

From Provincial savant to Parisian naturalist

the recollections of Pierre-Joseph Amoreux (1741-1824)

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Pierre-Joseph Amoreux of Montpellier was a Linnaean naturalist, agronomist and bibliographer whose adult life spanned the last decades of the ancien régime, the French Revolution, the age of Napoleon and the Restoration. Thanks to his many publications and contacts, he was a well-known figure in his own day, not just in the Midi but in Paris and beyond. His autobiography, published here for the first time along with a substantial introduction, provides the fullest first-person account of the life of a provincial man of science during this tumultuous period of France's history.

Before the French Revolution, Amoreux used his Montpellier base and the new prize-essay contest to become a renowned and respected figure in the multi-centred Republic of Letters. Post-Revolution, when French science became exclusively centred on Paris, he succeeded in relaunching his scientific career through frequent visits to the capital where he cultivated the leading lights of the Institut and the Jardin des plantes. Laurence Brockliss opens this volume by providing an in-depth analysis of the context of Amoreux's life and work, based on his surviving letters, printed and manuscript books and articles, and his autobiographical *Souvenirs*. Amoreux emerges as a driven, often ruthless, man of science, wealthy enough to devote the majority of his life to his intellectual pursuits, keen to retain his independence, and more interested in worldly success than he pretended.

The following fully annotated transcription of Amoreux's *Souvenirs* provides an unparalleled insight into the world of the minor intellectual in the Age of Enlightenment and Revolution, where success or failure could turn on the whims of publishing fashion and the vagaries of the postal service. The *Souvenirs* also offer novel access to the vibrant underbelly of intellectual life in early nineteenth-century Paris as Amoreux introduces us to a little-known world of libraries, museums, booksellers, collectors, nurserymen and dealers.

Preface

List of abbreviations

Abbreviations used by Amoreux

Note on conventions

Introduction: the Republic of Letters and the French Revolution

I. The life and work of Pierre-Joseph Amoreux

1. The autobiography
2. Family
3. The republican of letters
4. The correspondent
5. The prize-essayist
6. The Paris tourist
7. The published author
8. The collector
9. The man and his achievement
10. Concluding remarks

II. Pierre-Joseph Amoreux: *Mes souvenirs* Préambule

Enfance et jeunesse, 1741-1759

Etudiant en médecine, 1759-1762

Prbrière visite à Paris, 1764-1766

Médecin contrecarré, 1766-1767

Républicain des lettres, 1768-1789

Les années révolutionnaires, 1789-1800

Deuxième visite à Paris, 1800

Troisième visite à Paris, 1801

Chez lui, 1801-1803

Quatrième visite à Paris, 1803

Chez lui: travaux littéraires, 1803-1806

Cinquième visite à Paris, 1806

Chez lui: travaux littéraires et affaires domestiques, 1806-1814

Souvenirs et réflexions morales

Chez lui: travaux littéraires et affaires domestiques et nationales, 1814-1816

Sixième visite à Paris, 1816

Chez lui: travaux littéraires et affaires domestiques, 1816-1818

Septième visite à Paris, 1818

Chez lui: travaux littéraires et affaires domestiques, 1818-1821

Huitième visite à Paris, 1821

Dernières années, 1821-1824

Select bibliography

Index of persons

General index

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80
