

Biographical history of Henry Sully's life and work, written by Julien LeRoy.

Written and translated by : Robert St-Louis, June 2020

Source: 1737, Henry Sully, Paris: Règle artificielle du temps. Traité de la division naturelle & artificielle du temps, des horloges & des montres de différentes constructions, de la manière de les connoître & de les regler avec justesse. 433 pages.

In 1737 a new edition of Sully's ground-breaking 1717 book "Règle artificielle du temps", was carried out by the publisher Dupuis, assisted by the venerated French "horloger" Julien LeRoy, who had known Sully very well during his time in Paris. In revising the book the publisher stated, in his "Note to the reader" that "for a long time the readers asked for a new edition of this book, in which most of the sentences, containing unnecessary words, made for difficult reading [...] nothing essential was changed, so one can read all that the author has said and thought". Dupuis solicited the help of the most famous horologist of his time, Julien LeRoy, who also added several of his memoirs on horology in the second part of the book, and penned a very interesting memoir starting on page 381, entitled "Memoir to serve the history of horology from 1715 to 1729".

The majority of this section deals with Henry Sully, from his arrival in Paris around 1715, to his death in 1728. LeRoy knew Sully very well during much of this period. They were friends and worked together on advancing some aspects of watch-making during this important renewal period of French horology. Because LeRoy lived through this tumultuous period of Sully's life, consisting of alternating highs and lows, he was perfectly positioned to describe it, and offers a sympathetic portrait of his friend, who he called a "martyr" to the art of horology.

A previous translation of this important document was published in 1842 in "Time and Timekeepers", by the Englishman Adam Thomson. However, Thomson did not translate the text in its entirety, and took some editorial liberties with it, so this document aims to provide a complete translation, based on the text by Thomson wherever warranted.

[Start of Thomson's translation]

HENRY SULLY, An Englishman, the first who established a Manufactory for Watches in France—Engaged Sixty Workmen from Lon don—His Misfortunes—Died a Martyr to Science.

Sully had been an apprentice to Gratton of Lon don, under whom he made great progress, and acquired reputation. His attention was soon directed to the means of discovering longitudes; and having shewn some instruments, which he had made with that view, to Sir Isaac Newton, the encouragement given him by that illustrious philosopher, so increased his wish to attain his purpose by means of timekeepers, that he laboured incessantly, neglecting nothing which he thought would tend to the perfection of these machines.

A research like this, requiring not only talent, but also much time, was ill-suited to the condition of a poor watchmaker, and circumstances compelled him to leave his country.

He passed some time in Holland, from whence, after having studied the French and Dutch languages, he went to Vienna, where he soon ac quired German, and his genius and conversation obtained him the notice of Prince Eugene.

The Duke d'Aremberg and the Count de Bonneval thought highly of his genius, and induced him to accompany them to the army on the Rhine. Here he had the charge of their watches, with those of several German noblemen, who became his patrons and friends.

When peace was concluded between the Emperor and the King of France, the Duke d'Aremberg persuaded Sully to return with him to Paris, and on their arrival gave him apartments in the Hotel d'Ansbac, with a pension of six hundred livres.

Soon after his arrival in Paris he was introduced to Julien Le Roy, who says: "In our first conversation we disputed the merits of French and English watches, but I was on the weaker side, our watches at that time being inferior to those of London." Shortly afterwards, when the Duke d'Aremberg went to reside at the Cloitre de St. Germain l'Auxerrois, Sully followed him, and there married.

Though a foreigner, Sully applied for the post of "Maitre Horloger," but the Parisian watch makers, alarmed at his reputation, joined to oppose him; he was not appointed. His friends, however, obtained for him a donation from the Regent of 1500 livres, which Law, the noted Scotch speculator, was charged to remit to him.

Law, who was himself a clever man, went to see him, and having remarked the sound judgment evinced in his discourse, and the talent displayed in his works, considered him to be the person best adapted to his purpose of establishing a manufactory for clocks and watches, with a view to the benefit of France. He shortly afterwards communicated this design to Sully, who, at his request, went secretly to London, and engaged sixty workmen, who, with their families, were located at Versailles. The manufactory thus formed, existed for about two years, and Sully was director.

This was the most prosperous period of his life; handsome apartments, steward, servants, workmen to carry out his ideas, with ample funds, of which he had the management, everything for a time equalled his utmost wishes, but this enviable state was of short duration. The expenses of the manufactory were necessarily great, and Law, suspecting Sully of extravagance, displaced him.

Spirit-broken at this reverse, Sully returned to Paris, took furnished apartments, fell dangerously ill, and sorrow retarded his recovery. Law relented, and changing his opinion, gave him shares in stock, which were then worth 12,000 livres.

Once more in easy circumstances, Sully again turned his attention to the means of bringing horology to perfection. For this purpose he proposed, under the protection of the Duke de Noailles, to establish a manufactory at St. Germain. In this he was so well assisted by the Duke, as to be enabled to take a commodious house, and procure a number of workmen from Paris, London, and Amsterdam, who were employed solely under his direction. All his energy seemed to be exerted in exciting his men to surpass those of Versailles; thus were the two manufactories for nearly a year endeavouring to emulate each other.

But the times changed: Law was obliged to leave France; money, being scarce, was reserved for the necessaries of life; the manufactories throughout the kingdom suffered, particularly that of Sully. His small capital was soon exhausted, by paying clever workmen to execute difficult pieces of art, for which there were no purchasers, and the scheme was abandoned.

The English Government, at length aware of the injury that the country was likely to receive from the loss of clever artizans, granted £3000 to the workmen employed in the French manufactories, to enable them to return and again settle in London. This grant, together with the liberal offers of several noblemen, induced Sully to re turn to his native country with his workmen.

For some time after his arrival in London, he enjoyed the reputation which his industry and talents so well merited, but the death of his patron, the Secretary of State, prevented the fulfilment of his expectations; thus he again found himself dependant upon his own personal labour, perhaps insufficient for his maintenance.

A leaning to the scenes of his former happiness, determined him in this extremity to return to Versailles. Here he repaired watches, and his necessities even compelled him to send printed circulars to solicit the custom of the officers in the neighbourhood.

Being a clever mechanic, and his misfortunes making him indefatigable, his affairs began to assume a more favourable aspect. He here acquired the friendship of several influential persons of the court, and his means enabling him to employ several skilful workmen, he again indulged in his favourite pursuit.

He constructed a chronometer, to which he applied an escapement of his own invention. For some time it went so well, that he exhibited it to the Academy, and afterwards to the King, who granted him a pension of six hundred livres.

The exhibition and notoriety of this new chronometer, produced orders for several from various ambassadors, who wished to present them to their respective sovereigns. These orders, with numerous others from the lovers of the art, were too much for our poor countryman's finances; he was, therefore, obliged to request those who desired them, to subscribe a certain sum in advance.

Several of these watches were in a very forward state, when the original chronometer was found to be defective, from a fault in the principle of his new escapement, and the error was beyond a remedy. His subscribers became importunate, and he was unwilling to produce his watches with their imperfections. He now exerted the utmost efforts of his genius, and by perseverance he succeeded in making them according to his mind.

Imperfect as they may have been as marine chronometers, they were the first ever constructed, and Sully wished to try experiments with them at sea; for this purpose he went to Bordeaux, where he was well received by the academicians, and other persons of merit.

In the meantime his affairs were in a most deranged state, chiefly owing to the time employed to render his chronometers perfect. To add to his misfortunes, his most valuable tools were sold with other property during his absence, to pay arrears of wages due to his workmen, he was thus reduced to poverty. He returned to Paris, and grief again brought on a long and serious illness.

During his convalescence he was employed to trace a meridian in the superb church of St. Sulpice. While thus engaged, some members of the Society of Arts, which formerly met at the Louvre, and to the establishment of which Sully had principally contributed, requested him to join them in order to renew their assemblies; his taste for the arts and sciences, made him accede to their wishes.

The last time he attended this Society, he read a translation of a letter he had received from the celebrated Gregory, on the utility of mathematics. Towards the end of the same week, having heard that

an individual had something new in horology to show the Society, he took this person's address incorrectly, and persevering in the search, overheated himself, and died four or five days after of inflammation of the chest, in October, 1728. He was buried with funereal honours, opposite the door of the sanctuary, a little to the west of the meridian which he had traced only a few days before his death.

His last days were employed in endeavouring to make chronometers useful to navigation, generously sacrificing his own interest to an attempt, which, if successful, would, he knew, benefit mankind, and be the means of preserving innumerable lives.

(Julien Le Roy, who has given us his history, has well said that the arts had their martyrs as well as religions; this is truly exemplified in the life of poor Sully.)

[End of Thomson's translation]

Following is the new complete translation of LeRoy's memoir in the 1737 edition of "Règle artificielle du temps...", carried out by the author of this document. Footnotes provide contextual information on names mentioned, and particular instances of Sully's life that are represented. This translation is more literal than Thomson's, who took liberties in eliminating words or sentences, or joining some together for an easier flowing English style. Hopefully this literal translation preserves small details that may prove interesting or useful to readers and students of horological history.

[Start of new, revised translation by Robert St-Louis, 2020]

Memoir to serve the history of horology, from 1715 to 1729.

Arts have their martyrs just as much as religion, although the motives of one kind cannot be compared with the other. There were some who could have lived in abundance and comfort, if he had had more taste for their fortune, than for the perfection of their works: the late Mr. Sully was one of these; I saw him, all excited, go from door to door preaching to horologers how to perfect their art, and encouraging them with speeches and his advice to perfect themselves even more.

He had barely left his apprenticeship with Mr. Gréton [Gretton], London clockmaker, where he had made such progress and earned a reputation, whereupon his naturally elevated genius, driven to large things, turned his thinking to Longitudes. Having made some machines in this area, gave him the courage to go see the famous Mr. Newton to show them to him. It was on that day that he saw the escapement about which he talks on page 248 [1726?]. It was also on that day that he lost his restfulness. The praise and encouragement he received from this illustrious philosopher, enlightened him with such a passion that he believed that all which aimed at perfecting horology would help him get closer to discoveries he envisioned in this art.

It is easy to judge that such a search has not yet improved the affairs of an horologer born without means: further, I believe this is the motive that encouraged him to leave England for Holland, where he lived for a while, and where he learned French and Dutch languages, and from there went to Vienna in Austria, where he quickly learned German. It was in the library of Prince Eugene, and before writing his "Règle artificielle du temps", that he saw for the first time the Memoires de l'Académie [Memoirs of the Science Academy of Paris]; he developed such a fondness for these wise works, and felt so good at having learned enough French to read them, that he copied all the articles related to his art, and others that seemed to him most interesting and stimulating. (He gave me a copy of his manuscript).

His conversations led him to meet many noblemen in Vienna: the Prince Eugene, the Duke of Aremberg and the Count of Bonneval, were those who tried to help him the most; they brought him with them in the Army of the Rhine, where he took care of their watches, and repaired those of many German noblemen who became his clients and his friends.

The peace agreed between the Emperor and the King of France, determined The Duke of Aremberg to come to Paris; he wished to take care of Mr. Sully by signs of his generosity, and gave him a pension of six hundred livres, brought him to Paris and gave him an apartment in the Ansbac Hotel, in front of S. Benoist Street, where he established himself upon his arrival from Germany.

The benefits and shows of affection that the Duke of Aremberg gave to his new pensioner, did not make him forget horology, about which he so liked to discuss: a common friend, Mr. Blakey of London, crafty maker of springs, whom he asked to direct him to a well known horloger, brought him to me, on Petits Augustins Street. From our very first conversation we debated the relative quality of French and English watches, but I felt I was on the weaker side; Parisian watches, especially ones with repeaters, came up short against ones from London, because they were less expensive by half, which did not allow most if not all horlogers from producing works as finished and as perfect in all aspects, that they were capable of.

As his neighbour, I soon paid him a return visit; we talked again of our art, he showed me some of his tools, exquisitely made and crafted, including the beautiful wheel-making machine, and some pieces very well made, which seemed to me like those of a large watch, and of which he did not describe their use, which I suspected were part of, or destined for, a marine clock.

A few days later he told me he had just accomplished a bold move, and that he had bravely argued in front of famous academicians, that the application of the cicloide [cycloid?] in clocks, was useless and even damaging, and that having found them very opposed to this sentiment, he had offered to compose a memoir by which he hoped to prove his position. Some time after, he read it to me; part of this memoir, perfected by ideas he borrowed from those of Mr. Saurin, can be found on page 269 of his Description of clock escapements: one can see, in the book he dedicated to the King, what he says on this subject, starting on page 186.

Through his frequent visits, the mutual pleasure that we got from talking about our art, in which I found him very handy, because he sometimes came to my shop to repair watches of the Duke of Aremberg or some of his friends, we became such friends that proposed that I make him a watch as described at the end of his book. Some time later, the Duke of Aremberg went to live at the Cloître St. Germain l'Auxerrois: Mr. Sully went with him, and fell in love with a young lady of that neighbourhood, which interrupted our horological conversations; thus he forgot me and the watch he had ordered from me; I only saw him three or four months later, when he came to pick it up. I later learned that he had married, and some time after, had finished and presented, unbeknownst to me, the watch to the Adademie, from whom he had received an advantageous certificate, and which he used to be received as Maître Horloger [Master watch/clockmaker], even though he was a foreigner.

Most of the horlogers, alarmed by his reputation, which had spread like lightning, asked me to join them in opposing his demand, given the hand I had had in the watch that was then making a good deal of noise: I did what they asked, Mr. Sully was not accepted as Master, and he held it against me somewhat;

but as someone made him realize that he had done me wrong, we so quickly fixed things between us, that we didn't have, so to speak, the time to notice that we had been upset at each other.

Everything indicates that the opposition of the horlogers to his acceptance, was actually good for him: because his friends took the opportunity to make the Regent understand that he should obtain a gratification from the King to help him; they so well succeeded that he obtained a donation of 1500 livres, that Mr. Law was instructed to give to him, and even went to see him on that occasion. The beautiful works that he saw in his shop, the sound intelligence that he noticed in his talks, in addition to all the good that he had heard of him, made him believe that he would be well suited to lead a horology manufacture. Soon after, he communicated to him his plan, and had him leave secretly for London, from where he brought back a number of clock/watchmakers, among which were some very good ones. They were all put up at Versailles, in the Hotel des Louis, Orangerie Street or thereabouts, and built a horology manufacture, which lasted about two years.

Mr. Sully, who had set up the manufacture, became its director; most of the noblemen went there to shop for watches; he was lodged in a way that was appropriate to receive them: it was the most prosperous period of his life; a steward, servants, a "chaise roulante" [horse carriage], funds he administrated, all was there to give him pleasure. It seemed to me, in those happy times for him, that I shared his fortune, by the welcome that he gave me when I would visit his manufacture on holidays. I heard that it was during this time, feeling confident in his situation, that he thanked the Duke of Aremberg for the pension he had given him, and regularly paid him until then.

To bring from London around sixty workers, pay their debts, make them leave their place of work to come to a Roman Catholic country, lodge them fully furnished in Versailles, pay them for all their lost time, make their living conditions so good that their wives did not complain about having come to France; all this required great expense which, combined with expenditures of the director, and of Mr. R... [Reith], assistant director, who secretly made deals, concerned Mr. Law, in spite of his situation and his support of the manufactures, which he hoped would enrich the Royaume; such that in suspecting that Mr. Sully was over-spending, he named the assistant director to take his place.

Back in Paris in a furnished hotel, he became dangerously ill; the sadness in seeing his fortune vanished, made his recovery a lengthy one. A great nobleman who knew him [Aremberg? Rémond?] spoke in his defense to Mr. Law who softened his stand toward him, and gave him some shares that were worth around 12,000 livres in today's [1737] money. An hour after having received this further proof of the generosity of his benefactor, he sent for me to come dine with him, shared his joy with me, and told me about the steps he would take to better ensure his situation in the future.

But his guiding star soon took over from the resolution he had formed: once he got comfortable again, he went back to ways to perfect horology; and he chose among those that came to mind, to propose to the Maréchal Duc de Noailles to establish a manufacture at S. Germain which, becoming a rival to the one at Versailles, would produce among the workers of either one, a competition and emulation that would be advantageous to perfecting the resulting works.

Not only did the nobleman accept the proposition: he did more, helping Sully, by ordering the establish of laboratories in the sur-intendance [??], and did even more than could be expected from a great nobleman, who knows how to come down from his superior knowledge to that of the arts, loving them, and helping and protecting those who distinguish themselves by their talents.

With such great help by his protector, Mr. Sully moved into a fairly large house in S. Germain, furnished it, and inside there were many workers whose work he could observe himself, and occupied some of them to continue the construction of a wheel-cutting machine, very ingeniously designed, and on which I saw cut great watch pillars with ease and great precision. This machine would undoubtedly have been one of the most perfect of its type, if he could have finished it with the investment and the perfections which he had set for himself. I won't give here its description, as this would stray me too far from my subject.

The horlogers of the manufacture, some of whom were drawn from Paris, London, and Amsterdam, worked on his timepieces, both clocks and watches. They did not lack encouragement or advice from him, to surpass the products of Versailles; and the two manufactures, excited by the mutual emulation, tried to surpass each other during about a year.

It was during this time and in a single day, that Mr. Reith, director of the Versailles manufacture, by a fortuitous circumstance, became quite wealthy. Disgusted with having to continue to spend money on the manufacture, Mr. Law withdrew his involvement, and through an act of amazing generosity, gave to Mr. Reith all the funds that existed therein, in horology and other things; a present that was worth at least 40,000 écus in today's money.

Times changed, and Mr. Law left. Money became scarce, and reserved for basic life needs, was no longer used to buy watches: the manufactures suffered across the entire Kingdom, especially the one of Mr. Sully, whose limited funds were quickly spent in paying skilled workers, whom he had working on diverse timepieces that were too exquisite and took too long to make.

In this situation the directors of both manufactures were quite uncertain about what they should do, and for different motives; one, because he could no longer provide the funds necessary to maintain the S. Germain manufacture up and going; and the other, because he wanted to bring his fortune with him outside the Kingdom, being alarmed at rumours of government investigations, which seemed to be suggested to him because of the indifference given in Versailles to English horlogers.

At that time, several English noblemen proposed to take advantage of the circumstances in which Law's manufactures found themselves, and bring back the workers to London; they addressed themselves to the director of one, who was then in Paris; they put much pressure on him, and made him feel that he and his workers would suffer, if he didn't take necessary measures, and that he would have reason to regret it if he didn't take their advice; then they urged him to go see Sir Stuton, who received it very graciously, and told him that not only must he do what he would propose to him, but that he needed to find a way to bring back to London as many workers as possible; in this way, and to follow in the ambassador's point of view, he proposed and got acceptance without too much trouble, to Mr. Sully and Mr. Reith, to return to London with their workers, and also with the workers of another manufacture near Rouen in a place called Charleval.

As soon as the ambassador was assured of the resolution of the manufacture directors, he sent an express message to London, to inform the Court of their situation and what was taking place. The same express message came back with such favourable news, that soon after he sent to London Mr. B... [lakey?] who was the first director who had spoken to him, gave him a present worthy of his generosity and rank, and gave him letters of recommendation for the Secretary of State [James Craggs]. As soon as he arrived there, he wrote a memoir, presented it along with his letters to the Minister, who brought it

up to the First Council, and the result was that the government granted three thousand pounds sterling, payable in three installments, and as the workers would arrive in London.

On the eve of Mr. Reith and Mr. Sully's departure, I dined with them. Afterward, we went for a final ride in Mr. Reith's coach, drawn by four horses.

Upon his arrival in London, Mr. Sully received a part of the sum he had been promised for his return. It also provided for all the benefits that his reputation deserved: it was then that he started to work on his escapement; he found in it such wonderful properties that he demonstrated it in front of Mylord Parker, then Chancellor of Great Britain, and in front of Mylord Islay; he also demonstrated it in front of many interested and wise men, and of the clockmaker to the King. It was at that time that he wrote to me and proposed a horology problem related to the demonstrations and experiments that he had just done; he speaks about it on page 264 of the book already cited. [1726?]

These early beginnings did not last long, the Secretary of State died¹, his replacement [Carteret] was not very favourable to him, he didn't receive the entire sum promised to him.² The Lord Chancellor, to partly compensate him, gave him a sum of 70 guineas which, together with what he had already been given, totaled around 350, but this sum was at most a third of what he had expected, and insufficient to cover the expenses he had incurred in the hope of getting more money; therefore, finding himself not further ahead, his inclination to return to France brought him back to Paris, where he established himself at Versailles. There he started working with his hands repairing and servicing watches; I remember that he distributed printed tickets to the Camp officers of Porchefontaine³ to get their business. (His situation was so different from the one he had found himself only a few years before!) Since he was very able with his hands, and his setbacks had made him very laborious, he re-established his business pretty quickly; clients from the Court came to him in droves: amateurs of the art and others, all came to discuss with him and get him to repair their watches.

Finding himself more at ease financially, he enticed some horlogers from Paris to join and help him, including Mr. Halsted who was very skillful. This allowed him to take up again his plans for marine clocks; he built the one with levers, to which he applied his new escapement, experimented with in London to great success, and from which he hoped for great precision.

This clock, built with the highest precision, brought new admirers to him; it ran so well for many weeks that he was seduced by it. With such confidence, he presented it to the Académie and to the King, who granted him a soon after a pension of 600 livres, that was always regularly paid to him.⁴

The new lever clock was so well received, that each ambassador wanted one to bring to his sovereign: the Parisian collectors and amateurs ordered some as well; in order to make arrangements with all those who wanted one, he registered those who came to subscribe and provided a certain amount in

¹ James Craggs (1686-1721) was replaced by John Carteret (1690-1763).

² On April 20, the Treasury Papers of the UK have an entry: "Memorial Sully and others appointed to distribute his Majesty's Royal bounty to the poor manufacturers lately brought over from France. Have received 2000L out of 3000L, granted by the King in Council, and have distributed the same, but have been much interrupted by designing, ill-intentioned persons, who misrepresent them.

³ Porchefontaine was once an old feudal seigniory, farm and wooded area adjacent to Versailles, where one assumes was situated a military camp or barracks in Sully's time.

⁴ Story about LeRoy and Angélique both claiming it after Sully's death.

advance.⁵ With the funds generated by the subscriptions, he increased the number of his workers, and got them to work on marine clocks; but in the interval it took to make a few clocks, he noticed that his original one was losing accuracy, and he suspected correctly that the reason was his new escapement, of which the frictions became variable after some time; he thereby realized that the nice properties that had seduced him were obliterated by this only fault, and that he had been wrong in the positive judgment that he made about it; but at that time, when this subject was new and little known, anyone could have made the same mistake; and how could he not? the experiments themselves led him to error, he had seen his clock run so well for a month; so it was natural for him to conclude that it continue to run well, but that was not the case, it lost its consistency, and because the source was the escapement to which he was so attached, because of the love that one naturally has for one's inventions, especially those that one has flaunted in public, he had a very hard time deciding to abandon it, and only did so after many modifications that delayed him and made him very uncertain about how he would go about finishing the clocks; not being able to deliver any, and everyone asking him for them, he became very embarrassed, either to deliver them with imperfections, or to continue to have them screaming at him, until he had made the last efforts to perfect them as much as possible.

This would be the place to demonstrate why the escapement we are talking about produced such great variations, after having originally been so precise; but I reserve this subject for another memoir, I will limit myself to say here only that the variations came solely from the friction that increased or diminished to various degrees in short and equal amounts of time, and that the best escapements are those that are exempt from these defects; for example, in the memoir I am thinking about, I hope to demonstrate with the most recent evidence, that the amount of friction of the escapement from a second pendulum clock, perfected as much as it could be, and compared to Mr. Sully's, would vary less and be more constant during 50 or 60 years, than his own, as it was at the time of his death, for 50 or 60 days. I say 'at the time of his death', because I have since perfected his escapement, and I feel it would have been comforting for him to come up with this idea at a time when it could have been useful to him; however, most inventions depend on those that came before them, and the idea for mine only came to me after seeing another escapement that had been invented based on his.

After Mr. Sully had abandoned the new escapement, after many modifications, and applied the verge escapement one to his clocks, he was able to adjust them more easily, and their accuracy was much more sustainable; this progress toward their perfection, led him to try further, and it was in order to make experiments at sea, that he traveled to Bordeaux in 1726, where he arrived with referral letters from the Académie: one can see in the same book⁶, on pages 225 and 233, the results of the experiences that he made; he was extremely well received in this town by academics and other people of merit.

The considerable amount of time spent on his research, to make his clocks as perfect as possible, the money that the trips to Bordeaux cost him, his furniture and many of his precious tools sold to pay the rent in his absence, all contributed to upset him; he became ill with sadness, and his temperament weakened such that it took a long time for him to feel better, and regain his strength. Around this time, as he was convalescing, he proposed to the Curé of Saint Sulpice to trace a meridian line in the superb

⁵ Breguet would use the same approach when he returned to Paris after the Revolution, in his "Montres à souscription".

⁶ 1726?

temple that he was building for the glory of the Lord. As he toiled at this work, which he very much liked, some members of the Société des Arts, that met here in front of the Louvre, under the patronage of the Regent, and to the establishment of which he had contributed much, proposed to him to join them to start up again the interrupted meetings. His love for Science and the Arts, motivated him to devote much care in getting this project to succeed, which pleased him much; he got other people excited to join him, and rented a room in which meetings started soon after. At the last meeting that he attended, he read a letter from Mr. Gregori⁷, that he had just translated from the English, on the usefulness of mathematics. At the end of the same week, having learned that someone from the Fauxbourg St Marceau desired to show something interesting to the Société des Arts, he took the address, which was incorrect, and walked around and around this large neighbourhood so much, without being able to find it, that he overheated himself, and died four or five days later of pneumonia.

His illustrious Pastor, Mr. le Curé de S. Sulpice⁸, after having saved him spiritually during his illness, organized his burial, and a large funeral; he had him inhumated in the Church, near the sanctuary doors of the great altar, and just west of the meridian line itself, on which he had traced the signs of the degrees, few days before his death.

It was in October 1728 that one of the most skillful watch/clockmakers of Europe died, and whose last days, where he had sought ways to perfect marine clocks, and make them useful to navigation, were neither as serene nor happy as he deserved, for having courageously attempted such an honorable endeavour, since its success would have preserved thousand of lives from perishing at sea.

⁷ David Gregory (1659-1708) was a Scottish mathematician. In 1683, he was appointed Professor of Mathematics at Edinburgh University. Later, in 1691, he became Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford University. A fervent commentator on the works of Isaac Newton, in 1703 Gregory published *Euclidis quae supersunt omnia*, his commentary on Euclid's Elements. (W) Perhaps Sully had corresponded with Gregory in the past (before 1708) or decided to translate and share one of his writings. Gregory's specialties in mathematics and astronomy coincide with some of Sully's interests, not only insofar as applicable to horology.

⁸ Jean-Baptiste Languet de Gergy (1674–1750) was parish priest at Eglise Saint-Sulpice in Paris from 1714 to 1748. He was the initiator of the construction of the Gnomon of Saint-Sulpice, initiated by Henry Sully, and completed some fifteen years later by the French astronomer Pierre Charles Le Monnier (1715-99).