they experienced detention as migrants, correspondents or prisoners themselves. In fact, this thesis made the original claim that parole was tailored to the presence of female 'voluntary captives'. But, this object also reminds us that the portrait is incomplete: the base is missing, the window glass is fissured, and the circular aperture for the pocket watch is empty. Time has gone. The Navy is conspicuous by its absence in this little wooden house, despite the fact that naval men formed a majority in Verdun and other depots of British prisoners. The importance of the Navy in Napoleonic captivity should not be underestimated: not only did it channel charity to France, but the corps had an equal importance in Britain, as the Transport Board was in charge of the provision of relief to French prisoners sequestered afloat and ashore.²² Furthermore, the provenance of this object is obscure as it appears similar to Greenwich Hospital watch-stands, and the far more numerous objects crafted by French prisoners in Britain, which have been widely diffused in markets, families and museums, and have eclipsed the productions of British captives like this one.

The production and consumption of these objects furthered a three-layered process of oblivion, which was first constructed by British prisoners themselves and their readers. The 'captive muse' was a space of polyphonic and polemic dialogue of prisoners marked by strong social antagonisms between ranks and services. The Navy and the Field Army were particularly vehement in contesting the stories of the opposite service. Their claim of a unique and thus harmonising experience only partly covered a fragmented memory, which was inflected by publishers, readers, novelists and playwrights who sentimentalised their experience up until the dawn of the twentieth century. The published memoirs were consumed as fictions, and their texts served different purposes than the reading of history, as evidenced by the use of memoirs in nineteenth-century grammar exercise-books.²³

²¹ 'As you must know we have hired one for the season, gardening is quite the rage amongst the English at present ... We have got plenty of fruit trees, berry bushes and vines in it. You may be looking out for a pipe of wine by and by.' Dorothy Hyslop Booth (ed.), *Shepherd, Sailor and Survivor: the Life and Letters of James Hyslop, RN, 1764-1853* (Inverness, 2010), p. 72.

²² Robin F. A. Fabel, 'Self-help in Dartmoor: Black and White Prisoners in the War of 1812', *Journal of the Early Republic* 9:2 (1989), pp. 165-90

²³ Franz C. F. Demmler, *Exercises on the German Grammar* (London, 1842), p. 18

From Ulm to Austerlitz, the Great Army captured '140 000 prisoners, half of whom reached France'.²⁴ Amongst these an estimated 16 000 British could hardly compete with the 100 000 French prisoners held in Britain during the same period.²⁵ These French detainees, particularly those sequestered in prison hulks in the Channel, furthered the oblivion of their British counterparts because of the scale and conditions of their captivity, and also perhaps because Napoleon himself became a prisoner of war following Waterloo. The sight of these French captives after their liberation left long-lasting marks on popular imaginations on both sides of the Channel. Emaciated, ill, and bearing the stigma of mass confinement, they stood in stark contrast with the image of 'the carefree captivity' of the Verdun prisoners, and other French parolees in England and Scotland. As Philippe Mason has argued, the writings of these French prisoners diffused enduring myths about life aboard British hulks.²⁶ The publications of one man alone, Louis de Garneray, edified French and British readers on the 'immense sarcophagus' of the 'floating prisons', by introducing his memoir with an image of prisoners as the rising dead.²⁷ The myriad watercolours he produced in detention, and which were partly commissioned by his British clients, were reused in several publications of his memoirs. These illustrations were extirpated from the context of their production, they were taken out of the text, to use Roger Chartier's lexicon, to symbolize the experience of captivity in hulks. Between 1850 and 2010, Garneray's memoirs have been published in twenty-one editions, translated into English, German, Spanish and Italian.²⁸ They have been rewritten for children's books and novels of maritime adventure, which confirms the importance of publishers and readers in fashioning narrations and representations of Napoleonic captivity.²⁹

If experiencing and remembering captivity are visual processes, it seems evident that, in the context of Verdun, the trenches of the First World War have supplanted the faint traces of the British prisoners' legacy. Yet, 1914, the commencement of the conflict coincided with the centenary of the liberation of

²⁴ Laurent Chanoine, *Ornes, Vie et Mort d'Un Village Meusien. Mémoire de la Société des Lettres de Bar-le-Duc, 1936-1937* (Orne, 1936), p. 219.

²⁵ Le Caravèse, 'Les Prisonniers Français', p. 125.

²⁶ See Philippe Masson, *Les Sépulcres Flottants. Prisonniers Français en Angleterre Sous l'Empire* (Rennes, 1987).

²⁷ 'Que l'on se figure une génération de morts, sortant un moment de leurs tombes, les yeux caves, le teint hâve et terreux, le dos vouté, la barbe inculte, à peine recouverts de haillons jaunes en lambeaux, le corps d'une maigreur effrayante, et l'on n'aura encore qu'une idée affaiblie et bien incomplète de l'aspect que présentaient mes compagnons d'infortune.' Louis Garneray, *Mes Pontons* (Paris, 2007), p. 7.

²⁸ Dorothea Kraus, 'Appropriation et Pratiques de la Lecture. Les Fondements Méthodologiques et Théoriques de l'Approche de l'Histoire Culturelle de Roger Chartier', *Labyrinthe* 3 (1999), pp. 13-25. The publications dates in France were: 1851, 1852, 1853, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1889, 1891, 1895, 1903, 1904, 1906, 1912, 1933, 1944, 1947, 1965, 2001, 2002, 2010.

²⁹ See *Un Corsaire de Quinze ans, Un Marin de Surcouf*, or *Les Naufragés du Saint Antoine* published in 2002.

Napoleon's captives, which prompted the publications of anthologies and articles about the Verdun detainees in France, Britain, and beyond.³⁰ In December 1914, the *New York Times* dedicated an article on a new edition of Blayney's memoir, noting that 'an important centre of fighting in the present war, Verdun, was a familiar name to Englishmen 100 years ago ... until Waterloo the French town had a British colony numbering about 800, who, with dinners and dances, steeplechasing and cock fighting, reproduced as well as they could the conditions of life at home.'³¹ The article was reprinted a year after, being still relevant to the 'present war'. In 1916, the Singapore newspaper *Straits Times* published a long article entitled 'Historic Verdun: Napoleon's camp for his captives, a free-and-easy prison'.³² These articles burgeoned owing to diplomatic arguments about the captives' 3.5 million franc debt, which surfaced again at the end of the conflict, when reparations were discussed. The British government agreed to provide some compensation, financial and symbolic: they funded the refurbishment of the Meuse embankments, renamed *Quai de Londres*, and provided a solitary red telephone box, which still puzzles visitors today.

Yet, as early as 1917, Verdun began to encapsulate the entirety of the First World War in France, owing to the memorial activities of veterans. Verdun is now a town hemmed in by its position as a *national lieu de mémoire*, whose pre-1914 history has been eclipsed by the First World War. As Antoine Prost observes, 'Verdun occupies an exceptional position in the national memory ... symbolising and summarising all of WW1'.³³ In the collective imagination, Verdun equates trenches, 'its mere name [having] acquired a mythical dimension', as every French soldier, via the system of military rotation called '*norria*', had experienced this front.³⁴ However, there is nothing natural or evident about oblivion and memory: they are a construction as much as the result of the passing of time. Verdun perfectly exemplifies this, as its association of with WW1 was the product of three phenomena: a local memory with the creation of an '*ossuaire*' in Douaumont, a national discourse diffused in

³⁰ 'This year has seen the Centenary of the release of Napoleon's British Prisoners of War. In that connection these narratives of the exceptional experiences and adventures that some of them went through should be timely in their interest, and also prove useful as a general historical record. The book offers also, I venture to think, a new picture to the great gallery of Napoleonic portraits, and one that, it may be, is less familiar than some others—a portrait of Napoleon as the Gaoler of Europe.' See Edward Fraser, *Napoleon the Gaoler, Personal Experiences and Adventures of British Sailors and Soldiers during the Great Captivity* (London, 1914), p. v.

³¹ *New York Times*, 15 December 1914, 5 January 1915.

³² *Straits Times*, 29 April 1916.

³³ 'Verdun occupe une position exceptionnelle dans la mémoire nationale ... [qui]résume et symbolise toute la guerre de 1914'. Antoine Prost, 'Verdun', in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (3 vols, Paris, 1984-1997), II, pp.111-41 ; Antoine Prost, 'Verdun, Symbole de la Grande Guerre', Discours au Mémorial de Verdun, 2002 [<http://www.memorial-de-verdun.fr/me-verdun-symbole-de-la-grande-guerre.html>], accessed 07 June 2014].

³⁴ See Annamaria Lasseerra, 'Le Nom de Verdun Entre Réalité, Mythe et Fiction', *Mémoires et Antimémoires Littéraires au XXe Siècle: la Première Guerre Mondiale, Colloque de Cerisy-la-Salle, 2005* (2 vols, Bruxelles, 2008), I, pp. 81-105.

newspapers and tourist guides, and the actions of veterans who transformed former trenches into a site of pilgrimage.³⁵ As Antoine Prost argued, Verdun ‘as a national site of memory did not emanate from a state endeavour; the organization of memorial spaces on former battlefields resulted from private initiatives’.³⁶

Yet, the current commemorations of the anniversary of WW1 show how one historical episode of one specific place can be reclaimed for political purposes and reductive patriotic discourses. Verdun is not simply a ‘mere commemoration of the past’; it is vested with a certain idea of France as a defensive ‘nation aspiring simply to stay master of its own territory’.³⁷ Despite the fact this war too was transnational, such discourses have created a paradoxical space: an ‘international city of peace’ solely solemnised in war, one war, one *nationalised* war eclipsing a longer, and more diverse past. These discourses have been translated visually through the display of glorified heroism or victimisation the ‘*poilus*’, which, for the commemorative events of the coming years necessitated the removal of the blue signs sponsored by the *mairie*, named ‘*chemins de l’histoire*’ which had, since 2003, guided visitors through the early modern history of the town, with a particular emphasis on the Napoleonic prisoners. The date of their erection had coincided with the visit of descendants of British captives, who performed a play at a local historical festival.³⁸ These enterprises have now ceased to be of historical and economic interest, as the activities of genealogists are focused on another Great War, which in Britain, is not epitomised in Verdun, but in the Somme and Belgian battlefields.

Conducted in 2014, at the confluence of two competing memories of 1814 and 1914, this thesis is a timely study which places these manifestations in the perspective of other anniversaries, that of the Napoleonic Wars, which are increasingly revisited through a cultural and transnational lens. Flourishing POW studies have a role to play in these new approaches, as they disentangle the study of locales such as Verdun from traditional nation-centric narratives. This thesis has shown that captivity crystallised socio-professional, religious and cultural dynamics affecting Britain and France at a pivotal moment of nation-building, yet challenged accepted models of national enmity. National sentiment constitutes only

³⁵ A route from Mort-Homme to the Tavannes tunnel was included in the *Guide Michelin* in 1919.

³⁶ ‘*comme lieu de mémoire nationale, n’est ... pas né de la volonté de l’Etat, car l’organisation de lieux de mémoire sur le champ de bataille résulte d’initiatives privées.*’ See Antoine Prost, ‘Verdun, symbole de la Grande Guerre’.

³⁷ ‘*[Ce n’est] pas une simple commémoration d’un passé ... [mais la célébration d’une] nation qui aspire simplement à rester maîtresse chez elle et à retrouver l’intégralité de son territoire, sans l’étendre aux dépens d’autres nations par des conquêtes guerrières.*’ Ibid.

³⁸ They published a little booklet about the play, see Peter Clarke and Didier Houmeau (eds), *Hello Verdun, ou les Détenus Britanniques à Verdun. Livret du Spectacle et Notes Historiques* (Verdun, 2006).

one facet of an individual's identity, which in the words of Stuart Hall, is necessarily in flux and altered in contact with others.³⁹ This thesis intended to thus broaden the theorisation of military detention, and reconsider the ways in which we write and read captivity. Its structure aimed to engage with the tripartite narration historians and captive authors have both used to chronicle internment, and upon which this thesis aimed to reflect by including the aftermath and the act of writing as being part of the experience.

Overall, this captivity raises questionings which resonate with the present day. What is a prisoner of war? What form should captivity take, from a legal, sociocultural, political point of view? Are civilians rightfully taken as captives? The mere fact that a detention based on honour seems an 'ancient concept', hardly applicable today, reveals that understandings of detention, as a coercive system, are deeply contextualised and constructed.⁴⁰ The debates about discontinuing exchanges and ransoming during the Napoleonic wars, owing to the presence of civilians and ideological strategies, strongly resonate with current discussions about diplomatic handlings of non-belligerent hostages. The '*détenus*' were problematic prisoners of war. Their history, as much as that of other detainees sequestered within or without international regulations, offers precious perspectives that can inform past and present discussions of the 'place' of civilians in war and peace.

³⁹ See Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in Nicholas Mirzoeff (ed.) *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews* (London, 2000), p. 21; Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2003), p. 3; John Mueller, *War and Ideas: Selected Essays*, (New York, 2011), p. 79; Chris Weedon, *Identity and Culture: Narratives of Difference and Belonging* (Maidenhead and New York, 2004), p. 19.

⁴⁰ Gary Brown, 'Prisoner of War Parole: Ancient Concept, Modern Utility', *Military Law Review* 156 (1998), pp. 200-23.

Appendices

A. Frequency quantification

of the occurrence of 'détenu' and 'Verdun' in a large corpus of English printed texts, 1700-2000

As evoked in the introduction to this thesis, the word 'détenu' officially entered the English language in 1803, following the mass arrest of British civilians in France. The following quantification confirms this phenomenon over a large period of time. It also indicates that the term was used slightly before the detention in Verdun. This is probably owing to the arrest of British travelers and residents in France in the 1790s, as mentioned in the introduction. The second graph confirms the comments made in the introduction and conclusion about the ways in which the First World War triggered a strong interest in Verdun, to the point of resuming the history of the town to this conflict.



Frequency quantification of the occurrence of the term 'détenu' in English printed texts, 1700-2000

(Google Books, Ngram Viewer)



Frequency quantification of the occurrence of the term 'Verdun' in English printed texts, 1700-2000

(Google Books, Ngram Viewer)

B. Maps

The following maps aim to situate Verdun in a European context, and highlight, as was observed in chapter 1, its location at the nexus of expanding military, infrastructural and transnational networks. The third map of the region of the town, known as the *Verdunois*, intends to help the reader in locating the villages and hamlets evoked throughout this thesis. The final map situates Verdun amongst other depots for British prisoners of war. As mentioned in the introduction and the conclusion, the parole depot of Verdun was at the core of a well-defined military line in North-East France, where most of these depots were gathered.



Denaix, *Tableau de l'Europe en 1803: après le traité de Lunéville, 1830*

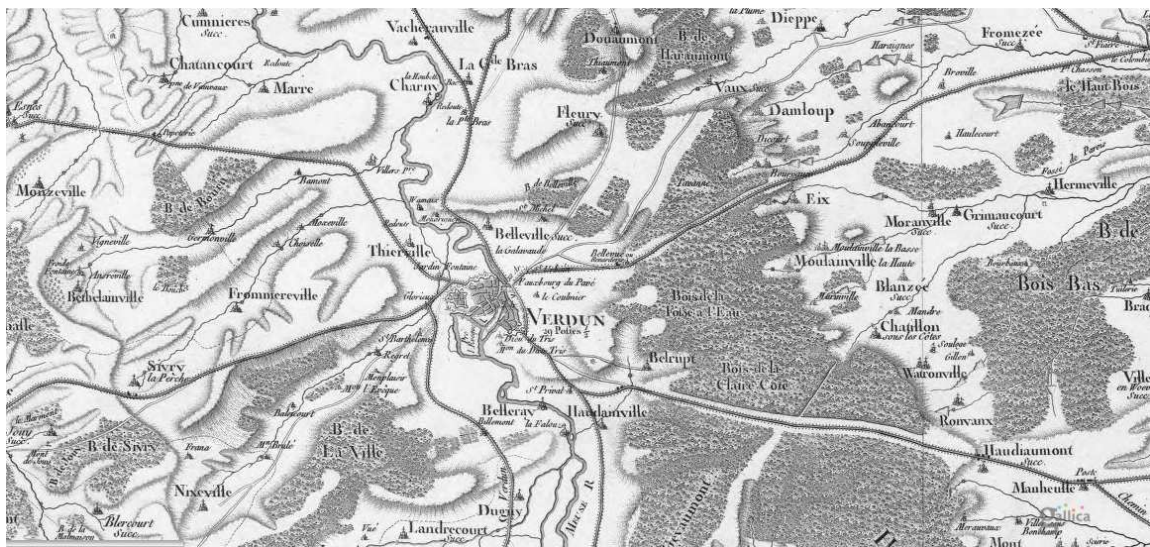
(Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris)

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530352944>, accessed 11 July 2014)



Map of Napoleonic France in 1811

(<http://splaf.free.fr/fr1811c.html>, accessed 11 July 2014)



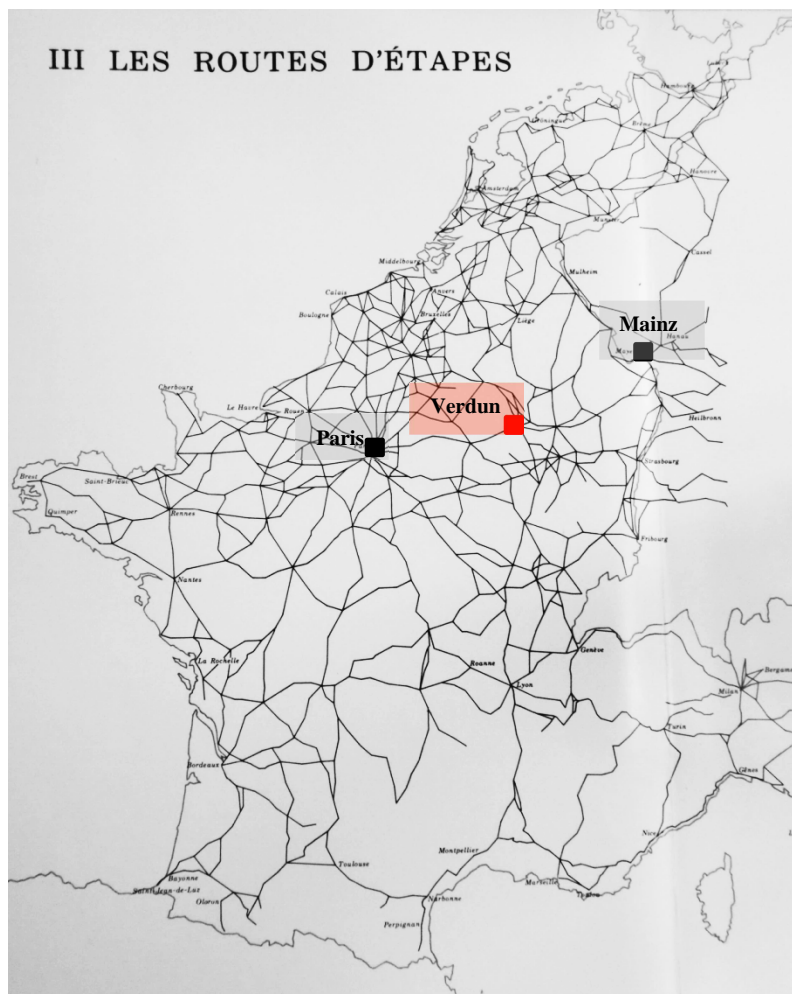
‘N°110, Verdun’, *Carte générale de la France*, 1815

(Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7711783v>, accessed 11 July 2014)



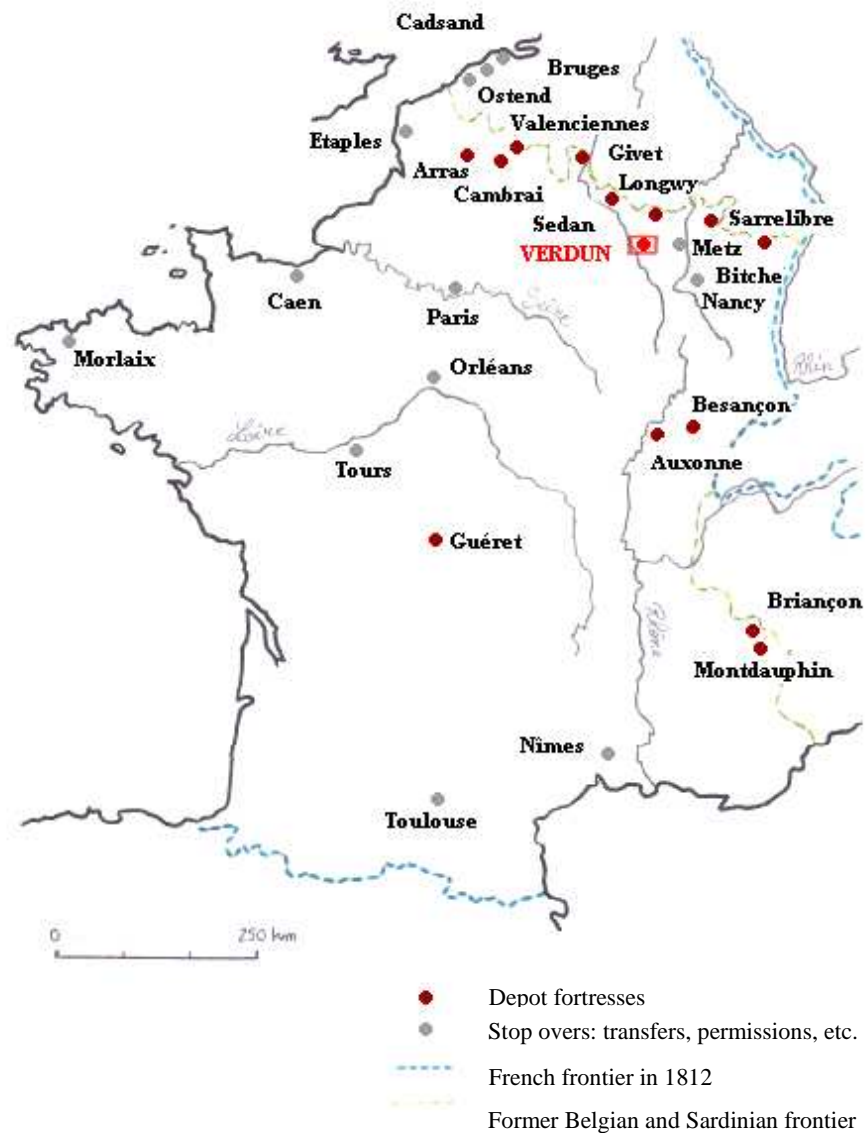
Telegraph lines in Napoleonic France, 1812

(Jean Tulard and François de Dainville, *Atlas Administratif du Premier Empire*, d'après l'Atlas Rédigé par Ordre du Duc de Feltre en 1812, 1973)



Main roads in Napoleonic France, 1812

(Jean Tulard and François de Dainville, *Atlas Administratif du Premier Empire*, d'après l'Atlas Rédigé par Ordre du Duc de Feltre en 1812, 1973)



Map of the depots of British captives in Napoleonic France, 1803-1814

(Based on a map by Michael Lewis, *Napoleon's British Captives*, 1962)

The following transcriptions and tables complement chapter 3 on charitable connections, chapter 5 on religion in detention, and chapter 6 which deals with the question of dying out of place and cross-national marriages. The timeline that concludes these appendices is meant to provide a sense of time, and situate the events mentioned in this thesis within broader political and military phenomena. It is an indicative timeline: it does not aim to cover all the significant events that affected life at Verdun. Rather, it is meant to be consulted alongside this thesis, as a reminder that Verdun is not to be considered as a world apart.

C. Transcription of the expenditures of Thomas Lavie in Verdun

Prisoners for whom Thomas Lavie placed drafts at Perregaux & Co.	French local money-lenders	Total drafts per term at Verdun (in French livres)	
Armstrong	Mademoiselle Pons	March-July 1810	9146 l.
Blake	Triboult fils	August-September 1810	2047 l.
Casves	Antoine	October-December 1810	2047 l.
Clifford	Paillet	October-December 1811	1275 l.
Gregg	Dollier Desforges	July 1812	144 l.
Hoy	Sauvage	January-April 1812	2940 l.
Lawmont	Aubert Dauphin	July 1812	1467 l.
Lyll	Morin	September-December 1812	1860 l.
Norton	Vivet	January-March 1813	1425 l.
Roberts		April 1813	1516 l.
Scott		June-August 1813	1186 l.
Secretan		October 1813	1368 l.
Street		January 1814	1498 l.
Williams			
Wolfe			

Bank account of Thomas Lavie and William Gorden with Perregaux & Co.

(Birmingham City Archives, Matthew Boulton Papers, MS3782/19/2)

D. Quantification of the Protestant sacraments for prisoners in Verdun

		1804	1805	1806	1807	1808	1809	1810	1811	1812	1813	1814	Total
BAPTISMS													
Breakdown	Male	1	2	11	11	12	13	11	10	14	20	5	110
	Female	1	5	7	3	12	5	13	8	9	23	4	90
	Total	2	7	18	14	24	18	24	18	23	43	9	200
BURIALS													
	Total burials	0	0	20	26	20	18	18	16	17	31	10	176
CHILD BURIAL													
Breakdown	Male	0	0	1	3	0	2	3	2	1	9	0	21
	Female	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	6	1	12
	Total	0	0	2	3	0	3	3	2	4	15	1	33
BORN AND DIED AT VERDUN													
Breakdown	Male	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	6	0	12
	Female	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	4	0	9
	Total	0	0	2	1	0	2	2	1	3	10	0	21
MARRIAGES													
Nationality of wives	British	0	0	2	2	1	3	0	0	1	2	2	13
	French	0	0	0	0	1	4	3	8	9	8	0	33
	Total	0	0	2	2	2	7	3	8	10	10	2	46

Protestant sacraments for the prisoners

(Society of Genealogists, London, FRA/R6/73007,

'Register of births, marriages and funeral of English prisoners at Verdun' kept by Reverend Gorden)

E. Members of the Charitable Committee at Verdun between 1804 and 1812

NAME	STATUS	CAPTIVE STATUS	ROLE IN THE COMMITTEE
General Scott	Officer	<i>Détenu</i>	Regular member
Colonel Abercrombie	Field Army officer	<i>Détenu</i>	Regular member until 1810
Captain John Gerrard	EIC merchant officer	<i>Détenu</i>	Regular member
Thomas Grey	Naval Surgeon	<i>Détenu</i>	Regular member
Mr. Sevrigh	Agent of the British government in Helvoetsluys	<i>Détenu</i>	Regular member
Rev. Lancelot Lee	Vicar	<i>Détenu</i>	Regular member, Treasurer
Rev. William Gorden	Vicar	<i>Détenu</i>	President
Stephen Wilson	Gentleman, Esquire	<i>Détenu</i>	Treasurer
Rev. Robert Wolfe	Vicar	<i>Détenu</i>	Treasurer

1804

NAME	STATUS	CAPTIVE STATUS	ROLE IN THE COMMITTEE
Captain Sir Thomas Lavie	Royal Navy officer, <i>H.M.S. Blanche</i>	POW	Regular member and Senior Officer at the depot
Rev. William Gorden	Vicar	<i>Détenu</i>	President and treasurer
Rev. Lancelot Lee	Vicar	<i>Détenu</i>	Regular member and treasurer
Captain John Gerrard	EIC merchant officer	<i>Détenu</i>	Regular member
Captain Christopher Strachey	Royal Navy officer	POW	Regular member
Captain Henry Gordon	Royal Navy officer, <i>HMS Blanche</i>	POW	Regular member
James Rogerson	-	-	Regular member
Captain John Ellis	Merchant master	POW	Regular member
Ives Harry	-	-	Regular member
Colonel Henri de Bernière	-	POW	Regular member
Thomas Phillips	Gentleman	<i>Détenu</i>	Secretary, regular member

1808

NAME	STATUS	CAPTIVE STATUS	ROLE IN THE COMMITTEE
Captain C. Otter	Royal navy officer, HMS Proserpine	POW	Regular member
Colonel W. Gard	Infantry officer	POW	Regular member
Captain W. Lyall	Royal navy officer	POW	Regular member
Major Alexander Sharp	Field Army officer	POW	Regular member
C. Slanster	Royal Marines officer	POW	Regular member
Rev. W. Lawson	Clergyman from Masham	<i>Détenu</i>	Regular member
Rev. William Gorden	Vicar	<i>Détenu</i>	President and treasurer
Rev. John Barnabas Maude	Vicar, Queen's College, Oxford	<i>Détenu</i>	Regular member
Captain John Ellis	Merchant master	POW	Regular member
Captain John Joyce	Officer HMS Manilla	POW	Regular member

1812

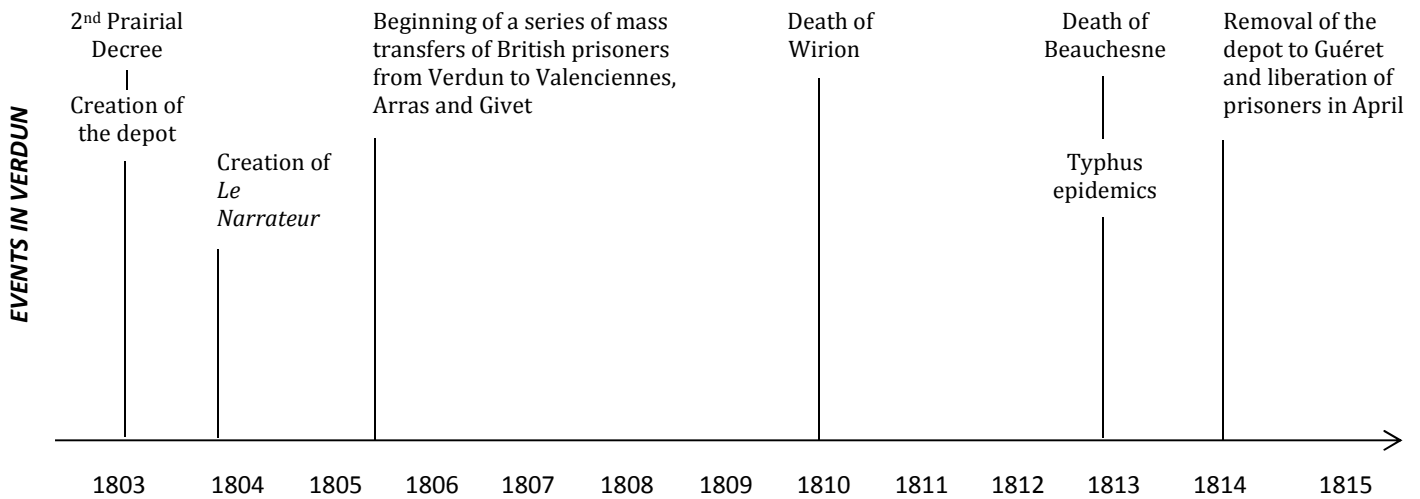
Members of the Charitable Committee at Verdun between 1804 and 1812

(Birmingham City Archives, Matthew Boulton Papers, MS3782/19/1)

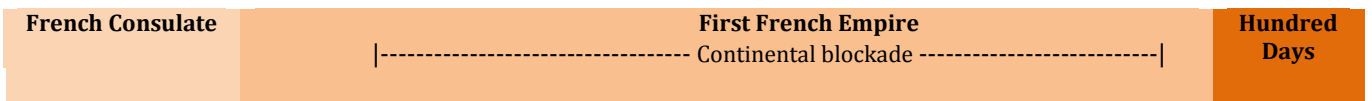
F. Indicative timeline

Verdun during the Napoleonic Wars

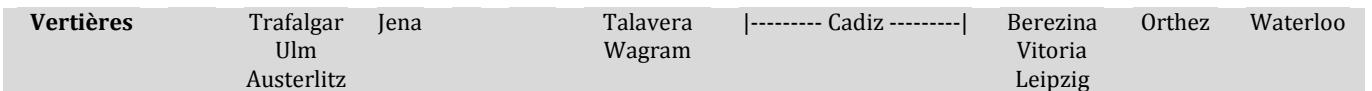
Military and political chronology



French and British governments



Salient battles



Other significant events

1799	<i>November</i>	Napoleon Bonaparte seized power in France.
1801	<i>January</i>	Act of Union of Great Britain and Ireland came into force.
	<i>February</i>	Treaty of Lunéville between France and Austria.
	<i>July</i>	Concordat.
1802	<i>March</i>	Treaty of Amiens between France and the United Kingdom. End of the War of the Second Coalition which had opposed, since 1798, Revolution France and a coalition of European monarchies including the United Kingdom, Austria, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Portugal and Naples.
	<i>August</i>	Plebiscite confirmed Napoleon as First Consul for life.
1803	<i>March</i>	French occupation of Hanover.
	<i>May</i>	Second Prairial decree and mass arrest of British subjects on French soil.

		Resumption of hostilities between France and the United Kingdom.
	<i>3 July</i>	Arrival of the first British détenu in Verdun.
	<i>December</i>	Official opening of the Verdun depot.
1804	<i>March</i>	The Italian Republic became the Kingdom of Italy. Foundation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London.
	<i>April</i>	Beginning of the War of the Third Coalition against the French Empire (alliance of the Holy Roman Empire, Austria, Russia and the United Kingdom) which lasted up to 1806.
	<i>September</i>	The French Army crossed the Rhine.
	<i>December</i>	Napoleon proclaimed Emperor and crowned in presence of the Pope Pius VII.
1805		The French Revolutionary Calendar ceased to be used by decree of Napoleon with effect on 1 January 1806.
	<i>December</i>	Peace of Pressburg signed between France and Austria.
1806		Beginning of the construction of Dartmoor Prison in Devon
	<i>June</i>	The Batavian Republic became Kingdom of Holland.
	<i>February</i>	Opening of a British POW depot in Arras.
	<i>October</i>	Beginning of the War of the Fourth Coalition against the French Empire (an alliance of Prussia, Russia, Saxony, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) which lasted up to 1807.
	<i>November</i>	Berlin decree, bringing into effect a large-scale commercial embargo against the United Kingdom, known as the 'Continental blockade'.
1807	<i>January</i>	Street light by gas in London.
	<i>March</i>	The United Kingdom prohibits slave trade.
	<i>October</i>	Outbreak of the Peninsular War.
1809	<i>July</i>	War of the Fifth Coalition (a coalition of the United Kingdom and the Austrian Empire against the French Empire and Bavaria). Arthur Wellesley returned to command the defence of Portugal and was made Viscount Wellington of Talavera.
	<i>July-December</i>	Failure of the Walcheren Campaign.
1811	<i>March</i>	Beginning of the machine breaking crisis in Nottingham.
1812	<i>May</i>	French invasion of Russia, which triggered the War of the Sixth Coalition against the French Empire (a coalition of Prussia, Austria, Russia, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Sweden, Spain and other German States) which culminated in the disastrous retreat of Napoleon's army from Moscow and ended in hi exile to Elba.
	<i>June</i>	The United States declared war on the United Kingdom.
1813	<i>October</i>	French Army defeated at the Battle of Leipzig.
	<i>December</i>	Arrival of retreating French troops in Metz and Verdun.
1814	<i>January</i>	Closure of the depot of Verdun, and removal of prisoners to Blois, then to Guéret.
	<i>April</i>	Abdication of Napoleon, before being sent to Elba. Liberation of British prisoners of war.
1815	<i>March-July</i>	The Hundred Days Napoleon returned to France, mustered his army in Belgium. War of the Seventh Coalition , including the Neapolitan War (a coalition of Austria, Prussia, Russia and the United Kingdom against Napoleon's army).
	<i>July</i>	Napoleon's army defeat at the Battle of Waterloo. Exile of Napoleon in Saint-Helena. Second restoration of King Louis XVIII.

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- CR1998/LCB/36, Account-book entitled 'House Accounts begun 1788', containing accounts of Charles Throckmorton's household at Cowbridge and later at Llanblethian, Fowelscombe, 1792-4, and Timberscombe 1788-1802, along with a summary of his expenses at Verdun and Paris, 1808-1814, and again at Llanblethian, 1814-1819.
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