

ON THE MARGINS OF THE METROPOLIS

18th and 19th Century Science in the University of Melbourne Library

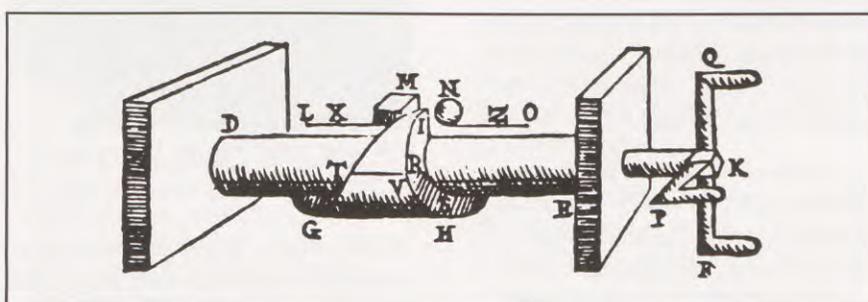
by **Juliet Flesch**

This article is loosely based on a paper presented to the 10th David Nichol Smith Seminar in Canberra in July 1996, the theme of which was *Margins and the Metropolis*. My title reflects Australia's position at the margins of the 18th century world and the the marginal position of 18th century women of science.

A conference paper about the holdings of a large research library can all too readily degenerate into the recital of a list, like a bibliographical version of the *Mikado* or a Modern Major-General. To avoid this, I begin with a broad overview of some of the more important additions to the collections of the last five or six years and conclude with a case study of how that collection may be used to research the history and works of two 18th century women.

The University of Melbourne Library holds Australia's strongest collection for the history of science. With over a century of teaching and research in science and technology behind us, we hold long runs of medical, scientific and technical journals as well as extensive holdings of monographs and we have continued to build on these resources, acquiring journals, newspapers, pamphlets and books in original editions, facsimile and microform.

Juliet Flesch is the Collection Management Librarian at the University of Melbourne Library.



An experimental device, from the *Landmarks of Science* a collection of source materials in the history of science, now in the University of Melbourne Library.

One of the most helpful things an Australian library can do is to provide material which makes a trip overseas more profitable. Indeed, in these straitened times, we may even seek to make the trip unnecessary. To this end, the University of Melbourne Library has built up a very solid collection of catalogues, bibliographies and finding aids of all kinds.

Two of the most significant acquisitions in print in recent years have been the 24 volumes of the *Catalogue Général des Ouvrages en Langue Française*^{1,2} edited by Bernard Dermineur and the 395 volumes of the *Gesamtverzeichnis des Deutschsprachigen Schrifttums*.

The *Catalogue Général* covers the gap in publication from the cessation in 1926 of Otto Lorenz's listing of all the material received in the Bibliothèque Nationale under legal deposit from 1840 to 1925 to resumption of publication in 1933. With over 100,000 entries, the work provides access to French, Belgian, Canadian, Swiss and Dutch material in the dialects of Alsace, Corsica and Brittany as well as in French.

The *Gesamtverzeichnis* appears in several series, covering German language publications, wherever published, including non-commercial publishers and dissertations. The first part covers imprints from 1700 to 1965 in 160 volumes³ and provides an unparalleled resource in a single alphabetical

sequence. Later series cover general publications from 1911 to 1965, non-commercial publications from 1966 to 1980 and dissertations for the same period.^{4,5,6}

In French we have recently bought far more bibliographical material in microform. Undoubtedly of the greatest importance are the author catalogues of printed books of the Bibliothèque Nationale.⁷ The 4,765 microfiche reproduce three separate catalogues: the *Catalogue Général des Livres Imprimés de la Bibliothèque Nationale — Auteurs 1897–1959*, which is reproduced from the corrected working copy in the BN and incorporates some 60,000 corrections of the printed volumes, *Catalogue Général des Livres Imprimés de la Bibliothèque Nationale — Auteurs, Collectivités-auteurs, Anonymes 1960–1969* and the *Catalogue Général des Livres Imprimés de la Bibliothèque Nationale — Auteurs 1897–1959. Supplément sur Fiches*.

Another general work is the *Catalogue Général des Périodiques des Origines à 1959*.⁸ Containing some 300,000 entries, this publication lists over 5,500 almanacs and about 1,500 journals published during the French Revolution. The publishers estimate that over 60% of the titles listed are not found in any other catalogue.

Going from the general to the more particular, the Library has also acquired the *Bibliothèque Nationale: Catalogue de l'Histoire de France*.⁹ The 1,500 microfiche reproduce the printed *Catalogue de l'Histoire de France* with the previously unpublished card catalogue, 1895–1987, giving a total of about 750,000 records. The works covered in this massive bibliography include pamphlets, posters and tracts as well as books.

Finally there is the republication on over 2,500 microfiche of *Département des Manuscrits. Inventaire des Instruments de Recherche: Manuscrits Occidentaux*.¹⁰ This project reproduces 200 catalogues which were either never published or have been long out of print.

They provide entries for over 100,000 manuscripts, providing the researcher in Australia with a means of pinpointing a wanted paper before leaving the country.

Perhaps overshadowing this in importance in terms of being able to let one's fingers do the walking before one gets on the plane is the microform publication of *Les Inventaires des Archives Nationales de Paris*.¹¹ The complete edition provides 773 previously unpublished inventories on 8,388 microfiche.



A few of the thousands of individuals included in the Deutsches Biographisches Archiv.

Access to these finding aids outside the Bibliothèque Nationale itself enables the scholar to identify precise documents or files to consult in Paris or have microfilmed.

A different kind of project is the *Archives Biographiques Françaises*.¹² Over 200 biographical reference works have been combined on about 1,200 microfiche to provide a single alphabetical sequence searchable by name. Multiple source works, many of them unlikely to be held in Australian libraries, can thus be consulted for about 150,000 individuals from all walks of life. The second series concentrates mostly on the 20th century, while the first is a goldmine for earlier times.

The German equivalent is the *Deutsches Biographisches Archiv*.¹³ The first series contains almost 500,000 entries on over 250,000 individuals up to the beginning of this century, while the second series supplements the first and takes the time span forward to 1945.

Our holdings of similar kinds of information in English are also extensive but less exceptional in Australia where many libraries hold the *British Biographical Archive*¹⁴ and a considerable range of bibliographical compilations.

Specifically for the history of science, one of the most important sources of texts is the vast *Landmarks of Science*. This is issued in two series. The first¹⁵ contains some 3,900 works by about 1,900 authors. It reproduces first editions of scientific works from the beginning of printing to the early 19th century. Later editions appear if notable or extensive changes were made. Collected works are present as are translations into English of works originally published in other languages. Early scientific textbooks, rare biographies, histories of science and histories of individual sciences are to be found here. Over 2,500,000 pages are reproduced.

In 1996 the University of Melbourne Library took a vital step towards making this exceptional resource more usable than before by trading in the opaque microcard version (from which it was not possible to print) for microfiche, thus liberating our readers from the solitary, elderly, clunky machine associated with the cards. The cost was high and the Library acknowledges with thanks the considerable contribution made by the Faculty of Arts towards making these documents more accessible.

The second part of *Landmarks of Science* is itself in two series, one covering journals and the other monographs. So far, we have bought only from the monographs series.¹⁶ It is appearing in several segments, each containing several hundred monographs. We are up to Segment 28 so far (publication is up to Segment 32) and continue to acquire them as we find the funds. We have not bought the journals series.

One of the Library's least-understood resources is the *CIS US Serial Set*.¹⁷ This extraordinary project consists of about 116,000 microfiche

reproducing some 11 million pages of material authorised by Congress to be printed in the set. It includes congressional publications, executive branch publications (including department and agency annual reports and other recurring publications) as well as non-governmental publications (including reprints from magazines, professional journals and other sources). The chronological coverage of the project is from 1789 (including the American state papers) to 1969.

Few people seem to know about this resource or how to use it, which is not surprising considering the lack of finding aids available until the publication of the 40 index volumes between 1975 and 1994, with the *Index and Carto-bibliography of Maps*, covering the 50,000 US maps scattered throughout the collection, to be completed in 1997. Now that the collection is accessible through the cd-rom *Congressional Masterfile 1*¹⁸, however, it should be a first port of call for many projects.

"Science" in the 1789–1857 index, for example, provides references to 13 documents, including a plan by Alexandre Vattemar, citizen of France, for international scientific and literary exchanges; a Memorial on the physical sciences and two documents on the National Institute for the Promotion of Science. In the "American State Papers" there is a six part historical survey of the cod fisheries of France, England and the United States from 1577 to 1790, and in the documents of the second, third, fourth and eighth Congresses there is the long-running saga of weights and measures: a proposed decimal system, an account of the French system, a proposal on standardising the existing system and finally a memorandum on the need for a uniform system. Accounts of geographical and geological surveys are routinely included in the *Serial Set*, as are those of other scientific inquiries.

Another large microform project containing journals is *American Medical Periodicals, 1797–1900*.¹⁹ This is issued at the rate of 100 reels of

microfilm a year and we have so far received the first 750. Over 2,000 19th century medical periodicals will eventually be covered, chosen from the holdings of the National Library of Medicine and other major US institutions. The first 15 units of the project contain five



In the *US Serial Set Index* (Part I), there are numerous entries on the US conflict with France during the 1790s. The index includes references to the infamous XYZ affair, in which French foreign minister Talleyrand attempted to extract bribes and loans from the American emissaries sent to France to resolve the dispute.

titles which began publication at the end of the 18th century and a further 20 or so which started in the first 20 years of the 19th century.

We hold parts of a couple of hundred pre-twentieth century English language medical journals in hard copy, mostly from Britain. These have been recently supplemented by the acquisition of the *Annals of the Royal College of Physicians, 1518–1915*.²⁰ The 417 microfiche provide access to the previously unpublished minute books of the Royal College of Physicians and its committees.

The Royal Society has long been a special focus of the historians of science at Melbourne and indeed the Friends of the Baillieu Library have made special efforts to buy titles for us. Neatly

connecting the Royal Society with the Royal College of Physicians is Sir Hans Sloane, who having been Secretary of the Royal Society from 1693 to 1712, was its President from 1727 to 1741 and was also President of the Royal College of Physicians from 1719 to 1735.

The Library has the first of a projected three part collection of his papers from the British Library²¹ on 17 reels of microfilm, containing his correspondence with all the notable scientists of the day. The papers dealing specifically with medicine are projected for publication some time in the future.

The Library also holds microfilm of the *Council Minutes* from 1600 to 1800²², the *Journal Books of Scientific Meetings, 1600–1800*²³ and some 1,800 *Miscellaneous Manuscripts*²⁴ as well as the *Early Letters and Classified Papers, 1660–1740*.²⁵ Together these provide an unparalleled insight into the formal and informal workings of the Royal Society in the 18th century.

While the *Council Minutes* deal with the management of the Royal Society rather than its scientific work, the *Journal Books* contain the minutes of the Society's ordinary meetings, including much material not to be found elsewhere. There are abstracts of papers read before the Society, reports of discussions, notations concerning books and other material brought to the attention of the members and the presidential addresses delivered at anniversary meetings. The *Miscellaneous Manuscripts* reproduce the Society's 14 volumes of letters and private papers comprising some 1,800 items. The *Early Letters and Classified Papers* consist of material by members disseminated by the Society on the one hand and papers, letters and memoranda submitted to it from all over the world on the other. The total resource thus assembled provides a very extensive, in-depth view of the state of scientific discussion in the 18th century.

From this general picture of the Library's holdings of mainstream 18th century science, let us turn to a resource for the study of marginalised

science — that undertaken by 18th century women.

There are some women's works included in *Landmarks of Science*, but there are many gaps. I had initially hoped that another large microfilm project would help: *History of Women*.²⁶ This consists of 1,238 reels of microfilm of books, periodicals, manuscripts, pamphlets and photographs published before 1920. Material has been filmed from the collections at Radcliffe College, Smith College, the Boston Public Library and Scripps College for Women. Filming has been done in chronological order, with the first four units covering the period to 1829. Eighty percent is in English. Although attempts have been made to cover women in science, the greater part of the collection deals with socio-economic, legal, political issues.

*Women Advising Women*²⁷, the second part of which is devoted to advice books, manuals, almanacs and journals from the Bodleian Library published between about 1635 and 1837, contains some titles on childbirth, sexual hygiene, etc., as well as rather more on etiquette and deportment.

With all these works at our disposal, therefore, I decided to find out what I could about two 18th century French women of science: Marie Boivin and Marie Louise Lachapelle, chosen partly because French history of the 18th and 19th century is an area of special strength in the Library and partly because of the position of Paris as the archetypal metropolis.

In making this choice I passed over some very interesting candidates for attention who are not, I suspect, currently the subject of intensive academic attention. Many are reasonably well-known represented in the collections. Madame du Châtelet, Caroline Herschel, Sophie Germain and Marie Lavoisier are all held, although Lavoisier's translation of Kirwan's *Essay on Phlogiston* is listed under his name without identifying the translator. We also hold, either in original editions or in *Landmarks of Science*, at least some of the works of

Margaret Bryant, Dorothea Erxleben, Jane Marcet, Maria Gaetana Agnesi and Priscilla Wakefield.

I am indebted to Professor R.W. Home for the information that a German scholar is researching the life and work of Laura Bassi Verati. This astonishing Italian anatomist and physicist managed, after receiving the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Bologna, to study mechanics, hydraulics, anatomy and natural history. She was appointed to the Chair of Anatomy at Bologna and continued to give lectures on anatomy and experimental physics, while at the same time bearing 12 children. Shirley Conran, eat your heart out! I had thought of trying to see how much work one could do on her in Melbourne but as she never found the time or the inclination to publish, research from Australia would be difficult indeed.

The women I chose both appear with some biographical detail in Marilyn Bailey Ogilvie's *Women in Science: Antiquity through the Nineteenth Century*²⁸ and they both published. Their careers were intertwined and both produced books which were influential in their time, translated into other languages and produced in several editions.

Marie Louise Lachapelle, née Dugès, lived from 1769–1822. The daughter of a midwife, she is reputed to have brought her first delivery, a difficult one, to a successful conclusion at the age of eleven and a half. Her mother, Marie Dugès, née Jonet, lived from 1730 to 1797. In 1775 she became the chief midwife at the Paris Hôtel Dieu, which until 1793 was the only hospital for the pregnant poor. Its conditions were horrendous: in an insanitary ward above the other patients, women were frequently crowded several to a bed.

Madame Lachapelle married in her early twenties (the sources differ on whether she was 22 or 25) and was left a widow some three years later. On her mother's death, which occurred at about the same time as her husband's, she inherited the position of head of the

maternity department of the Hôtel Dieu. After studies in Heidelberg, she was employed by the Directoire to set up a maternity and children's hospital at Port Royal.

Madame Lachapelle published two monographs, a slim volume entitled *Recherches sur les Maladies des Nouveaux Nés* and a very much more famous and influential *Pratique des Accouchemens*²⁹ which went through several editions, including a German translation. She also published in the *Annuaire des Hôpitaux*.³⁰

There is a picture of Madame Lachapelle in Delacoux's *Biographie des Sages-femmes Célèbres*,³¹ which gives ten pages to her biography. This is reproduced in the *Archives Biographiques Françaises*, which also contains an extract from Mahul's *Annuaire Nécrologique*³² as well as Hoeffler's *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*³³ and references to entries in the *Moniteur* of 6 October, 1821³⁴ and Quérard's *La France Littéraire*.³⁵

While the University of Melbourne Library holds Quérard in hard copy and the *Moniteur* in microform, as well as the biographical extracts mentioned above, it does not hold Madame Lachapelle's principal work or the *Annuaire des Hôpitaux*.

One of her pupils at the Ecole Pratique de la Maternité was Marie Anne Victoire Boivin, née Gillain who was soon recognised as an outstanding student. She lived from 1773 to 1841. At the age of 18, she entered a convent, but took no vows and was in any case forced back into the world in 1793. In 1797 she married a civil servant, Louis Boivin, by whom she had one daughter.

Marie Boivin received an honorary MD from the University of Marburg and was invested with an order of merit by the King of Prussia in 1814. In that year she was co-director of the General Hospital for Seine et Oise and in 1815 was director of a temporary military hospital. She later became director of the Hospice de la Maternité and, further

proof that her skills were not confined to gynaecology, of the Maison Royale de Santé, where she took over the position previously occupied by Madame Lachapelle. Contemporary biographers stress her extreme modesty but also make clear that as well as midwifery, she also worked as a surgeon. *Archives Biographiques Françaises* reproduces the five pages allocated to her by Delacoux, two by Hoeffler and seven pages in Daniel and Daniel de Saint-Anthoine's *Biographie des Hommes Remarquables du Département de Seine-et-Oise*.³⁶ Evidently, she was so remarkable that she became an honorary man.

Ogilvie notes that Madame Boivin wrote a treatise on obstetrics and gynaecology which "had a popular following in both Germany and France".³⁷ There were in fact four French editions published between 1812 and 1836 and it was used as a textbook at the maternity school of Berlin. Nor was this all she published.

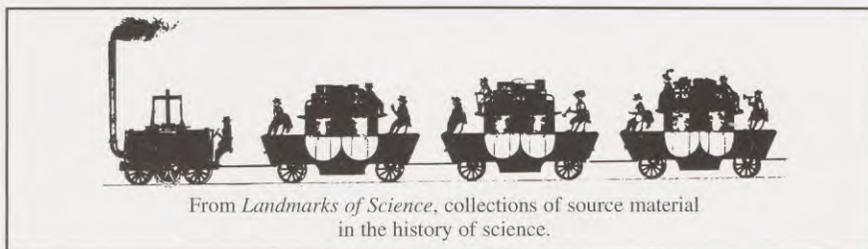
The *Bibliothèque Nationale* lists five other works, one of which won the "prix d'émulation au concours ouvert" of the Société de Médecine de Paris³⁸ and another which was "couronné par la

Société Royale de Médecine de Bordeaux",³⁹ as well as two translations from the English.

Madame Boivin also published numerous "observations" in the *Gazette de Santé*,⁴⁰ the *Journal des Sciences Médicales*⁴¹ and the *Journal Hebdomadaire de Médecine*.⁴²

The University of Melbourne holds only one of her works, written in collaboration with Dr Antoine Dugès, translated into English: *A Practical Treatise on the Diseases of the Uterus and its Appendages*.^{43,44} We do not hold the original edition. The journals in which she published are not reproduced in the vast Pergamon Press publication *The French Revolution Research Collection*,⁴⁵ and, as far as I can tell, they are not held anywhere in Australia.

The first part of this article shows the great strength of the University of Melbourne resources in 18th and 19th century science. The second part suggests that we still have some way to go. Women's health and women's history are areas of great and growing scholarly interest but primary source material for the history of early women scientists is an area in which the collection still requires some work. ●



From *Landmarks of Science*, collections of source material in the history of science.

Footnotes

1. *Catalogue Général des Ouvrages en Langue Française 1926–1929*. Publié sous la direction de Bernard Dermineur. (Munich, Saur, 1987–89)
2. *Catalogue Général des Ouvrages en Langue Française 1930–1933*. Publié sous la direction de Bernard Dermineur. (Munich, Saur, 1991–95)
3. *Gesamtverzeichnis des Deutschsprachigen Schrifttums 1700–1965*. Hrsg. Willi Gorzny und Hilmar Schmuck. (Munich, Saur, 1979–86)
4. *Gesamtverzeichnis des Deutschsprachigen Schrifttums 1911–1965*. Hrsg. Reinhard Oberschlep. (Munich, Saur, 1976–81)
5. *Gesamtverzeichnis des Deutschsprachigen Schrifttums Ausserhalb des Buchhandels 1966–1980*. (Munich, Saur, 1988–89)
6. *Gesamtverzeichnis Deutschsprachiger Hochschulschriften 1966–1980*. (Munich, Saur, 1983–88)
7. *Bibliothèque Nationale: the Author Catalogues of Printed Books*. (Cambridge, Chadwyck-Healey, 1990)
8. *Bibliothèque Nationale: catalogue Général des Périodiques des Origines à 1959*. (Cambridge, Chadwyck-Healey, 1987)
9. *Bibliothèque Nationale: Catalogue de l'Histoire des France*. (Cambridge, Chadwyck-Healey, 1987)
10. *Bibliothèque Nationale: Département des Manuscrits. Inventaire des Instruments de Recherche: Manuscrits Occidentaux*. (Cambridge, Chadwyck-Healey, 1989)
11. *Les Inventaires des Archives Nationales de Paris*. (Cambridge, Chadwyck-Healey, 1989)
12. *Archives Biographiques Françaises*. Edited by Susan Bradley. (Munich, Saur, 1988–90) and *Archives Biographiques Françaises II*. Edited by Tommaso Nappo. (Munich, Saur, 1993–96)
13. *Deutsches Biographisches Archiv* (Munich, Saur, 1984) and *Neue Folge*. (Munich, Saur, 1989–91)
14. *British Biographical Archive*. (Munich, Saur)
15. *Landmarks of Science*. (New Canaan, Readex, 1966–76)

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16. *Landmarks II*. (New Canaan, Readex, 1990—)
17. *CIS US Serial Set*. Washington, CIS, 197?—
18. *Congressional Masterfile 1789–1969*. (Bethesda, Congressional Information Service, 1993)
19. *American Medical Periodicals, 1797–1900*. (Reading, Research Publications, 1986—)
20. *Annals of the Royal College of Physicians, 1518–1915*. (Reading, Adam Matthew, 1991)
21. Sir Hans Sloane, *Science and Society, 1660–1753*. (Reading, Adam Matthew, 1991)
22. *Royal Society (Great Britain) Council Minutes, 1660–1800*. (Frederick, University Publications of America, 1991)
23. *Royal Society (Great Britain) Journal Books of Scientific Meetings, 1660–1800*. (Frederick, University Publications of America, 1991)
24. *Royal Society (Great Britain) Miscellaneous Manuscripts*. (Frederick, University Publications of America, 1991)
25. *Royal Society (Great Britain) From the Archives of the Royal Society: the Early Records and Classified Papers, 1660–1740*. (Bethesda, University Publications of America, 1990)
26. *History of Women*. (Woodbridge, Research Publications, 1983)
27. *Women Advising Women*. (Reading, Adam Matthew, 1994)
28. Marilyn Bailey Ogilvie, *Women in Science: Antiquity Through the Nineteenth Century: a Biographical Dictionary*. (Windsor, CA, National Women's History Project, 19)
29. Marie Louise Lachapelle (Dugès), *Pratique des Accouchemens; ou Mémoires et Observations Choisis Sur les Points les Plus Importants de l'Art*. 3 volumes. (Paris, Baillière, 1821–25)
30. *Annuaire des Hôpitaux*. (Paris)
31. A. Delacoux. *Biographie des Sages-Femmes Célèbres*. (Paris, 1834)
32. A.J. Mahul. *Annuaire Nécrologique*. (Paris, 1821–26)
33. J.C.F. Hoeffer. *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*. (Paris, 1832)
34. *Le Moniteur*
35. Joseph Marie, Quérard. *La France Littéraire ou Dictionnaire Biographique des Savants, Historiens et Gens de Lettres de la France*. (Paris, Firmin Didot, 1827–64)
36. Ernest H. Daniel, & J. Hippolyte Daniel de Saint-Anthoine. *Biographie des Hommes Remarquables du département de Seine-et-Oise, Depuis le Commencement de la Monarchie Jusqu'à ce Jour*. (Paris, 1832)
37. Marie Anne Victoire Boivin, (Gillain). *Mémorial de l'Art des Accouchements: ou Principes Fondés sur la Pratique de l'Hospice de la Maternité de Paris et sur Celles des Célèbres Praticiens Nationaux et Étrangers*. (Paris, 1812)
38. Marie Anne Victoire Boivin (Gillain). *Mémoire sur les Hémorragies Internes de l'Utérus*. (Paris, 1819)
39. Marie Anne Victoire Boivin (Gillain). *Recherches sur une des Causes les Plus Fréquentes et la Moins Connues de l'Avortement*. (Paris, 1828)
40. *Gazette de Santé*. (Paris, 1773–1829)
41. *Journal des Sciences Médicales*
42. *Journal Hebdomadaire de Médecine*. (Paris, 1828–1830)
43. Marie Anne Victoire Boivin (Gillain). *A Practical Treatise on the Diseases of the Uterus and its Appendages: Translated...with Copious Notes, by G.O. Heming*. (London, 1834)
44. Marie Anne Victoire Boivin (Gillain). *Traité Pratique des Maladies Pratiques de l'Utérus et de ses Annexes, Fondés sur un Grand Nombre d'Observations Cliniques*. (Paris, 1833)
45. *The French Revolution Research Collection and Videodisk*. (Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1989)