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Natalie Hawkes

Antoine Daquin – Premier Médecin to Louis XIV (1672-1693)

Antoine Daquin, a graduate of the Montpellier Medical Faculty and court physician, was appointed *premier médecin* to Louis XIV in 1672. Controversially dismissed in 1693, Daquin's interest to medical history would appear to lie not in his medical activity, but in the ways in which his medical career was adapted, and eventually compromised, to suit the unique dynamics of Louis XIV's court society.

Although his exact birth date is unknown, it appears likely from extant sources that Antoine Daquin was born in 1629.¹ A middle child from the fruitful marriage of Louis-Henri Daquin and Claire Loppès,² Antoine was born into a family of considerable scholarly and medical acclaim. His father had been in the King's medical service since 1644, attaining the position of *médecin par quartier* to Louis XIV by 1657.³ His paternal grandfather, a converted Jew named Philippe, was a celebrated writer of religious texts and a Hebrew teacher in Paris.⁴ His scholarly reputation was such that he was named a professor of the prestigious Collège de France by Louis XIII.⁵

Next to nothing is known about Daquin's life before he received his medical doctorate from the Montpellier Medical Faculty on 18th May 1648.⁶ After graduating he moved to Paris, and although his exact whereabouts are unknown during this time, it is possible that he settled in the suburbs of Saint-Germain where many of his relatives were situated.⁷

In light of his father's career, it seems likely that Daquin established himself at court very soon after his move to the capital.⁸ Once there, he quickly formed a close working relationship with

¹ Using a range of archival sources, Auguste Jal proposed the approximate birth date of 1629 for Daquin based upon the recorded birth dates of his elder siblings, and assumed age upon death. (A. Jal, *Dictionnaire critique de biographie et d'histoire; : errata et supplément pour tous les dictionnaires historiques, d'après des documents authentiques inédits*, Genève, 1970, I, 60).

² For more information on the children of Louis-Henri Daquin and Claire Loppès, see: *Ibid.*, 59.

³ *Ibid.* Jal cites the following archival source for this information: Bibl. Imp. Ms. St-Magloire, n° 74.

⁴ For more information on Philippe Daquin, see Pierre Bayle's famous *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*, Amsterdam, 1734; N. F. J. Eloy, *Dictionnaire Historique de la Médecine ancienne et moderne*, Mons, 1755, 6 and M. Hofer, *Nouvelle biographie générale depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à 1850-60*, Copenhagen, 1966, 946.

⁵ Hofer, *Nouvelle biographie générale*, 946.

⁶ Eloy, *Dictionnaire Historique*, 6.

⁷ Jal, *Dictionnaire*, I, 59-60.

⁸ '(Daquin) fut promu au Doctorat le 18 Mai 1648. Il retourna delà à Paris, & il alla s'établir à la Cour, autant que j'en puis juger'. (J. Astruc, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la Faculté de Médecine de Montpellier*, Paris, 1767, 387).

Antoine Vallot, who was then *premier médecin* to Anne of Austria.⁹ This connection was to prove particularly valuable to Daquin's career after Vallot was appointed *premier médecin* to Louis XIV in 1652, following the death of François Vautier.¹⁰

Vallot's use of controversial new remedies such as antimony, cinchona and laudanum made him the subject of much criticism amongst members of the Paris Medical Faculty,¹¹ who remained loyal to traditional Galenic and Hippocratic practice during this period. Due to his association with Vallot, Daquin would inevitably fall victim to the Paris Faculty's scorn in this respect. Criticism was often headed by Gui Patin - Dean of the institution from 1650-1672 – who wrote the following scathing description of Daquin in 1654:

*(...) pauvre cancre, race de juif (...) qui est un grand charlatan (...) C'est un médecin de la cour qui est véritablement court de science, mais riche en fourberies chimiques et pharmaceutiques.*¹²

Despite the Paris Medical Faculty's disapproval, Daquin's medical career at court progressed comfortably and he was appointed *médecin par quartier* in April 1653.¹³ On 24th October 1656 he married Marguerite Geneviève Gayaut – Vallot's niece in law.¹⁴ The marriage proved prolific – the couple had at least eight children together between 1657 and 1666¹⁵ - but undoubtedly the greatest benefit of the union from Daquin's point of view was the permanent alliance it cemented between himself and the *premier médecin*.

Appointed *intendant au Jardin du roi* in 1661, Daquin's next medical advancement at court would not materialise until 1667 when he became *premier médecin* to Marie-Thérèse d'Autriche, Queen of France. His promotion to this prestigious position - and subsequent appointment as *premier médecin* to the Dauphin¹⁶ - was attributed by many to his now familial alliance with Vallot.¹⁷ Unfortunately for Daquin, this would not be the last time in his career that his professional success was attributed to social rather than medical causes.

⁹ An example of cooperation between Daquin and Vallot can be found in February 1650, when the pair consulted over the suspected urethral stone of Sieur d'Emery, *Surintendant des finances*. (F.-N. B. Dubuisson-Aubenay, *Journal des guerres civiles de Dubuisson Aubenay*, Paris, 1883, I, 218. In S. Perez, *La Santé de Louis XIV: Une biohistoire du Roi-Soleil*, Seyssel, 2007, 156).

¹⁰ François Vautier was *premier médecin* to Louis XIV from 1646 to 1652. For more information on Vautier, see : Eloy, *Dictionnaire*, 486-7.

¹¹ Astruc, *Mémoires*, 381-2 and Eloy, *Dictionnaire*, 465.

¹² Extract from a letter dated 21st January 1654. (Jal, *Dictionnaire*, I, 61).

¹³ Perez, *Biohistoire*, 162.

¹⁴ Marguerite's father was Nicolas Gayaut - Lord of Meneutier, Saint-Vincent and la Sablonière, conseiller du Roi and Prevost of Clairmont. For more information on the marriage, see: Jal, *Dictionnaire*, I, 59-60.

¹⁵ For more information on Daquin's children, see: *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁶ Perez, *Biohistoire*, 162.

¹⁷ Astruc, *Mémoires*, 387.

As chief physician to the Queen, Daquin's social status at court began to inevitably ascend alongside his medical career. After his family were ennobled in 1669,¹⁸ Daquin's seventh child enjoyed the privilege of receiving his royal patient, Marie-Thérèse d'Autriche, and the Prince du Condé as godparents.¹⁹

In the beginning of 1671, the ageing Vallot fell seriously ill with asthma and a fever.²⁰ Unable to accompany Louis XIV on his expeditions to Saint-Germain and Flanders, he consequently transferred responsibility for the King's healthcare to Daquin. The latter documented his first tentative medical encounters with Louis XIV, which mostly took the form of precautionary purgative stocks and enemas,²¹ in the *Journal de Santé de Louis XIV* - a medical journal written by Louis XIV's three successive *premiers médecins*.²²

On the 8th August of the same year, Vallot died at the age of 75.²³ Writing in the *Journal de Santé*, Daquin described how the *premier médecin's* death created a stir amongst the medics at court who fought over the coveted and now vacant position.²⁴ Despite this commotion it must have been very little surprise to all at court when Daquin, who had continued to care for the King's health into the following year, officially obtained the title of *premier médecin* on 18th April 1672.

Although his medical skill was praised by more official vehicles as the justification behind his appointment,²⁵ many continued to attribute Daquin's ultimate rise to his social aptitude. Perhaps Bussy-Rabutin illustrated court sentiment towards Daquin's appointment most succinctly, when he wrote to his cousin the Marquise de Sévigné:

*Le petit Daquin est premier médecin. La faveur l'a pu faire autant que le mérite.*²⁶

¹⁸ Louis XIV ennobled Louis-Henri Daquin on 11th November 1669. (L. W. B. Brockliss and C. Jones, *The Medical World of Early Modern France*, Oxford, 1997, 547).

¹⁹ Jal, *Dictionnaire*, I, 61.

²⁰ Daquin in A. Vallot, A. Daquin and G.-C. Fagon, *Journal de Santé de Louis XIV*. Ed. by S. Perez, Grenoble, 2004, 170.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 170-1.

²² Louis XIV's three *premiers médecins* were Antoine Vallot (1647-1671), Antoine Daquin (1671-1693) and Gui-Crescent Fagon (1693-1715). The *Journal de Santé* provides a meticulous annual report of the King's health from 1652 to 1711.

²³ *Ibid.*, 171.

²⁴ 'M. Vallot (...) laissa en mourant, le huitième d'août, la charge de premier-médecin vacante, et ouvrit la porte à toutes les brigues et toutes les poursuites de quantité de prétendants qui ont si longtemps partagé la cour.' (*Ibid.*).

²⁵ *La Gazette* wrote the following on Daquin's appointment: '(...) le roi nomma le sieur d'Aquin à la charge de son premier-médecin, vacante depuis le décès du sieur Vallot, à qui S. M. ne pouvait donner un successeur dont la capacité fut plus universellement reconnue'. The periodical also describes how on 24th April 1672, the Dean of the Paris Medical Faculty accompanied by several doctors in ceremonial dress officially complimented Daquin on his appointment, on behalf of the institution. (Footnotes by Perez in *Journal*, 172-3).

²⁶ Bussy-Rabutin in Marquise de Sévigné, *Correspondance*. Ed. by R. Duchêne, Paris, 1972, I, 487.

Rumours abounded that Daquin owed his appointment to Mme de Montespan - Louis XIV's powerful second mistress with whom the *premier médecin* was now closely associated.²⁷ Some contemporaries even suspected that Daquin had bribed his flamboyant new protégé in order to obtain the position.²⁸ Yet despite this discernable ambivalence towards his medical skill, Daquin appears to have fulfilled his duties relatively successfully in his first few years as *premier médecin*.

The *premier médecin's* primary purpose was to maintain the health of the King. In order to fulfil this requirement, Daquin was provided with his own apartments in both the château de Versailles²⁹ and Marly - Louis XIV's exclusive holiday retreat³⁰ - ensuring his constant medical presence by the King's side. Success in this key aspect of the role often lay in the *premier médecin's* ability to negotiate a balance of power between himself as doctor, and the King as his patient. Yet although it was integral that Louis XIV received the full medical surveillance and care that were due to him, it must have proven particularly difficult for Daquin to enforce any kind of medical control over a 'Sun King', who exerted his absolute authority over all aspects of his life and kingdom with an iron fist.³¹

Daquin appears to have initially succeeded in negotiating this challenging aspect of his new position. Writing in the *Journal de Santé* during his first years as *premier médecin*, he paints a vivid portrait of Louis XIV as an energetic military leader who - excepting his customary 'vapours' and a string of protracted illnesses in 1675³² - enjoys a relatively clean bill of health. Daquin often

²⁴ The duc de Saint-Simon describes Daquin as a 'créature de Mme de Montespan' (Duc de Saint-Simon, *Mémoires: Additions au Journal de Dangeau*. Ed. by Y. Coirault, Paris, 1983-1988, I, 107). Italian courtier Primi Visconti wrote the following description of their relationship: 'Mme de Montespan (...) supportait (Daquin) parce que son principal talent consistait en un remède secret pour calmer les maux de tête dont cette dame souffrait beaucoup; le remède était d'ailleurs imaginaire, car il ne procurait à cette dame que peu de soulagement.' (P. Visconti, *Mémoires sur la cour de Louis XIV, 1673-1681*. Ed. By J. F. Sohon, Paris, 1988, 69-70).

²⁸ P. Narbonne and Père Léonard believe the bribe amounted to 60,000 *livres* (Perez, *Biohistoire*, 162). In his edition of Saint-Simon's memoirs, Arthur Michel Boislisle gives the figure of 20,000 *écus*. (Duc de Saint-Simon, *Mémoires de Saint-Simon*. Ed. by A. M. de Boislisle, Paris, 1879, I, 285. In : J. J. Peumery, 'La disgrâce d'Antoine Daquin, premier médecin de Louis XIV (1693)', *Vesalius : acta internationalia historiae medicinae* 2 (1996) 79-85, 84).

²⁹ W. R. Newton, *L'espace du roi. La cour de France au château de Versailles: 1682-1789*, Paris, 2000, 236. Daquin's apartment was situated on the ground floor of the Prince's Wing, facing the rue de la Surintendance. Although Daquin's apartment - which would be occupied by many successive *premier médecins* - was one of the best in this part of the châteaux, it was very modest in comparison with many of the nobles' vast suites (*Ibid.*, 193).

³⁰ Abbé le Gendre, *Mémoires*. Ed. by M. Roux, Paris, 1863, 212. In: Perez, *Biohistoire*, 155.

³¹ For more information on the 'rapports de force' between Louis XIV and his medics, see: 'Les archiatres et le roi: médecine, pouvoir et vérité', in: *Ibid.*, 165-179.

³² This period of bad health included 'vapours', nosebleeds and pains in the feet, thighs and neck (Daquin, *Journal*, 187-198 and Perez, *Biohistoire*, 382).

attributes this happy state of affairs to Louis' wilful submission to doctors' orders,³³ and active engagement with himself over lifestyle choices and remedies.³⁴

In a society where the King's medical taste - as with all aspects of his life - was keenly emulated,³⁵ the *premier médecin* automatically became the most desirable physician at court. Daquin consequently enjoyed a large clientele; brought into consultation by the personal physicians of members of the royal family during times of illness, his medical advice was equally sought by lesser nobles, such as the marquis de Richebourg.³⁶

As chief physician to the kingdom's most important citizen, the *premier médecin* was theoretically the most superior medic in France. In the wider medical profession, deference towards the *premier médecin's* authority in this respect was often expressed in the form of dedications of medical texts. Many such texts, on a wide variety of subjects, were dedicated to Daquin during his time as *premier médecin* – some including transcripts of his correspondence and medical advice, as can be seen in Jean de Rhodes' text on the salutary effects of different waters,³⁷ others - such as the second edition of the *Traité des maladies des femmes grosses* by François Mauriceau - soliciting his superior approval as a defence against potential critics.³⁸

Due to his nationally recognised medical authority, the *premier médecin* was also expected to preside over administrative matters as varied as the policing of apothecaries,³⁹ authorization of

³³ Examples of Louis XIV's submission to Daquin's orders in the early years of his appointment as *premier médecin* can be found in: Daquin, *Journal*, 176, 185, 190, 193, and 195.

³⁴ A good example of Louis XIV's cooperation with Daquin can be seen in April 1672, when the pair negotiated a precautionary purging to prepare the King for an upcoming military campaign (*Ibid.*, 173).

³⁵ Perhaps the most bizarre example of courtly emulation in this respect followed the operation on Louis XIV's anal fistula. Parisian surgeon Pierre Dionis recounted how even perfectly healthy courtiers queued up to have the same procedure performed upon themselves. (P. Dionis, *Cours des opérations de chirurgie, démontrées au jardin royal*, Brussels, 1708, 322-5. In: Brockliss and Jones, *Medical World*, 316).

³⁶ In June 1673, the marquis de Richebourg consulted Daquin and asked to be bled, fearing for his life. On examining him and diagnosing the 'vapours', Daquin refused the marquis' request on the grounds that due to the nature of the illness, bleeding would be likely to do much more harm than good. (P. Pellisson-Fontanier, *Lettres historiques*, Paris, 1729, 319. In: Perez, *Biohistoire*, 157).

³⁷ J. de Rhodes, *A Monsieur d'Aquin, Conseiller Ordinaire du Roy en ses Conseils & Premier Médecin de sa Majesté*, Lyon, 1691. The text is a collection of the correspondence between Daquin and de Rhodes on the subject of hot 'artificial' waters, and the illnesses for which they were considered appropriate.

³⁸ 'C'est MONSIEUR (Daquin), ce qui m'oblige de vous supplier avec tout le respect que je vous dois, de me permettre de faire paraître au public la seconde édition de ce Livre sous vostre Nom, qui seul luy servira d'une suffisante approbation, & d'une assurée protection contre tous les jaloux de la reputation de son Auteur (...)' (F. Mauriceau, *Traité des maladies des femmes grosses, et de celles qui sont nouvellement accouchées*, Paris, I, 1675).

³⁹ Brockliss and Jones, *Medical World*, 182.

organisations and appointment of medical officials at court and beyond.⁴⁰ Daquin was of course no exception to this rule - one such example of his work as *premier médecin* in this respect can be seen in his authorization of the opening of a shop and manufactory, built for the preparation of medicines by surgeon Cosme-Darwin in 1679.⁴¹

The *premier médecin's* required proximity to the King, and consequent permanent residence at court, meant that its holder was often unable to engage with the wider medical world to any significant extent. Yet the medical text, *Secrets concernant la beauté et la santé*⁴² - published by Daquin's protégé, Nicolas de Blégny, in 1688 – reveals that despite his commitments at court, Daquin evidently harboured some productive desire to contribute to contemporary medical discourse. The book contains a lengthy dedication to Daquin, which explains the text's purpose as a culmination of medical research commissioned by the *premier médecin* himself. In repeatedly referring the reader to Daquin's own authoritative medical works and opinions, the text also hints at a personal interest in medical development on Daquin's part.

Daquin's strong support for the *Chambre royale des universités provinciales et étrangères* was undoubtedly his most significant – and controversial – contribution to contemporary medicine beyond the court.⁴³ The *Chambre royale* – a medical organization authorized by Louis XIV and established with patent letters in April 1673 – was a small group of medics from non-Parisian medical faculties who had the right to license medical practice in the capital – a privilege that was usually reserved for Parisian graduates exclusively. The *Chambre royale's* circumvention of their privileges, along with its support for the use of new chemicals, rendered it a particularly controversial organisation to the Paris Medical Faculty.⁴⁴ As a graduate of the Montpellier Medical Faculty – historically bitter rivals of their Parisian counterparts – and the chief representative of court medicine, which in its encouragement of innovation had always been at odds with the Paris Faculty's stalwart loyalty to ancient medical tradition,⁴⁵ it must have been no surprise to Paris graduates when Daquin began to encourage the *Chambre royale's* efforts. However, it was equally logical that his strong support would be enough to secure the Paris Medical Faculty's permanent wrath against him.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ The *premier médecin* reserved the right to examine and survey all new physicians at court. He also had the right to appoint new medical officials in towns that were too small to house their own medical faculties. (Perez, *Biohistoire*, 145).

⁴¹ Brockliss and Jones, *Medical World*, 243.

⁴² N. de Blégny, *Secrets concernant la beauté et la santé, recueillis et publiez par ordre de Monsieur Daquin, Conseiller du Roy en ses Conseils & Premier Médecin de sa Majesté*, Paris, I, 1688.

⁴³ Perez, *Biohistoire*, 164.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ For more information on the court medical community and Paris Medical Faculty's conflicting approaches to medical practice, see: H. Trevor-Roper, 'The Court Physician and Paracelsianism', In: *Medicine at the Courts of Europe 1500-1837*. Ed. By V. Nutton, London, 1990, 79-94.

⁴⁶ In his account of his journey to Paris in 1698, Martin Lister wrote the following description of the feelings he encountered towards Daquin and the *Chambre royale*, which had been dissolved four years earlier in 1694: 'J'ai eu occasion de causer avec nombre de médecins de cette ville, qui tous conviennent de l'abaissement et de le mésestime où est tombé leur art, grâce à l'intrusion des

Whilst Daquin continued to fulfil his duties as *premier médecin*, his presence at court became increasingly defined and he enjoyed a significant improvement in social status. Despite the rumours surrounding his appointment, Mme de Montespan's retreat from court in 1683 was generally believed to have had no significant effect on Daquin's career or reputation amongst contemporaries.⁴⁷ A year later on 1st January 1684, he received the honorary title of *Intendant de la Maison de la Dauphine*.⁴⁸ During his career as *premier médecin*, Daquin obtained an impressive number of titles including the earldom of Jouy, and the lordship of Châteaurenard. In 1685 he commissioned his portrait from Hyacinthe Rigaud – one of the most influential painters of Louis XIV's reign,⁴⁹ and assisted with rehearsals of a comedy at Fontainebleau that Monseigneur le Grand Dauphin had previously banned.⁵⁰ His actions progressively appear to be those of a man who felt at ease with his place in court society.

On 18th November 1686, Louis XIV famously underwent surgery for an anal fistula.⁵¹ Daquin was rewarded 100,000 *livres* for simply attending and overseeing the operation⁵² – more than Charles-François Félix de Tassy, the *premier chirurgien* who had performed the procedure – or indeed anyone else who had been present during the event. Following his recovery from the operation in January 1687, the King also gave Daquin's eldest son an abbey containing the archbishopric of Coligny in Reims, valued at 13-14,000 francs.⁵³

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Daquin's social ascension at the King's side – very similar in appearance to the rise of a favourite – became the subject of growing disapproval from courtiers who attributed his success to avarice and exploitation of the King's proximity and favour. The duc de Saint-Simon's brief description of Daquin in his celebrated memoirs is perhaps the most representative of bad feeling towards the *premier médecin* in this respect:

*D'Aquin était grand courtisan, mais riche, avare, avide, et qui voulait établir sa famille en toutes façons.*⁵⁴

charlatans, des femmes et des moines, et de leur hardiesse. M. Daquin, en dernier lieu premier médecin, s'étoit fait grand tort en recevant de l'argent et en accordant sa protection à ce bétail-la (...)' (M. Lister, *Voyage de Lister à Paris*, Paris, 1873, 103-4. In: Perez, *Biohistoire*, 79).

⁴⁷ 'D'Aquin, premier médecin du Roi, créature de Mme de Montespan, n'avait rien perdu de son crédit par l'éloignement final de la maîtresse (...)' (Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, I, 107).

⁴⁸ Peumery, 'Disgrâce', 80.

⁴⁹ The portrait cost him 100 *livres*. (Perez, *Biohistoire*, 152).

⁵⁰ Marquis de Dangeau, *Journal*. Ed. by L. E. Dussieux, Paris, 1854-1860, I, 229. In: Perez, *Biohistoire*, 165.

⁵¹ For Daquin's ongoing treatment of Louis XIV's anal fistula in 1686, see Daquin, *Journal*, 230-240.

⁵² P. Dionis, *Cours d'opérations de chirurgie, démontrées au jardin royal*, Brussels, 1708, 290. In: Brockliss and Jones, *Medical World*, 326.

⁵³ Dangeau, *Journal*, II, 2. In: Perez, *Biohistoire*, 148.

⁵⁴ Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, I, 107.

In Jean Astruc's history of the Montpellier Medical Faculty, published in the mid-eighteenth century, the following interesting anecdote is provided which, if true, highlights both Daquin's confidence in his position as *premier médecin* and the extent of disapproval at court towards his behaviour:

(Daquin) étoit un adroit courtesan; mais importune, & qui lassa plus d'une fois le Roi par ses demandes continuelles pour sa famille. On m'a dit un fait qui prouve bien l'idée que le Roi en avoit. «On vint dire au Roi, un matin à son lever, qu'un vieux Officier que le Roi connoissoit & aimoit, étoit mort dans le nuit; sur quoi le Roi répondit, qu'il en étoit fâché, que c'étoit un ancien domestique qui l'avoit bien servi et qui avoit une qualité bien rare dans un Courtisan, c'est qu'il ne lui avoit jamais rien demandé. En disant ces mots, le Roi fixa ces yeux sur d'Aquin, qui comprit bien ce que le Roi vouloit lui reprocher.»; mais sans se déconcerter, il dit au Roi, oserait-on, Sire, demander à votre Majesté, ce qu'elle lui a donné.⁵⁵

Whilst the Abbé Le Gendre paints a similar portrait to Saint-Simon in his description of Daquin as an over-reaching courtier,⁵⁶ the following ominous rumour from his memoirs also confirms that scepticism towards Daquin's medical skills was not improving:

On en dit un étrange exemple. Un chirurgien nommé Dutertre, pour être chirurgien du roi, ayant promis deux mille louis au premier médecin sous cette condition que l'argent ne seroit point compté que Dutertre n'eût saigné le roi, le premier médecin, pour le mettre en possession de sa charge, ordonna que le roi, qui se portoit bien et qui étoit alors au siège de Mons, seroit saigné par précaution. Ce ne fut pas longtemps après que l'on découvrit ce mystère d'iniquité.⁵⁷

Unfortunately for Daquin, this courtly scepticism towards his medical practice was not entirely unfounded. Despite his relative success in maintaining the King's health and general fulfilment of his medical duties, the second half of his career as *premier médecin* would be shaped by a series of medical events and catastrophes at court that would have a significant impact on his reputation.

One of the first events of this nature occurred as early as November 1680, when an English medic named Sir Robert Talbot⁵⁸ appeared at court and saved the life of the seriously ill Dauphine, Marie Anne Christine de Bavière, with a secret remedy composed primarily of quinine. The

⁵⁵ Astruc, *Mémoires*, 388.

⁵⁶ 'Daquin père, premier médecin de Louis XIV, avoit été longtemps de la plus haute faveur, parce que le roi étoit persuadé qu'il devoit sa bonne santé aux sages conseils que lui donnait cet Esculape. Dans cette toute-puissance, ce médecin, de race juive, n'avoit cessé de demander et de prendre à toutes mains.' (Le Gendre, *Mémoires*, 212. In: Perez, *Biohistoire*, 160).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* Primi Visconti's brief, satirical description of Daquin also agrees with other contemporaries' social and medical criticisms of the *premier médecin*: 'Le Roi connoissoit l'ignorance de son médecin, cependant il ne lui refusait par les graces qu'il sollicitait. C'est un petit homme sans conversation et pour le fair fuir, il suffit de lui parler latin'. (Visconti, *Mémoires*, 69-70).

⁵⁸ Also often spelt 'Talbor' in contemporary texts.

Dauphine's miraculous recovery at the hands of a charlatan must have been a humiliating experience indeed for Daquin, who was expected as *premier médecin* to be at the helm of any significant medical events at court. Talbot's victory had instead highlighted Daquin's inability to control the very medical community he was supposed to lead.⁵⁹ The court society in their growing suspicion towards Daquin eagerly seized the opportunity to mock him, as Mme de Sévigné's jovial account of the affair reflects:

C'est dommage que Molière soit mort; il ferait une scène merveilleuse de Daquin, qui est enragé de n'avoir pas le bon remède, et de tous les autres médecins, qui sont accablés par les expériences, par les succès, et par les prophéties comme divines de ce petit homme. Le Roi lui a fait composer son remède devant lui, et lui confie la santé de Mgr. Pour Mme la Dauphine, elle est déjà mieux, et le comte de Gramont disait hier au nez du Daquin:

Talbot est vainqueur du trépas;

Daquin ne lui résiste pas;

La dauphine est convalescente:

*Que chacun chante, etc.*⁶⁰

Although a quarrel over the quinine remedy quickly ensued between Talbot and Nicolas de Bléigny,⁶¹ who was now *conseiller médecin ordinaire* to Louis XIV and Monsieur le duc d'Orléans, this discourse would not be enough to repair the permanent damage the event had inflicted upon Daquin's medical reputation at court.

Three years later on the 30th July 1683, Marie-Thérèse d'Autriche - Daquin's former patient - died following the discovery of a tumour in her left arm. Daquin briefly mentioned the death in the *Journal de Santé*, attributing it to a 'cruelle et maligne fièvre'.⁶² Yet the following anecdote, provided by Nicolas Eloy in his eighteenth-century biographical dictionary of the medical profession, suggests that as emotions ran high, the medical community at court had no reservations in pointing their fingers at Daquin for his involvement in the Queen's death:

*Un quart d'heure avant la mort de Marie-Thérèse d'Autriche d'Autriche, M. de Villacerf rencontra (Daquin) dans l'appartement & se laissa tellement aller à la douleur, qu'il lui donna un soufflet en lui reprochant d'avoir tué la Reine par la saignée qu'il avoit ordonnée contre l'avis de Fagon.*⁶³

⁵⁹ L. W. B. Brockliss, 'The Literary Image of the Médecins du Roi in the Literature of the Grand Siècle', In: *Medicine at the Courts of Europe, 1500-1837*. Ed. by V. Nutton, London, 1990, 130.

⁶⁰ Sévigné, *Correspondance*, III, 56.

⁶¹ Perez, *Biohistoire*, 153.

⁶² Daquin, *Journal*, 221. Daquin mentions the Queen's death solely in the context of his fear for Louis XIV's health.

⁶³ Eloy, *Dictionnaire*, 6.

The *premier médecin* was to have no better luck seven years later, when on 30th March 1690 he was called into consultation with several other physicians to examine the now terminally ill Dauphine. She had already been bled copiously by an Italian doctor named Caretti, and did not survive.⁶⁴ These consecutive failures on Daquin's part, exacerbated by his almost total alienation from the kingdom's wider medical institutions,⁶⁵ began to cast a dark shadow over his reputation as *premier médecin* that his increasingly controversial social presence at court could not redeem.

On 3rd November 1693, Daquin's medical career at court was brought to an abrupt end when he was dismissed from his role as *premier médecin*. Informed of the King's decision by the comte de Pontchartrain at seven in the morning, Daquin was told to remove a pension of 6,000 *livres* and retire from court immediately, with an absolute prohibition on making any further contact with Louis XIV.⁶⁶

Unfortunately, the exact cause of Louis XIV's decision to dismiss his *premier médecin* was, and remains, unknown. Daquin's disgrace consequently became the subject of intense gossip, as courtiers speculated upon the potential causes behind his not entirely unexpected downfall.

The cause that appeared most plausible to the majority of contemporaries was, unsurprisingly, Daquin's over-reaching behaviour towards the King. It was generally agreed amongst the advocates of this theory that Louis XIV had finally lost his temper when Daquin had asked for the archbishopric of Tours for his son.⁶⁷ However, many believed that Madame de Maintenon – Louis XIV's pious third and final mistress – also played an active role in the dismissal.⁶⁸ Saint-Simon attributes her involvement not only to an invested interest in her protégé, Guy-Crescent Fagon – an emerging medical star from the Paris Medical Faculty who would replace Daquin as *premier médecin* – but also to her perceived desire to control a position at court that would hold a significant amount of power over the King as he aged:

⁶⁴ Dangeau, *Journal*, III, 85. In Perez, *Biohistoire*, 156.

⁶⁵ A sworn enemy of the Paris Medical Faculty due to his support for the *Chambre royale* and controversial new medical practice, Daquin also shared a cool relationship with his own Montpellier Medical Faculty, whose members he had agitated when he nominated his protégé Sébastien Matte la Faveur for the position of *Démonstrateur de chimie* in 1670. (L. Dulieu, 'Sébastien Matte La Faveur', *Monspeliensis Hippocrates* 50 (1970). In : Peumery, 'Disgrâce', 80).

⁶⁶ Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, I, 108 and Marquis de Sourches, *Mémoires*. Ed. by Cosnac, Paris, IV, 281-2. In: Perez, *Biohistoire*, 159.

⁶⁷ Le Gendre, *Mémoires*, 212. In Perez, *Biohistoire*, 160; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, 107-8 and Sourches, *Mémoires*, IV, 281-2. In Perez, *Biohistoire*, 159. The Marquis de Sourches believed that Daquin had gone on to press the Père la Chaise for the position after being refused by Louis XIV - displeasing the King so much that he resolved to dismiss him. However, the Abbé le Gendre believed that Daquin's request for the archbishopric of Tours was in fact just one of several requests to the King on behalf of all three of his sons: 'pour établir ses trois fils, il demanda pour l'aîné une charge de président à mortier au parlement de Paris; pour le second, qui étoit d'épée, le gouvernement d'une place, et pour le cadet, qui étoit abbé, l'archevêché de Tours; demandes excessives qui, faites à contretemps et toutes à la fois, furent la cause ou le prétexte de sa perte.'

⁶⁸ Le Gendre, *Mémoires*, 212. In Perez, *Biohistoire*, 160 and Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, 107-8.

*Mme de Maintenon, qui voulait tenir le Roi par toutes les avenues, et qui considérait celle d'un premier médecin habile et homme d'esprit comme une des plus importantes à mesure que le Roi viendrait à vieillir et sa santé à s'affaiblir, savait depuis longtemps d'Aquin, et saisit ce moment de la prise si forte qu'il donna sur lui et de la colère du Roi : elle le résolut à le chasser, et en même temps à prendre Fagon en sa place.*⁶⁹

Interestingly, the Abbé de Choisy's account of the affair places the blame not on Daquin's social behaviour, but on his perceived medical incompetence, which allowed Fagon to gain the King's confidence in his absence:

“La (...) m'a conté que le Roi étant à Marly eut un fort grand accès de fièvre. Les médecins, sur le minuit, voyant que la fièvre diminuait, lui firent prendre un bouillon; Daquin dit: «Voilà qui est sur son decline; je m'en vais me coucher.» Fagon fit semblant de le suivre, et s'arrêta dans l'antichambre, en disant entre ses dents: «Quand donc veillerons-nous? Nous avons un si bon maître, et qui nous paie si bien!» Il se mit sur un fauteuil, appuyé sur son baton: il y était aussi bien que dans sa chambre, parce qu'il ne se dishabille jamais, et ne dort qu'à son séant, à cause de son asthme. Une heure après, le Roi appel le premier valet de chambre, et se plaignit à lui que sa fièvre durait encore. Il lui dit, «Sire, M. Daquin s'est allé coucher; mais M. Fagon est là dedans: le ferai-je entrer? – Que me dira-t-il? Lui dit le Roi, qui craignait que le premier médecin ne le sût. – Sire, reprit Niert (et ce que je dis ici je le sais de lui), il vous dira peut-être quelque chose, il vous consolera.» Fagon entra, tâta le pouls, fit prendre de la tisane, fit changer de côté, et enfin il se trouva seul auprès du Roi pour le première fois de sa vie. Daquin eut son congé trois mois après, sur une bagatelle dont on lui fit une querelle d'Allemand: il avait demandé l'archevêché de Tours pour son fils. Si demander plus qu'il ne devait eût été un crime, il y avait longtemps qu'il eût été criminel. »⁷⁰

As with his life before his arrival at court, very little is known about Daquin after his dismissal. Although it is unclear where he lived after his exile from court, it appears most likely that he established himself at Moulins,⁷¹ where there is some evidence to suggest that he continued to practice medicine, retaining a small number of his courtly patients.⁷²

Shortly after his dismissal, Daquin became ill and travelled to the waters at Vichy in an attempt to restore his rapidly deteriorating health.⁷³ He died there on 17th May 1696 – less than three years after the disgrace for which he would be forever remembered. He was buried in the church of Saint-Blaise, where his sons erected a monument in his honour.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, 107-8.

⁷⁰ Abbé de Choisy, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Louis XIV*. Ed. by G. Mongrédien, Paris, 1966, 166.

⁷¹ Peumery, 'Disgrâce', 84.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 85.

⁷³ Astruc, *Mémoires*, 388-9.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* The following text was the epitaph on Daquin's monument: D. O. M. / HIC JACET ANTONIUS DAQUIN, / Comes de Joui, Dominus de Château-Renard, Comes Consistorianus, /

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Mariae Austriacae, Francorum Reginae, primarius Medicus, Deindè apud Ludovicum magnum per XXIII annos Archiatorum Comes, / Fortunâ christianè usus, in prospera Deum timuit, adoravit in adversa, / In utraque Regem honorificavit. / Post XXXVII annos aula exactos, / Cum par tres fermè annos sibi & Deo vixisset, / In hac urbe piè obiit, die...1696. / Monumentum hoc optimo parente moerentes liberi posuerunt, / Requiescat in pace. (Eloy, *Dictionnaire*, 7).

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