

## CHARLES XII

### King of Sweden (r. 1697-1718)

*As one of the greatest kings of the Vasa Dynasty, Charles XII defended Sweden and won many victories for his country during the Great Northern War against Russia, Poland, and Denmark. He brought Swedish power to a high point, but he also initiated its decline.*

**Born:** June 17, 1682; Stockholm, Sweden

**Died:** November 30, 1718; Fredrikshald (now Halden), near Oslo, Norway

**Also known as:** Karl XII; Alexander of the North;

Charles XII of Sweden; Madman of the North; Lion of the North

**Area of achievement:** Government and politics

#### EARLY LIFE

The future Charles XII was born to loving parents, the reigning Vasa king of Sweden, Charles XI, and his wife, Ulrika Eleonora, a former Danish princess. As a child, Charles was frail but physically active. He survived a case of smallpox and throughout his life loved riding and hunting. Charles also appreciated and enjoyed his formal education. While he was uncomfortable and awkward speaking Swedish, he was learned in Latin, German, and French. He liked reading biography and military history and studying religion and mathematics (which he often applied to problems of ballistics and fortifications). His heroes were Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. As a young man, he was often wild, extravagant, irreverent, and drunken, but as king he became pious and abstemious, drinking no alcohol stronger than beer. He was always strong-willed and stubborn.

Charles was the first king of Sweden born to absolutism, and from the beginning of his reign he expanded upon the absolutist powers of the Swedish throne. Charles XI died in 1697, and a regency was established for his fifteen-year-old son and successor, but it lasted only a few months. In 1697, at age sixteen, Charles XII crowned himself king in Stockholm rather than in Uppsala, as dictated by tradition, and he omitted the traditional oath as well. His first official acts were to build and restore several palaces, setting the stage for a lavish court life, and to enlarge and modernize the Swedish military establishment (for example, by introducing flintlocks and bayonets).

#### LIFE'S WORK

Unquestionably, the most important event of Charles's reign was the Great Northern War (1701-1721), yet he

had little directly to do with its coming about and was one of its casualties before it was over. The war was largely caused by the dynamic and ambitious czar of Russia, Peter the Great, who was ten years Charles's senior. Mistaking the new Swedish king's youth and inexperience for ineptitude, Peter gathered to his emerging Russian Empire two of Sweden's other historic rivals, Poland and Denmark, in an initial alliance and seized an apparent moment of vulnerability to go to war with Sweden.

In the opening weeks of the war, Charles moved swiftly and decisively, catching the enemy alliance almost completely off guard and proving himself to be a military genius. He soon came to be called the Lion of the North. In 1700, with the aid of England and the Netherlands, he defeated Denmark and quickly turned to Poland. The price for Anglo-Dutch support had been a pledge of Swedish neutrality during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), in which England and the Netherlands engaged France, whose King Louis XIV was Sweden's tacit ally.

In Poland, Charles quickly defeated the Polish-Lithuanian-Saxon armies and established a position of dominance, and the defeat of the Russians at Narva at the end of 1700 caused Peter to initiate a reorganization of his forces. In 1703, however, Russian victories along the Baltic Sea led to the founding of Peter's new capital, St. Petersburg. In 1704, Charles deposed the Saxon king of Poland, Augustus II, and replaced him with Stanisław I Leszczyński, forcing Poland into a temporary alliance with Sweden and clearing the Russians from Polish territory. The mastery of Poland at this time marks an important high-water mark of Swedish power in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Charles secured his rear flank in 1707 by signing a treaty with Prussia and a convention with the Holy Roman Empire to protect his earlier invasion of Saxony.

After concluding a secret alliance with the Cossack leader Ivan Stepanovich Mazepa in 1708, Charles launched an invasion of the Ukraine. Peter's military reforms bore their first fruits with the great Russian victory over the Swedes and Cossacks at Poltava in 1709. The Swedish army was destroyed, Charles and Mazepa were forced to flee to the Ottoman Empire, and Augustus was reinstated as king of Poland. The Russo-Danish-Polish-Saxon alliance was reconstructed, and, in 1710, Charles responded by forming an alliance with Turkey. The Russians were then decisively defeated in a battle at the Pruth

River in which Peter the Great was captured in 1711. Consequently, the peace that followed was dictated by the Turks, and Charles returned to the Ottoman Empire. Russia mainly lost territory in the Azov region on the Black Sea, which it had secured from Turkey in 1700.

Sultan Ahmed III and Charles had a falling-out in 1713, all Russo-Turkish hostilities ceased, and Charles was forced to return to Europe in 1714 to defend Swedish-occupied Stralsund. In 1715, the Netherlands, Britain, Prussia, Bremen, Verden, Holstein, and Hannover declared war on Sweden, and Stralsund fell to the Danes and Prussians. Charles invaded Norway in 1716, and in 1717 Peter finally failed in his attempts to secure an alliance with Louis XIV. Charles was killed in the trenches at the Siege of Fredriksten in 1718.



*Charles XII and men fighting Moldavian soldiers. (Library of Congress)*

While as a warrior-king on campaign Charles lived a spartan, sober, and even pious existence, the Great Northern War nevertheless took a formidable toll on Sweden and its Baltic empire. With the king's continued absence from Stockholm, the absolutism of the monarchy began to erode. Because Charles remained unmarried and had no direct heir to the throne, while he was away at the war his weaker sister, Ulrika Eleonora, became the de facto head of state. The resurging power of the Swedish parliamentary forces, especially of its upper house, and the increasing demands of the prolonged war began to force change on the monarchy. In 1711-1714, while Charles was in Turkey, administrative and economic reforms were enacted in Sweden, allowing for new taxes to pay for the war in return for economic and political concessions on the part of the monarchy. Perhaps Charles believed that he could reestablish the absolute authority of the monarchy upon his return to Stockholm, but he never did return. Upon Charles's death in battle, he was succeeded to the throne by Ulrika Eleonora. She gradually lost more power to the nobility and clergy under a new constitution.

After 1715, Russian successes in Finland and the Baltic area, which eventually came to threaten Stockholm itself, and the general political and economic exhaustion resulting from a war of more than two decades finally forced Sweden to agree to an end to the hostilities. Under the Treaty of Nystadt in 1721, peace was formally declared, and Sweden lost some parts of its Baltic empire (for example, the province of Ingria, surrounding St. Petersburg, was lost to Peter the Great's newly declared Russian Empire). The Treaty of Nystadt was by no means a victor's peace. Instead, it led to better relations in the changing spectrum of Baltic and other powers in Northern Europe, culminating in Sweden's participation in the allied coalition against Napoleonic France less than a century later.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE**

Charles XII was a single-minded and ambitious absolutist ruler and a formidable soldier who neglected the real needs of his kingdom and its empire for foreign adven-

ture and personal glory. Of the twenty-one years of his reign, he spent all but three away from Stockholm fighting in the Great Northern War. Through his military triumphs, he revitalized, for a time, the power and status of the Swedish Empire. This revitalization recalled the days of the greatest Vasa king of Sweden, Gustavus II Adolphus, and the Thirty Years' War and has caused many historians to consider Charles second in importance only to Gustavus among the ruling members of the Vasa Dynasty.

However, the Great Northern War and Peter the Great also were Charles's and the Swedish Empire's undoing. The Russian victory and the Treaty of Nystadt marked Sweden's fall and its replacement as a great power by Peter's new Russian Empire. With this treaty, the tacit French-Turkish-Swedish anti-Habsburg coalition came apart too, and Poland was reduced to little more than a Russian puppet-state on the road to partition. Last, the reign of Charles signaled the beginning of Sweden's transition from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy under the later Vasa and Bernadotte Dynasties.

—Dennis Reinhartz

#### FURTHER READING

- Bain, R. Nisbet. *Charles XII and the Collapse of the Swedish Empire, 1682-1719*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1895. A standard biography of Charles, presenting a detailed account of his life and times. Dwells on his military prowess and sees his ambition as his undoing and that of the Swedish Empire.
- Bengtsson, Frans G. *The Life of Charles XII, King of Sweden, 1697-1718*. London: Macmillan, 1960. A more modern, but nevertheless standard, biography. Bengtsson portrays Charles in a more positive light than Bain does, but on the whole Bain's life of Charles reveals more to the reader.
- Buzzi, Giancarlo. *The Life and Times of Peter the Great*. Translated by Ben Johnson. London: Hamlyn, 1968. This popular account of Charles's principal rival includes several sections on Charles and the Great Northern War. Profusely illustrated.
- Englund, Peter. *The Battle That Shook Europe: Poltava and the Birth of the Russian Empire*. New York: I. B. Tauris, 2003. Military history by a Swedish historian describing the decisive battle in the Great Northern War. Examines the impact of the war on Russia and Sweden.
- Hallendorff, Carl, and Adolf Schück. *History of Sweden*. Stockholm: C. E. Fritze, 1938. This standard history of Sweden has a good chapter on Charles and puts him into perspective with the rise and fall of the Swedish Empire under the Vasa Dynasty.
- Hatton, R. M. *Charles XII of Sweden*. New York: Weybright and Talley, 1968. The best biography of Charles in English. A well-researched, well-documented, well-written, and balanced study of the man, his country, and his times.
- Lisk, Jill. *The Struggle for Supremacy in the Baltic, 1600-1725*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1968. Follows the rise of Swedish and then Russian power in the Baltic arena in the seventeenth century through the Great Northern War and the death of Peter the Great. Includes two important chapters on Charles and the Great Northern War.
- Massie, Robert K. *Peter the Great: His Life and World*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1980. A Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Peter the Great. Thorough and well written, with information on Charles primarily in chapter 24. Charles is treated fairly and not overshadowed by Peter when they are both center stage.
- Roberts, Michael. *From Oxenstierna to Charles XII: Four Studies*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Collection of four essays about Swedish history, including an essay examining the controversy surrounding the death of Charles XII.
- Warner, Oliver. *The Sea and the Sword: The Baltic, 1630-1945*. New York: William Morrow, 1965. Essentially a general modern naval history of the Baltic basin. Includes a good and rather extensive chapter on Charles, Peter, and the war.

**See also:** Ahmed III; Peter the Great.

**Related articles** in *Great Events from History: The Eighteenth Century, 1701-1800*: c. 1701-1721: Great Northern War; May 26, 1701-September 7, 1714: War of the Spanish Succession; May 27, 1703: Founding of St. Petersburg; June 27, 1709: Battle of Poltava; November 20, 1710-July 21, 1718: Ottoman Wars with Russia, Venice, and Austria.

## QUEEN CHARLOTTE

### Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (r. 1761-1818)

*Queen Charlotte essentially ruled Great Britain and Ireland when her husband, King George III, became disabled in 1810.*

**Born:** May 19, 1744; Mirow, duchy of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (now in Germany)

**Died:** November 17, 1818; Surrey, England

**Also known as:** Charlotte Sophia (birth name);

Princess Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz

**Area of achievement:** Government and politics

#### EARLY LIFE

The German-born Charlotte Sophia had an unremarkable childhood in the duchy of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, where her uncle Frederick was the duke. She was schooled essentially by her mother and a few attendants, and she had an early interest in art. Charlotte could trace direct lineage to Marguerita de Castro y Sousa, a black member of the royal family of Portugal.

Brought up in a religious household, Charlotte venerated the church. Her displays of religious respect were apparent. For example, she always removed her jewelry before taking Holy Communion. When she and King George III were installed as king and queen of England, she wore a bejeweled headpiece. The king removed his crown before taking communion, and Charlotte was about to remove her tiara when the officiating priest excused her because the tiara was intricately woven into her hair.

Charlotte was seventeen years old when she married George III, who had assumed the throne upon the death of his father, George II, on October 25, 1760. George III delayed his coronation as long as was seemly—some eleven months following his father's death—because he was madly in love with Lady Sarah Lennox and desperate to marry her. Both his mother, Augusta, and his most influential adviser, the earl of Bute, opposed this union so strongly that George finally had the earl draw up lists of eligible marriage prospects for him among the Protestant princesses of Europe.

Augusta and the earl of Bute attempted to persuade George to marry Princess Caroline of Brunswick, but George resisted. Caroline would marry someone else. The two matchmakers, beginning to despair of finding a suitable bride for the twenty-three-year-old king, set their sights on Princess Charlotte, reputed to be a shy, retiring young lady, not dazzlingly beautiful but slender, dark-eyed, and reasonably attractive.

On July 8, 1761, the Privy Council formally approved of George's wish to marry Charlotte, who had never met the king. She arrived in court on September 8, 1761, unable to speak English, and was graciously received by George. The two embarked upon a marriage that lasted for fifty-seven years.

#### LIFE'S WORK

Queen Charlotte delivered her first child, George IV, on August 12, 1762, attended by various courtiers and two lady attendants she had brought to England with her. Charlotte bore her first child easily, scarcely crying out during the birth according to those attending her. Between 1762 and 1783, Charlotte bore fifteen children—nine sons and six daughters—of whom all but two sons survived to maturity.

The first duty of royal wives was to produce children, preferably sons, so that the royal line could continue. In part because of her continual pregnancies, Charlotte had little direct involvement in affairs of state. George III, whose mother was intimately involved politically during her husband's reign, did not encourage Charlotte's involvement in matters of state because George resented his mother's political meddling.

Charlotte became something of a nonentity during her childbearing years. She had a jealous nature and often harbored deep suspicions that George was being unfaithful to her, although nothing has surfaced to support such suspicions. George appeared to be genuinely devoted to his wife and, although he undoubtedly had a roving eye, he is generally thought never to have been unfaithful.

Added to George's reluctance to have Charlotte involved in affairs of state was that Charlotte lived in fearful awe of the king's mother, who had an overpowering personality. Fanny Burney, the diarist who was for several years a member of the household staff at Windsor, portrayed Charlotte as being unreasonably demanding. She imposed impossible protocols on members of the court, forbidding them from coughing or sneezing in the presence of the monarchs.

A dark cloud descended over the royal palace in the spring of 1788 when the king, suffering from a progressive disease later diagnosed as porphyria, became insane for about a year, during which he experienced brief intervals of rationality. The government had never been forced to deal with such a situation and was quite at odds



Queen Charlotte. (Library of Congress)

about how to handle it. In the earliest stages of this hereditary disease, George had been hyperactive, as sufferers from porphyria often are. This hyperactivity had helped to ignite his open conflict with the American colonies.

As the king became increasingly psychotic, Charlotte had little choice but to take on some of the matters that normally fell to her husband. Following a two-year period of reasonable lucidity that lasted from 1799 until 1801, George resumed most of his formal activities, but he lapsed into insanity in 1801 and by 1804 was in a grave mental state. His inhibitions were fading rapidly as his language and actions became uncharacteristically crude and increasingly obscene.

Charlotte suffered considerable humiliation as the king lapsed into these trying periods. She had long since ceased to share her bed with George, who now seemed intent on taking a mistress, although no evidence substantiates his having done so. At the celebration of the royal couple's forty-third wedding anniversary, some of the royal ministers tried to persuade the queen to resume conjugal relations with her husband, but she was

resolute in her refusal, going so far as to post two women in her bedroom in the early evening lest George, who sometimes became obsessed with her, try to enter her room.

George, humiliated by Charlotte's behavior, moved to a separate building on the grounds of Windsor Palace, declaring that he would never have a separate bed in the residence he shared with the queen. Also, the king was going blind as a result of his porphyria. By 1810, George was sufficiently disabled by his illness that he could no longer perform even the most rudimentary responsibilities of his office. Charlotte, with the knowledge and consent of Parliament, was officially empowered to take on most of the king's official duties. She served actively as his consort until her death in 1818, which came two years before George's death.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Because of King George's illness and his subsequent inability to fulfill the duties of his office, Queen Charlotte graduated from being essentially a cipher whose chief activity was childbearing to becoming an increasingly active and contributing member of the royal family. Despite the relative isolation of her first thirty-five years as queen, Charlotte, who was intelligent, emerged as a woman capable of dealing with complex problems. She faced her domestic problems squarely and was resolute in her dealings with the king. Had she been equally resolute earlier in her dealings with George's mother Augusta, the course of her life might have been different.

Charlotte has been commemorated with a group of islands named for her (the Queen Charlotte Islands off the coast of British Columbia, Canada) as well the city of Charlotte, North Carolina. Queen's College in New Jersey, now Rutgers University, was also named in her honor. Because of her exotic appearance, she was a favorite subject of artists. Sixty-four major portraits of her exist in museums throughout the world. She also inspired a special type of cream-colored earthenware that Josiah Wedgwood produced, calling it Queen's Ware. Queen's Ware pieces are simply decorated and clean in appearance.

—R. Baird Shuman

#### FURTHER READING

Carretta, Vincent. *George III and the Satirists from Hogarth to Byron*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990. A study of how King George III and Queen Charlotte were portrayed in various art forms by artists seeking to satirize them.

- Graham, Jenny. *The Nation, the Law, and the King: Reform Politics in England, 1789-1799*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2000. Demonstrates how a monarch's deteriorating mental state affected world politics.
- Long, J. C. *George III: The Story of a Complex Man*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1960. Although dated, this volume is well written and interesting. Long reveals the complex interactions between a reigning monarch and his somewhat subdued wife, showing how these interactions necessarily changed as the monarch declined both mentally and physically.
- Macalpine, Ida, and Richard Hunter. *The "Insanity" of King George III: A Classic Case of Porphyria*. St. Alban's, England: Gainsborough Press, 1966. An excellent background study for understanding the problems facing Charlotte as her husband deteriorated mentally.
- Tytler, Sarah. *Six Royal Ladies of the House of Hanover*. 2d ed. London: Hutchinson, 1898. Although this re-

source is more than one hundred years old, the material on Queen Charlotte provides valuable reading.

**See also:** Fanny Burney; Caroline; Thomas Gainsborough; George II; George III; Sarah Siddons; Josiah Wedgwood.

**Related articles** in *Great Events from History: The Eighteenth Century, 1701-1800*: 1774: Hansard Begins Reporting Parliamentary Debates; December, 1774-February 24, 1783: First Marāthā War; April 19, 1775: Battle of Lexington and Concord; May, 1776-September 3, 1783: France Supports the American Revolution; July 4, 1776: Declaration of Independence; June 21, 1779-February 7, 1783: Siege of Gibraltar; June 2-10, 1780: Gordon Riots; 1783: Loyalists Migrate to Nova Scotia; 1790: Burke Lays the Foundations of Modern Conservatism; May-November, 1798: Irish Rebellion; July 2-August 1, 1800: Act of Union Forms the United Kingdom.

## SAMUEL CHASE

### American jurist

*Chase is the only U.S. Supreme Court justice to have faced an impeachment trial. He was both a partisan firebrand and a Founding Father whose political and legal theory helped shape the republic.*

**Born:** April 17, 1741; Somerset County, Maryland

**Died:** June 19, 1811; Baltimore, Maryland

**Areas of achievement:** Law, government and politics

#### EARLY LIFE

Samuel Chase's mother, British-born Matilda Walker Chase, died the day he was born. Three years later, the young boy moved to Baltimore with his father, Thomas Chase, a British-born Church of England clergyman. The elder Chase's profession conferred on him the status of a gentleman, but father and son seemed always beset by money worries. From his father, Chase received both a good education in the classics and an ambivalent attitude toward wealth and aristocracy.

At age eighteen, Chase left for Annapolis, Maryland, to pursue a legal career. As was the custom, he did not attend law school but rather "read" law in the offices of legal practitioners, those of Arthur Hill in Chase's case. Four years later, in 1763, he was admitted to the Maryland bar.

One year earlier, Chase had married Ann Baldwin, whose father was a bankrupt farmer. The marriage produced seven children, only four of whom survived infancy, and lasted until Ann died sometime between 1776 and 1779. This union did little to further Chase's prospects, and he had a difficult time attracting wealthy clients. For several years, his practice focused on defending debtors from their creditors. Eventually, however, he built a successful law firm in Annapolis.

Like many lawyers, Chase was attracted to politics. In 1764, he was elected to the lower house of the Maryland assembly, where he would spend two decades representing Annapolis and Ann Arundel County. By the early 1770's, he had established himself as one of the colony's most important and most controversial politicians. His leadership of demonstrations against the city of Annapolis caused the mayor to call him a "busy, restless incendiary, a ringleader of mobs, a foul-mouthed and inflaming son of discord."

#### LIFE'S WORK

Samuel Chase was an early and enthusiastic supporter of the revolutionary cause. In 1774, he helped organize the Sons of Liberty, a militant group that demonstrated

against British rule. The same year, Maryland sent him as a delegate to the First Continental Congress. At age thirty-three, he was one of the youngest participants at the congress, where he signed the Declaration of Independence. He again represented Maryland at the Second Continental Congress in 1775, where he served on more than thirty committees and urged colonial unity in an economic boycott of English goods.

At the same time, Chase continued to serve in the state legislature and develop his legal practice. He was one of the authors of the Maryland constitution, a document that ultimately reflected his belief that governing should be left in the hands of an elite group of property holders. Later, the ruling senate he helped design opposed him, and Chase reverted to the role of champion of the common person. In 1788, he opposed Maryland's ratification of the state constitution because at the time it lacked a bill of rights, and the opposition cost him his seat.

Chase found himself out of office and bankrupt. For many years, he had lived beyond his means, attempting to transform himself into a property holder. In 1778, in fact, he had been suspended from the Continental Con-

gress owing to accusations of war profiteering connected with an attempt to corner the flour market. Now in his forties and just married to his second wife, Hannah Kitty Giles, who would bear two daughters, Chase sought a position that would bring him both public respect and financial security: He became a judge.

Chase first served as a local judge in Baltimore County. Then, in 1791, he also became chief judge of the Maryland General Court. Objecting to this dual role and annoyed by the overbearing manner Chase displayed on the bench, certain members of the state assembly attempted to remove him from both posts. In a preview of Chase's later judicial impeachment, the vote went in his favor by the narrowest of margins.

By all accounts Chase was a larger-than-life figure. More than 6 feet tall and broadly built, he had a brownish-red complexion that caused his detractors to refer to him as Old Bacon Face. More kindly, U.S. Supreme Court justice Joseph Story compared Chase to the legendary eighteenth century English man of letters Samuel Johnson "in person, in manners, in unwieldy strength, and severity of reproof, in real tenderness of heart; and above all in intellect."

On the bench, the once ardent Republican reverted to his earlier elitist orientation, aligning himself with the Federalists, who favored a strong central government. His intense commitment to the Federalist cause was one of the reasons President George Washington nominated Chase to the Supreme Court in 1796; it also nearly proved to be his undoing. Like all Supreme Court justices in his day, Chase was obliged to perform two roles: one as an appellate judge on the highest court in the land and the other as a circuit judge who heard cases in an assigned geographical area. In two cases for which he served as a judge, Chase's Federalist partisanship caused him to conduct criminal trials in a highly questionable manner.

In 1798, the Federalist Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, which were meant to quell political dissent during the war then raging between Britain and France. The United States was officially neutral, but Republicans, who supported the French, feared that the administration of President John Adams favored the British. Several publishers and editors of Republican newspapers were prosecuted under the act, which made it a punishable offense to oppose the federal government in word or deed. One of these journalists was John Callender, who had pub-



*Samuel Chase.* (Library of Congress)

lished a book claiming that President Adams was an “alleged aristocrat” who served British interests. When Chase, along with a district judge, heard the case against Callender in the spring of 1800, he repeatedly interfered with defense counsel’s attempts to present its case, seating an admittedly biased juror despite objections and refusing to allow the testimony of one of the defense witnesses.

Only months earlier, Chase had presided over the Philadelphia trial of John Fries, who was accused of treason. The question before the court was whether Fries’s leadership of a tax revolt amounted to treason. Chase, however, forestalled any debate on the issue by delivering an opinion defining the crime even before the trial began. As a result, Fries’s attorneys withdrew from the case, whereupon Chase declared that the court would act as Fries’s advocate. Not surprisingly, Fries was found guilty and sentenced to hang.

Chase’s partisanship became more pronounced as the presidential election of 1800 approached. In August of that year, the start of the Supreme Court’s term had to be delayed because Chase was detained in Maryland working for Adams’s reelection. Despite Chase’s efforts, the Republican candidate, Thomas Jefferson, was elected. Undeterred, Chase pursued his Federalist campaign, in 1803 delivering a charge to a Baltimore grand jury in which he openly, and egregiously, criticized Republican policy. Jefferson responded by suggesting to one of the leaders of the House of Representatives that Chase be impeached.

Under Article I of the U.S. Constitution, only the House is endowed with the power to impeach for offenses that Article II outlines as “treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors.” In 1804, the House voted to impeach Chase on eight charges, the most serious of which grew out of the Fries and Callender trials and the 1803 grand jury charge. Chase’s trial was held in 1805 before the Republican-controlled Senate, where the justice was so well represented and the case against him so badly managed that even some Republicans voted not to impeach. In the end, many senators—both Federalists and Republicans—came to believe that the charges against Chase were either politically motivated or not serious enough to warrant his removal from the bench. Although eighteen—all of them Republicans—of the thirty-four members of the Senate voted in favor of convicting Chase, their votes did not constitute the two-thirds extraordinary majority the Constitution requires for conviction.

By the time of Chase’s acquittal, the Supreme Court was dominated by Chief Justice John Marshall, who

wrote most of the Court’s major opinions. It is difficult, therefore, to know just how the impeachment trial affected Chase’s participation in the affairs of the national judiciary. He did, however, continue to serve on the high court until his death from heart failure in 1811.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Samuel Chase’s acquittal scotched any further impeachment plans the Republicans might have been entertaining in an attempt to wrest control of the judicial branch from the Federalists. It has also had long-term significance in that it established the principle that impeachment was not to be used as a political weapon. No Supreme Court justice has ever been impeached, and the two presidents faced with an impeachment trial, Andrew Johnson and William Clinton, were likewise acquitted. Those who voted against impeachment in these two cases undoubtedly saw the trials as political and perhaps also recollected the partisanship that occasioned Chase’s trial.

However, Chase’s legacy does not stem solely from his impeachment trial. During his early years on the Supreme Court, he clearly was the intellectual leader of the bench. Before Justice Marshall enshrined the principle of judicial review in law in the case of *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), Chase had spoken out in support of the principle, which made the Supreme Court the final authority on the constitutionality of state and federal laws. Chase also helped to establish the doctrine of substantive due process, which holds that rights not expressly laid out elsewhere in the Constitution can be justified by the due process clause found in either the Fifth or the Fourteenth Amendments.

By nature a conservative, Chase adhered to the principle of judicial restraint, which holds that the Court should customarily defer to Congress with regard to changes in legislation, and advocated a strict, literal interpretation of the words of the Constitution. It is a mark of his genius that he was able to reconcile these seeming contraries, all of which remain vital in American jurisprudence.

—Lisa Paddock

#### FURTHER READING

Burger, Warren E. *It Is So Ordered: A Constitution Unfolds*. New York: W. Morrow, 1995. A historical look at the U.S. Constitution and constitutional law, with chapters on Chase’s impeachment trial and the subpoena of President Jefferson’s papers by Justice Marshall. Includes an index.

Chase, Samuel. *Trial of Samuel Chase*. 1805. Reprint. New York: Da Capo Press, 1970. Chase’s own legal

responses to the articles of impeachment filed against him in the House of Representatives.

Elsmere, Jane Shaffer. *Justice Samuel Chase*. Muncie, Ind.: Janevar, 1980. Still the best full-length biography of the justice.

Haw, James A., et al. *Stormy Patriot: The Life of Samuel Chase*. Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1980. Includes valuable information about Chase's judicial and political career in his home state.

Malone, Dumas. *Jefferson the President: First Term, 1801-1805*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1970. The fourth installment of this multivolume biography of Jefferson provides an excellent historical and political backdrop for the drama of Chase's impeachment. Includes illustrations, maps, and an extensive bibliography.

Presser, Stephen B. *The Original Misunderstanding: The English, the Americans, and the Dialectic of Federalist Jurisprudence*. Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 1991. A history of the federal courts in the late eighteenth century, focusing on Chase's career. The

author describes how law, politics, and morality in the United States drew from, and contrasted with, that of England.

Rehnquist, William H. *Grand Inquests: The Historic Impeachments of Justice Samuel Chase and President Andrew Johnson*. New York: W. Morrow, 1992. Rehnquist provides a clear and concise exploration of the historical background and legal complexities of two significant impeachment trials in U.S. history.

**See also:** John Adams; Charles Carroll; Thomas Jefferson; Samuel Johnson; George Washington.

**Related articles** in *Great Events from History: The Eighteenth Century, 1701-1800*: September 5-October 26, 1774: First Continental Congress; May 10-August 2, 1775: Second Continental Congress; July 4, 1776: Declaration of Independence; October 27, 1787-May, 1788: Publication of *The Federalist*; June 25-July 14, 1798: Alien and Sedition Acts.

## MARQUISE DU CHÂTELET

### French writer and scholar

*Largely self-educated, du Châtelet produced the definitive French translation of Sir Isaac Newton's Principia as well as several scientific and cultural treatises of her own.*

**Born:** December 17, 1706; Paris, France

**Died:** September 10, 1749; Lunéville, Meurthe-et-Moselle, France

**Also known as:** Gabrielle-Émilie du Châtelet (full name); Gabrielle-Émilie Le Tonnelier de Breteuil (birth name)

**Areas of achievement:** Science and technology, physics, philosophy, mathematics

#### EARLY LIFE

The marquise du Châtelet (mahr-keez dew shaht-leh), the daughter of Louis-Nicholas, baron de Breteuiland, and Alexandra-Elisabeth de Froulay, spent her early years learning the ways of aristocratic life in the court of Louis XIV, where her father held several lucrative positions. As a girl, she received lessons in fencing, riding, and gymnastics and discovered her intellectual gifts, as indicated by mastery of English, Italian, Spanish, Greek, and Latin and by her interests in mathematics and metaphysics.

Not particularly attractive as a child, she blossomed into a beauty by the age of sixteen, when her father introduced her at court. At this time, she also began to read the works of René Descartes and became engaged in discussions of his philosophy with professors at the Sorbonne. At the age of nineteen, she entered into a marriage of convenience to the marquis Florent-Claude du Châtelet-Lomont, a military man with whom she had nothing in common. She bore a daughter in 1726 and sons in 1727 and 1733.

As was tolerated at the time, she took on a succession of lovers, including for a time her lifelong friend, the duc de Richelieu, a noted French statesman. During the course of their yearlong affair, which began in 1730, Richelieu encouraged du Châtelet to pursue her intellectual interests. She began to work on mathematical theorems and studied advanced physics and mathematics in private tutorials with members of the Royal Academy of Sciences. She also engaged in serious efforts to translate Latin poetry into French. About 1733, she began a long affair with Voltaire, the famous philosophe. Converted to the theories of physics of Sir Isaac Newton during a trip to England, Voltaire introduced du Châtelet to two French Newtonians, Pierre Louis de Maupertuis in 1734

and Alexis-Claude Clairaut during the 1740's, both of whom became her tutors. Voltaire and du Châtelet retired to the du Châtelet estate in Cirey, with du Châtelet's husband accepting a ménage à trois. Together, Voltaire and Madame du Châtelet threw themselves into studies that made Cirey an intellectual center.

### LIFE'S WORK

At Cirey, du Châtelet and Voltaire pursued a variety of subjects, on which du Châtelet wrote several unpublished manuscripts. One was a free translation of Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Public Benefits* (1714), a work on moral philosophy to which she added her own reflections and points of view. The next year, 1736, she and Voltaire worked on *Grammaire raisonnée* (reasoned grammar), of which the three extant chapters written by du Châtelet contain arguments that language should be considered a branch of logic.

As biblical criticism was popular during the eighteenth century, du Châtelet and Voltaire developed an interest in critical Deism. A five-volume manuscript written by du Châtelet, *Examen de la Genèse* (examination of Genesis), provided a thorough critique of the entire Bible. Copies were circulated, though no one attributed its authorship to du Châtelet. Toward the end of her life, she wrote another manuscript, *Essai sur le bonheur* (1797; a discourse on happiness), addressed to the elite of society.

Du Châtelet published several scientific works. Through her tutors and self-study, she acquired the same knowledge of analytic geometry and differential and integral calculus as many members of the Academy of Sciences, from which women were excluded. As her knowledge of mathematics soon exceeded Voltaire's, she provided him with the mathematical information necessary for his *Eléments de la philosophie de Newton* (1736; *Elements of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy*, 1738).

In 1737, the Academy of Sciences announced a competition to investigate the nature of heat and fire. In order not to anger Voltaire, who had decided to enter the contest, du Châtelet secretly worked on the questions posed by the academy, though she never tested her hypothesis in the laboratory. Neither du Châtelet nor Voltaire won, but both garnered honorable mentions. Once the competition was over, du Châtelet informed Voltaire of her entry, and he arranged for the publication of her essay, *Dissertation sur la nature et la propagation du feu* (1739; essay on the nature and propagation of fire), as well as of his.



Marquise du Châtelet. (Library of Congress)

Du Châtelet's approach to physics began to diverge from Voltaire's, as she was interested in the metaphysical underpinnings of science. In 1737, she began to work on *Institutions de physique* (1740; lessons in physics), a book designed to instruct her son in Newtonian physics. At this time, she found a new tutor, Samuel König, who introduced her to the metaphysics of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, largely unknown in France. Leibniz's notions of the principle of sufficient reason and the *vis viva* (living force) appealed to du Châtelet. At the same time, she approved of René Descartes's attempt to unite his metaphysics with the physics of his mechanical philosophy, though she did not accept the particulars of his philosophy, especially his reliance on God as the first cause. Critical of revealed religion, she replaced Descartes's God with Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason in the metaphysical aspect of the work and substituted Descartes's physics, including the vortices and theory of motion, with Newtonian mechanics and Leibnizian dynamics.

In 1745, du Châtelet began her translation of the third edition of Sir Isaac Newton's *Philosophiæ naturalis principia mathematica* (1687; *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, 1729; best known as the

*Principia*), a project in which she was engaged until the end of her life. She consulted both the first and second editions of the work and Newton's own commentaries and abridgment, as well as a number of commentaries and specialized mathematical treatises written by French and Swiss mathematicians. In the notes to the translation, she defended her choice of words and revealed a familiarity with possible solutions.

Included in du Châtelet's translation was an "Exposition abrégée" (abridged exposition), which provided three ways to understand Newton's physics. In the first, she provided the reader with a clear understanding of the basic ideas and the logic behind Newton's physics, avoiding the technical language of science and mathematics. The second explication presented algebraic equivalents of Newton's demonstrations and included du Châtelet's solutions of some problems through calculus. Finally, she synthesized the progress made in physics since Newton's death. The result of four years of work, *Principes mathématiques de la philosophie naturelle* (1759; mathematical principles of natural philosophy) was published first in an incomplete form in 1756.

By 1748, the relationship between Voltaire and du Châtelet had become quite strained. They went to Lunéville, the court of King Stanisław I Leszczyński. There, du Châtelet met Jean François, marquis de Saint-Lambert, a man ten years younger than she. She became pregnant by him and died on September 10, 1749, a few days after giving birth to a daughter.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The marquise du Châtelet's translation is still the only French translation of Newton's *Principia*. Publication of the complete version in 1759 was eagerly awaited and was instrumental in providing the French with an understanding of Newtonian physics. Du Châtelet's name was included in a list of important Newtonians in the 1779 edition of the *Encyclopédie: Ou, Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts, et des métiers* (1751-1772; *Encyclopedia*, 1965). However, the acceptance of Newtonianism was not complete in France until the end of the eighteenth century.

It is significant that du Châtelet's male contemporaries accepted her as their intellectual equal. However, modern scholars have examined her life in the context of the restrictions imposed on women by society. She herself decried the lack of educational opportunities for women. Most of her important friends were men, and it was only through her association with them that she was able to attain prominence. On the other hand, her mar-

ginalization from the professional mainstream allowed her to carve out an original philosophical position, as expressed in the *Institutions de physique*.

—Kristen L. Zacharias

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**See also:** Maria Gaetana Agnesi; Jean le Rond d'Alembert; Étienne Bonnot de Condillac; Denis Diderot;

Joseph-Louis Lagrange; Gaspard Monge; Montesquieu; Voltaire.

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Shaped Curve; 1740: Maclaurin's Gravitational Theory; 1743-1744: D'Alembert Develops His Axioms of Motion; 1748: Agnesi Publishes *Analytical Institutions*; 1748: Euler Develops the Concept of Function; 1751-1772: Diderot Publishes the *Encyclopedia*; 1781: Kant Publishes *Critique of Pure Reason*.

## CHIKAMATSU MONZAEMON

### Japanese playwright

*Chikamatsu wrote more than one hundred plays for the puppet and Kabuki theaters, most of them concerned with the drama and emotional life of common, ordinary people.*

**Born:** 1653; Fukui, Echizen Province, Japan

**Died:** January 6, 1725; Sakai, Japan

**Also known as:** Sugimori Nobumori (birth name); Sōrinshi; Heiandō

**Areas of achievement:** Literature, theater

#### EARLY LIFE

Chikamatsu Monzaemon (chi-kah-mah-tzoo mohn-zah-ay-mohn) was born the second son of Sugimori Nobuyoshi, to a line of samurai who had been temporarily without government employ several generations earlier. His father served Matsudaira Tadamasu, lord of Echizen province, in Fukui until Matsudaira's death when he began to serve one of his lesser sons, which was his position when Chikamatsu was born. Chikamatsu's father was of minor samurai rank. Chikamatsu's mother was the daughter of a physician. Chikamatsu's father moved to the provincial town of Yoshie (now Sabae City) when Chikamatsu was two. Chikamatsu probably lived comfortably there for the larger part of his childhood.

When Chikamatsu was fifteen or sixteen years old (1668 or 1669), it seems his father lost employment and moved the family to Kyoto. Chikamatsu began serving Ichijō Ekan, probably soon after their arrival. After Ekan's death in 1672 he served other high-ranking officials. Given his status as the son of a lordless samurai, it is unlikely that Chikamatsu expected to advance as a samurai himself. It is more probable that he was learning the life of an intellectual, the educated class, under the tutelage of the men he served. For example, a *haikai* poem (short verse of three lines) by him was published when he was age nineteen (the earliest known record of his writing). The men he served also had interest in the puppet theater (*jōruri*), and Chikamatsu surely gained his expo-

sure to this world through them. One of the gentleman whom he served wrote a puppet play for the master Uji Kaga-no-jō, and it is believed that by around 1677, Chikamatsu did so as well, perhaps not as an independent writer but as one who corrected plays based on what Kaga-no-jō determined needed correcting.

His father's move to Kyoto and Chikamatsu's subsequent social intercourse while he was not yet twenty with men of education who had special interests in literature, especially the puppet theater, should be seen as life-defining, providing the stimulus and opportunity for Chikamatsu to leave the samurai tradition of many generations within his family to become a playwright.

#### LIFE'S WORK

The first play known to have been independently penned by Chikamatsu Monzaemon was a puppet play titled *Yotsugi Soga* (the *soga* successors), first performed in 1683 (pb. 1896). Chikamatsu's reputation began with this well-received play of morally sanctioned revenge. The following year, Takemoto Gidayū, who would later be known as the founder of the Gidayū tradition, used this play for the opening of his first theater house, the Takemoto-za, in Osaka. Staging this play prefaced a collaboration that would prove successful for both men.

Though Chikamatsu continued to write plays for the puppet theater, for the next twenty years the greater part of his energy was devoted to composing scripts for the more showy and increasingly popular Kabuki theater, through an association with the famous Kabuki actor of the era, Sakata Tōjūrō.

The play that would truly establish Chikamatsu's reputation, however, came in 1703, when he wrote, once again for the Takemoto Theater, the wildly popular *Sonezaki shinjū* (*The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*, 1961), the oldest puppet play still performed. He would thereafter be officially employed by that theater. Moving from Kyoto to Osaka in 1706, he continued to write puppet plays for the remainder of his life. *The Love Suicides at*



Chikamatsu Monzaemon's plays were performed in Kabuki theaters such as the one depicted in this eighteenth century woodblock print. (The Granger Collection, New York)

*Sonezaki*, loosely based on a pair of what had been recent suicides, had such a social impact that it is said similar love suicides increased after this play. In this story, a simple, overly trusting shop clerk refuses the marriage that has been arranged for him by his family because he is in love with a courtesan. His mother, unfortunately, has already accepted the dowry for the marriage. It is money he must return, but even though he manages to find the sum, he foolishly loans it to a friend, who then claims never to have received such a loan. The extreme predicament leads the clerk and his lover to decide that suicide is their only option. The description of the two luckless lovers as they walk toward the place where they intend to kill themselves is the moving climax, and a scene still highly regarded for its emotional impact and fine language.

Chikamatsu would write other plays that focus on domestic situations, including *Meido no hikyaku* (pr. 1711; *The Courier for Hell*, 1961), his masterpiece *Shinjū ten no Amijima* (1720; *The Love Suicides at Amijima*, 1953), and *Onnagoroshi: Abura jigoku* (pr. 1721; *The Woman-*

*Killer and the Hell of Oil*, 1961). He wrote at least twenty-four such plays. Chikamatsu explores in all these plays the strong emotions of ordinary people, with special emphasis on betrayal, revenge, and ill-conceived love. Though not considered morality plays as Western traditions might define them, such domestic plays (*sewa-mono*) do explore the painful and contradictory imperatives that derive from desperate personal needs and the immovable, strict requirements placed upon individuals by social norms. This friction between obligation (*giri*) and human feeling (*ninjō*) was the source of suspense and impact of many Chikamatsu plays.

In addition to his domestic plays, Chikamatsu wrote more than eighty historical plays (*jidai-mono*). Though based on historic events, these plays often have current, if concealed, political relevance. His most famous is *Kokusenya kassen* (pr. 1715; *The Battles of Coxinga*, 1951). Set in the year 1644 at the dramatic fall of the Ming Dynasty, the story deeply involves the forbidden country of China. The play's exoticism, variety of dramatic events, settings, and sheer beauty of language

make this his most popular play, one that ran for seventeen months after opening.

Chikamatsu's aesthetic has been described in the following manner: "the space between fiction and truth is like that between the surface of skin and flesh" (*kyojitsu himaku*). That is, truthful art should not strive for perfect realism but rather present an alteration of reality that achieves truth. Chikamatsu made special effort to achieve a high literary level for his scripts. They are replete with words that have resonance with other nearby word choices (*engo*), additional meanings derived from using homonyms (*kakekotoba*), rhyming, and careful choice in rhythm to help set off the prose passages from poems.

According to the inscription on his tombstone, Chikamatsu had a wife who died in 1734. It appears that he also had two sons. Not a great deal is known about them, though it seems one son, Tamon, painted and the other, Taemon, served as a steward for an important family. (In 1741, however, he was removed to Izumi province for causing trouble during a parade.) Chikamatsu died at the Nichiren sect Buddhist temple called Kōsai, in present-day Amagasaki City, near Osaka, at the age of seventy-two.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Chikamatsu Monzaemon's reputation during his lifetime was great enough that in one commentary he was called "the guardian god of writers." His influence extended throughout the puppet and Kabuki theater worlds. His impact on puppet theater is so great that it is with his *Shusse Kagekiyo* (pr. 1686, pb. 1890; Kagekiyo the victorious) that historians demarcate between old and new puppet theater. His introduction of the lives and emotions of a merchant class man and his prostitute lover in *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki* has been recognized as the beginning of premodern drama. His approach to the relationship of fiction to fact remained a central framework for Japanese writers as they began to import and interpret European literature with the establishment of an open country in the nineteenth century.

In part because of the later ascendancy of the Kabuki theater, many of Chikamatsu's plays themselves, however, were rewritten or not performed in later years. In the twenty-first century, while Chikamatsu is firmly established as an icon in the history of Japanese literature and theater, only a few of his works remain well known.

—John R. Wallace

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**See also:** Cao Xueqin; Hakuin; Honda Toshiaki; Ogyū Sorai; Suzuki Harunobu; Tokugawa Yoshimune.

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## ÉTIENNE FRANÇOIS DE CHOISEUL

### French statesman

*Choiseul was an excellent military strategist and negotiator. He was responsible for the Pacte de Famille, uniting the Bourbon rulers of Europe against England, and for the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Seven Years' War. He preserved the West Indies for France and added Lorraine and Corsica to its possessions.*

**Born:** June 28, 1719; Nancy, France

**Died:** May 8, 1785; Paris, France

**Also known as:** Comte de Stainville; Duc de Choiseul

**Areas of achievement:** Government and politics, diplomacy, warfare and conquest

#### EARLY LIFE

Étienne François de Choiseul (ay-tyehn frahn-swah duh shwah-zuhl) was born into an influential family of Lorraine and known early in life as the comte de Stainville. He spent his childhood in the care of nurses, tutors, and governesses, a typical existence for children of the aristocracy in the eighteenth century, as French aristocratic parents rarely spent time with their children. For such parents, it was the family name that mattered, not the individual: Children were viewed simply as heirs to the family name and fortune. It was only once they became adults and distinguished themselves by bringing honor to the family that their importance as individuals increased.

Stainville's initial choice of a career that would honor his family was in the military. Having received a traditional aristocratic education, he entered the French army as an officer. In his mid-thirties, however, he was called to diplomatic service. In 1754, Stainville was appointed ambassador to Rome and remained in the position until 1757. From 1757 to 1758, he served as ambassador to Vienna.

#### LIFE'S WORK

At the court of Louis XV, Stainville came to the attention of both the king and his mistress Madame de Pompadour, who had enormous influence on the king. Stainville quickly became a favorite of Pompadour and enjoyed her protection until she died in 1764. As a result of his relationship with Pompadour and Louis, Stainville received the title of duke and was henceforth known as the duke of Choiseul. He is sometimes referred to as the duke of Choiseul-Stainville. In 1758, the same year he was raised to duke, he became secretary of state for foreign affairs, and in 1761 he was made secretary of war.

At this time, France was embroiled in the Seven Years' War against England and Prussia. In 1761, Choiseul con-

cluded the Pacte de Famille among the Bourbon rulers of France, Spain, Parma, and Naples. This treaty enabled them to resist the British navy. Great Britain's navy was far superior to any navy of the Continent. The war did not go well for France; the country suffered defeat after defeat. It finally ended in 1763 with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on February 10.

Choiseul represented France in the negotiations to end the war, and although he had to cede the French territories of Canada and the left bank of the Mississippi River to England, he managed to keep the West Indies. These islands were essential to the continuing growth of the French economy, because they provided the raw material for France's sugar trade. Nevertheless, Choiseul was bitterly angered by France's defeat and the concessions he was forced to make. Once back in France, he immediately implemented reforms in the army and navy to prevent such defeats from occurring in the future.

In 1766, Stanisław I Leszczyński, the exiled former king of Poland and Louis XV's father-in-law, died. Choiseul carried through the arrangements made by Prime Minister André-Hercule de Fleury before his death. Lorraine, which had been an independent duchy ruled by Stanisław, once again became part of France. In 1768, Choiseul further increased French territory by purchasing Corsica from Genoa.

Choiseul did not easily accept France's defeat in the Seven Years' War. He wanted revenge. Thus he formulated a plan to humiliate England. He also hoped to improve France's financial situation and to restore its glory. His plan was to cause unrest in the British colonies, to bring about a revolt against England, and eventually to annex the colonies to France. As early as 1764, he sent two agents to the colonies to determine the needs of the colonists for a revolt. The report that came back in 1767 displeased him. There was no interest in revolting with the help of a foreign power.

Choiseul later devised a plan to invade England. However, as a result of the bumbling of his agents, the plan's existence was used by Charles d'Éon de Beaumont, chevalier d'Éon, to blackmail Louis XV. A dreadful scandal resulted, just at the moment the comtesse du Barry and her faction were working to discredit Choiseul with the king.

Choiseul was unable to quell the political unrest within France. The *parlements*, largely dominated by allies of the Jansenists, were constantly opposing the king. The

Jansenists and the Gallicans were once again vocally at odds with the Jesuits. The philosophes were at odds with the Jesuits. It happened that a member of the Jesuit order was implicated in a bankruptcy. The Parlement of Paris used this incident to suppress the Jesuits in 1762. Choiseul made no effort to intervene. His allegiance to Madame de Pompadour was undoubtedly a factor. She had been denied the sacraments by the Jesuits; she detested them and wished to see them ruined. Thus, Choiseul sacrificed the Jesuits to placate a number of factions and to gratify Madame de Pompadour.

The *parlements* continued to challenge the absolute power of the king. In 1764, this opposition intensified in the Affaires de Bretagne. In 1765, the parliamentarians of Rennes resigned. Louis-René de Caradeuc de La Chalotais, the *procureur-général* (attorney general), was arrested for making injurious remarks against the king. The Paris Parlement supported Rennes. Finally, on March 3, 1766, Louis XV addressed the Parlement and reaffirmed the absolute power of the king.

Madame de Pompadour, who had been in failing health for some years, died in 1764. Choiseul continued to support the parliamentarians. After the death of Madame de Pompadour, Louis XV took the comtesse du Barry as his mistress. She and Choiseul despised each other. Factions at court realigned and influence with the king shifted. Du Barry allied herself with the *dévo*t faction, which had always been enemies of Madame de Pompadour and Choiseul. In December, 1770, on the advice of René Nicolas de Maupeou, one of du Barry's allies, Louis XV dismissed Choiseul. The disgraced Choiseul retired to his estate of Chanteloup. There, in his later years, he raised Swiss cattle. He died in Paris in 1785.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Étienne François de Choiseul exemplified the lifestyle and values of the French nobility during the reign of Louis XV. He began his career as an army officer, found his way into the court, and used the favor he garnered at court to obtain positions in the government. He availed himself of the financial benefits to be had at court as well, being appointed to the lucrative position of colonel general of the Swiss Guards. His skill at diplomacy allowed Choiseul to give something back to his nation, as he negotiated the best possible terms for France in the Treaty of Paris, preventing the Seven Years' War from damaging French power and prestige even further.

Choiseul spent lavishly and despised avarice as the greatest antisocial vice. He loved his wife but was unfaithful to her. Charming yet quick of wit and capable of

bitter sarcasm, he was at ease in the salons where intellectuals and aristocrats met to discuss philosophy, science, and literature. Possessed of a cosmopolitan culture, his interests included Chinese architecture, Flemish painting, and English gardens. Not devoutly religious, he counted the philosophes among his friends.

—Shawncey Webb

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**See also:** André-Hercule de Fleury; Jean-Baptiste Vaquette de Gribeauval; Louis XV; Madame de Pompadour.

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