

## **Stencil-making in Paris in the eighteenth century**

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# Stencil-making in Paris in the eighteenth century

This is a study of stencil-making in Paris in the eighteenth century, and of stencilmakers active there. It reports on methods of work, commercial circumstances, locations, products, customers, distribution networks, and professional trajectories. Two stencilmakers are featured, Louis Bresson de Maillard and Jean Gabriel Bery, alongside other contemporary and later stencilmakers. Evidence drawn on includes texts describing stencil-making and stencil work, technical illustrations, advertisements, specimens, receipted bills, public administrative documents and death inventories, published works, and artefacts including stencil plates and stencil work. A series of appendices list known advertisements of Bresson de Maillard, transcribe and translate representative advertisements among them, and transcribe and translate descriptions and valuations of stencil merchandise, tools, and materials recorded in the inventories of Bery and two other Paris stencilmakers.

*A note on translations.* Credits for translations made by persons are given in footnotes (or in the sources cited there). Unless otherwise credited, translations of advertisements have been made using <deepl.com> to generate 'base' texts, which have then been revised by the author using dictionaries contemporary to the original text to more accurately render period terms. All other translations are by the author. Dictionaries have been accessed at 'The ARTFL Project' <artfl-project.uchicago.edu/content/dictionnaires-dautrefois>.

*Acknowledgements.* See below, p. 107.

The stencils under consideration in this study were formed of thin brass plates, from which were cut out letters, figures, punctuation, diacritical marks and other symbols, music notation, and decorative and figurative matter. In religious and devotional contexts, such stencils were used for marking out texts, music, and decorations in liturgical books, for decorative frames in books of pious or devotional texts, and for religious souvenirs (*images pieuses*); in secular contexts they were used for inscriptions on walls, for decorative frames in books of verse or genealogy, for library catalogues, and for producing a variety of graphic works including bordered writing paper, floral and other decorations on paper and cloth, labels for bottles and boxes, bookplates and marks of ownership, *cartes de visite*, trade cards, billheads, large-format posters (*affiches*), accounting ledgers, and other items.

In surveying stencil-making of this kind, several categories of evidence will be drawn on. In addition to stencil artefacts – by and large the stencils themselves – evidence will include an early account of stencil-making, advertisements and notices in contemporary journals, a specimen sheet, trade card, and other associated documents of a stencilmaker, an encyclopaedia article, and notarial records, principally *inventaires après décès*, which record the goods and materials of stencilmakers at the time of their death. The study will describe stencil-making methods, and document individuals by reporting on their commercial circumstances, locations, products, customers, networks of distribution, and professional trajectories. Two stencilmakers, Louis Bresson de Maillard and Jean Gabriel Bery, will be discussed in depth, with others about whom less is known adding texture to the Paris stencil-making scene. And while the focus of the study is indeed the eighteenth century, it will first reach back to the late seventeenth century and end in the nineteenth.

The aim of the study is to assemble a fuller representation of stencil-making in Paris during this period than has so far been attempted, though the representativeness of what follows must, by necessity, remain provisional.

## Early description by Des Billettes

The so-far earliest known description of stencilling letters, words, texts, and other graphic matter was written by Gilles Filleau des Billettes, probably in the latter half of the 1690s. Des Billettes' text, some ten thousand words in length and titled 'Imprimerie de Livres d'Eglise, Ecriteaux ou Sentences &c.', deals with the stencilling

1. Gilles Filleau des Billettes, 'Imprimerie de Livres d'Eglise, Escripteurs ou Sentences &c.', n.d. (c. late 1690s), Chicago, The Newberry Library, Wing MS oversize Z4029.225, pp. 166–89. Louis Simonneau, engraving for Des Billettes' description of stencilling, signed 'Lud. Simonneau 1701.', from 'Les Arts et Métiers de l'Académie des Sciences', 5825 ('Plates relating to printing and kindred arts, principally engraved by L. Simonneau'), St Bride Library, London. Des Billettes' text is presented in Eric Kindel (ed.), 'The description of stencilling by Gilles Filleau des Billettes: transcription and translation', *Typography papers*, 9, 2013, London: Hyphen Press, pp. 66–86; Veronica Heath (trs). The equipment and method of stencilling described by Des Billettes is examined in Eric Kindel, 'A reconstruction of stencilling based on the description by Gilles Filleau des Billettes', with two appendices by Fred Smeijers, *Typography papers*, 9, 2013, pp. 28–65. Details about the context of Des Billettes' description is provided by James Mosley, 'A note on Gilles Filleau des Billettes', *Typography papers*, 9, 2013, pp. 87–90. For an earlier episode of stencil-making and use for duplicating texts and graphic matter, see Eric Kindel, 'Delight of men and gods: Christiaan Huygens's new method of printing', *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*, new series, no. 14, 2009, pp. 5–41. This method, tested by Huygens in 1669 at the Académie royale des Sciences in Paris, employed etched brass stencils and a rolling press.

2. Kindel (ed.), 'The description of stencilling by Gilles Filleau des Billettes ...', *op. cit.*, pp. 68–9.

3. There are several significant differences between the description and the engraving; these are discussed in Kindel, 'A reconstruction of stencilling ...', *op. cit.*, appendix 3, pp. 52–4.

4. When referring to the stencil, Des Billettes uses the term, 'caractère'. This term encompasses the metal plate as well as the letter, figure, or other 'character' that has been cut out. In French during this period and throughout the eighteenth century, reference to caractère in a stencil context implies such stencils, i.e., those carrying the set of characters (or 'fount', to adopt a typographical term) shown in figure 9, below. *Caractères* are sometimes described more specifically, thus 'alphabet', 'chiffres', 'notes de musique', and so on. In this article, I will often refer to stencil 'letters' for convenience, though the reference may imply the (complete) set of characters or parts of it. The term 'vignette', used by later stencilmakers (discussed below), generally refers to stencils carrying decorative matter such as *bordures*, *culs-de-lampe* or *filets* (i.e., *ornemens*) but sometimes also *animaux*, *chinoiseries*, and so on.

of large-sized texts mainly for liturgical books but also for inscriptions displayed on (interior) walls. Des Billettes was a *technologue* at the Académie royale des Sciences in Paris, and his description, together with an associated engraving by Louis Simonneau, dated 1701 (figure 1a), were part of a larger project, the 'Description des arts et métiers', which the Académie had recently embarked on. Neither Des Billettes's text nor Simonneau's engraving were published at the time.<sup>1</sup>

Des Billettes begins his description with speculations on when and how the practice of stencilling texts began:

Telle est une petite espece d'imprimerie fort recente, et qui a peine remonte a 40 ou 50 ans, sans qu'on en sçache le veritable auteur, comme peuestre n'en a telle pas pour un seul, ne s'estant originairement formée que sur un travail d'ailleur asses commun pour d'autres dessins, mais dont on n'avoit pas fait la mesme application. Ainsi chacun de son costé à pu rencherir sur une inversion commune, et se prestant les uns aux autres leurs manieres, cela est devenu comme un petit Art nouveau, qui a son merite, et un usage presentement assés frequent, comme beaucoup de grace et d'utilité.<sup>2</sup>

(One such is a minor kind of printing that is very recent, and indeed scarcely dates back forty or fifty years, without us knowing who was the real inventor of it, as it may be that it was not the invention of any single person, merely being modelled on a way of working that was quite common for other purposes, but which had not (previously) been used for this same application. Thus each (workman) on his own account was able to take further a shared invention, and by sharing and exchanging their practices, this practice became as it were a new minor art, which has its merits, and is currently used quite frequently as having much grace and usefulness.)

Des Billettes then describes in detail a suite of equipment, including specially configured stencils, tools, and furniture, with which such stencilling could be done. Much of what Des Billettes describes is illustrated in Simonneau's engraving, more or less faithfully (figure 1b).<sup>3</sup> The concept of the equipment, in total, is that it functions in an integrated way to enable texts to be stencilled quickly and easily, and with letters that are precisely aligned, consistently spaced, and without 'breaks' in them, which are otherwise typical of stencilled letters.

Of particular interest is Des Billettes' description of stencil-making. This involved measuring, cutting and folding pieces of sheet brass in a specific way to produce a (blank) plate, from which the letter would be cut out (figures 1c; 2–3).<sup>4</sup> In the engraving, a worker is pictured doing this (figure 1d); it is the only (known) image from this period – and indeed from the whole of the eighteenth century – that shows someone making metal stencils. Thereafter, Des Billettes explains how to inscribe four horizontal lines across the plate using four rulers of different heights (figure 4a). These establish the vertical proportions of the letter (baseline, x-height [*l'oeil*], capital height, descender depth) that guide the subsequent drawing of the letter; they also locate each letter in the same vertical position on the plate, ensuring that consecutively stencilled letters will be aligned.



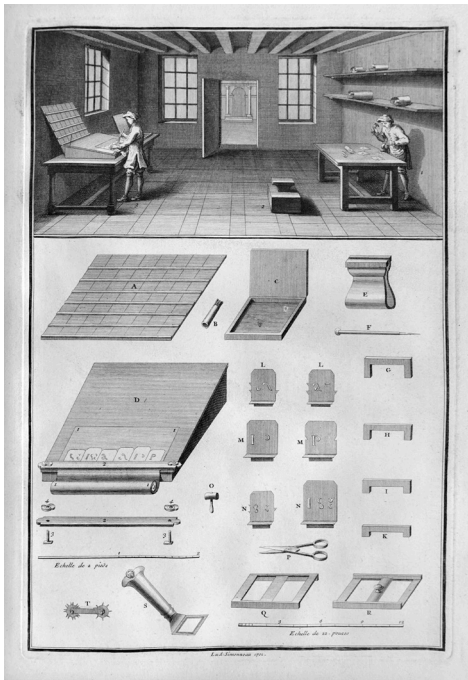
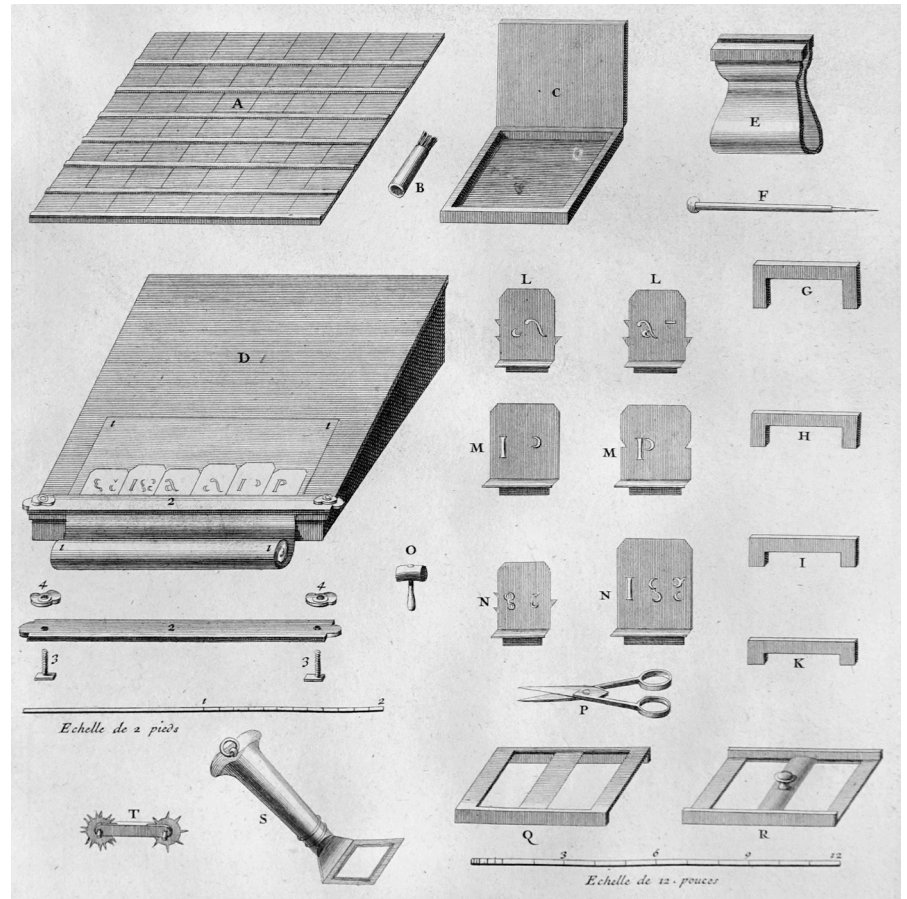
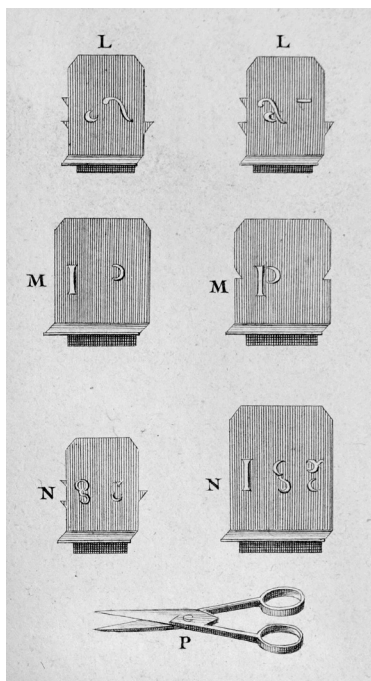


Figure 1. Engraving for Des Billettes' description of stencilling, signed 'Lud. Simonneau 1701.', from 'Les Arts et Métiers de l'Académie des Sciences'. London, St Bride Library, 5825 ('Plates relating to printing and kindred arts, principally engraved by L. Simonneau').

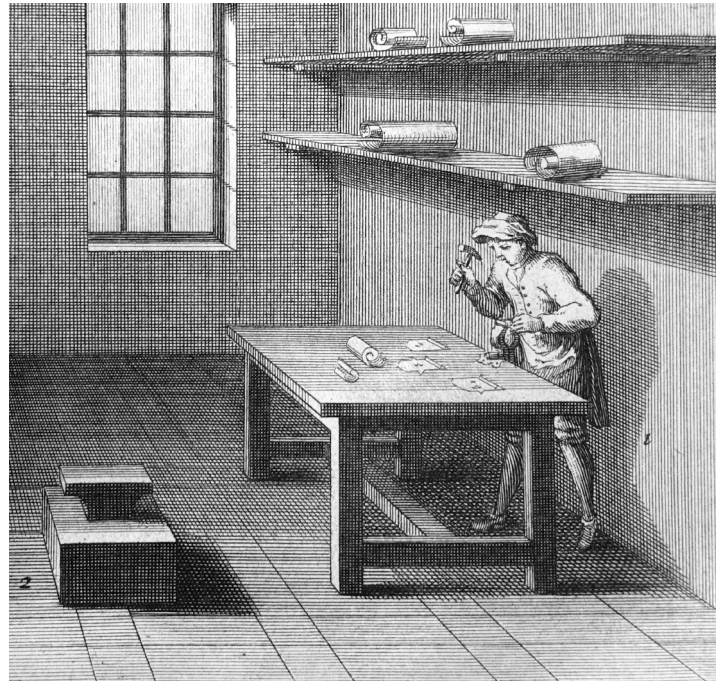
(a) Complete engraving, 268 × 176 mm.



(b) Suite of equipment, detail of (a).



(c) Stencil plates, detail of (a).  
Only plate 'N' (right) approximates Des Billettes' description.



(d) Stencilmaker, detail of (a).



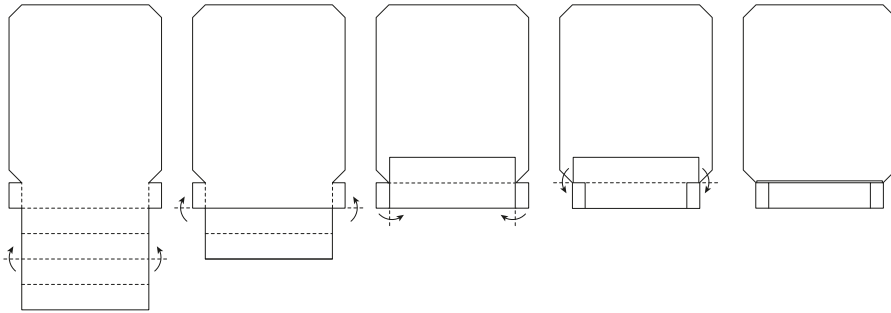


Figure 2. Sequence of folds to configure the stencil plate, as described by Des Billettes.



Figure 3. Stencil plate configured according to Des Billettes's description of stencilling, brass, 54 × 37 mm, reconstructed 2012.



Figure 4. Stencil plate configured according to Des Billettes's description of stencilling.  
(a) Plate with inscribed vertical proportions.



(b) Plate with inscribed pair of letter-forms prior to cutting parts from each letterform, with rectangle that will form 'lumière' (at left).



(c) Plate cutting and filing completed.

When drawing the letters on the plate, guided by the horizontal lines, those letters with enclosed spaces are split into two parts; when stencilled consecutively, the two parts re-form to produce a complete letter without breaks. A guide-mark accompanies the first part of the letter to help position the second part; a rectangular opening ('lumière') is also cut out of the plate to the left of the letter, enabling the stenciller to accurately position the plate relative to the preceding (stencilled) letter and thereby achieve consistent letter spacing. Once these various elements are drawn on the plate, they are cut out (figure 4, b–c):

Nous n'avons point dit de quelle maniere on coupe ces lettres après qu'on les a eu dessinées, parce que cela depend du genie particulier de celui qui l'entreprend. Mais on peut neanmoins s'assurer que quand



Figure 5. Text stencilling according to Des Billettes's description, reconstructed 2012.

- (a) Stencil placement, showing preceding letter within the lumière.
- (b) Stencilled text.

tous ces traits doubles ou simples des lettres, les repères, et les lumières sont parfaitement dessinés la meilleure manière de les ouvrir, ou percer a jour, est de faire un trou en quelqu'un des plus gros endroits du trait avec des ciseaux fort aigus, puis suivre toujours en coupant de la pointe des mêmes ciseaux le plus approchant qu'on peut du trait. Et ensuite pour ce qui reste d'inégalités ou qui manque pour achever les contours ou les ciseaux ne peuvent suffire, on en vient aisément a bout avec de petits limes d'une taille très fines, plates rondes demi rondes, a couteau, a feuille de sauge, et de toutes sortes d'autres figures différentes selon la diversité des lettres, telles que sont les petites limes ordinaires des horlogers; et c'est ainsi qu'on finit parfaitement les lettres avec toute la propreté nécessaire, a quoy l'on ne peut estre trop exact si l'on veut avoir une impression fort agreable.<sup>5</sup>

(We have not described how one cuts out these letters after having drawn them, because that depends on the particular skill of the person who undertakes the task. But one can nonetheless be certain that when all these single or double outlines of letters, guide-marks and *lumières* are perfectly drawn, the best way to open or to cut them out is to make a hole at one end of the thickest parts of the shape with very sharp scissors, then continue cutting with the point of the same scissors as close to the outline as possible. And then for the remaining uneven parts or whatever remains to be done to finish off the contours, where scissors are not sufficient, one can easily complete the task with small files of a very small gauge, [that are] flat, round, semi-rounded, like a knife, in the form of a sage leaf, and all sorts of other shapes according to the different varieties of letters, such as the small files commonly used by clock-makers; and by such means one finishes off the letters with the requisite sharpness, in which matter one can not be too accurate if one wishes to make a very pleasing impression.)

The 'pleasing impression' of the letters encompassed their stencilled forms – sharp, without breaks – and their regular and consistent spacing (figure 5).

In describing stencils needed for composing words and texts, Des Billettes states that one can think of them like printing types, both in respect of the size of the letters and in their extent. Thus, the size of the letters should not be too small, since these would be difficult both to cut out and to use.

5. Kindel (ed.), 'The description of stencilling by Gilles Filleau des Billettes ...', *op. cit.*, pp. 76–9.

On peut distinguer les Alphabets par sortes comme dans l'imprimerie, mais qui sont icy en petite quantité parce qu'on ne peut pas faire de ces caracteres en petit, et qu'il seroit mesme tres difficile ou du moins fort inutile d'en faire d'aussy petits qu'un gros Parangon, car quand on pourroit le bien executer, il seroit encore plus difficile de le bien marquer/imprimer.<sup>6</sup>

(One can distinguish the alphabets by sizes as in printing, but these will be few in number as one cannot make the stencil letters [very] small, and it would be very difficult or at least quite useless to make any as small as *Gros Parangon*, because even if they could be well executed, there would be even more difficulty in marking/printing them out properly.)

He states that four or five sizes are sufficient and describes the make-up of the character set:

Ainsy on se trouveroit asses bien fourni de *sortes* en cet art en ayant seulement 4 ou 5 depuis la grosseur du gros canon en montant. Quoy qu'il en soit il faut environ pour chaque *sorte* environ 80 caracteres et plus, chacun devant avoir sa *courante* et sa *majuscule*, qui est precisement/justement ce que nous avons nommé dans l'imprimerie le *bas de casse*, et les *capitales*. Puis il faut quelques lettres doubles, des ponctuations, des chiffres &c. et sy l'on y veut ajouter des renvois des notes de musique et quelques autres, ce tout pourra bien aller du moins jusqu'a une centaine de caracteres suivant l'intention de celui qui s'en veut servir.<sup>7</sup>

(Thus one will find that one is sufficiently supplied with sizes if one has four or five only, of *Gros Canon* and upwards. In any case for each size around eighty or more stencils will be needed, as each has to have small and big letters, which are to be precise/exact what we call in printing lowercase and capital letters. Then one must have some double letters, punctuation marks, numerals and so on, and if one wishes to add to that some reference signs, musical notes, and a few others, this can add up to at least a hundred or so stencils depending on the purposes of the person who wishes to use them.)

Thus, one size might consist of the characters shown in (figure 6). By Des Billettes's calculation, four or five sizes would therefore add up to roughly four or five hundred individual stencils, or more.

These extracts from Des Billettes's text represent, for the most part, his remarks on the specific work of stencil-making.<sup>8</sup> As already

Figure 6. Character set, as recommended by Des Billettes.

A Æ B C D E F G H I (J) K L M N O Æ P Q R S T (U) V X Y Z  
a æ b c ð d e f g h i j k l m n o œ p q r f t s s t t u v x y z &  
, . ; ! ? ` ^ ~ " , o 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 \* ¶ [notes de musique]

6. Kindel (ed.), 'The description of stencilling by Gilles Filleau des Billettes ...', *op. cit.*, pp. 70–1.

7. Kindel (ed.), 'The description of stencilling by Gilles Filleau des Billettes ...', *op. cit.*, pp. 70–1. Of the sizes Des Billettes mentions in this and the previous quotation, *Gros Canon* would have a capital height of roughly 10 mm; *Gros Parangon* would have a capital height of roughly 5 mm.

8. One additional, notable, aspect of work he describes is the making of stencils for decoration: 'Pour l'ornement de cette maniere d'impression, on peut faire aussi de toutes sortes de caracteres de fleurons, vignettes, cartouches &c dont on se sert dans l'imprimerie soit pour les marquer tout d'un coup d'une seule couleur; soit pour en avoir le trait seul, et l'enluminer ensuite de diverses couleurs au pinceau'. (In order to ornament

this kind of printing one can also make all sorts of stencils bearing fleurons, vignettes, cartouches, and so on, which are used in printing, whether to mark them out in one go in one colour alone, or else to make the outline only and then illuminate it in different colours with a paintbrush). Kindel (ed.), 'The description of stencilling by Gilles Filleau des Billettes ...', *op. cit.*, pp. 84–5.





Figure 7. Gilles Filleau des Billettes, drawing of common stencil plate, from 'Imprimerie de Livres d'Eglise, Ecriteaux ou Sentences &c.', n. d. (c. late 1690s). The Newberry Library, Chicago, Wing MS oversize Z4029.225, p. 185 (detail).



Figure 8. Stencil plate, maker not known, France, probably 18th century, brass, 70 × 49 mm.

mentioned, the equipment he describes was designed to support a particular method of stencilling, and the configuration of the stencils, tools, and furniture reflect their collectively interacting functions. While the stencils described by Des Billettes were therefore probably atypical,<sup>9</sup> the tools (scissors and files) and techniques used to cut them, on the other hand, were probably more common, an assertion supported by the observation that in the early decades of text stencilling, as so far documented, only relatively large-size letters were employed, for which the technique of scissor-cutting and filing would have been viable and appropriate.<sup>10</sup> Towards the end of his description, Des Billettes criticises differently-configured stencils that were apparently common or typical at the time; a sketch drawn by him suggests the kind he had in mind (figure 7). Surviving examples incorporate an out-turned 'foot' for ease of handling, triangles cut into the sides to aid their alignment, and a letter-spacing system comprised of a dot to the right of the letter to indicate the position of the next letter to be stencilled (figure 8). Because their configuration was not integral to a larger suite of specially-designed equipment, they could be made, sold, and used on their own, or (as Des Billettes suggests) together with common tools and equipment such as a simple ruler and an ordinary table.<sup>11</sup>

In his text, Des Billettes mentions two excellent liturgical books made at the Hôtel royal des Invalides in Paris, against whose stencilled texts the accuracy of his method could be compared; one of the books is probably that shown in figure 9.<sup>12</sup> The book raises the question: who made the stencils used to mark out its expertly formed letters and chant notation? While the aim of the 'Description des Arts et Métiers' was to describe French trades, at no point does Des Billettes indicate that stencil-making itself constituted a separate trade. But on the evidence of this and other such books of the period, clearly there were individuals of considerable skill at work in Paris making stencils. But who were they? Little is known about them at present beyond what Des Billettes writes, which amounts to unspecific remarks such as, '[w]e have not described how one cuts out these letters after having drawn them, because that depends on the particular skill of the person who undertakes the task'.<sup>13</sup> It is reasonable

9. At present, only a handful of surviving stencils configured as described by Des Billettes have been recorded; see Kindel, 'A reconstruction of stencilling ...', *op. cit.*, p. 55.

10. As quoted above, the minimum size recommended by Des Billettes, *Gros Canon*, is roughly the smallest size of capital letter that can be conveniently cut with scissors, as demonstrated by reconstructed practice. See Kindel, 'A reconstruction of stencilling ...', *op. cit.*, pp. 36–7, 43. Des Billettes's default technique of cutting stencils with scissors thus appears to correlate with the size and style of letter (i.e., relatively large romans) needed for the kinds of stencilled texts he had in mind. Small sizes of letter as well as more complicated (i.e., decorated) styles, which are first

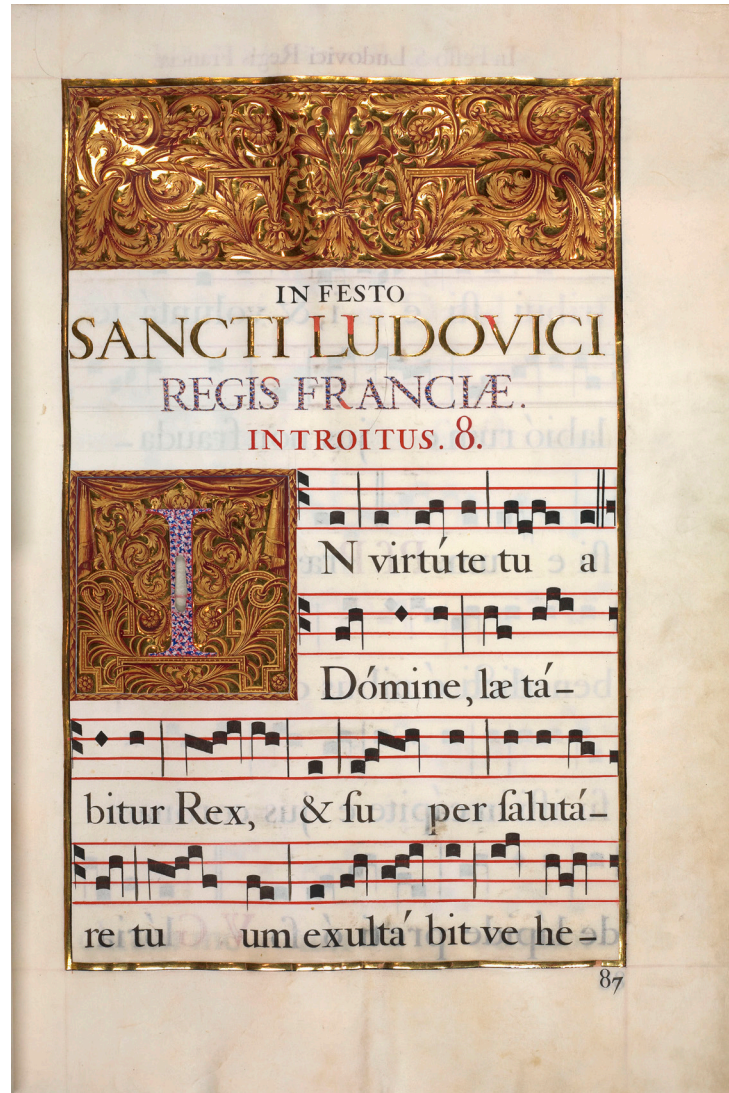
found several decades later, appear to be accompanied by advances in cutting technique, etching in particular, as described below. See also discussion below, where, in the *Encyclopédie méthodique*, a similar minimum size of letter able to be cut out with scissors is stated.

11. Kindel (ed.), 'The description of stencilling by Gilles Filleau des Billettes ...', *op. cit.*, p. 83.

12. Kindel, 'A reconstruction of stencilling ...', *op. cit.*, p. 42; Kindel (ed.), 'The description of stencilling by Gilles Filleau des Billettes ...', *op. cit.*, pp. 82–3.

13. Kindel (ed.), 'The description of stencilling by Gilles Filleau des Billettes ...', *op. cit.*, pp. 76–7. Immediately following this remark, however, Des Billettes does go on to describe the work of cutting with scissors and files.

Figure 9. *Graduale et antiphonale ad usum S. Ludovici Domus Regiæ Invalidorum ...*, parchment, 800 × 570 mm, 1682. Paris, Musée de l'Armée. © Photo Musée de l'Armée. Stencilled elements include plainchant text and notation.



to concur with Des Billettes, in any case, that the person referred to would have possessed a 'particular skill' combining letter design, drawing, and metal-working. By extension, it is also reasonable to place them within the sphere of engravers (*graveurs*) or possibly metal chasers (*cizeleurs*).

Given the absence of references in Des Billettes's description to stencil-making as a partly or wholly independent trade, it is necessary to move forward several decades to the 1730s to find the so-far earliest recorded mention of stencilmakers in Paris. The reference occurs in connection with an apparatus known as the 'bureau typographique' invented by Louis Dumas to help children with spelling, grammar, and other aspects of literacy.<sup>14</sup> The invention was made up of letters, words, and grammatical elements put on the backs of playing cards and arrayed in a matrix of compartments, from which the cards were selected and arranged as part of lessons. In the book detailing his invention, Dumas suggests producing these cards by affixing to them printed letters and words, or alternatively by stencilling the letters and words onto them. The stencils could be acquired in different ways:

14. Louis Dumas, *La bibliothèque des enfans, ou les premiers elemens des lettres, contenant le sisteme du bureau typographique*. n. p., 1732, pp. 42–4. This publication is a compilation of letters that appeared in the *Mercur de France*, in which the 'bureau typographique' is described and discussed. Republished as *La bibliothèque des enfans, ou les premiers élémens des lettres, contenant le nouvel ABC françois, à l'usage de Monseigneur le Dauphin et des Augustes Enfans de France ...*, Paris: Pierre Simon, 1733. Recent discussion of the bureau typographique can be found in (e.g.) Paola Bertucci, *Artisanal enlightenment: science and the mechanical arts in old regime France*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2017, pp. 178–81.

[...] on peut s'adresser aux religieux qui ont des A, B, C, à jour sur des plaques de cuivre. On trouve encore de ces caracteres à jour dans les églises catedrales ou collegiales des provinces. Le plus court sera d'en faire acheter à Paris chés les ouvriers qui en font [...] <sup>15</sup>

(... one could try people in religious orders who have ABC's cut in plates of brass. These stencils are still to be found in cathedral or collegiate churches in the provinces. The quickest answer would be to buy them directly from the makers in Paris ...)

Dumas's reference admittedly offers little specific information, though his mention of 'ouvriers' making stencils in Paris is notable simply by its occurrence. But, again, who were these makers? In the following decade an answer to this question can be found.

### Louis Bresson de Maillard

In November 1744, an advertisement placed in the journal, *Suite de la clef*, announced – by name – the first Paris stencilmaker about whom a substantial amount of information has been assembled: Louis Bresson de Maillard (1715/16 – c. 1784). <sup>16</sup> Like many advertisements of the period, this one takes the form of a lengthy description and explanation, written in the third person. Several features are noteworthy. The first is that Bresson de Maillard is notifying the public of a useful 'invention' – stencilling – that, by implication, may be unfamiliar. He gives no specific name to the invention but instead begins by saying that it involves cut-out brass plates: 'il fait différents ouvrages de desseins & de caractères, sur plaques de cuivre, découpées à jour' (he makes different kinds of designs and letters on brass plates, which are cut out). After offering suggestions about who might find the invention useful, he explains how the stencilling is done: 'au moyen d'un pinceau de la grosseur du pouce, que l'on passe, après l'avoir humecté de noir ou de couleur, sur la planche de cuivre' (by means of a one-inch thick brush, which one passes over the brass plate after having moistened it with black or colour [ink]). The stencils are placed one after another to make words and lines of text, aided by familiar features added to each plate; the work is slow but rewarding:

Avec les caractères ou Lettres, on parvient à former des mots & des lignes entières, en assemblant lettre à lettre: on les alligne aisément au moyen des points & des coches qui accompagnent chaque lettre, & qui guident pour les placer à une distance égale. Cette façon d'écrire est à la vérité un peu longue, mais on est dédommagé par la beauté du caractère, & elle ne sert que pour quelques mots, qu'on veut peindre plus proprement qu'à la plume [...].

(With the stencils, one is able to form words and whole lines, letter-by-letter: they are easily aligned by means of the dots and notches [i.e., triangles] that accompany each letter, and which [serve as] guides for spacing them evenly. This way of writing is in truth a little slow, but one is compensated by the beauty of the letters, and it serves for a few words, which one wants to paint more neatly than with a pen ....)

Three years later, in June 1747, Bresson de Maillard placed another advertisement, this time in *Mercure de France*. Here he lists the kinds of stencils he made:

15. Dumas, *La Bibliothèque des enfans ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 43. Translation by James Mosley. Dumas's reference to 'caractères à jour' is the so-far earliest recorded occurrence of this term, which becomes the common name for such stencils by the nineteenth century.

16. Maillard [sic], 'Avis sur une invention utile', *Suite de la Clef*, vol. 56, Novembre 1744, pp. 333–5. The quotations that follow in this paragraph are from this advertisement. A listing of advertisements and notices for Bresson de Maillard, published between 1744 and 1782, is given in appendix A; the advertisement of November 1744 is transcribed and translated in appendix B. In addition to 'Maillard', Bresson de Maillard was also known as 'Bresson', 'Bresson Maillard', 'Bresson-Maillard', 'De Bresson', 'Maillard' and 'Maillard de Bresson' (he did not use his first name in advertisements). 'Bresson de Maillard' is the rendering he employed most frequently during his professional life and is the one adopted here. Bresson de Maillard's year of birth is approximated from a document of 1731, which confirms his appointed legal guardians ('tutors') following the death of his father; the document states the age of 'Louis Bresson' as 15 years. 'Tuition Bresson', 12 septembre 1731, Paris, Archives nationales, Y//4471 (Tutelles). Documents recording circumstances subsequent to his death are discussed below.



Le Sr de Bresson donne avis au public qu'il fait [&] vend différens ouvrages en caractères & lettres imitant ceux d'impression, en desseins, lettres financieres & à traits de plume, chiffres, notes de plein chant, vignettes en bordure pour le papier [à] lettres, figures d'animaux, écussons, accompagnemens & supports d'armoire, vignettes en rosettes, en culs-de-lampe & autres pour l'ornement des livres d'Eglise, bouquets courans & détachés, [n]oms en chiffres & autrement, le tout découpé à jour sur plaques de cuivre.<sup>17</sup>

(M. Bresson gives notice to the public that he makes and sells various kinds of *caractères* and letters imitating those of printing, designs, *lettres financieres* and flourished letters, figures, plainchant notes, vignettes of borders for writing paper, figures of animals, escutcheons, coats of arms, vignettes of rosettes, of culs-de-lampe and others for the decoration of *livres d'Eglise*, flowing and modelled bouquets, names of numbers and otherwise, all cut out of brass plates.)

In a third advertisement, from January 1752, Bresson de Maillard remarks that he sells and sends his stencils to religious houses, provincial merchants, and others ('vend & fait des envois aux Maisons Religieuses, aux Marchands de Province, &c.').<sup>18</sup> thus confirming that some monasteries – where stencilling was commonly done – did not make their own stencils but instead purchased them from a specialist supplier. His remark also implies that in some regions of France stencils were not made locally.

Between 1744 and the late 1750s, Bresson de Maillard regularly placed advertisements in French journals, mostly *Suite de la Clef* but also *Mercure de France*. They reveal in considerable detail his business activities, the items he made and sold, and his encouragements to customers. The advertisements also give his locations across the city: first in rue des Vieilles-Étuves-Saint-Martin on the right bank of the Seine; in 1750, in the second court of the Arsenal; by 1756, on the left bank, in the Collège de Cambray (a building that still exists as part of the Collège de France); and finally, by 1758, in rue Saint-Jacques, the centre of printing, publishing, and print selling in Paris. The advertisements record Bresson de Maillard's professional trajectory over the course of fifteen years as he progressed from 'découpeur en caracteres' (stencilcutter) to 'graveur & peintre' (engraver & painter) to 'marchand d'estampes' (print dealer), the latter designation adopted the same year he arrived in rue Saint-Jacques (table 1).

17. De Bresson [sic], *Mercure de France*, Juin 1747, p. 117; characters in square brackets are obscured in the original and have been supplied.

18. Bresson de Maillard, *Suite de la Clef*, Janvier 1752, pp. 52–3. This information is repeated in subsequent advertisements in *Suite de la Clef* in December 1752, December 1753, and November 1754; see appendix A.

19. Bresson de Maillard, *Mercure de France*, Juin 1750, pp. 206–07.

20. Bresson de Maillard, *Suite de la Clef*, Janvier 1752, pp. 52–3.

21. Bresson de Maillard, 'Vignettes du sieur Bresson de Maillard', *Suite de la Clef*, vol. 72, Décembre 1752, pp. 431–2.

22. Maillard de Bresson [sic], 'Vignettes & caractères', *Suite de la Clef*, vol. 73, Décembre 1753, p. 431; Maillard de Bresson [sic], 'Vignettes & Sentences', *Suite de la Clef*, vol. 76, Novembre 1754, pp. 347–8. The latter advertisement is transcribed in full and translated in appendix B.

23. Maillard [sic], *Mercure de France*, Mars 1758, pp. 213–14.

1744–7	[no description]
1750	Découpeur en caracteres <sup>19</sup>
1752	Découpeur & peintre en caracteres & en vignettes <sup>20</sup>
1752	Graveur en caractères & en vignettes <sup>21</sup>
1753–4	Graveur & peintre en caractères & en vignettes <sup>22</sup>
1758	Marchand d'estampes <sup>23</sup>

Table 1. Louis Bresson de Maillard, professional descriptions given in advertisements, 1744–58.

At present, no work confirmed as that of Bresson de Maillard is known from these years, whether stencils or items made with them.



Figure 10. Pages from 'Caracteres fleurs et autres assortimens en vignetes', in Perère Junior, 'Catalogue des livres de la bibliothèque de Perère junior, avec le prix & volumes de chaque ouvrage', 1755. Bordeaux, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 0836.

In their absence, a suggestion of the possible range of work he might have produced can be found in a stencilled library catalogue, dated 1755, made by Perère Junior, probably in Bordeaux where he lived (figure 10).<sup>24</sup> The book is an example of the secular use of stencils by perhaps the kind of customer Bresson de Maillard hoped to encourage. Of particular value – apart from its listing of books in the library – is a section of more than seventy pages at the back of the catalogue that serves as a specimen of the stencils Perère Junior owned and apparently considered part of his library. Displayed under the title, 'Caracteres fleurs et autres assortimens en vignetes', are roman alphabets in four sizes and one size of italic (accompanied by numerals or punctuation marks, or both), chinoiserie, animals, insects, borders, flowers, culs-de-lampe, and other decorations. While there is no indication of who made the stencils, they roughly conform to the kinds offered by Bresson de Maillard, as described in his advertisements.

In the two or so decades from 1760, further dimensions of Bresson de Maillard's professional activities are notable. Thus, in an advertisement of 1760, while stating his common status ('découpeur ordinaire en caractères & desseins-vignettes'), he nevertheless draws attention for the first time to the patronage of aristocratic clients – the Duc de Bourgogne, foremost, but also an impressive group of royal persons to whom he supplied his works, including the Queen:

Le goût & l'élégance qui régner dans tout ce qui sort des mains du Sr. Bresson, lui ont mérité un Brévet de Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne, la protection de ce Prince, & l'honneur de lui fournir, ainsi qu'à la Reine, à Madame la Dauphine & à plusieurs Dames de la Cour, nombre de ses petits ouvrages qui paroissent aussi utiles qu'amusans.<sup>25</sup>

(The taste and elegance that reigns in everything that issues from the hands of M. Bresson, earned him a patent of Monseigneur the Duc de Bourgogne, the protection of this prince, and the honour of providing

24. Perère Junior, 'Catalogue des livres de la bibliothèque de Perère junior, avec le prix & volumes de chaque ouvrage', 1755, Bordeaux, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 0836, p. 115 ff. I am grateful to Meghan Constantinou for drawing my attention to this book.

25. Bresson de Maillard, 'Nouvelles Etrennes & Estampes', *Suite de la Clef*, vol. 88, Décembre 1760, p. 440.

26. Bresson de Maillard, *L'Avant-coureur*, 1761, no. 12, Lundi 23 Mars, p. 184. English translation of this advertisement, here and below, by Alice Savoie.

27. Bresson de Maillard's reference to Malo suggests that Malo was generally known for such work.

28. 'Inventaire après décès d'Antoine Petit, ébéniste à Paris, à requête ... de (3) Nicolas-Antoine Malo, graveur en caractères et de Marie-Anne Petit [his spouse] ...', 16 mai 1749, Paris, Archives nationales, MC/ET/XXVIII/312. See also 'Partage de la succession d'Antoine Petit ...', 8 février 1750, MC/ET/XXVIII/315.

29. 'Mainlevée d'opposition par Jacques Pinelle ...', 28 février 1750, Paris, Archives nationales, MC/ET/XXVIII/315.

30. 'Inventaire [après décès]', Nicolas Antoine Malo, 29 mai 1754, Paris, Archives nationales, MC/ET/XCVII/341. I am grateful to Laurent Guillo for locating this document on my behalf in August 2019. See also 'Transport de rente', 23 mai 1753, MC/ET/XCVII/337.

31. 'Inventaire', Nicolas Antoine Malo, *op. cit.*, p. 4 (fol. 2v). See appendix D for a transcription and translation of the list of goods and tools.

32. 'Inventaire', Nicolas Antoine Malo, *op. cit.*, pp. 4–5 (fols 2v–3r).

33. 'Die besten heutigen Kuenstler diese Art Buchstaben zu machen, sind Malo, Vater und Sohn in Paris, die sich in ihrer Adresse: *Faiseurs de Caracteres*, nennen.' Johann Gottlob Immanuel Breitkopf, *Versuch, den Ursprung der Spielkarten ...*, zweyter Theil, Leipzig: Roch und Compagnie, 1801, pp. 32–3 (p. 33). English translations in this paragraph by James Mosley. In these posthumously published notes, Breitkopf (1719–94) gives no indication of when or how he encountered the work of Malo, though he mentions stencilled liturgical books made in the later 1750s; his reference to Malo's 'Adresse' and trade name suggests he may have seen a specimen, trade card, or advertisement rather than the stencils themselves. A record probably of Malo *fils* (i.e., 'Sohn' / son) was brought to my attention by Laurent Guillo late in the assembly of this study. It is an invoice for the supply of stencils submitted to the duchess of Villeroi in 1781, which was settled in 1783. 'Memoir des Caractere en Cuivre fournny a Madame la Duchesse de Villeroi par Molo [sic] le 15 fevrie 1781', Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, Archives nationales, T//129/7–17.

34. 'Sie machen dergleichen Alphabete in Capital- und Currentbuchstaben aller Art, von der Hoehe zu 2¼ Zoll, bis auf die kleine Currentschrift, die wir Cicero nennen; mit allerley Art von Vignetten, die fuer Maler, Zeichner un Ingenieurs sehr brauchbar sind.' Breitkopf, *Versuch, den Ursprung der Spielkarten ...*, zweyter Theil, *op. cit.*, p. 33. Notable is Breitkopf's mention of 'all sorts of vignettes'; none are recorded in Malo's inventory.

him, as well as the Queen, Madame la Dauphine and several ladies of the court, with many of his small works that are as useful as they are amusing.)

An advertisement of March 1761 contains two references that are of interest, to which additional information can be added. The first is a reference to 'sieur Malo', thus:

Le sieur Bresson de Maillard, marchand d'estampes, breveté de M. le duc de Bourgogne, fait non-seulement des caractères à jour en cuivre comme en faisoit ci-devant le sieur Malo, [...].<sup>26</sup>

(M. Bresson de Maillard, print dealer, patented by M. the Duc de Bourgogne, makes not only stencil letters in brass as did M. Malo before him ...)

This appears to be Nicolas Antoine Malo, an engraver active in Paris in the 1740s and 1750s. Malo resided in rue de Harlay (île de la Cité) and made 'caractères à jour' of the kind Bresson de Maillard now made.<sup>27</sup> Contemporary documents assign to him a number of professional descriptions including 'graveur en caractères'<sup>28</sup> and simply 'graveur';<sup>29</sup> by the end of his life, in 1754, he was 'maitre graveur', as stated in his inventory after death.<sup>30</sup>

Insights into Malo's professional circumstances are offered by his inventory, which itemises materials under the heading, 'Suivent les marchandises et outils de la profession dud. defunt Sr Malo' (The professional goods and tools of the deceased M. Malo, as follows).<sup>31</sup> Among them were 236 brass 'alphabets' (referring to sets of stencils), along with 113 pounds of brass in sheets. The seemingly large quantity of stencils suggests that they were in some considerable demand. Various tools and other items of equipment are also listed including a small oak workbench, two medium-sized vices, two small wood mallets, a set square and a compass of brass, a small chisel, a medium-sized flat file, a dozen files of triangular section, files both flat and round, and a copper bar placed in one of the vices. The tools are indicative of certain aspects of stencil making, such as delineating brass sheets, folding them, and filing the cut-out shapes, though other aspects of the work appear unaccounted for, in particular cutting the brass, however this was done, whether with knives, scissors or gravers, or by etching. The final items listed under the same heading are Malo's cash assets, amounting to 1390 livres.<sup>32</sup>

Some five decades later, another reference to Malo was published under the name of the Leipzig printer and publisher, J. G. I. Breitkopf, which provides further information. Breitkopf had at some time become aware of Malo's work, which he praises: 'The best (makers) of this kind of characters are at present Malo, father and son, of Paris, who in their *Adresse* call themselves *faiseurs de caractères*.'<sup>33</sup> Breitkopf goes on to describe the stencils they made: 'They make such alphabets in capital and small characters of all kinds, from the largest of 2¼ Zoll [c. 60 mm capital height] to the smallest *Currentschrift* that we call Cicero [c. 2.5 mm capital height]; with all sorts of vignettes, those that are much used by painters, artists and engineers.'<sup>34</sup> He also suspected that the stencils were cut with punches: 'I have been told that they are pierced by hand, but the evenness of the letters and the modest price make one suspect that they are struck with sharp



35. 'Man hat mich zwar versichert, daß sie aus freyer Hand ausgebrochen wuerden: aber sowohl die Gleichheit der Buchstaben, als der geringe Preiß, lassen wahrscheinlich vermuthen, daß sie durch scharfe staehlerne Stempel ausgeschlagen werden.' Breitkopf, *Versuch, den Ursprung der Spielkarten ..., zweyter Theil, op. cit.*, p. 33. Breitkopf's suspicion of the use of punches is probably a misunderstanding, as there is no evidence among metal stencils from this period that complete letters were cut out with punches or dies. For remarks on the use of punches and dies in the context of eighteenth-century stencil making, see Eric Kindel, 'Recollecting stencil letters', *Typography papers*, 5, 2003, Department of Typography & Graphic Communication, University of Reading, pp. 82–3; and Eric Kindel, 'Stencil dies: new tools for an old trade', *Vom Buch auf die Strasse: Grosse Schrift im öffentlichen Raum* (Journal der HGB #3), Julia Blume, Pierre Pané-Farré and Fred Smeijers (eds), Leipzig, Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst, pp. 194–5 (esp. n. 5). Confirmed early evidence for the use of punches/dies to cut out complete stencil letters is not found until around 1840, in the USA.

36. Information about a stencilmaker contemporary to Malo, Antoine Legrand, was brought to my attention by Laurent Guillo late in the assembly of this study. An early reference occurs in a notice of the inhumation of Legrand's five-year-old daughter, in January 1749; at this time he is described as a 'faiseur de caractères et vignettes', residing in the Place Dauphin, i.e., adjacent to Malo's location in the rue de Harlay (*Inventaire-sommaire des archives départementales antérieures à 1790 ... Eure-et-Loir*, archives civiles, série E (supplément), vol. 4, p. 66, Chartres, Édouard Gernier, 1877). In February 1762, in the inventory of his wife, Legrand is described as a 'marchand l'écrituriers'; among their common property were 'cent plaques de cuivre de petites formes en caractere dont la plus part imparfaites et les autre travaillés prisé le tout ensemble soixante livre[s], i.e., one hundred brass plates [stencils] consisting of small characters, most of which are imperfect and the others worked, the whole valued at sixty livre[s]' (*Inventaire après décès de Jeanne Delamotte, épouse Antoine Legrand*, Paris, Archives nationales, MC/ET/XCIV/308, f. 2r). In 1770, serving as a witness to a contract of marriage, Legrand is described as a 'maître peintre' ('Contrat de mariage d'Antoine Lair compagnon peintre ...', Paris, Archives nationales, MC/ET/XXX/421).

37. Bresson de Maillard, *L'Avant-coureur*, 1761, no. 12, Lundi 23 Mars, p. 184.

38. Bresson de Maillard, *L'Avant-coureur*, 1761, no. 12, Lundi 23 Mars, p. 185.

39. Bresson de Maillard, *L'Avant-coureur*, 1761, no. 44, Lundi 2 Novembre, p. 699.

steel punches.<sup>35</sup> Regrettably, Breitkopf records nothing further about Malo, though his notes provide a valuable additional perspective on Malo's activities.<sup>36</sup>

Returning to Bresson de Maillard, the second reference of interest in his advertisement of March 1761 is his description of the use of stencils for decorating fabrics, bags, clothing, and so on:

'[... sieur Malo, mais] il a imaginé de plus des desseins formés également par des plaques de cuivre percées à jour qui servent à peindre sur des étoffes & dont on peut orner des sacs à ouvrage, des vestes, &c. Au moyen de ces desseins qu'on peut varier à l'infini, tant pour l'assemblage que pour la différence des couleurs & des nuances, on peut se procurer un amusement agréable, & nos dames pourront par ce moyen multiplier leurs occupations.'<sup>37</sup>

(... he has also created designs made from cut-out brass plates, which are used to paint on cloth, and which can adorn bags for knitting and embroidery work, jackets, and so on. By means of these designs, which can be made to vary infinitely, as much through the way they are assembled as through the possible differences in colours and nuances, one can get an agreeable amusement, and our ladies can thereby increase their occupations.)

He also made it known that he was developing coloured inks suitable for such applications and wished to exchange information with others to improve the results:

Le sieur Bresson invite les personnes versées dans la maniere d'extraire les couleurs des minéraux, &c. à lui communiquer leurs lumieres pour empêcher que les couleurs ne se detachent: il se fera en revanche un plaisir de faire part ses desseins aux personnes qui voudront concourir avec lui à la perfection de son art.<sup>38</sup>

(M. Bresson invites people familiar with the method for extracting colours from minerals, and so on, to communicate to him their insight into how to prevent colours from coming off. ... he would be delighted, on his part, to share his designs with people who would be willing to work with him at perfecting his art.)

In an advertisement placed later the same year, Bresson de Maillard gives notice that his wife was available to teach this kind of stencilling to ladies in their homes:

Les dames qui voudont s'amuser à peindre de cette maniere n'auront qu'à s'adresser à l'épouse du sieur Bresson qui ira chez elles leur enseigner à se servir des desseins de son mari, par le moyen desquels on peut imiter sur le champ, avec une brosse & plusieurs planches découpées à jour & bien combinés, différentes fleurs que l'on croirait être faites au pinceau.<sup>39</sup>

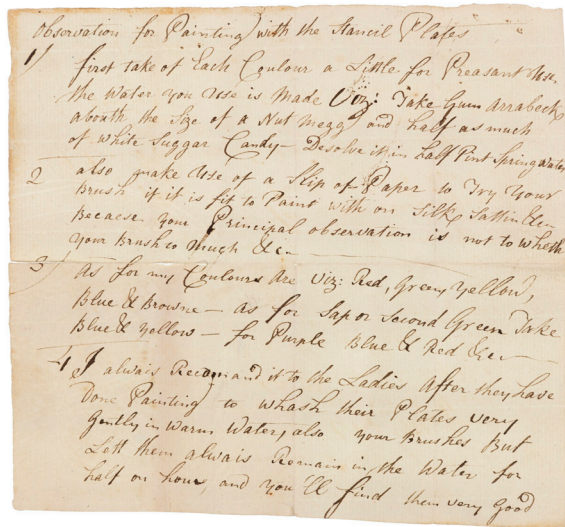
(Ladies who would like to be amused by painting in this way need only contact the wife of M. Bresson, who will come to their home to teach them how to use the designs of her husband, which can be readily used as a means to imitate, with a [thick] brush and many well-combined stencil plates, different kinds of flowers that one would think were made with a [fine] paintbrush.)

Later, his daughter would also help with this service.

While, again, no work of this kind confirmed as that of Bresson de Maillard is known, a stencil 'outfit' probably made in England at

Figure 11. Stencil outfit, maker not known, probably England, 18th century.

- (a) Box, plan view with sliding lid removed and drawer extended, 244 × 186 × 54 mm (closed). Containing single and registering sets of brass stencils, brushes, (water)colours, ivory palette and handwritten instructions. Individually wrapped stencils, palette and instructions in drawer. Stencil brushes are double-ended; one end is comprised of fine bristles, the other end of coarse bristles. Watercolours in pots; additional pigments (in powder form) in folded paper packets.



- (b) Instructions for use of stencil outfit, ink and paper, 152 × 170 mm.



- (c) Set of registering stencils, brass, 46 × 97 mm (plate '2'); composite stencilled design from stencils, ink, and paper, 40 × 92 mm.

- (d) Wrapper for stencils in (c), paper and ink, 103 × 50 mm.

40. *Public Advertiser*, London, 13 June 1769, cited in 'Mary Darly, fun merchant and caricaturist', Sheila O'Connell, in *Female printmakers, printsellers, and print publishers in the eighteenth century*, Cristina S. Martinez, Cynthia E. Roman (eds), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024, pp. 155–73 (p. 165). O'Connell cites a second advertisement in the *Morning Chronicle* (4 April 1775): 'Mrs. Darly's best respects wait on the Ladies, to inform them, that she has a new assortment of stencils, for painting silks, linen, &c. for work-bags, toiles, gowns, &c. .... N. B. Young ladies and gentlemen, (unacquainted with drawing) taught to paint [i.e., stencil] in a few minutes.' The 'Observation for painting ...' found in the outfit (figure 11b) includes spellings that date to the latter half of the eighteenth century, such as 'coulour', 'nut megg', 'arrabeck', and 'sugar'; the brass plates are referred to as 'stencil plates'.

around this time appears to coincide with his descriptions. The outfit includes numerous sets of registering brass plates for stencilling polychromatic designs onto paper or fabric, together with stencil brushes, fine paintbrushes, pots of watercolour, pigments in powder form, and handwritten instructions for 'painting' with the plates (figure 11). Though neither the maker nor the seller of the outfit is known, it may be linked in some way with the London engraver and print dealer, Matthew (or Matthias) Darly, who was in business with his wife, Mary Darly. In 1769, an advertisement in the London *Public Advertiser* offered 'Ladies Stencils for painting Silks, Linens, Paper, &c, by Mary Darly', work of a kind the outfit answers well to.<sup>40</sup>

As mentioned above, in 1752 Bresson gave notice that he was supplying stencils to religious houses and also to merchants in the provinces. In an advertisement of 1764, he provides a list of such merchants, thereby indicating his network of distribution at the time. Ten are named, one each in Lyon, Rouen, Toulouse, Tours, Poitiers, Bordeaux, La Rochelle, Nantes, and Dijon, and one outside France





Figure 12. 'Etrennes' [Presents on the first day of the year], Louis Bresson de Maillard (attributed), engraving on paper, with aquarelle (colour washes) and gouache (stencilled frame), 112 × 69 mm (irregular). Attribution based on the occurrence of this engraving in Bresson de Maillard, *Collection de différents sujets gravés* ..., 1760s/70s, f. 34r (see appendix C). The item shown in this figure is apparently a re-engraved version; it also lacks the double-line frame that occurs in the *Collection*, which the stencilled frame replaces.

proper, in Liège. Most were booksellers (*marchand libraire*) or print dealers (*marchand d'estampes*), though among them was a well-known map dealer and publisher (M. Daudet, Lyon), a paper merchant (M. Jagus, Tours), and a print dealer who also sold music (M. Noblet, Bordeaux).<sup>41</sup> Evidence of Bresson de Maillard's work becoming known further afield, in German-speaking areas, is found in advertisements appearing in the *Neue Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste*, published in Leipzig; these draw attention to his engravings rather than to his stencils.<sup>42</sup>

From 1760 until the early 1780s, numerous advertisements and notices continue to record Bresson de Maillard's commercial interests in stencil-making, the production of graphic works (figure 12), and print selling and publishing. They also give his achievements within professional circumstances that included on-going aristocratic and royal patronage, and an evolving status from 'ordinaire' to 'privilegié' to 'de la Cour' (table 2).

1760	Marchand d'Estampes, & Découpeur ordinaire en Caractères & Desseins-Vignettes, de Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne <sup>43</sup>
1761	Marchand d'estampes, breveté de M. le duc de Bourgogne; <sup>44</sup> Découpeur privilégié de feu M. le duc de Bourgogne <sup>45</sup>
1764	Marchand d'estampes, & privilégié des Enfants de France <sup>46</sup>
1768	Graveur des Enfants de France & marchand d'estampes ... aux Armes of the Duc de Bourgogne <sup>47</sup>
1771	Marchand d'estampes, d'emblèmes, allégories, &c; <sup>48</sup> ... de l'Académie de S. Luc, graveur & marchand d'estampes <sup>49</sup>
1776	... de l'Académie de Saint Luc, graveur en divers ouvrages de cuivre évuidé, dessinateur & coloriste <sup>50</sup>
1779	... de l'Académie de Saint Luc, & graveur coloriste de la Cour <sup>51</sup>
1782	Peintre <sup>52</sup>

Table 2. Bresson de Maillard, professional descriptions given in advertisements and elsewhere, 1760–82.

41. Bresson de Maillard, *Mercure de France*, Janvier 1764, pp. 208–10. This advertisement is transcribed and translated in appendix B.

42. Bresson de Maillard, 'Auch Kleinigkeiten in der Kunst verdienen eine Anzeige. Hr. Bresson de Maillard verkauft Kupferstiche von Zeichnungen zu Vignettes ...', *Neue Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1764, p. 346. This advertisement occurs with another for M. Duchesne, marchand libraire (p. 345), who was located near Bresson de Maillard in the rue Saint-Jacques, and was apparently a business associate; see advertisement in *Mercure de France*, Janvier 1764, pp. 208–10

(transcribed in appendix B). Bresson de Maillard re-appears in this Leipzig publication in 1766.

43. Bresson de Maillard, 'Nouvelles Etrennes & Estampes', *Suite de la Clef*, vol. 88, Décembre 1760, p. 440.

44. Bresson de Maillard, *L'Avant-coureur*, 1761, no. 12, Lundi, 23 Mars, pp. 184–5.

45. Bresson de Maillard, *L'Avant-coureur*, 1761, no. 44, Lundi 2 Novembre, pp. 698–9.

46. Bresson de Maillard, *Mercure de France*, Janvier 1764, pp. 208–10.

47. Maillard [sic], *L'Avant-coureur*, 1768, no. 23, Lundi 6 Juin pp. 355–6.

48. Bresson de Maillard, 'Cadran de l'Amitié', *L'Avant-coureur*, 1771, no. 3, 21 Janvier, pp. 35–6.

49. Bresson de Maillard, *Affiches, Annonces, et Avis Divers. Quatorzième Feuille hebdomadaire*, Mercredi 3 Avril 1771, p. 131.

50. Bresson de Maillard, 'Dessins en cuivre évuidé', *Suite de la Clef*, vol. 120, Octobre 1776, p. 319. This advertisement is transcribed and translated in appendix B.

51. Bresson Maillard [sic], 'Liqueur pour imprimer des caractères sur le Linge', *Journal de littérature, des sciences et des arts*, vol. 3, no. 13, 1779, p. 285.

52. 'Procuration par François Audouart, marchand fripier à Paris, demeurant grande rue du Faubourg Montmartre, paroisse Saint-Eustache, à Maillard de Bresson, peintre', 2 Juillet 1782, Paris, Archives nationales, MC/ET/XCVIII/645.



However, at least one document from this period indicates that his rise was not entirely trouble-free and that the permissibility of certain of his activities was challenged. The document, dated 1769, describes the seizure of some of Bresson de Maillard's works by Paris city officials at the instigation of the Académie de Saint-Luc, whose syndics contended that he was practising painting 'sans qualité', that is to say, in an unqualified and unregulated manner. The works, depicting vases, baskets, garlands, and bouquets, were executed in gouache on paper. These were probably stencilled works, as suggested both by the gouache medium (i.e., water-based, as used for stencilling, but not *aquarelle*) and by Bresson de Maillard's protestation that the works in question were not subject to regulation:

Est intervenu Louis Bresson de Maillard, dessinateur et graveur privilégié en taille douce et en vignette, qui déclare qu'il a toujours considéré cette sorte d'ouvrage comme faisant partie de l'état d'enlumineur et non de la peinture, et qu'il ne s'est jamais cru en contravention.<sup>53</sup>

(Louis Bresson de Maillard, draughtsman and engraver *privilegié* in intaglio and in *vignette* [i.e., stencil], intervened and declared that he had always considered this type of work as part of the illuminator's profession and not of painting, and that he had never believed himself to be in contravention.)

Nevertheless, the works were seized at the insistence of the Académie de Saint-Luc and placed in the custody of a merchant nearby. No resolution to the action is stated in the document, though suggestively Bresson de Maillard appears to have become a member of the Académie de Saint-Luc shortly after this episode, sometime between January and early April 1771, according to his advertisements (see table 2), perhaps implying his acknowledgement that such work did indeed fall within the regulatory sphere of that organization.<sup>54</sup>

Despite his long and apparently productive career, and the record of his advertisements, work confirmed as associated with Bresson de Maillard is limited to only a handful of publications from the 1760s and 1770s, for which he acted as publisher or co-publisher.<sup>55</sup> One further book, dated 1775 and incorporating stencil work (figures 13, 14), gives Bresson de Maillard's name on the title page, though the description there refers only to his involvement in the colour design ('coloré par Bresson-Maillard'); it is unclear if he also stencilled the text and music notation, or if the text incorporates stencil letters and notation he designed or made. As already mentioned, no stencils have

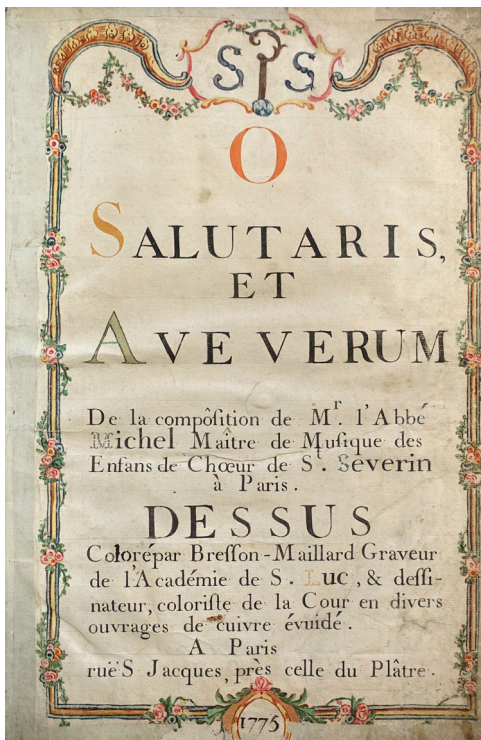


Figure 13. Louis Bresson de Maillard, 'O Salutaris et Ave verum'. De la composition de Mr. l'Abbé Michel Maître de Musique des Enfants de Chœur de S. Séverin à Paris. Dessus Coloré par Bresson-Maillard graveur de l'Académie de S. Luc, & dessinateur, coloriste de la Cour en divers ouvrages de cuivre évidé. A Paris[,] rue S Jacques, près celle du Plâtre. 1775', title page (f. 1r); height = 475 mm (approx.). Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, Ms. 6452.

53. 'Procès verbaux constatant contraventions et saisies pour les sieurs directeurs gardes de l'Académie de St Luc et de la Communauté des Maîtres peintres et sculpteurs contre plusieurs personnes', Paris, Archives nationales, Y//11085, 3 mai 1769. This document and episode are cited in Maël Tauziède-Espariat, 'Les peintres et sculpteurs "sans qualité". Une population invisible dans le Paris des Lumières?', *Revue d'histoire moderne & contemporaine*, 2019/2, no. 66-2, pp. 35-62 (p. 51). Bresson de Maillard's description as an engraver 'en vignette' probably refers to the making of stencil plates with figurative and pictorial matter.

54. Regardless of Bresson de Maillard's run-in with the authorities, his membership of the Académie de Saint-Luc and his entrepreneurial activities and achievements, as recorded in his advertisements, suggestively position him as an *artiste*, which in the middle decades of the eighteenth century described a maker whose practice possessed *esprit*, that is to say, intelligence, inventiveness, discernment and so on, beyond the merely rote operations of the artisan. See Bertucci, *Artisanal enlightenment ...*, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 1-28, 118, 155.

55. See appendix C for a listing of these works.



Figure 14. Louis Bresson de Maillard, 'O Salutaris et Ave verum ...', 1775. Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, Ms. 6452.

- (a) Text under stave (f. 2v detail); x-height = 10 mm (approx.).  
 (b) Adresse (f. 5v detail); frame = 54 × 79 mm (approx.).

so far been attributed to him. Bresson de Maillard probably died in the late summer or early autumn of 1784; although an inventory after death was compiled in October 1784, it has not been located.<sup>56</sup>

#### Jean Gabriel Bery

The second Paris stencilmaker about whom a substantial amount of information has been assembled is Jean Gabriel Bery (active from 1760s, d. 1786). Unlike Bresson de Maillard, a number of primary and autographic documents, along with many stencils, can be reliably attributed to Bery and these provide detailed insights into his stencil-making as well as his entrepreneurial activities. Bery's work is principally known through a box of stencils he supplied in 1781 to the printer, publisher, and statesman, Benjamin Franklin, who was residing at that time in Paris as envoy for the nascent government of the United States of America. This box of stencils and several documents associated with it (discussed below) represent attributable artefacts of a stencilmaker active at this time.

An early documentary record relating to Bery provides details about his family and a glimpse of Jean Gabriel himself. A set of 'quittances des héritiers', notarised in 1763, records the distribution of the dowry of Catherine Sausset, recently deceased, who was the wife of the Paris engraver and metal-chaser (*cizeleur*), Alexandre-Gabriel Berry, and the mother of his three sons. Two of the sons were residing in Paris: Pierre Berry, a master gilder (*maître doreur*), and Alexandre-Gabriel Berry, also a metal-chaser; a third son, 'Jean Berry', was residing in Madrid, though his occupation is not given.<sup>57</sup> While the documents do not unequivocally confirm the latter as Jean Gabriel Bery, it is almost certainly him, given the names shared by other family members and the nature of their trades, which are

<sup>56</sup> By the time of his death, Bresson de Maillard had accumulated a significant level of debt, so much so that his family eventually renounced the succession of the estate, presumably to escape liability; in 1787, an auction of property was authorised in order to settle creditor demands. Among documents at Paris, Archives nationales, see: 'Avis de parents et amis', Y//5122/B, 19 octobre 1784, requesting that Bresson de Maillard's widow be appointed guardian of his minor son and that authorisation be given to proceed with an inventory of the estate in order to determine whether succession would be accepted or refused; 'Renonciation', XLIII 538, 21 août 1786, declaring the renunciation of the succession of the estate after its inventory by Belime (*notaire*) on 22 October 1784; and 'Autorisation sur requête', Y//5150A, 8 février 1787, requesting authorisation to auction a house owned by Bresson de Maillard in Brie Comte-Robert, southeast of Paris. No inventory after death has been found in the relevant étude, MC/ET/XLIII/525 (Charles Belime).

<sup>57</sup> 'Quittances des héritiers [...] Catherine Sausset, [...] 16 octobre 1763 – 23 octobre 1763', Paris, Archives nationales, MC/ET/XXX/381. One among the quittances was notarised in Madrid and records payment to 'Juan Berry' of his portion of the dowry, in Spanish money (*reales*).



58. 'Collection of Brass Stencils', Philadelphia, Museum of the American Philosophical Society, 58.48. 'Specimen sheet of various fonts in the collection of brass stencils bought from Bery in 1781', Library of the American Philosophical Society, Franklin Miscellaneous Collection, BF85.93; receipted bill from Bery, dated 29 December 1781, Franklin Papers: Bache Collection, BF85.ba (item PH581p); receipted bill from Bery, dated 12 January 1782, Franklin Papers: Bache Collection, BF85.ba (item PH621p).

59. Cited below, n. 76.

60. Compiled in Françoise Courcol, 'Histoire du Pont Notre-Dame à Paris du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle à la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', chp 4, unpublished doctoral thesis, École des Chartres, 1969.

61. The eighteenth-century scene on the pont Notre-Dame is conveyed by digital reconstructions made as part of a research project led by the art historian, Sophie Raux. Among them are street-level views of the house exteriors and views of their interior configuration. See Sophie Raux, 'Virtual explorations of an 18th-century art market space: Gersaint, Watteau, and the Pont Notre-Dame', *Journal 18*, issue #5 ('Coordinates'), Spring 2018 <journal18.org/issue5>.

62. Here 'cuivre' by default means brass, an alloy of copper and zinc, rather than pure copper. While more precise terms were available (*cuivre jaune* or *laiton* for brass, *cuivre rouge* for copper) it seems that reference to these was uncommon in stencil-making contexts. (Analysis of the brass in the stencils supplied by Bery to Franklin, using optical emission spectrometry, reveals an alloy of three elements, copper-zinc-lead, in the approximate percentages, 71-23-6, respectively). The modifiers 'en cuivre' or 'de cuivre' could additionally denote brass punches, as used for tooling leather, for example. Bery notably does not use the term 'caractères à jour'. Despite its early appearance in Dumas (1732) and in some advertisements of Bresson de Maillard (1761, 1776), it is not clear if this term was in general use in the 1780s; alternatively, it may not have encompassed the range of 'caractères en cuivre' that Bery made. The modifier 'en acier' could likewise also describe steel punches for other uses, such as marking metal, or for die sinking in the production of stamps, seals, or buttons. For evidence of punches probably made by Bery, see discussion below relating to the maker's marks struck into his stencils. Evidence that Bery aspired to work associated with typefounding occurs in the document, 'Archives de la Chambre syndicale de la Librairie et Imprimerie de Paris, aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles. Déclarations d'envoi de presses d'imprimeries et de fontes de caractères par Didot, Fournier, Gando, de Sanlecque, etc., et des inscriptions de graveurs et de

cognate with that pursued by Jean Gabriel. Notable is the difference in spelling of his surname: in 1763, it is with double 'r'; later it would have only one.

Apart from the quittances of 1763, known records of Jean Gabriel Bery are otherwise found in the last five-and-a-half years of his life, from mid 1781 until late 1786. Among the documents and artefacts generated through his dealings with Franklin, in addition to the box of stencils, are a specimen sheet that displays the 'caractères' Bery made, and two receipted bills, all of which Franklin preserved.<sup>58</sup> In his specimen sheet, Bery gives his location on the pont Notre-Dame, near La Pompe; other documents identify his *maison* as no. 43.<sup>59</sup> The pont Notre-Dame had on it at this time more than sixty houses built to a standard design in facing rows, occupied by merchants, artists, and artisans pursuing a variety of trades (table 3<sup>60</sup>). The bridge formed part of a principal north-south thoroughfare through Paris running from rue Saint-Martin on the right bank of the Seine, across the pont Notre-Dame, Île de la Cité, and Petit-Pont, to become rue Saint-Jacques on the left bank. Bery's location was therefore a conspicuous one and presumably commercially advantageous.<sup>61</sup>

11 peintres	1 épicier
8 orfèvres	1 fondeur en caractères [i.e., Bery]
4 brodeurs/chasubliers	1 graveur/sculpteur
4 miroitiers	1 limonadier
2 doreurs	1 mercier
2 perruquiers	1 papiers peint
2 plumassiers	1 tabac
1 bonnetier	1 tapissier
1 coutelier	

Table 3. Trades of residents on the pont Notre-Dame in 1784.

In his specimen sheet, Bery describes himself as a *faiseur de caractères* (figure 15); a label attached to the inside of the lid of the box of stencils expands this to 'faiseur de caractères en cuivre et acier' (figure 16). As already noted, 'caractère' may refer to the object that carries or embodies a letter or other character; in the context of Bery's work, the modifier 'en cuivre' primarily indicates (brass) stencils while 'en acier' probably denotes dies or steel punches, possibly typographical ones.<sup>62</sup> Bery's use of the term 'faiseur', rather than 'découpeur' or 'graveur' (as favoured by Bresson de Maillard), may indicate his wish to encompass and perhaps emphasise 'making' of several kinds that involved more than cutting or engraving.

fondeurs, 1750–1790', Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (Mss.) Français 21844, in which is found a declaration signed by Bery and dated 24 July 1781 (f. 88r). The declaration records Bery's appearance in front of the Chambre syndicale to request permission to pursue the work of typefounding; the syndics agreed to the request on the condition that he adheres to the relevant regulations, which Bery

states he already knows quite well. I am indebted to Sébastien Morlighem for discovering this declaration and bringing it to my attention, and to Laurent Guillo for assistance in its transcription and translation. This document may also provide context for the description of Bery as 'fondeur en caractères', extracted from contemporary city records, in Courcol, 'Histoire du Pont Notre-Dame ...', *op. cit.*



Figure 15. Jean Gabriel Bery, 'Bery faiseur de caractères ...', specimen sheet of letter styles and sizes, paper, with stencilling, pencil delineations, and ink annotations, 429 × 311 mm, 1781. Philadelphia, Library of the American Philosophical Society, Franklin Miscellaneous Collection, BF85.93.

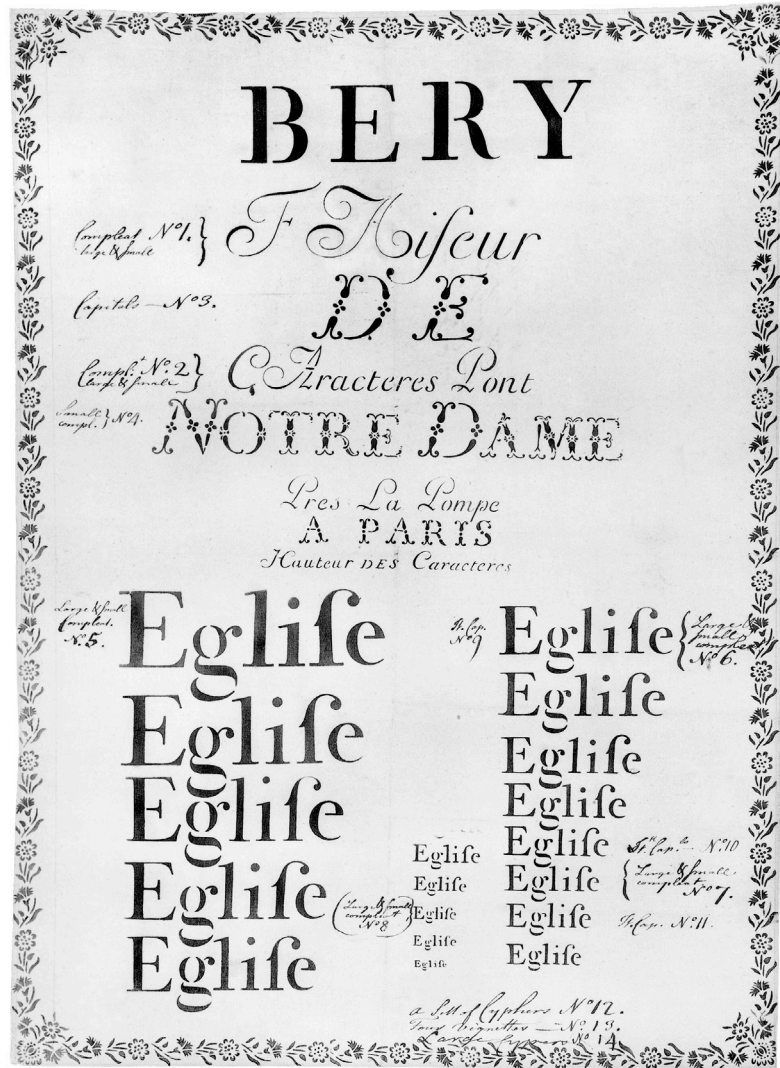


Figure 16. Jean Gabriel Bery, box of stencils, 265 × 321 × 85 mm (closed), 1781. Philadelphia, Museum of the American Philosophical Society, 58.48.

- (a) Box open with storage drawer extended.  
(b) Detail of trade label glued to lid, stencilling on paper.



Figure 17 (a–f). Jean Gabriel Bery, representative stencils from the box of stencils, brass, 1781; numbers correspond to annotations on Bery's specimen sheet. Philadelphia, Museum of the American Philosophical Society, 58.48.

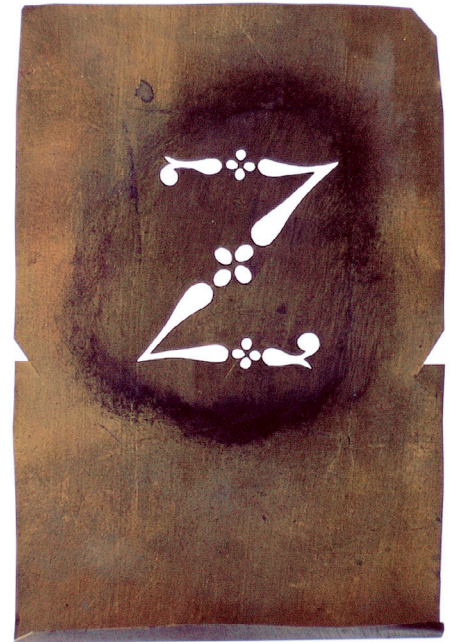
Apart from announcing Bery, his trade, and his location, the specimen sheet's principal function was to display the styles and sizes of letters he offered as stencils. Among them are romans, scripts with elaborate swash features (*caractères de finance*), and decorated capitals (*lettres ornées*) (see figure 15; also figure 17, a–f, g–j). Other 'caractères' offered by Bery (not shown in the specimen but confirmed by the stencils supplied to Franklin and the receipted bill for their sale) included italics, numerals (*chiffres*), and decorated borders (*vignettes*)



(a) Caractère de finance, capital, 'no. 1', 98 × 73 mm.



(b) Caractère de finance, small, 'no. 1', 78 × 53 mm.



(c) Lettre ornée, 'no. 3', 86 × 57 mm.



(c) (above) Caractère de finance, capital, 'no. 2', 78 × 53 mm.  
(d) (right) Caractère de finance, small, 'no. 2', 79 × 53 mm.



(f) Lettre ornée, 'no. 4', 78 × 53 mm



Figure 17 (g–l). Jean Gabriel Bery, representative stencils from the box of stencils, brass, 1781; numbers correspond to annotations on Bery's specimen sheet. Philadelphia, Museum of the American Philosophical Society, 58.48.

or *boredures*) with integrated corners, like that forming the border around the specimen sheet itself (figure 17, k–l, m). Bery probably made further kinds of stencils as well, such as those carrying musical notation, required by customers engaged in the production of stencilled books containing plainchant or other musical compositions.

In respect of letter sizes, it is unclear if Bery's scripts and decorated designs were limited to those sizes shown in the specimen sheet. The romans, as represented by the word 'Eglise', are positioned under



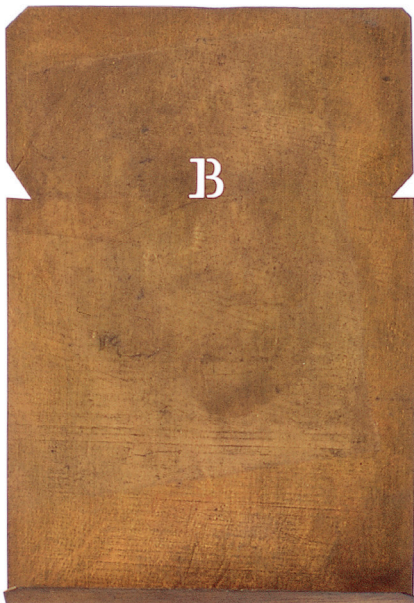
(g) Roman, capital, 'no. 5', 89 × 66 mm.



(h) Roman, small, 'no. 6', 79 × 53 mm.



(k) Italic, capital, 'no. 9', 79 × 53 mm.



(i) Roman, capital, 'no. 8', 79 × 53 mm.



(j) Roman, small, 'no. 8', 79 × 53 mm.



(l) Figure, probably 'no. 12', 65 × 42 mm.





Figure 17 (m). Jean Gabriel Bery, vignette, 'no. 13', stencil from the box of stencils, brass, 1781, 69 × 188 mm; number corresponds to annotation on Bery's specimen sheet. Philadelphia, Museum of the American Philosophical Society, 58.48.

the note, 'hauteur des caracteres' (height/size of the letters), which applies to the height of the capital E. Eighteen sizes are shown, ranging from about 2.5 mm to 31 mm (that is, about half the size range made by Malo, according to Breitkopf). The number of sizes is notable, as are the small – indeed almost negligible – differences in height between many of them. (By comparison, a typesetter would produce at most twelve type sizes across a similar range.) The number and range of sizes might be explained simply as a *tour de force* of Bery's skill and inventory, or, alternatively, as a display of sizes that *could* be made but were not necessarily kept in stock, implying that any size could be made to order. This, in turn, suggests that some customers, such as those producing stencilled books, had exacting requirements for the sizes of letter they needed.

The make-up of the sets of stencils supplied to Franklin is indicative of their intended use. The romans are comprised of partnered sets of capital (i.e., majuscule or 'uppercase') and small (minuscule or 'lowercase') letters. The latter are provisioned for text composition and thus include the alphabetic characters (except w, which could be constructed by doubling v) as well as æ, medial (or 'long') j, final s, c-t and f-t ligatures, and &, along with twelve punctuation and diacritical marks grouped on two plates, six per plate. The sets of capitals are comprised only of alphabetic characters, excluding W but including Æ (or the A component of the diphthong, which could be combined with parts of E). The scripts are similarly provisioned for text composition, if less consistently so, and thus the small sets variously exclude the c-t ligature and consistently exclude æ, the f-t ligature, and punctuation; the sets of capitals exclude Æ, J, and U, providing an alternate-V instead. While the roman and script capitals could additionally be used for titles, headings, or initials, the sets of decorated capitals appear to be intended solely for this purpose. These latter sets are inconsistent in make-up, thus excluding W and U while variously including Æ and J.<sup>63</sup> Finally, Bery supplied Franklin with three sets of italic capitals that consistently exclude W and include Æ.

63. Inclusions and exclusions among the two sets of decorated capitals must be stated provisionally since approximately one-third of the stencils from each set has been lost.

Bery's stencil plates are themselves worth describing in some detail since their configuration and features appear to be

conventional in Paris by this time. They consist of a rectangular brass plate whose thickness varies between 0.1 and 0.2 mm. The four corners of the plate are angle-cut and a 'foot' or handle is folded outward and up at its base. Triangles cut into each side are aligned to the baseline of the letter and (as already mentioned) are used to position the plate along a line of composition. The letter is generally placed high on the plate, which is of a generous size, in proportion. Inter-character spacing dots are added to (nearly) all plates in the sets of small letters, though generally (and logically) the dots do not accompany letters that usually occur in 'final' or isolated positions, such as (final) s or &. In any case, such dots additionally confirm sets as intended for text composition. Punched into one of the plates in each set are Bery's name ('BERY') and address ('P·N·DAME'); these are mostly found on the C/c plates, though in single instances they occur on the e, K and 2 plates. Among eighteenth-century stencils, Bery's are apparently unique in carrying such marks, which allow his work to be identified and assigned an approximate date. His (putative) activities as a punchcutter perhaps prompted him to cut punches for these marks, while the marks themselves may have been a purposeful demonstration of his punchcutting skills.

Despite the many letter sizes displayed in Bery's specimen sheet and his likely understanding of the concept of type body sizes (an extension of the work of typographical punchcutting), it is surprising that no system of measure is employed by Bery to identify the sizes of his letters, either in the specimen sheet or on the stencils he supplied to Franklin. To acquire a specific size of letter presumably required a customer to visit Bery's shop to consult a specimen or choose from existing stock, or, if ordering from a distance, to send an annotated specimen sheet, sketch, or sample to make their wishes clear.<sup>64</sup> But if no such system is evident at this time, another document almost certainly associated with Bery does employ a numbering system for the sizes he offered. This is a second specimen, in the form of a trade card of Pouillard, a supplier of artists materials located on the quai de l'Horloge, not far from Bery's shop on the pont Notre-Dame (figure 19).<sup>65</sup> The style of letters both on the front and back of the trade card – the latter shown using the same 'Eglise' specimen word as seen in the Bery specimen sheet – would seem to confirm the stencil work as that of Bery. The trade card, in turn, seems to



Figure 18. Wrapper for 'no. 1' stencils, paper with stencilling and ink annotations, 99 × 75 mm (approx.). Philadelphia, Museum of the American Philosophical Society, 58.48.

64. The annotations on the Bery specimen sheet do not serve this purpose but are instead simply an ascending sequence of numbers that identify the sets of stencils Franklin purchased. These numbers correlate with numbers written on paper wrappers in which each set was presented (figure 18). In any case, the numbers bear no relationship to size. The specimen sheet annotations appear to have been made by Franklin's grandson and secretary in Paris, William Temple Franklin; they were probably made after purchase and probably when Bery delivered the box of stencils to the Franklin residence in Passy. The numbers on the wrappers were (mostly) written by Bery.

65. Jacques-Joseph Pouillard (d. 1791) apparently occupied this address from 1770 until his death, after which the husbands of his two daughters carried on the business; see <[www.pastellists.com/suppliers.html#p](http://www.pastellists.com/suppliers.html#p)>. At present it has not been possible to assign an exact date to the Pouillard trade card; consequently, it is unclear if it pre- or post-dates the Bery specimen sheet, although, as described below, a post-dating seems likelier if nevertheless unconfirmed. I am greatly indebted to Meghan Constantinou who acquired this document in 2022 from the Paris dealer Chamonal and generously presented it to me.





Figure 19. Jacques-Joseph Pouillard, trade card, paper with stencilling, 145 × 205 mm (irregular), c. 1780s.  
(a) Front.  
(b) Back.

66. It is unclear if Pouillard / Bery supplied a 'run' of already stencilled trade cards, labels, or visiting cards, or instead supplied a stencil, with which the purchaser could then produce their own cards or labels as needed.

67. Reference to figure 19b shows that (alphabets of) capital letters were assigned odd numbers while small letters were assigned even numbers. See also discussion below (p. 92) for a recurrence of stencil alphabets made in a range of twenty-four sizes.

68. Measurements of 'E' in each of the twenty-four sizes of 'Eglise' indicate no pattern of correlation between reference numbers and measured sizes. For numbers '17' to '43', size increments vary randomly between (roughly) 0.2 and 0.5 *ligne* (i.e., between 0.5 and 1 mm; see following paragraph and n. 69, below, for discussion of *ligne* measures). For numbers '11' to '17', size increments vary between (roughly) 0.5 *ligne* (1 mm) and 0.9 *ligne* (2 mm). Sizes of the 'E' itself range from (roughly) 1.6 to 10.6 *lignes* (3.5 to 24 mm), without displaying putative sizes '1' to '9'; in the Bery specimen sheet, the range is (roughly) 1.1 to 13.7 *lignes* (2.5 to 31 mm). It is important to confirm that although both the specimen sheet and the trade card specimen use ascending sequences of reference numbers, there appears to be no other relationship between the two sequences.

69. *Pied de roi* = 12 *pouces*; 1 *pouce* = 12 *lignes*; the *ligne* is approximately 2.256 mm.

confirm that Pouillard acted as a 'retailer' of Bery's stencils and the stencil-making services he apparently offered, though Bery is not identified. The copy on the front of the trade card describes the kinds of stencils Pouillard could supply (bouquets, garlands, and vignettes; letter, numeral, and other characters; trade cards, labels, and visiting cards<sup>66</sup>), while the trade card itself demonstrates their nature (i.e., stencil), given that the copy does not state this explicitly.

Apart from the insights Pouillard's trade card offers into Bery's putative commercial relationship with a nearby merchant, the specimen of letters on the back of the trade card, in a range of twenty-four sizes (as capital and small letter pairings), numbered in an ascending sequence from '11' to '44', confirms that Bery did employ a system of numbering. What this system represents, however, is unclear beyond providing a reference number for each size of capital and small letter alphabets for the convenience of customers wishing to order a particular size or sizes.<sup>67</sup> Assigning the lowest reference number to the largest size, with numbers ascending as size decreases, contradicts the possibility that the numbers refer to a unit of measure, at least directly; complicating matters is the intermittent occurrence of half numbers in the sequence, as if an afterthought or a later insertion.<sup>68</sup> Comparison of the trade card's 'Eglise' specimen words with the equivalent words in the Bery specimen sheet reveals that the two specimens were not made with the same stencil(s). One might speculate, therefore, that the Pouillard trade card represents a new range of sizes that expanded the range shown in the specimen sheet, and for which Bery made new 'Église' stencils now accompanied by reference numbers.

Given the peculiarity of a system of ascending reference numbers matched to descending sizes, it is perhaps unsurprising that by around 1785–6 Bery had apparently adopted a different numbering system whose meaning is obvious. Evidence is a set of numeral stencils (0–9) marked with Bery's name and 'P. NEUF N. 15', an address he occupied at this time (discussed below). Examination of the '1' plate reveals in the upper left an '8' inscribed in the brass (figure 20, a–b); it refers to the size of the characters (taken as the height of the 1), namely 8 *lignes* (about 18 mm), employing a subdivision of an official unit of linear measure, the *pied de roi*.<sup>69</sup> This is the so-far earliest



Figure 20. Stencils carrying size designations; brass, etched and filed.

- (a) Jean Gabriel Bery, 61 × 41 mm, c. 1785–6, ligne size ('8') inscribed (partly cropped).
- (b) Jean Gabriel Bery, 61 × 41 mm, c. 1785–6, name and address ('BERY' and 'P.NEUF N.15') punched.
- (c) Maker not known, 71 × 54 mm, date not known, ligne size ('12') punched.
- (d) Maker not known, 54 × 37 mm, date not known, ligne size ('6') handwritten.
- (e) Maker not known, 70 × 44 mm, date not known, metric size ('16' [mm]) punched.



Correlations with stencils marked by Bery suggest an attribution of (c.) and possibly (d.) to Bery, or Pierre Denis Hertelle; correlations include features of letterform style and detailing, quality of design and finish, and plate details such as shape of alignment triangles, size of angle-cut corners, and proportions of plate overall and in relation to the size of the letterform.

datable set of stencils to carry a size designation, and assuming Bery was himself responsible for inscribing the 8 into the plate, it raises the question of whether he introduced this practice.<sup>70</sup> Other stencil plates probably made at around this time, some of which may be associated with Bery, are suggestive, as they also carry size designations, though an exact date of making can not be fixed (figure 20, c–e). The introduction of such designations, in any case, indicates a need for precise size information, whether as an aid to the rationalisation of stencil making or to enable customers to specify an order or purchase with greater precision, especially if this was done at a distance.<sup>71</sup>

70. Notably, this date roughly follows the introduction of a new system of type body sizes in the early 1780s, devised by François-Ambroise Didot *l'aîné*. The Didot system was based on a unit of measure that was a subdivision of the pied de roi (namely, one-sixth of the ligne); traditional names for type body sizes, such as *Gros Parangon*, were replaced by whole

number designations, such as 'le dix', 'le onze', 'le douze', and so on.

71. Despite the introduction of metric measures in France in the 1790s, only a single set of stencils made at around this time has been recorded as carrying a metric size designation (see figure 20e). Sets of French stencils instead continued to display sizes in lignes throughout the

nineteenth century, though at some point these were transformed into 'fabrication' numbers and prefixed with 'No.' Fabrication numbers (i.e., obsolete ligne sizes) continued in use alongside metric sizes when the latter were added to plates in the later nineteenth century, and persisted among some stencil sets until the 1960s.

To cut out characters from blank brass plates, Bery employed etching. This is confirmed by at least one residual fault in his stencils, a decorative element of the ‘O’ in the set of larger-sized decorated capitals (‘no. 3’ on the specimen sheet), whose outline is etched part-way into the plate but not through it. The piece of brass, which should have been removed, was apparently overlooked and left in place. Other partly etched lines running within and across this element indicate that it was made by tracing through another (guide) stencil or template of some kind with a scribing point or etching needle. Evidence of tracing in this way is also observed in a second plate where the outline of ‘E’ from the smaller-sized set of decorated capitals (‘no. 4’) can be seen lightly inscribed on an italic ‘J’ plate (‘no. 9’). However, it is unclear if Bery used this technique for all sizes and styles of letter since it would be difficult to trace the smallest sizes in this way; instead, it is likely that Bery inscribed such letters free-hand.<sup>72</sup> A contemporary source, Le Pileur d’Apligny, provides details of the technique in relation to the making of brass stencils used to apply gilded decoration to interior walls and ceilings; such stencils were said to be similar to those used to imitate printing types.<sup>73</sup> A needle was deployed to inscribe a design into an etch ground (hard or soft varnish, or wax) coating the plate, thus exposing the brass. Thereafter, engraver’s etching acid was applied to the plate but allowed to etch only part-way through. After pouring off the acid and clearing away the etch ground, the plate was clamped in a vice and the elements of the design removed and refined with files of various shapes. Any remaining burrs were smoothed away before the plate was annealed and beaten flat with a small wood mallet. This way of working appears to correspond with available inventories, which variously list vices, many kinds of files, and small wood mallets.<sup>74</sup>

A receipted bill for the box of stencils tallies the whole of Franklin’s order and was apparently settled when Bery called at the Franklin residence in Passy to deliver the box.<sup>75</sup> The bill lists the stencils and additional items, indicating how Bery named and described them, and how much each cost. The writing, in a rudimentary script, is suggestive of Bery’s literacy, as exhibited by its scattering of phonetic spellings. The box, its contents, and the bill together record and illustrate a representative range of ‘caractères’ of this kind, in style, size, and function. If Franklin’s aim – as a collector of scientific apparatus – was to document such stencils, which perhaps in his experience were unique to France or to Paris, then such an aim was well served by the box of stencils in its totality. If, at the same time or alternatively, his aim – as a printer attuned to letterforms – was

72. Lines scribed across Bery’s plates are suggestive. Where only a single line appears, in the baseline position, this may indicate the use of a guide stencil or template whose positioning would only require a baseline; where two lines appear, in the baseline and x-height (*l’oeil*) or capital height positions, this may indicate freehand scribing, since both lines would be needed to insure all characters were drawn to a consistent height. Some of Bery’s stencil plates appear to confirm this, with two lines occurring on plates with small-sized characters and a single line on plates with large-size characters.

73. [Jeanne Magdeleine] Le Pileur

d’Apligny, *Traité des couleurs matérielles, et de la manière de colorer, relativement aux différens arts & métiers*, Paris: Saugrain & Lamé, Barrois aîné, 1779, pp. 83–7. ‘... se servant de plaques minces de cuivre percées à jour, pareilles à celles dont on se sert pour imiter les caractères d’Imprimerie. Les Ouvriers, qui font ces sortes de caractères en cuivre, en sont aussi qui représentent différens dessins en fleurs, ornemens, compartimens, &c.’ (... using thin cut-out brass plates, similar to those used to

imitate printing types. The workers who make these kinds of brass stencils are also depicting different kinds of flowers, ornaments, groups of figures, and so on.) (p. 83)

74. See the inventory of Malo, discussed above and itemised in appendix D; also the inventory of the goods and materials of Pierre Denis Hertelle, discussed below and itemised in appendix G.

75. See appendix E, where this bill is transcribed and translated.

to acquire stencils of distinctive design and excellent making, then those of Bery, which are outstanding in both respects, were well chosen.

In 1785, Bery left his house on the pont Notre-Dame prior to the demolition of all houses on the bridge the next year. He relocated his business downstream to the Pont-Neuf and his lodgings to the Pont-au-Change, on which houses were also built. On the Pont-Neuf, he rented a single *boutique*, no. 15, one of more than twenty that had been built into the lunettes above each pier, and which were occupied by small traders. At the start of 1786 he rented a second shop on the bridge, no. 9, agreeing a six-year lease at an annual rent of five hundred livres. However, on 18 November 1786, Bery died ‘à la suite de maladies’, after which an inventory after death was compiled at the request of his paternal sister (*sœur consanguine*), Marie Louise Bery (whose husband was Drapier), and his maternal brother (*frère utérin*), Pierre Denis Hertelle, who was also a *faiseur de caractères*. A listing and valuation of goods and materials associated with Bery’s business took place at his house and at Pont-Neuf, no. 15.<sup>76</sup>

Bery’s inventory confirms that in the last year of his life he divided his activities between his shop and his lodgings. At the shop, merchandise was presented in display counters; at his lodgings additional merchandise was kept along with some materials. While the latter, including quantities of brass, both uncut sheets and off-cuts, and many pieces of steel, may suggest that stencil-making was done at Bery’s lodgings, the inventory does not identify any room as a workroom, nor are any tools or other working materials listed there or at the shop. On this evidence, one can postulate a role for Hertelle in Bery’s business, namely that at the time of Bery’s death Hertelle was doing the stencil-making, wholly or in part, probably at his own lodgings nearby. Responsibility for procuring materials may have fallen to Bery who then passed them to Hertelle.<sup>77</sup>

The goods and their quantities itemised both at Bery’s shop and his lodgings suggest a thriving business. These included, at the shop, fourteen dozen (168) vignette stencils, nearly eighty sets of letters (i.e., alphabets) in decorated, script, and roman styles, and forty sets of numerals. Also listed are nearly sixty vignettes ‘en couleur’ (the precise identity of these is unclear) and some 130 items described as ‘doit’ and ‘avoir’ (possibly stencils carrying these words, for use in accounting ledgers), together with paint brushes and ink. At Bery’s lodgings, similar amounts occur including fifteen-and-a-half dozen (186) vignette stencils, nearly fifty sets of letters (alphabets) in the same styles as at the shop, and twelve sets of numerals. Such quantities of stencils (alphabets), however, are somewhat less than those itemised in the Malo inventory of 1754 (where 236 alphabets are listed) while the numbers of vignettes are far greater (none are listed in the Malo inventory), suggesting that by the 1780s vignettes were in some considerable demand. Other items at Bery’s lodgings are notable including an ‘alphabet d’acier’ and additional pieces of steel, which may be dies or (typographical) punches, and numerous buttons indicating a further line of work, in which die-cutting and -sinking and brass stamping play a part and draw on skills continuous with other activities of the *faiseur de caractères*.<sup>78</sup>

76. ‘Inventaire du Sieur Jean Gabriel Bery’, 24 novembre 1786, Paris, Archives nationales, MC/ET/CXXI/507. Information in this and the following two paragraphs is drawn from this document and the ‘Scellé après le décès de Sr. Jean Gabriel Bery m[archan]d de caractères. Pont au Change et en sa Boutique sur le Pont neuf’, Y//13315 (originally catalogued as Y//13307), 18 novembre 1786. I am grateful to staff in the Archives nationale de France for their kind assistance in locating these documents in 2006. See appendix F for a transcription and translation of the inventory’s listing and valuations. Notice of Bery’s death also occurs in the *Journal de Paris*, no. 327, Jeudi 23 Novembre 1786, p. 1354, col. 1, under ‘Extrait du Registre des Scellés apposés dans la Ville & Faub. de Paris, après décès’: ‘Du Sr Jean-Gabriel Bery, M[archan]d de Caractères, en sa demeure au Pont-au-Change, & en sa boutique sur le Pont-Neuf.’ Bery’s inclusion in the register extract for this date (one of only six individuals listed) may be suggestive of his relative stature or prominence.

77. In addition to the inventory’s confirmation of quantities of brass at Bery’s lodgings, it also lists a debt claimed by the *veuve* Coqueret (or Cocquent), *marchande clinquaille* (metal merchant). Bery’s inventory gives Hertelle’s address as rue du Haut-Moulin at the corner of rue de la Lanterne near la Madeleine de la Cité. This location, near the south end of the pont Notre-Dame, would have been just steps away from Bery’s former lodgings on that bridge, and thereafter only a short walk from the Pont-au-Change and the Pont-Neuf. In addition to Hertelle’s postulated involvement, Bery’s niece, Marie Charlotte (daughter of Marie Louise), who lived with Bery, may have also helped in his business.

78. See, for example, ‘Bouttonier’ and associated plates (esp. pl. 4), in Diderot and d’Alembert (eds), *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* ..., vol. 2 (1752) and plates. Paris: Briasson, etc., 1751, etc.



### Contemporaries of Bery

Jean Gabriel Bery's inventory after death records other stencilmakers who were part of his milieu. They include, as mentioned, his half-brother and heir, Pierre Denis Hertelle, who probably took part in Bery's business and succeeded to it after his death. Two others, Jean Baptiste François Leleu and Charles Rougier, served as *expertes* in the valuation of Bery's professional effects; both are named as *faiseurs de caractères*. Benoît Savanne is also known; Leleu resided with him (as stated in Bery's inventory) and Savanne, too, is named as a *faiseur de caractères* in the inventory of his wife.<sup>79</sup> All lived nearby: Hertelle, as noted, at the south end of the pont Notre-Dame, Leleu and Savanne near the south end of the Pont-Neuf and Rougier a few streets to the north (table 4).

Pierre Denis Hertelle (active from 1780s, d. 1807); rue du Haut-Moulin au coin de celle de la Lanterne près de la Madeleine de la Cité
Jean Baptiste François Leleu (or Leleux) (active 1780s – c. 1834); rue Dauphine, at Sieur Savanne's; later (1820) given as rue Dauphine, 3
Charles Rougier (active 1780s, d. 1789); rue des Deux-Écus, 25
Benoît Savanne (active 1780s); rue Dauphine

Table 4. Contemporaries of Jean Gabriel Bery, named as 'faiseur de caractères'.

Little else is presently known about Leleu, Rougier, or Savanne in the 1780s, though at the time of Rougier's death in March 1789, his wife, Catherine Mousset, made a deposition to city officials describing the distressing circumstances of his final hours when he complained in the morning of violent stomach pain, threw himself on the bed, and died so quickly that she did not even have time to summon a priest. She believed the cause of death was related to his work:

Observe la comparante que depuis trois semaines son mari se plaignait de ce mal d'estomac et qu'il ne l'attribuait qu'aux vapeurs de l'eau forte qu'il employait journellement a la fabrique de ses caractères de cuivre, et que même il craignait des suites au point de ne prendre au déjeuner que du pain afin d'étouffer les effets de ces vapeurs, de sorte que la comparante croit ne pouvoir attribuer la mort subite de son mari qu'au métier qu'il exerçait.<sup>80</sup>

(The appellant observes that for three weeks her husband had complained of this stomach pain and that he attributed it solely to the vapours of the acid he used daily in the making of his stencils, of which he feared the consequences to the point of taking only bread for lunch in order to stifle the effects of these vapours, so that the appellant believes that she can only attribute the sudden death of her husband to the trade he was pursuing.)

Despite its sombre content, the deposition of Rougier's wife nevertheless re-confirms the use of etching by *faiseurs de caractères* at this time.

### *Encyclopédie méthodique*

Rougier's circumstances and their indication of his working methods, as well as the artefacts and documentary records of Jean Gabriel

79. Inventaire après décès, Marie Madeleine Ledoux, 2 septembre 1786, Paris, Archives nationales, MC/ET/LVIII/541. Savanne's full name, as given in the inventory, is Henri Joseph Benoît Savanne. The inventory records the property of his wife, which was held in shared ownership; consequently, several items associated with Savanne's trade are listed, thus: 'quatre demi douzaines de petites brosses à caractère, trois douzaines de petites boîtes de bois de buis remplies d'encre de la Chine ... cent feuilles de cuivre de différents caractères d'imprimerie et vignettes, vingt petites limes à évider des caractères' (four-and-a-half dozen small stencil brushes, three dozen small boxwood boxes filled with china ink ... one hundred brass sheets [i.e., stencil plates] with various [typographical] characters and vignettes, twenty small files for hollowing out the stencils).

80. Scellé après décès, Charles Rougier, 8 mars 1789, Paris, Archives nationales, Y//15403, p. 1 (fol. 1r). Rougier is also documented in the 'Inventaire après décès du Sr Rougier', MC/ET/C/924, 21 Mars 1789, though the inventory contains no listing of professional goods or materials. I am grateful to Alice Savoie and Laurent Guillo, respectively, for their assistance in obtaining copies of these documents in 2015 and 2019.

Bery, together provide testimony of the *faiseur de caractères* that is contemporary with a description of stencil-making published in the *Encyclopédie méthodique*, the project directed by the Paris publisher, Charles Joseph Panckoucke. That such a description is absent from the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and D'Alembert is notable and it is this absence that the later *Encyclopédie méthodique* makes good in the dictionary, *Arts et métiers mécaniques*, where a three-thousand-word article, 'Plaques de cuivre (art de faire des caractères en)', appears in volume six (1789), unattributed. Given the absence of a 'base' text in the original *Encyclopédie*, from which a revised or expanded article might have been generated (as was typical of many articles in *Arts et métiers mécaniques* and elsewhere in the *Encyclopédie méthodique*), 'Plaques de cuivre' appears to be an original text.<sup>81</sup>

After a short introduction, which describes these kinds of stencils and what they could be used for ('pour faire des titres de registres, ou des encadrements de billets, ou des caractères de lettres qui paroissent comme gravés ou burinés', i.e., for making titles for account books, or frames around cards/tickets, or letters that appear as engraved), the article is divided into three sections, 'Outils & autres choses nécessaires' (tools and other necessities), 'Modèles des plaques de cuivre pour chaque alphabet de hauteur' (Models of the brass plates for each height/size of alphabet) and 'Manière de procéder' (method of working). In the first section, the tools and materials required for the work are listed: in addition to the brass itself are twelve files, variously sized, that are round or 'rat tail' (*queue de rat*) in section, another twelve that are semi-round (*demi-ronde*) and one that is flat.<sup>82</sup> Two sizes of pricking tool (*piqueur*) are specified, each consisting of a needle inserted into a wood handle. Further tools and materials include scissors, a flat smooth piece of marble, a wood mallet, a ruler for measuring, a flat piece of brass folded in half for holding the stencil plates by their out-turned foot, and a ball of soot-blackened wax for coating the plates. Other 'choses nécessaires' relate to the letters (alphabets) to be made in twenty-four sizes, from one to twenty-four lignes in one-ligne increments.<sup>83</sup> For each of these, a template (*patron*; apparently a plain rectangular plate of some kind) could be prepared as a ready-guide to character height. Models for the letters should be printed on paper and separated by spaces of four lignes to be more easily cut apart and glued to blank plates, prior to cutting.<sup>84</sup> The recommended letter styles are capital and small romans, sloped (*penchée*) capitals, and numerals, in addition to vignettes and borders.

81. 'Plaques de cuivre (art de faire des caractères en)', *Encyclopédie méthodique. Arts et métiers mécaniques*, vol. 6, Paris: Panckoucke, and Liège: Plomteux, 1789, pp. 400–03. This volume was published in two parts; the volume containing 'Plaques de cuivre' was, in fact, completed in September 1790. The *Encyclopédie méthodique* is structured by knowledge areas; each area, such as *Arts et métiers mécaniques*, takes the form of a 'dictionary' (often in multiple volumes) that contains subject articles and associated vocabulary. The general editor of the eight volumes of *Arts et métiers mécaniques* was Jacques Lacombe; named contributors were Antoine Allut, Blanquart de Septfontaines, Nicolas Desmarest and Joseph Lalande. While the 'Discours final' in volume 8 (pp. 761–4) attributes some articles in *Arts et métiers mécaniques* to the named contributors, 'Plaques de cuivre' is not mentioned. As Schmitt notes, 'the exact attribution of a great number of articles [in *Arts et métiers mécaniques*] is impossible'. Stéphane Schmitt, 'Inventaire des livraisons, des auteurs et du contenu de l'*Encyclopédie méthodique* (1782–1832)', in *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie*, 2018/1, no. 53, pp. 207–70 (p. 226, n. 28). See also Kathleen Hardesty Doig, *From Encyclopédie to Encyclopédie méthodique: revision and expansion*, Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2013, especially chp 9, 'The mechanical arts', pp. 253–68. Among the illustrative plates published in eight volumes, covering *Arts et métiers mécaniques* and other areas, none relate to 'Plaques de cuivre'.

82. The author recommends acquiring the brass itself, in rolls, from Germany, and Hamburg specifically. Hamburg was at this time a centre for trade in copper, brass, and bronze, with numerous mills in the region.

83. As already mentioned, size or height refers to the height of the capitals. It is important to emphasise the article's consistent use of lignes to specify character heights, in light of the possible contemporary introduction of ligne size designations on stencil plates. As discussed above, the Pouillard trade card showing Bery letters (alphabets) also displays a

range of twenty-four sizes (see figure 19). However, as measured, this range only runs from (roughly) 1.6 to 10.6 lignes (3.5 to 24 mm) and in increments that vary randomly between nil and 0.9 ligne (see n. 68); in addition, the full range, not shown in the circular, probably included at least five additional sizes.

84. The text, 'on doit avoir en imprimé pour servir de modèles plusieurs sortes de caractères de différentes hauteurs' (p. 401), leaves some ambiguity as to whether these models were intended to be printing types.

The second section of the article, 'Modèles ...', sets out the recommended plate dimensions for each of the twenty-four sizes of alphabet; with three exceptions, plate sizes are different for each alphabet size.<sup>85</sup> The section continues with an explanation of how to anneal the plates and hammer them flat; the plates are further soaked in red vinegar diluted with water, removed, rubbed, rinsed, and dried. The text then abruptly shifts to a second method of acquiring models, in this case hand-drawn letters like those of *maîtres écrivains*; an (unnamed) book of examples by Rossignol and Roland is recommended.<sup>86</sup> Here, the letters can be traced using varnished (i.e., transparent) paper and the outlines pricked in order to transfer them to another sheet of white paper by means of pouncing. These are transferred, in turn, to the plates and then cut out. Vignette stencils could be made in the same way, with the production of polychromatic flower designs employing multiple registering plates described in detail. The latter involved cutting out a complete flower design from a single plate, then with this plate tracing onto other wax-blackened plates the various parts assigned to each colour and cutting these out in turn. A hole punched through the set of plates in the same place guided their alignment.

The third section of the article, 'Manière de procéder', returns to those letters for which printed models had been glued to the plate, as described in the first section, and relates in greater detail how these are actually cut out. The technique is more-or-less like that described by Des Billettes almost a century earlier: a hole is made with the pricking tool in the thickest part of the letter, the scissors are inserted and cutting is done outward and along the letter's edge; parts that the scissors can not reach, including the serifs, are formed and refined with the files. This process, with variations, is described for the letters I, S, and C, and adopted for making twenty-two of the twenty-four sizes; those letters that are one or two lignes in height must be made with files alone. The total number of alphabets thus generated in this way is seventy-two (i.e., twenty-four alphabets each of capital and small roman letters, and sloped capitals), plus the fifteen sizes of numerals. Some advice is given about *tenons*, the 'ties' or 'bridges' that hold together and strengthen parts of the stencil plate and produce breaks in the stencilled letter. They should be placed where they are least noticeable or obtrusive ('dans les endroits où ils embarrassent le moins'). The section ends with reference to making stencils carrying musical notes and, in some detail, how to form whole words.

The article, thus, in content is a mix of descriptions that are specific and detailed if also occasionally vague or apparently incomplete. Some aspects seem unduly programmatic, in particular the specification of the alphabet series, for which twenty-four sizes in one-ligne increments is surely unnecessary and excessive, at least in the upper part of the size range. In composition, the article's order of discussion lacks a degree of procedural logic, while shifts in the text and short single-sentence paragraphs suggest more a compilation of notes, perhaps hurriedly assembled, than a considered and well-edited treatise.<sup>87</sup> There is also a question about the author's full awareness of then-current stencil-making practices. This is nowhere more the case than in the absence of etching from the description,

85. That is to say, twenty-one different plate sizes are specified for the twenty-four alphabet sizes; only three alphabets share the same plate size.

86. Louis Rossignol (1694–1739) and his pupil André-François Roland (1720–92), both active in Paris. Their work was presented together in *L'Art d'écrire contenant une collection des meilleurs exemplaires d'après Messieurs Rossignol et Roland, experts écrivains vérificateurs*, Paris: Daumont, c. 1756. Roland was later a member of the Bureau académique d'Écriture, inaugurated in 1779 as successor to the Académie royale d'Écriture. It may be relevant to the article's specification of alphabets in series of twenty-four sizes (and, in turn, to the article's possible attribution) that the Bureau consisted of twenty-four members, twenty-four adjuncts (*agregés*) and twenty-four associates (*associés*).

87. This could tally with the well-documented publishing history of the *Encyclopédie méthodique*, which was beset by difficulties and chronic delays that became especially acute in the later 1780s and after. See George B. Watts, 'The *Encyclopédie Méthodique*', *PMLA*, vol. 73, no. 4, Sep. 1958, pp. 348–66, *passim*.



a technique probably introduced to stencil-making some decades earlier, and which by the 1780s had reached a considerable degree of sophistication, as illustrated by the work of Jean Gabriel Bery. That at least one author was aware of the technique of stencil etching ten years earlier and could describe it accurately is demonstrated by Le Pileur d'Apligny (discussed above).<sup>88</sup> The conclusion drawn, therefore, is that while the article in *Encyclopédie méthodique* is undoubtedly important as an early published description of stencil-making of this kind, it nevertheless seems compromised by falling short of an entirely clear and comprehensive account.\*

#### Pierre Denis Hertelle

Returning to the contemporaries of Bery, his successor Pierre Denis Hertelle continued in business on the Pont-Neuf for some two decades until his own death on 5 October 1807. Sometime prior to this date, Hertelle had encountered Hendrik Jansen, whose essay on the origins of engraving, published in 1808, includes an account of stencilling; in it, Hertelle makes a brief appearance:

Aujourd'hui M. Hertelle, dont l'atelier est sur le Pont-Neuf, et d'autres artistes méritent d'être distingués par leur talent en ce genre.<sup>89</sup>

(At the present time M. Hertelle, whose shop is on the Pont-Neuf, and other *artistes* are deserving of being singled out for their talent in this kind of work.)

An inventory for Hertelle was prepared some two weeks after his death at the request of his wife, Marie Louise Drapier (i.e., Bery), who (as indicated above) was also his step-sister.<sup>90</sup> The inventory describes Hertelle as a 'graveur de caractères' and is suggestive of the state of the business he had inherited from Jean Gabriel Bery, which he subsequently maintained through the years of revolution and their aftermath.

The listing of items at the shop encompasses goods and tools. The tools, which (as mentioned) are not listed in Bery's earlier inventory, are similar to those listed in the Malo inventory of 1754. They include compasses, a ruler, a vice, and a group of files, to which are added tweezers and a number of unidentified tools for working steel. Among the identified 'caractères' are some three dozen sets in a range of small sizes (from one to seven lignes); it is not clear if these are stencils, though the ligne measure may indicate that they are. Their description distinguishes them from numerous sets of 'caractères anciens', some of old brass, though again it is not possible to deduce their precise identity or determine whether they were 'ancien' in some way other than being made of old brass. Also present are 'caractères' whose sizes are stated in *points* (from eight to twelve), and which, despite their description as caractères, may have typographical associations. In any case – and taking into account the uncertain identity of many items – Hertelle's inventory documents a business that had undergone contraction: the sets of stencils (alphabets) in his possession were, in number, significantly fewer than were tallied in 1786; the same is true of the itemised vignettes, where Hertelle's stock was (roughly) one-fifth of Bery's. The numbers of buttons, however, were identical in both inventories and the number of brushes nearly so.

88. The article's description of the use of blackened wax to coat the brass plates may be, in part, a 'residue' of an unmentioned etching process, since its use in the article for scribing outlines in the production of polychromatic flower designs requiring multiple plates is equivalent to the use of (blackened) wax as an etch ground.

\* One additional observation should be made, namely that the article entirely omits reference to stencil use in religious contexts and specifically in the production of liturgical books, probably the most common use of stencils in France throughout the eighteenth century.

89. Hendrik Jansen, *Essay sur l'origine de la gravure en bois et en taille-douce, et sur la connaissance des estampes des xv<sup>e</sup> et xvi<sup>e</sup> siècles*, vol. 2, Paris: F. Schoell, 1808, pp. 39–40. Hertelle is mentioned at the end of Jansen's account, which is mostly derived from Gotthelf Fischer, 'Über ein in der Mainzer Universitätsbibliothek befindliches durch Blech geschriebenes Chorbuch', *Beschreibung einiger typographischer Seltenheiten ...*, vol. 3 (1801), Nürnberg: Joh. Leonh. Sixt. Lechner, 1800–04, pp. 139–60. Jansen was a Dutch writer and translator living in Paris; he was also librarian to Talleyrand. His use of the word 'artistes' may be significant in placing Hertelle and other faiseurs or graveurs de caractères in this category; see discussion above (n. 54), in relation to Bresson de Maillard.

90. 'Inventaire après décès du Sr Hertelle', 21 Octobre 1807, Paris, Archives nationales, MC/ET/XCVII/651. I am grateful to Alice Savoie for her help in obtaining a copy of this document in 2015 and assisting with its transcription. Hertelle and Marie Louise Drapier were probably married sometime prior to November 1791 when their daughter, Marie Louise Anne Hertelle, was born, as stated in the inventory. Hertelle and Drapier/Bery may have married, at least in part, to consolidate their joint inheritance of the estate of Jean Gabriel Bery. The inventory gives Hertelle's address as Pont-Neuf, no. 9, i.e., one of the two addresses on the bridge occupied by Jean Gabriel Bery at the time of his death. Clearly, at some point after succeeding to Bery's business, Hertelle relinquished the second address, no. 15.

### Dénouement to the eighteenth century

Sometime after Hertelle's death in 1807, his business at Pont-Neuf, no. 9, came into the possession of M. Récordon, whose prior activities are not known. Récordon continued leasing the shop, which had no doubt become a familiar sight to those regularly crossing the bridge. In 1820, in the *Almanach du commerce de Paris*, he is included in the section, 'Graveur en caractères d'imprimerie', indicating that like his predecessors he also practised typographical punchcutting.<sup>91</sup> The shop is mentioned four years later in *Voyage autour du Pont-Neuf*, a light-hearted perambulation around the bridge and its environs by the writer, playwright, bookseller, and publisher, Imbert.<sup>92</sup> His account evokes Récordon's business in picturesque terms and is worth quoting at length:

Le personnage le plus remarquable de ce territoire contesté, c'est sans contredit M. Récordon, successeur de sieur Berry [*sic*], lequel était successeur de M. Hertelle,<sup>93</sup> fabricant de caractères, qui tient sa boutique entre *la Providence* et *le Bien-venu*.<sup>94</sup> M. Récordon improvise sur le cuivre et sur le fer-blanc avec autant de succès que la fameux signor Sgricci.<sup>95</sup> On le voit composer des alphabets de toutes les tailles; son état est lucratif, et sous ses heureuses mains le cuivre devient or.

(The most remarkable character in this disputed territory is, unquestionably, M. Récordon, successor to M. Berry, who himself succeeded M. Hertelle [*sic*], *fabricant de caractères*, and who keeps his shop between *la Providence* and *le Bien-venu*. M. Récordon improvises on brass and tinplate with as much success as the famous Signor Sgricci. One can see him compose alphabets of all sizes; his business is profitable, and in his hands brass turns into gold.)

After describing a particular kind of work done by Récordon (cutting stencils for posters), the author sketches a scene of the stencil-maker at work.

Le jeune commis, nouvellement admis à la tenue des livres, vient aussi chez M. Récordon chercher le caractère qui doit suppléer à son expérience et à son incapacité pour la *bâtarde*. C'est un tableau digne des pinceaux d'un Rembrandt, que l'intérieur de M. Récordon, embelli de tous effets du clair-obscur. Assis lui-même, le pinceau et le ciseau à la main, devant son établi, cet industriel graveur, qui ne reçoit la lumière du jour qu'au travers de sinuosités des Z, des Y et des *etc.* appliqués sur ses vitres, accueille, avec toute l'affabilité de l'artiste, ceux qui recourent à ses talents. Ah! monsieur de C...., qui n'avez plus de caractère; ah! monsieur de P...., qui n'en avez jamais eu, venez vous en fournir chez M. Récordon. Et vous, monsieur V...., qui menacez d'en changer, et vous, monsieur de M...., qui en avez un si gothique, de grâce, arrêtez-vous un moment, en allant au faubourg Saint-Germain, à la boutique de Pont-Neuf.<sup>96</sup>

(The young clerk, newly hired for keeping the books, also comes to M. Récordon to collect the stencil that will compensate for his inexperience and his inability to write in the *bâtarde* style. M. Récordon's interior, embellished under the effects of chiaroscuro, offers a scene worthy of Rembrandt's brushes. Himself seated, brush and chisel/scissor in hand, facing his workbench, this skilful and diligent engraver, who receives daylight only through the curves of the Zs, the Ys, and the *etc.* that are applied to his windows, welcomes those who use his talents with all of the affability of the artist. Ah! Monsieur de C...., who has run out of

91. *Almanach du commerce de Paris*, Paris: Au Bureau de l'Almanach du Commerce, 1820, p. 598.

92. Rossignol Passe-Partout [Jean-Baptiste Auguste Imbert], *Voyage autour du Pont-Neuf, et promenade sur le quai aux fleurs*, Paris: Auguste Imbert, 1824, pp. 7–9. The translation that follows is by Alice Savoie. I am indebted to Sébastien Morlighem for bringing this book to my attention.

93. The order of succession has been mistakenly transposed.

94. 'La Providence' and 'le Bien-venu' may be the names of shops on either side of Récordon's. However, immediately prior to the account of Récordon, the author also describes the establishment of shops on the Pont-Neuf in 1775 as 'entre': 'Les boutiques du Pont-Neuf, placés entre les deux rives de la Seine, se sont tenus aussi éloignés du faste des détaillans du faubourg Saint-Germain que du luxe des rues Saint-Honoré et Richelieu.' (The shops of the Pont-Neuf, placed between the two banks of the Seine, were as far removed from the splendor of the retailers of the Faubourg Saint-Germain as the luxury of the streets Saint-Honoré and Richelieu.) The shops are further depicted as dimly lit booths (*baragues*), though their modest wares were nevertheless offered by merchants said to be satisfied and proud of their situation. Rossignol Passe-Partout, *Voyage autour du Pont-Neuf...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 5–7.

95. Tommaso Sgricci (1789–1836), *improvisatore*, famed at this time 'for theatrical performances in which he extemporized lyric poems as well as entire Classical dramas'. Angela Esterhammer, 'Improvisational Aesthetics: Byron, the Shelley Circle, and Tommaso Sgricci', *Romanticism on the Net*, no. 43, August 2006.

96. The last two sentences of this quotation play on the word 'caractère' (stencil) to also mean 'character', i.e., one's personal qualities, disposition, or temperament.

stencil[s]; ah! Monsieur de P..., who has never owned any, M. Récordon will provide some for you. And you, Monsieur V..., who is threatening to swap for different ones, and you, Monsieur de M..., who owns a *gothique* one, I beg you to stop for a moment at the shop on the Pont-Neuf on your way to the Faubourg Saint-Germain.)



Figure 21. Trade card of M. Trémery, 52 × 88 mm (approx.). Whereabouts not known.

Récordon continued in business until the mid 1830s when the shop was acquired by M. Trémery, who by the late 1820s was already active in Paris as a ‘graveur en caractères à jour’, the designation by which stencilmakers were now generally known and would continue to be for many decades. His trade card from around this time lists his services: ‘gravure de caractères à jour, vignettes, chiffres, cachets, timbres, composteurs, plaques de porte, etiquettes de clefs, etc. Véritable rouille perfectionnée pour marquer le linge’ (engraver of letter, vignette, and numeral stencils, seals, stamps, perforators, door plates, key checks, and so on. Original ink-paste perfected for marking linen) (figure 21). Trémery was aware of the age of his shop, as elsewhere on the card he sought to distinguish himself from a second stencilmaker (Jacob) now installed at Pont-Neuf, no. 3: ‘Ne pas confondre cet ancien Etablissement avec un autre qui est sur le même pont’ (Do not confuse this venerable establishment with another that is on the same bridge). Among other stencilmakers active in Paris in the 1830s, only Leleu, still at work in rue Dauphine, could claim a start in the years before the Revolution. Trémery traded from Pont-Neuf, no. 9, until at least 1851, the last year he is listed at that address in the Paris directory, *Annuaire général du commerce*, and it was during these years that the shop was captured in a panoramic daguerriotype of the bridge and its surroundings (figure 22). By the mid 1850s, the shop, along with others on the bridge, had been demolished to create the Pont-Neuf as it is seen today. With its demise, what was probably the last stencil-making business of the eighteenth century disappeared from the Paris scene.



Figure 22. View of the Pont-Neuf, showing ‘Fabrique de caractères No. 9’; details from ‘Panorama: le Pont-Neuf, le Louvre et le quai de la Mégisserie’, daguerriotype panoramique inversé (re-inverted here to right-reading), c. 1845–50. Musée Carnavalet, Paris, PH 1827. The photographer is recorded as ‘anonymous’; the plate carries the maker’s mark of Noël-Marie-Paymal Lerebours.



### Retrospect

A look back at the episodes of stencil-making in Paris described in this study, and the documented circumstances of stencilmakers active there, provides an opportunity to summarise such work as it was pursued over the course of the eighteenth century. Given the fragmentary evidence so far assembled, any summary will be provisional but worth attempting nonetheless. This ‘retrospect’ offers observations in three areas: naming, technique, and entrepreneurial profiles.

Titles, designations, and descriptors assigned to or adopted by stencilmakers during this period are indicative or suggestive of their work. Specific instances do not occur until they are located in texts and documents linked to known stencilmakers; the earliest of these are (presently) found in the 1740s. Malo, known consistently as a ‘graveur’, added precision to this designation by appending ‘en caractères’; differently, in the ‘adresse’ cited by Breitkopf, Malo named himself as a ‘faiseur de caractères’, as did his contemporary, Legrand. Prior to Malo and Legrand, both Des Billettes and Dumas – as observers rather than makers – appear unaware of a name for stencilmakers, referring only to ‘ouvriers’. Bresson de Maillard, and later Bery and the stencilmakers in his milieu, also describe themselves variously as ‘graveur’ and ‘faiseur’ (and Bresson de Maillard, uniquely, as ‘découpeur’), appending reference to the objects made, ‘caractères’ and ‘vignettes’, and in Bery’s case, implying such items by reference to the materials employed, ‘cuivre’ and ‘acier’. Yet such descriptions were apparently still not in general use even in the latter part of the eighteenth century, at least as demonstrated by Le Pileur d’Apligny (1779), who, like Des Billettes and Dumas, refers only to ‘ouvriers’; similarly, the *Encyclopédie méthodique* (1790) does not assign a name to stencilmakers (they are not even mentioned), while the title of its stencil-making article, ‘Plaques de cuivre (art de faire des caractères en)’, is essentially descriptive – though ‘plaques de cuivre’, like ‘caractères en cuivre’, does serve as a quasi-proper name for stencils. By the early nineteenth century, the durable ‘graveur en caractères’ appears to have become the settled designation, to which was eventually added the unambiguous ‘à jour’, perhaps under the impetus of Paris commercial directories, which needed to distinguish between the several engraving specialisms in their listings. In so doing, the naming of stencils was also effectively settled, where ‘à jour’ would be consistently appended to ‘caractères’ (and to a lesser extent ‘plaques’ and ‘vignettes’) to indicate stencils, while also making redundant (more or less) the modifier ‘de/en cuivre’ and the verbs ‘percer’, ‘vuider’ and ‘découper’, which had previously served to invoke them.

Stencil-making technique, as surveyed across the period of this study, also allows for summary observations. Evidence of consistency is nowhere clearer than in the connections found between Des Billettes’s description of stencil-making compiled in late 1690s and the stencil-making article published in the *Encyclopédie méthodique* nearly a century later. In both sources, the technique – scissor-cutting – while different in some preliminaries, is otherwise essentially the same, including the use of files for refining shapes. Filing, indeed, appears to be a feature of stencil-making consistent among

all eighteenth-century techniques so far recorded, including etching. The latter, however, unlike scissor-cutting, appears to demonstrate an expansion of technique, though caution must be exercised since it is not yet possible to state when etching became widely used by stencilmakers. Artefacts associated with Huygens' stencil-duplicating experiments of the 1660s, which include an etched stencil plate, locate the technique to an early date. But *Des Billettes* makes no mention of etching in the 1690s and only at the end of the 1770s does *Le Pileur d'Apligny* describe it explicitly. Yet the detail and relative clarity of her description indicates a well-established technique and other clues suggest its use already some decades earlier. These include the appearance of elaborate and finely detailed decorated letters and vignettes (in the form of stencils, and as stencilled in books and elsewhere), and romans and italics in increasingly small sizes, for which etching was probably the only viable means of cutting. And if growth in the popularity of stencilling is postulated across the eighteenth century, then etching would be most capable of delivering increases in production volume through the simultaneous cutting of multiple plates. At present, scissor-cutting and etching are the two techniques confirmed by sources (and artefacts) during this period, though other techniques such as chisel-cutting were possibly also employed, as well as hybrid techniques such as etching combined with graving. Techniques leading to the mass production of stencils – die-cutting and mechanical die-stamping – would not be introduced until the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

Entrepreneurial profiles of stencil-making, where these can be discerned, add texture to a summary. As this study has stated, almost nothing is presently known about early (that is to say, seventeenth century) stencil-making in Paris – indeed, if it was even an identifiably independent activity or instead a subset of skills circumscribed by a parent trade, namely engraving. But as stencilled works (liturgical books, in particular) appear to become more prevalent, and as their stencilled matter becomes more complex and comprehensive (no longer limited to plainchant notation and text in one or two sizes but instead incorporating a wider range of text sizes, initials and titling, and some or all decorative matter), it is plausible to assert greater stencil-making activity and confirm an expansion of the stencilmaker's repertoire. This repertoire, on the evidence of survivals, was deployed for secular works as well, with the range of customers growing accordingly to include anyone who wanted to produce for themselves a variety of graphic documents incorporating expert form captured by stencils. The entrepreneurial profile of a maker such as Bresson de Maillard suggests this shift. While counting 'maisons religieuses' among his customers, his advertisements – judging by their content and by the journals in which they appeared – were surely intended for a general public, including women and (by extension) children, to whom stencilling was presented as an amusing pastime. He also addressed himself to specialist stencillers ('people who want to compose books of the general and specific Offices with stencil letters, and who wish that these books be ornamented with attributes and cartouches in the latest style'), some of whom probably served religious organisations but were not members of them. Bresson de



Maillard's profile is equally illustrative of disposition, where, as a 'graveur', stencil-making was situated on an entrepreneurial spectrum that extended to the production and sale of a considerable range of engraved and coloured works, including books, which he published, and that this end of the spectrum became more important as his career progressed. Bery, by contrast, exhibits a seemingly variant profile, where, as a 'faiseur', stencil-making comprised the principal part of his business and was situated on a spectrum that extended in a different direction, in his case to typographical punchcutting, and die-cutting and -sinking. While it is possible only to speculate on the customers Bery sought out – no advertisements placed by him have been discovered, though the Pouillard trade card is suggestive – his impressive specimen sheet, as well as the trade card, the former with its inventive titling styles and both with their finely graduated romans, appear to be presentations designed to appeal to specialist stencillers and their particular demands as much as to a general public. Like Bresson de Maillard, Bery may have addressed himself to customers both in Paris and further afield, including provincial merchants; his inclusion of 'à Paris' in his specimen sheet implies this. Whether or not this was true of other stencilmakers, and indeed whether the entrepreneurial profiles of Bery and Bresson de Maillard were typical or exceptional, remains unclear.

Whatever may be the case, in the profiles of Bresson de Maillard, Bery, and their peers, in the evidence of naming and technique, and in the assembly and analysis of documents and artefacts, it is possible to confirm aspects of stencil-making practice in eighteenth-century Paris, tendencies among stencilmakers, the general identity of those who purchased stencils and used them, and much else. The representation thus arrived at, while self-evidently incomplete, illustrates much about the work and those who did it, and the place and presence of stencil-making in Paris at this time.

## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Advertisements and notices of Louis Bresson de Maillard, 1744–82

The advertisements and notices listed below, which appear over a period of more than three-and-a-half decades in mainly French-language publications, demonstrate Louis Bresson de Maillard's career-long efforts to make his commercial activities publicly known. While the side-bars employed by *Suite de la Clef* provide titles for the advertisements that appear there, other publications give no such titles. In many instances, Bresson de Maillard's advertisements take a consistent form, in which he is named, a professional description is given and patrons are listed, before a description is set out of the kinds of articles he made, sometimes with an explanation of how they could be used. Early advertisements tend to feature stencils and their varied applications, while later ones increasingly give notice of his publishing activities (books or engravings); many repeatedly refer to Bresson de Maillard's inventions or to his inventiveness. Among the inventions he announced towards the end of his career were an indelible ink (*liqueur*) for utilitarian kinds of clothes marking and, remarkably, in 1782, in *Mercure de France*, the so-far earliest known stencils configured as 'settable-units', thus: 'Alphabets à jour disposés de façon à pouvoir placer deux différentes lettres à côté l'une de l'autre dans une espèce de coulisse, & que l'on peut transposer d'une manière aisée & très-expéditive' (stencil alphabets arranged in such a way that two different letters can be placed next to each other in a kind of slide, and which can be transposed in an easy and very expeditious way); see Eric Kindel, 'Patents progress: the Adjustable Stencil', *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*, new series, no. 9, 2006, pp. 65–92.

This listing should not be taken as exhaustive, as it has not been possible to search all years of some journals, such as *L'Avant-coureur*, where Bresson de Maillard regularly advertised.

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| 1744 Maillard [sic], 'Avis sur une invention utile', <i>Suite de la Clef, ou journal historique sur les matières du tems</i> , vol. 56, Novembre 1744, pp. 333–5 | 1761 Bresson de Maillard, <i>L'Avant-coureur</i> , 1761, no. 12, Lundi 23 Mars, pp. 184–5  |
| 1747 De Bresson [sic], <i>Mercure de France</i> , Juin 1747, p. 117  | 1761 Bresson de Maillard, <i>L'Avant-coureur</i> , 1761, no. 44, Lundi 2 Novembre, pp. 698–9   |
| 1750 Bresson de Maillard, <i>Mercure de France</i> , Juin 1750, pp. 206–07   | 1763 Bresson de Maillard, <i>L'Avant-coureur</i> , 1763, no. 33, Lundi 13 Août, pp. 523–4  |
| 1752 Bresson de Maillard, 'Vignettes & Caractères', <i>Suite de la Clef</i> , vol. 71, Janvier 1752, pp. 52–3  | 1763 Bresson de Maillard, <i>L'Avant-coureur</i> , 1763, no. 51, Lundi 19 Décembre, pp. 812–14   |
| 1752 Bresson de Maillard, 'Vignettes du sieur Bresson de Maillard', <i>Suite de la Clef</i> , vol. 72, Décembre 1752, pp. 431–2                                  | 1764 Bresson de Maillard, <i>Mercure de France</i> , Janvier 1764, pp. 208–10  |
| 1753 Maillard de Bresson [sic], 'Vignettes & caractères', <i>Suite de la Clef</i> , vol. 73, Décembre 1753, p. 431   | 1764 Bresson de Maillard, 'Auch Kleinigkeiten in der Kunst verdienen eine Anzeige. Hr. Bresson de Maillard verkauft Kupferstiche von Zeichnungen zu Vignetten ...', <i>Neue Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste</i> , vol. 11, no. 2, 1764, p. 346 |
| 1754 Maillard de Bresson [sic], 'Vignettes & Sentences', <i>Suite de la Clef</i> , vol. 76, Novembre 1754, pp. 347–8   | 1766 Bresson de Maillard, 'Mr. Bresson de Maillard verkauft Vignetten in Kupfer ...', <i>Neue Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste</i> , vol. 13, no. 1, 1766, p. 365   |
| 1755 Maillard de Bresson [sic], 'Vignettes & Etrennes', <i>Suite de la Clef</i> , vol. 77, Janvier 1755, p. 36   | 1768 Maillard [sic], <i>L'Avant-coureur</i> , 1768, no. 23, Lundi 6 Juin, pp. 355–6  |
| 1755 Maillard [sic], 'Vignettes & Caractères', <i>Suite de la Clef</i> , vol. 77, May 1755, p. 400   | 1769 Bresson de Maillard, <i>Affiches, Annonces, et Avis Divers. Trente-cinquieme Feuille hebdomadaire</i> , Mercredi 30 Août 1769, p. 139   |
| 1756 Maillard de Bresson [sic], 'Caractères & Desseins', <i>Suite de la Clef</i> , vol. 79, Janvier 1756, p. 71  | 1769 Maillard de Bresson [sic], <i>Mercure de France</i> , Janvier 1769, p. 188  |
| 1756 Maillard [sic] <i>Mercure de France</i> , Janvier 1756, p. 233  | 1770 Bresson de Maillard, <i>Affiches, Annonces, et Avis Divers. Trente-troisieme Feuille hebdomadaire</i> , Mercredi 15 Août 1770, p. 131   |
| 1757 Maillard [sic], <i>Mercure de France</i> , Avril 1757, pp. 210–11   |  |
| 1758 Maillard [sic], <i>Mercure de France</i> , Mars 1758, pp. 213–14  |  |
| 1759 Maillard [sic], <i>Mercure de France</i> , Juillet 1759, pp. 211–12   |  |
| 1760 Bresson de Maillard, 'Nouvelles Etrennes & Estampes', <i>Suite de la Clef</i> , vol. 88, Décembre 1760, p. 440  |  |



- 1770 Bresson de Maillard, *L'Avant-coureur*, 1770, no. 1, Lundi 1 Janvier, p. 7
- 1770 Bresson de Maillard, *L'Avant-coureur*, 1770, no. 3, Lundi 15 Janvier, p. 34
- 1770 Bresson de Maillard, *L'Avant-coureur*, 1770, no. 33, Lundi 13 Août, p. 514
- 1770 Bresson de Maillard, *L'Avant-coureur*, 1770, no. 41, Lundi 8 Octobre, p. 645
- 1770 Bresson de Maillard, *L'Avant-coureur*, 1770, no. 52, Lundi 24 Décembre, p. 819
- 1770 Bresson de Maillard, *Mercure de France*, Octobre 1770, pp. 166–7
- 1771 Bresson de Maillard, 'Cadran de l'Amitié', *L'Avant-coureur*, 1771, no. 3, 21 Janvier, pp. 35–6
- 1771 Bresson de Maillard, *Affiches, Annonces, et Avis Divers. Quatorzième Feuille hebdomadaire*, Mercredi 3 April 1771, p. 131
- 1771 Bresson de Maillard, *L'Avant-coureur*, 1771, no. 51, Lundi 23 Décembre, p. 816
- 1772 Bresson de Maillard, 'Ornemens en fleurs, peints sur un fond préparé, & ensuite déposés sur les glaces', *Almanach général des Marchands, Négocians & Commerçans de la France et de l'Europe*, Paris, 1772, p. 612
- 1776 Bresson de Maillard, 'Dessins en cuivre évidé', *Suite de la Clef*, vol. 120, Octobre 1776, p. 319
- 1779 Bresson Maillard [sic], 'Liqueur pour imprimer des caractères sur le Linge', *Journal de littérature, des sciences et des arts*, vol. 3, no. 13, 1779, p. 285
- 1779 Bresson Maillard [sic], 'Liqueur pour imprimer des caracteres sur le linge', *L'esprit des journaux, français et étrangers*, Juin 1779, p. 349
- 1781 Bresson-Maillard [sic], 'Gravûre', *Journal de littérature, des sciences et des arts*, vol. 4, 1781, pp. 223–4
- 1782 Bresson Maillard [sic], *Mercure de France*, Samedi 4 Mai 1782, p. 45

## Appendix B

### Selected advertisements of Louis Bresson de Maillard

The four advertisements transcribed and translated below have been selected as representative or illustrative of the business of Louis Bresson de Maillard over the course of his working life.

1744. Maillard [sic], 'Avis sur une invention utile' (Notice of a useful invention), *Suite de la Clef, ou journal historique sur les matières du tems*, vol. 56, Novembre 1744, pp. 333–5. This advertisement is the earliest Bresson de Maillard is known

to have placed and is mentioned in later advertisements of June 1750 (*Mercure de France*) and January 1752 (*Suite de la Clef*).

Le Sieur Maillard donne avis au Public, qu'il fait différens ouvrages de desseins & de caractères, sur plaques de cuivre, découpées à jour. Ces ouvrages peuvent être utiles à bien des personnes, & servir d'amusement à d'autres. On peut en faire usage pour peindre sur la fayance plate, lorsqu'elle est en biscuit, & pour former les caractères des lettres que les Serruriers, Peintres & autres, peignent ou dessinent dans leurs ouvrages. Toutes sortes de desseins, ainsi que les lettres, étant découpés à jour, l'impression s'en fait sur le champ, & avec beaucoup de facilité, au moyen d'un pinceau de la grosseur du pouce, que l'on passe, après l'avoir humecté de noir ou de couleur, sur la planche de cuivre, ensorte que ceux qui ont du goût pour le dessein, peuvent au moyen de deux de ces planches, faire sur le champ un fleur, avec du carmin, ou du vermillon, si c'est une rose, & avec du verd de vessie pour les feuilles. Ces plaques seroient d'un grand secours aux Enlumineurs & aux Evantaillistes, pour faire les dos & les bordures des éventaill, puisqu'avec des planches, on peut ombrer, & donner ainsi aux fleur & à leurs feuilles toutes le nuances nécessaires.

Avec deux ou trois vignettes, on peut composer différentes sortes de bordures & de rosettes: il ne s'agit que de sçavoir les placer, & les arranger différemment. Ces vignettes, de même que les lettres, pourroient être

aussi fort utiles à ceux qui sont des ornemens avec l'or en feuilles, parce que la composition, qui sert à faire tenir cet or, & qui se met sur le papier ou sur le parchemin, s'employe & le couche très bien, par le moyen des plaques.

Avec les caractères ou Lettres, on parvient à former des mots & des lignes entières, en assemblant lettre à lettre: on les alligne aisément au moyen des points & des coches qui accompagnent chaque lettre, & qui guident pour les placer à une distance égale. Cette façon d'écrire est à la vérité un peu longue, mais on est dédommagé par la beauté du caractère, & elle ne sert que pour quelques mots, qu'on veut peindre plus proprement qu'à la plume; comme des étiquettes sur des boîtes; ou autres choses, des titres de Regîtres, ou les intitulés de chapitres de recette, de dépense, &c. On peut aussi faire avec ces caractères des lettres majuscules, des lettres à traits & à desseins & autres ornemens, comme des animaux de toute espèce: représenter une chasse, ou autres images, peu composées, auxquelles on se contenteroit de vouloir donner les nuances des enluminaires ordinaires. C'en est assez pour faire concevoir toute l'utilité des Plaques ou Planches de sieur Maillard, qui demeure à Paris, rue des vieilles Etuves S. Martin, chez le sieur le Maure, à l'Enseigne du petit Maure, au troisième étage sur le devant.

M. Maillard gives notice to the public that he makes different kinds of designs and characters on brass plates, which

are cut out. These works may be useful to many people and serve as amusement to others. They can be used to paint

on the faience plate, when it is *en biscuit* [i.e., unglazed], and to form the alphabet of letters that locksmiths, painters and others paint or draw in their works. All sorts of designs, as well as the letters, being cut to size, the impression is made forthwith and with great ease, by means of a one-inch thick brush, which one passes over the brass plate after having moistened it with black or colour [ink] ensuring that those who have a taste for design, can by means of two of these plates, make forthwith a flower, with carmine, or vermillion, if it is a rose, and with *verd de vessie* [i.e., dark yellow-green] for the leaves. These plates would be a great help to illuminators and fanmakers, to make the backs and the borders of the fans, since with these plates, one can [add] shading and give the flowers and their leaves all the necessary nuances.

With two or three *vignettes*, one can compose different kinds of borders and rosettes: you just have to know how to place them and arrange them variously. These vignettes, as well as the letters, could also be very useful for those who are ornamenting with gold leaf, because the binder, which serves to hold the gold, and which is placed on the

paper or parchment, can be used and laid down very well by means of the plates.

With the characters or letters, one is able to form words and whole lines, letter-by-letter: they are easily aligned by means of the dots and notches that accompany each letter, and which [serve as] guides for spacing them evenly. This way of writing is in truth a little slow, but one is compensated by the beauty of the letters, and it serves for a few words, which one wants to paint more neatly than with a pen; such as for labels on boxes; or other things, titles of registers, or headings for receipts, for expenditures, and so on. One can also make with these *caractères* capital letters, flourished letters, and designs and other ornaments, like animals of all kinds: representing a hunt, or other images, not very composed, to which one would be satisfied with giving the nuances of ordinary illuminations. This is enough for us to conceive of all the uses of the plates of M. Maillard, who lives in Paris, rue des vieilles Etuves Saint Martin, at M. le Maure's house, at the sign of the little Moor, on the third floor at the front.

1754. Maillard de Bresson [sic], 'Vignettes & Sentences', *Suite de la Clef*, vol. 76, Novembre 1754, pp. 347–8. This advertisement is notable for its mention of Pluche, i.e., Abbé Noël-Antoine Pluche, who several years earlier had published a second ('nouvelle') edition of his *Le spectacle de la nature*, in which he included a section titled 'Écriture'.<sup>97</sup>

Le Sr. Maillard de Bresson, Graveur & Peintre en Caractère & en Vignettes, qui demeure cour des Celestins à l'Arsenal, à Paris, continue de débiter ses ouvrages & d'en faire des envois, tant aux Marchands de Province qu'aux Maisons Religieuses; on trouve chez lui des feuilles de Sentences sacrées, des prières en forme de croix très-proprement emblumées: il s'est appliqué d'une manière particulière à personnifier les sujets des devises & de quelques fables qu'il vend gravées, & qui sont enchassées dans des vignettes de sort bon goût. Elles peuvent être d'un grand secours pour les jeunes enfans, qui ayant besoin d'idées, en trouveront de très agréables dans les gravures qui accompagnent, ou les fables ou les devises. Ces enfans y verront un loup, un renard, & d'autres animaux bien dessinés, & ces figures accompagnées de quelques vers choisis des fables, forment un ensemble instructif & amusant. Ceci rentre assez dans les vûes de Mrs. Rollin & Pluche,

There, writing with stencils ('Les caractères à jour') is given as the second of four writing methods (handwriting is the first, engraving and typographical printing the third and fourth, respectively). Pluche briefly describes the stencilling of letters, words, and texts and links it to monastic practices.

qui conseillent de captiver l'attention des enfans par ces artifices. On jugera de ces ouvrages par cette vignette que nous allons décrire: on aperçoit sur le bord d'un parterre rempli des fleurs, une Religieuse qui médite avec un livre à la main: dans le lointain est sa retraite & son Couvent: sur le devant sont deux caisses avec des fleurs. Toute cette gravure délicate sert d'ame à ces vers:

Brillantes fleurs de la saison nouvelle  
Cesses de paroître à mes yeux,  
Vous rendes la terre trop belle;  
Je ne veux aimer que les Cieux.

M. Maillard vend toujours des caractères de lettres de vignettes, des couleurs, des pinceaux & tout l'assortiment qu'une personne qui voudroit se livrer à des amusemens aussi innocens pourroit souhaiter.

M. Maillard de Bresson, engraver and painter in *caractère* and *vignettes*, who lives at the court of the Celestins at the Arsenal, in Paris, continues to make his works and send them to merchants in the provinces as well as to religious houses; one finds at his place leaves of holy sayings, prayers in the form of a cross very appropriately illuminated: he has applied himself in a particular way to personify the subjects of the mottos and of some fables which he sells engraved, and which are set in tasteful vignettes. They can be a great help for young children, who need ideas, and will find some very pleasant ones in the engravings that accompany them, or the fables or mottos. These children

will see a wolf, a fox, and other well drawn animals, and these figures, accompanied by a few verses chosen from the fables, form an instructive and amusing set. This fits quite well with *sieurs* Rollin and Pluche's advice to catch children's attention with these tricks. These works will be judged by this vignette which we will describe: on the edge of a garden filled with flowers, one can see a nun meditating with a book in her hand: in the distance is her retreat and her convent: on the front are two boxes with flowers. The whole of this delicate engraving serves as the soul of these verses:

97. (Abbé) Noël-Antoine Pluche, 'Écriture', *Le spectacle de la nature, ou entretiens sur les particularités de l'histoire naturelle, qui ont paru les plus propres à rendre les jeunes-gens curieux, & à leur former*

*l'esprit*, second ('nouvelle') edition, vol. 7 ('contenant ce qui regarde l'homme en société'), Paris: La veuve Estienne & fils, 1747 (1732), pp. 183–4.



Bright flowers of the new season.  
Cease appearing in my eyes,  
You render the earth too beautiful;  
I want only to love the Heavens.

1764. Bresson de Maillard, *Mercur de France*, Janvier 1764, pp. 208–10. This advertisement provides a view of Bresson de Maillard's business in the years following his relocation to the rue Saint-Jacques and his use of the trade designation, 'marchand d'estampes'. While stencils remain first in

M. Maillard still sells letter stencils, vignette stencils, colours, brushes and everything else that a person who wants to indulge in such innocent amusements could wish for.

his listing of merchandise, prints are now positioned more prominently and his wife's contribution to the business is mentioned. Importantly, the advertisement ends with a listing of provincial merchants who Bresson de Maillard supplied.

Le Sieur Bresson de Maillard, Marchand d'Estampes, & Privilégié des Enfans de France, en ouvrages de Caractères, Desseins, Vignettes, demeurant rue S. Jacques, Maison de M. de Lambon, Avocat, proche M. Duchesne, Marchand Libraire à Paris, tient un assortiment de Caractères, Vignettes, & de différentes Fleurs, qu'il a dessinées d'après nature, & exécutées sur des Planches de cuivre, avec lesquelles on peut, avec facilité & sur le champ, faire divers Desseins pour meubles, &c.

Ledit Sieur exécute pareillement à jour nombre d'autres ouvrages utiles, & d'une même facilité dans l'usage, comme des Adresses, Alphabets [*sic*] pour apprendre les Enfans à lire, Notes, Etiquettes, Noms à laisser en visite, ou pour mettre sur les Livres, Marques & Chiffres, Desseins au simple trait pour broder ou peindre d'après.

Il tient aussi un assortiment de toutes sortes de Papiers peints en Vignettes, & entreprend de noter les Livres de Plein-chant.

Il grave aussi en Taille-douce des Adresses avec les attributs des différentes Professions, & autres sujets.

L'Epouse de Sieur Maillard dessine & colore très-proprement les Fleurs, Emblèmes & Armoiries, Ecrans. Elle montre aux Dames la manière de se servir des Planches à jour, que l'on peut qualifier d'Art de dessiner & de peindre sans

*Maitre*; & fournit les Couleurs & autres choses qui y sont relatives.

On trouvera aussi chez ledit Sieur une suite assez considérable de petites Estampes en Emblèmes, Devises, Fables choisies, Prières, Bouquets & Souhais de bonnes Fêtes, *Etrennes brochées en forme de Calendrier, Emblématiques & Chantantes, pour la nouvelle Année, présentées au Enfans de France*.

Ceux qui desireront acheter & connoître plus particulièrement toutes lesdits Marchandises d'Estampes, Caractères & Desseins, & qui souhaiteront les vrais Originaux, s'adresseront directement à Paris au Sieur Maillard; & en Province à MM. les Libraires & Marchands d'Estampes qu'il fournit. Sçavoir,

A Lyon, M. Daudet.

Rouen, M. Frere, sur le Port.

Toulouse, M. Jouques, rue S. Rome.

Tours, M. Jagus, Marchand Papetier.

Poitiers, M. Fatoux.

Bordeaux, M. Noblet.

La Rochelle, M. Pavie, Marchand Libraire.

A Nantes, M. Tancrét.

Liege, M. Soer, Marchand Libraire.

Dijon, M. Desventes, Marchand Libraire.

M. Bresson de Maillard, print dealer, under privilege of the *Enfans de France*, in works of *caractères*, designs, vignettes, residing rue S. Jacques, house of M. de Lambon, lawyer, close to M. Duchesne, Paris bookseller, holds an assortment of *caractères*, vignettes, and various flowers, which he has designed from nature, and executed on brass plates, with which one can, with ease and forthwith, make various designs for furniture, and so on.

The said *sieur* executes in the same cut-out way a number of other useful works, and with the same ease of use, such as *adresses*, alphabets to teach children to read, notes, labels, visiting cards, or to put on books, *marques* and figures, line drawings to embroider or paint over.

He also holds an assortment of all kinds of decorated papers with vignettes and undertakes [to supply] notes for books of plainchant.

He also engraves in intaglio *adresses* with the attributes [i.e., iconography] of the different professions, and other subjects.

The wife of M. Maillard draws and colours very neatly flowers, emblems and coats of arms, and screens. She shows ladies how to use the stencils, which can be

described as the art of drawing and painting without a master; and provides colours and other related things.

One will also find at the [business of the] said *sieur* a rather considerable series of small prints comprised of emblems, devices, choice fables, prayers, bouquets and wishes for happy holidays, brocaded strings in the form of a calendar, emblematic and singing, for the new year, presented to the *Enfans de France*.

Those who wish to buy and get to know more particularly all the said prints, *caractères* and designs, and who wish for true originals, will address themselves in Paris to M. Maillard; and in the provinces to the booksellers and print dealers that he supplies. Thus,

in Lyon, M. Daudet.

Rouen, M. Frere, on the waterfront.

Toulouse, M. Jouques, rue S. Rome.

Tours, M. Jagus, paper merchant.

Poitiers, M. Fatoux.

Bordeaux, M. Noblet.

La Rochelle, M. Pavie, bookseller.

in Nantes, M. Tancrét.

Liege, M. Soer, bookseller.

Dijon, M. Desventes, bookseller.

1776. Bresson de Maillard, 'Dessins en cuivre évidé' (Designs in cut-out brass), *Suite de la Clef*, vol. 120, Octobre 1776, p. 319; translation by Alice Savoie. This advertisement provides a view of Bresson de Maillard's business in the

latter years of his professional life, demonstrating continuity in his offering of stencils for many uses, and in his larger assortment of works of graphic art. His daughter has also now joined his wife in contributing to the business.

Le sieur Bresson de Maillard, de l'Académie de Saint Luc, Graveur en divers ouvrages de cuivre évuidé, Dessinateur & Coloriste, avertit qu'il continue toujours d'exercer son Art à la satisfaction du Public. Il fait des Desseins très-agréablement composés pour meubles & vêtements, pour décorer les livres ou cahiers, de jolis cartels, des fleurs, des figures & autres ornemens de ce genre. Cet Artiste est aidé dans son travail par son épouse & par sa fille, qui colorent & dessinent parfaitement. Elles montrent au Dames à dessiner & à peindre des fleurs, des dessins, &c. Le Sieur Bresson tient un assortiment de petites estampes, d'emblèmes, de complimens d'étrennes, de bouquets, de

sentences & devises en lettres d'or & autres, de prières, de sonnets, billets de visite & d'invitation, &c. Le tout enjolivé avec gout. Les personnes qui voudront faire composer des Livres d'office propres & particuliers avec des caracteres à jour, & qui souhaiteront que ces Livres soient ornés d'attributs & de cartouches d'un goût nouveau, pourront aussi s'adresser à lui. Il les prie d'affranchir les Lettres qu'elles lui adresseront, sans quoi il n'y répondroit pas. Le Sieur Bresson-Maillard demeure actuellement maison d'un Marchand Limonadier, rue Saint Jacques, vis-à-vis la rue de la Parchemenie, à Paris.

M. Bresson de Maillard, of the Académie de Saint Luc, engraver of various works of cut-out brass, designer / draftsman and colourist, notifies that he continues to practice his Art to the satisfaction of the public. He makes designs that are very agreeably composed for furniture and clothing, for decorating books or notebooks, some pretty decorative frames, flowers, figures and other ornaments of this kind. This artist is assisted in his work by his wife and his daughter, who colour and draw perfectly. They show other ladies how to draw and paint flowers, designs, and so on. M. Bresson holds an assortment of small prints,

emblems, compliments of the new year, bouquets, sayings and devices in letters of gold and more, prayers, sonnets, visiting cards and invitations, and so on. The whole is tastefully embellished. People who want to compose books of the general and specific Offices with stencil letters, and who wish that these books be ornamented with attributes and cartouches in the latest style, can also contact him. He asks them to stamp their letters accordingly, otherwise he will not respond. M. Bresson-Maillard currently resides at the house of a *marchand Limonadier*, rue Saint Jacques, facing the rue de la Parchemenie, in Paris.

## Appendix C

### Known works associated with Bresson de Maillard

This listing should not be taken as exhaustive, as it is anticipated that further works will be located in due course. Approximate dates are assigned to undated works by means of correlation with addresses given in (dated) advertisements.

- 1768 *L'art d'écrire ...*, [François Nicolas] Bedigis, Paris: chez Butard ...; Bresson de Maillard, rue Saint Jacques, attendant l'Eglise des Mathurins; L'Auteur ..., 1768
- 1760s/70s. *Etrennes divertissantes ou Collection d'Historiettes agréables; Ornée de jolies gravures, qui ont rapport au sujet. Pour la présente année. Et se trouvent à Paris.* Chez Maillard de Bresson, rue S. Jacques, près la rue des Mathurins. [no date]
- 1760s/70s. 'Epithalame, Combat des deux sexes, Allegorie' [engraving]. Se vend à Paris, rue St. Jacques chez le Sr. Maillard, Md. aux armes de Bourgogne près l'Eglise des Mathurins. [no date]
- 1760s/70s. *Collection de differents sujets gravés sçavoir De petits Emblèmes, de Devises, de Fables, d'Enigmes, de Chansons choisies et d'historiette; De complimens pour le temps des étreñes, et pour les fêtes, enjolivés de cartouches et Ornemens disposés à pouvoir garnir des boîtes ou Ecrans; Assortimens d'autres sujets d'étrénne et de complimens, ou étrennes emblématiques et chantantes, pour être brochés avec Calendrier.* A Paris. Chez le Sr. Bresson de Maillard, de l'Académie de St. Luc. Graveur et Md. d'Estampes rue St. J. près celle des Mathurins. Avec Approbation et Privilège du Roi [1770]. [Bound with] *Collection de desseins servants*

- a plusieurs usages ...* [see following item]. Copy at Washington, DC, Library of Congress, N7740 .C57
- 1760s/70s. *Collection de desseins Servants à plusieurs usages. Sçavoir De différentes Fleurs, Dessinées d'après nature, Vases, Paniers et Guirlandes de Fleurs, et autres ornemens de décorations. Plusieurs Desseins d'enjolivements, de Boîtes et d'enveloppes pour Pastilles et autres Marchandises de Bijouteries, Plusieurs ornemens en forme de Cartouches, servants d'encadrement de divers sujets.* A Paris. Chez le Sr. Bresson de Maillard, de l'Académie de St. Luc. Graveur et Md. d'Estampes, rue St. Jacques, près celle des Mathurins. Avec Approbation et Privilège du Roi [1770]. [Bound with] *Collection de differents sujets gravés ...* [see previous item]. Copy at Washington, DC, Library of Congress, N7740 .C57
- 1775 'O Salutaris et Ave verum. Dessus. De la composition de Mr l'abbé Michel maitre de musique des enfans de chœur de St. Severin à Paris. Coloré par Bresson-Maillard graveur de l'Académie de Saint-Luc, et dessinateur, coloriste de la Cour en divers ouvrages de cuivre évuidé. A Paris rue S Jacques, près celle du Plâtre. 1775', Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, Ms. 6452

## Appendix D

## Inventory of goods and materials of Nicolas Antoine Malo, 1754

Extracted from 'Inventaire [après décès]', Nicolas Antoine Malo, 29 mai 1754, Paris, Archives nationales, MC/ET/XCVII/341, p. 4 (fol. 2v). Values in *livres tournoises* (lt.); 1 livre = 20 sols; 1 sol = 12 deniers.

Un petit établi de bois de chêne, deux moyens etaux, deux petits maillets de bois, une equerre et un compas de cuivre, un petit cizeau, une moyenne lime plate et une douzaine de tiers points et limes tant plattes que rondes, une ferre de cuivre etant dans l'un desdits etaux, prisé le tout ensemble huit livre	A small oak workbench, two medium-sized vices, two small wood mallets, a set square and a compass of brass, a small chisel, a medium-sized flat file and a dozen files of triangular section and files both flat and round, a copper bar placed in one of the above-listed vices, the whole valued at eight livre[s]	8 livres
Deux cent trente six alphabets en cuivre prisés à raison de vingt cinq sols l'alphabet	Two hundred and thirty-six brass alphabets valued at twenty-five sols per alphabet	295 lt.
Cent treize livres pezant de cuivre jaune en feuille prisé à raison de seize sols la livre	One hundred and thirteen pounds of brass in sheets valued at sixteen sols per pound	90 lt. 8 s.
		<b>393 lt. 8 s.</b>

## Appendix E

## Bery's receipted bill supplied to Benjamin Franklin, 1781

Receipted bill from Bery, dated 29 December 1781. Philadelphia, Library of the American Philosophical Society, Franklin Papers: Bache Collection, BF85.ba (item PH581p). Bery's handwritten text is transcribed verbatim. Values in *livres tournoises* (lt.); 1 livre = 20 sols; 1 sol = 12 deniers. Reference to 'caractère(s)' is understood to mean *sets* of characters (i.e., alphabets) that are stencils. The first and second items listed refer to sets 'No. 1' and 'No. 2', as annotated on Bery's specimen sheet (see figure 15); of the eleven sets of romans and italics, only nine sets survive; of the borders, only four were supplied, thus the overwritten correction ('6') in red. Reference to 'chiffres' and note of receipt ('Reçu le montant ...') were probably written by William Temple Franklin.

Monten des caraters fourni par bery a Son eclence le docleure flanklin Savoie	Sum total of characters supplied by Bery to his excellency Doctor Franklin, thus	
2 caracteres magescule	2 [sets of] capitals	16 lt.
2 dite a .. 12 lt	2 of the same at .. 12 lt	12
11 caractere len romint qui talique a 4 lt	11 [sets of] romans and italics at 4 lt [each]	44
2 caracteres de lettre arené	2 [sets of] ornamented letters	16
6 boredure a 1 lt 10 s	6 border[s] at 1 lt 10 s [each]	9 [overwritten as '6' in red]
4 baton dencre de la chine a 2 lt	4 stick[s] of china ink at 2 lt [each]	8
6 brosse a 12 s	6 brush[es] at 12 s [each]	3 12
poure la boîte	for the box	8
le biet de visite	visiting card	6
toto	total	122 lt 12 s
		3 [in red]
		119 lt 12 s [in red]
chiffres	numerals	8
		<b>120 0</b>
Reçu le montant a Passy le 29 Decembre 1781. [signed] Bery	Sum total received at Passy on 29 December 1781. [signed] Bery	



## Appendix F

## Inventory of goods and materials of Jean Gabriel Bery, 1786

Extracted from 'Inventaire du Sieur Jean Gabriel Bery', 24 Novembre 1786, Paris, Archives nationales, MC/ET/CXXI/507, pp. 9–12 (fols 5r–6v). The inventory locates items at Bery's business premises (shop), Pont-Neuf, no. 15, or at his house, Pont-au-Change. Values in *livres tournois* (lt.); 1 livre = 20 sols; 1 sol = 12 deniers. Reference to 'caractère(s)' is generally understood to mean *sets of characters* (i.e., alphabets) that are stencils; 'un alphabet' may refer to stencils in the case of 'fer blanc' but probably does not in the case of 'acier'.

## [At the shop]

Quatre douzaine de doit et avoir à raison de deux Livres huit sols la douzaine	Four dozen of 'doit' and 'avoir' valued at two livres eight sols per dozen	9 livres 12 sols
Quatre douzaine de doit et avoir estimé à raison de deux Livres huit sols la douzaine	Four dozen of 'doit' and 'avoir' valued at two livres eight sols per dozen	9 lt. 12 s.
Quatorze douzaine de vignettes estimé à raison de vingt quatre sols la douzaine	Fourteen dozen vignettes valued at twenty-four sols per dozen	16 lt. 16 s.
Soixante dix neuf caracteres tant fleurons qu'écriture et romain estimés à raison de vingt quatre sols pieces [sic]	Seventy-nine sets of characters made up of so many decorations, scripts and romans valued at twenty-four sols each	94 lt. 16 s.
Neuf caracteres estimés à raison de huit sols la piece	Nine sets of characters valued at eight sols each	3 lt. 12 s.
Quarante huit suites de chiffres estimés à raison de six sols la piece	Forty sets of numerals valued at six sols each	12 lt.
Cinquante huit vignettes en couleur estimés la somme de quatre livres	Fifty-eight vignettes in colour valued at four livres in total	4 lt.
Vingt deux pinceau, dix batons d'encre de la chine estimés quatre livres quatre sols	Twenty-two paintbrushes, ten sticks of china ink valued at four livres, four sols	4 lt. 4 s.
Deux douzaine neuf pieces estimés à raison de trente sols la douzaine	Two-dozen [and] nine pieces valued at thirty sols per dozen	4 lt. 2 s. 6 d.
Un alphabet de fer blanc dans sa montre estimé la somme de quatre livres	One alphabet of tinplate in the display case valued at four livres in total	4 lt.
Un comptoir avec deux portes montre estimé douze livres	One counter with two display doors valued at twelve livres	12 lt.
Deux montres d'etalage et un [coyus] de tiroir estimé quarante sols	Two display cases and one [?] cash drawer valued at forty sols	2 lt.
Un petit comptoir et plusieurs bouts de planches estimés vingt sols	One small counter and many bits of wooden planks valued at twenty sols	1 lt.
		<b>177 lt. 14 s. 6 d.</b>

## [At the house]

Quinze douzaine et de [mi] de vignettes estimés à raison de trente sols la douzaine	Fifteen-and-a-half dozen vignettes valued at thirty sols per dozen	23 lt. 5 s.
Six douzaine de boutons estimés dix sols la douzaine	Six dozen buttons valued at ten sols per dozen	3 lt.
Cinq caracteres estimés à raison de quinze sols piece	Five sets of characters valued at fifteen sols each	3 lt. 15 s.
Quatre douzaine de caracteres tant écriture, fleurons et romain estimé à raison de quinze sols le caractere	Four dozen [sets of] characters made up of so many scripts, decorations and roman valued at fifteen sols per [set of] character[s]	36 lt.
Dix livres de cuivre en planche estimés à raison de trente sols la livre	Ten pounds of plate brass valued at thirty sols per pound	15 lt.
Douze suites de chiffres estimés à raison de six sols piece	Twelve sets of numerals valued at six sols each	3 lt. 12 s.
Neuf livres dans une boîte estimés à raison de quarante sols la livre	Nine pounds in a box valued at forty sols per pound	18 lt.
Huit livres de cuivre loto [i.e., laiton] estimés à raison de dix huit sols la livre	Eight pounds of brass valued at eighteen sols per pound	7 lt. 12 s. [sic; excess of 8 sols]
Vingt livres de cuivre en rognure estimés à raison dix huit sols la livre	Twenty pounds of brass off-cuts valued at eighteen sols per pound	18 lt.
Un alphabet d'acier et plusieurs morceau [sic] d'acier estimé vingt sols	One alphabet in steel and many pieces of steel valued at twenty sols	1 lt.

**129 lt. 4 s.**

## Appendix G

## Inventory of goods and materials of Pierre Denis Hertelle, 1807

Extracted from 'Inventaire après décès du Sr Hertelle', 21 Octobre 1807, Paris, Archives nationales, MC/ET/XCVII/651, pp. 10–12 (fols 5v–6v). Items are solely located at Hertelle's business premises (*boutique*), Pont-Neuf, no. 9. Values in *francs*; 1 franc = 100 *centimes*. Reference to 'caractère(s)' is generally understood to mean *sets of characters* (i.e., alphabets) that are stencils, with the possible exception of 'Douze caractères' whose sizes are stated in *points*.

## Ustensiles de la boutique

Un petit comptoir à une tablette tournante avec tablettes <i>[sic]</i> prisé et estimé Neuf francs	One small counter of one revolving shelf with shelves valued at nine francs	9 francs
Une montre vitrée de deux carreaux et un placard vitré aussi de deux carreaux, un petit placard d'armoire avec valet, un petit corps de dix tiroirs, deux petites armoires vitrées par le haut à l'un dix tiroirs et à l'autre douze tiroirs, un autre petit corps de dix tiroirs, le tout en bois blanc peint, en mauvais état le tout prisé et estimé la somme de trente francs	One glazed display of two panes and a glazed cupboard also of two panes, one small cupboard door with jack/clamp, one compact set of ten drawers, two small glazed cupboards the upper of ten drawers and the other of twelve drawers, another compact set of ten drawers, all of wood painted white, and in a poor state, the whole valued at thirty francs	30 fr.
Un sceau ferré, quatre tabourets foncés de paille, un réchaud bâti en façon de forge, une pincette et quelques ustensiles en fer ne méritant description prisés et estimés ensemble la somme de huit francs	An iron seal, four stools of dark straw, a stove built like a forge, one small tweezers and a few utensils of iron not meriting description the whole valued at eight francs	8 fr.

## Dans la boutique sur le Pont Neuf no. 9

## Marchandises

Trente six caractères depuis une ligne jusqu'à sept prisés et estimés à raison de un franc cinquante centimes la pièce	Thirty-six sets of characters from one <i>ligne</i> to seven valued at one franc fifty centimes each	54 fr.
Douze caractères depuis huit jusqu'à douze points prisés et estimés à raison de deux francs la pièce	Twelve sets of characters from eight to twelve <i>points</i> valued at two francs each	24 fr.
Six douzaines de vignettes de différentes grandeurs prisées et estimées à raison de trois francs soixante centimes la douzaine	Six dozen vignettes of various sizes valued at three francs sixty centimes per dozen	21 fr. 60 centimes
Six douzaines de petits boutons prisés et estimés à raison de quinze centimes la douzaine	Six dozen small buttons valued at fifteen centimes per dozen	10 fr. 80 c.
Vingt pièces de chiffres prisées et estimées à raison de cinquante centimes la pièce	Twenty <i>pièces</i> of numerals valued at fifty centimes each	10 fr.
Quatre pièces plus grandes prisées et estimées à raison de un franc la pièce	Four very large <i>pièces</i> valued at one franc each	4 fr.

## Caractères anciens

Cinquante vieux caractères prisés et estimés à raison de soixante quinze centimes la pièce	Fifty sets of old characters valued at seventy-five centimes each	37 fr. 50 c.
Vingt caractères de vieux cuivre prisés et estimés à raison de un franc vingt cinq centimes la pièce	Twenty sets of characters of old brass valued at one franc twenty-five centimes each	25 fr.
Deux douzaines de brosses prisées et estimées à raison de un franc quatre vingt centimes la pièce	Two dozen brushes valued at one franc twenty-five centimes each	3 fr. 60 c. <i>[sic; 30 fr.]</i>
Une demie livre d'encre de la chine prisée et estimée la somme de six livres <i>[sic]</i>	One-half pound of china ink valued at six livres <i>[sic]</i> in total	6 fr.
Trois pinces, trois compas, une règle servant à fabriquer les caractères en cuivre prisés et estimés la somme de cinq francs	Three tweezers, three compass[es], one ruler used for making the brass stencils valued at five francs in total	5 fr.
Outils servant à fabriquer l'acier, un lot de limes, un tas de vieil acier ne méritant description prisés neuf francs	Tools used for working steel, a group of files, a vice of old steel not meriting description valued at nine francs	9 fr.

278 fr. 90 c.  
*[sic; 305 fr. 30 c.]*

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## Photography & imaging

Figures 1, 2, 7, 12–14, 16–18: Eric Kindel

Figures 3–5, 8, 11, 17, 19, 20: Laura Bennetto

Figure 6: Fred Smeijers

Figure 9: Musée de l'Armée (Paris)

Figure 10: Bibliothèque municipale de Bordeaux

Figure 15: Library of the American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia)

Figure 22: Musée Carnavalet (Paris)

Artefact locations are given in captions. Where no location is given, artefacts are in the collection of the author.