

About Seignelay Colbert de Castlehill

Between Scotland and Rouergue

On June 25, 1789, five days after the Tennis Court Oath, which marks the end of the Ancien Régime, the Bishop of Rodez, Seignelay Colbert de Castlehill, one of the rare prelates to have accepted the idea of common deliberations of the representatives of the three orders, was chaired around the streets of Versailles by the population... This same prelate who had presided over the ephemeral Provincial Assembly of Haute-Guyenne set up by Necker, on an experimental basis, as part of a reform programme, emigrated to London in 1791, after having refused the constitutional oath, unlike Loménie de Brienne of whom he had been for eighteen years one of the Vicars General in Toulouse. Ten years later, he opposed the Concordat of 1802 between Napoleon and Pius VII and, until his death in 1813, was the head of the schismatic 'Petite Eglise', well established in his diocese.

This rupture, both with the French Revolution and with the Catholic Church, caused misunderstanding, and the judgments of Catholic historians have not entirely been kind, while on the other hand this mysterious and atypical prelate has almost entirely been forgotten. A few documents from the 19th century related his career more or less accurately and the Société des Gens de Lettres de l'Aveyron supported the work of one of its members, Victor Advielle who sketched a biography of Colbert de Castle Hill.

In the mid-1980s, Andrew Moore, a history student at the University of Bristol, under the direction of William Doyle, undertook a study of Colbert based on departmental and diocesan archives and the documents in the possession of the Société des Gens de Lettres. His dissertation, however, remained in the Bristol University Library. Philippe Massot in a thesis devoted to the visit of the economist Adam Smith to Toulouse became interested in Colbert, who was Smith's guide in the South-West, and emphasised the links he had kept with the British world. Bernard Fixes studied the pastoral activities of Seignelay and more recently Gautier Louyriac, M.A student at the university Jean Jaurès, dedicated his thesis to his administration of the diocese of Rodez.

From all this research emerges a figure much more complex than that available in biographical dictionaries. Different approaches should be compared to finally fully describe the career of this extraordinary 18th century character, in all its many aspects.

This is why we wish to organize in autumn 2020 a symposium bringing together interested researchers restituting the framework of the end of the 18th century in Scotland and the Rouergue and examining the bishop's life history, In Scotland, Paris, Toulouse, the Rouergue,

the revolutionary years in Versailles an Paris, then his exile, or in his unique case, return, to Britain.

The symposium will take place in Toulouse and/or Rodez. The acts will provide the materials for a true biography of this character. It would certainly be no exaggeration to assert than no other Scot exercise as much influence on events in France in the second half of the 18th century.

Suggested Topics

1. The religious question in 18th century Scotland
2. The rallying of the high clergy to the Revolution in June 1789.
3. Colbert from the General Estates to the emigration
4. The French Bishops and the Vatican from 1789 to the Concordat
5. About Colbert 's two books on natural law and perpetual peace
6. Colbert and the clergy of Rouergue.
7. The printed production of the pre-revolutionary years in Rouergue
8. The role of bishops in the assemblies of the civil dioceses and at the head of the various commissions of the Estates of Languedoc
9. The Provincial Assembly of Haute-Guyenne
10. The catalogue of Colbert's library
11. Colbert, Condorcet and the establishment of the cadastre in Haute-Guyenne
12. Colbert de Castlehill and Abbé Mazars

Note: the list of the themes is purely indicative and does not claim to be exhaustive

Organisation Committee

- Alain Alcouffe, professor (emeritus), Université Toulouse Capitole (alain.alcouffe[at]ut-capitole.fr)
- Bernard Callebat, professor of history of law institut Catholique de Toulouse (bernard.callebat[at]gmail.com)
- Andrew Moore, associate researcher, CERES/ICT (anvmoore[at] gmail.com)

Scientific Committee

(yet to be finalised)

- Nigel Aston, Reader in Early Modern History, University of Leicester
- Bernard Callebat, professor of history of law, institut Catholique de Toulouse
- Gerard Carruthers FRSE, Francis Hutcheson Chair of Scottish Literature, Glasgow University
- Philippe Delvit, professor of history of law , University Toulouse 1 Capitole
- William Doyle, professor of history, emeritus, Université de Bristol
- Christine Fauré, Directrice de recherche émérite au CNRS, Triangle-ENS-Univ. Lyon.
- Stéphane Gomis, professor of modern history, Université Clermont Auvergne
- Gilbert Larguier, professor emeritus of modern history, U. Via Domitia
- Clotilde Prunier, Professor of English Cvilisation, University of Nanterre
- Valérie Sottocasa, professor of modern history, University jean Jaurès, Toulouse

Submission instruction and important dates¹

Proposals (French or English will be limited to 5,000 characters (spaces and bibliographie not included)

- March 2020 : intention to contribute and abstracts submissions deadline (emailed to organisers)
- June 1st 2020 : notification to authors
- September 1st 2020 : Full papers will appear in the proceedings on <https://colbertdecastlehill.com/>
- September 10 to 12 2020 : symposium in Rodez and Toulouse

Patronage Committee

(Yet to be finalized)

¹As foreseen end of July 2019