

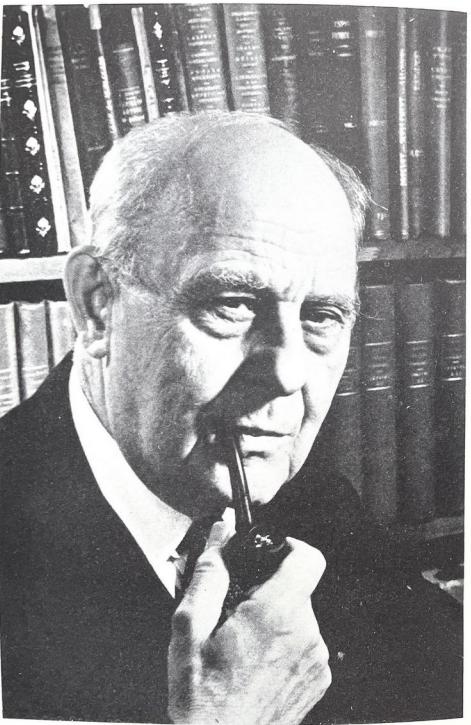
# **Henry Sully (1679 - 1728)**

***A summary of his life, times and work***

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Member of NAWCC Chapter 111 (Ottawa)

Presented to Toronto NAWCC Chapter meeting on April 28, 2024



## IT'S ABOUT TIME

*Paul M. Chamberlain*

THE HOLLAND PRESS LTD  
London 1964

### Henry Sully

1680–1728

Henry Sully is a figure that stirs the imagination. Fired with the love of his art, he sets out for foreign lands to broaden his knowledge, acquires languages, makes friends of princes, and holds firmly to his aims. He was an apprentice of Charles Gretton. We know that Newton and Wren encouraged him in his ambition to make a timepiece to determine longitude, that he knew Quare and it is likely that he knew Debaufre and Facio. I think that he went to Holland—in his late twenties—too late to know Huygens. And as a matter of fact, we know nothing of his stay there, save what LeRoy wrote. After mention of the grand passion inspired by Newton, LeRoy suggests that it is easy to judge that it was what caused him “to engage passage for Holland, where he lived some time, and where he learned French and Dutch, and then passed to Vienna in Austria, where he learned German very quickly.”

*“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 they had had more taste for their fortune, than for the perfection of their works: the late Mr. Sully was one of these.”*

- Julien Le Roy: *Règle artificielle du temps* (1737)

*“[Sully] was specious, adept at self-promotion, willing to turn his coat rapidly, and noticeably lacking in loyalty or gratitude for past favours.”*

- J.R. Harris: *Industrial Espionage and Technology Transfer* (1998)

*“At the time of his death, [this most ingenious and unfortunate man] was working on a new design of marine timekeeper, and if his life had been prolonged, it is quite probable that he would have triumphed over both the mechanical and financial difficulties.”*

- Rupert Gould: *The Marine Chronometer* (1923)

## **Henry Sully:**

*Who was he? Why does he matter?*

- A clock-watchmaker trained in London during the Golden Age of Clockmaking
- Lived, worked and traveled on the Continent, made influential acquaintances
- Notable presence in and around Paris during last dozen years of his life
- An innovator, he invented new ways of making a better watch
- Wrote a very famous book on horology, and several other publications
- During 20+ years, designed and promoted an important longitude timekeeper
- Initiated and managed the two earliest horological factories in Europe
- Encouraged and promoted knowledge exchanges among “artistes” (creative innovators)
- Devised a gnomon and meridian line for a large Parisian church

# Overview

## Henry Sully (1679 - 1728)

- *Family origins in Somerset County*
- *Apprenticeship in London*
- *Years spent in Netherlands, Germany, Austria*
- *Notoriety in Paris, Versailles*
- *Brief return to London*
- *Final years in and around Paris*
- *Sully as a horologist (marine timekeeper)*
- *Sully as an horological writer*
- *Sully as founding member of Société des arts*
- *Influences on future horologists in France and beyond*
- *Recent discoveries in this research project*

Europe 1700

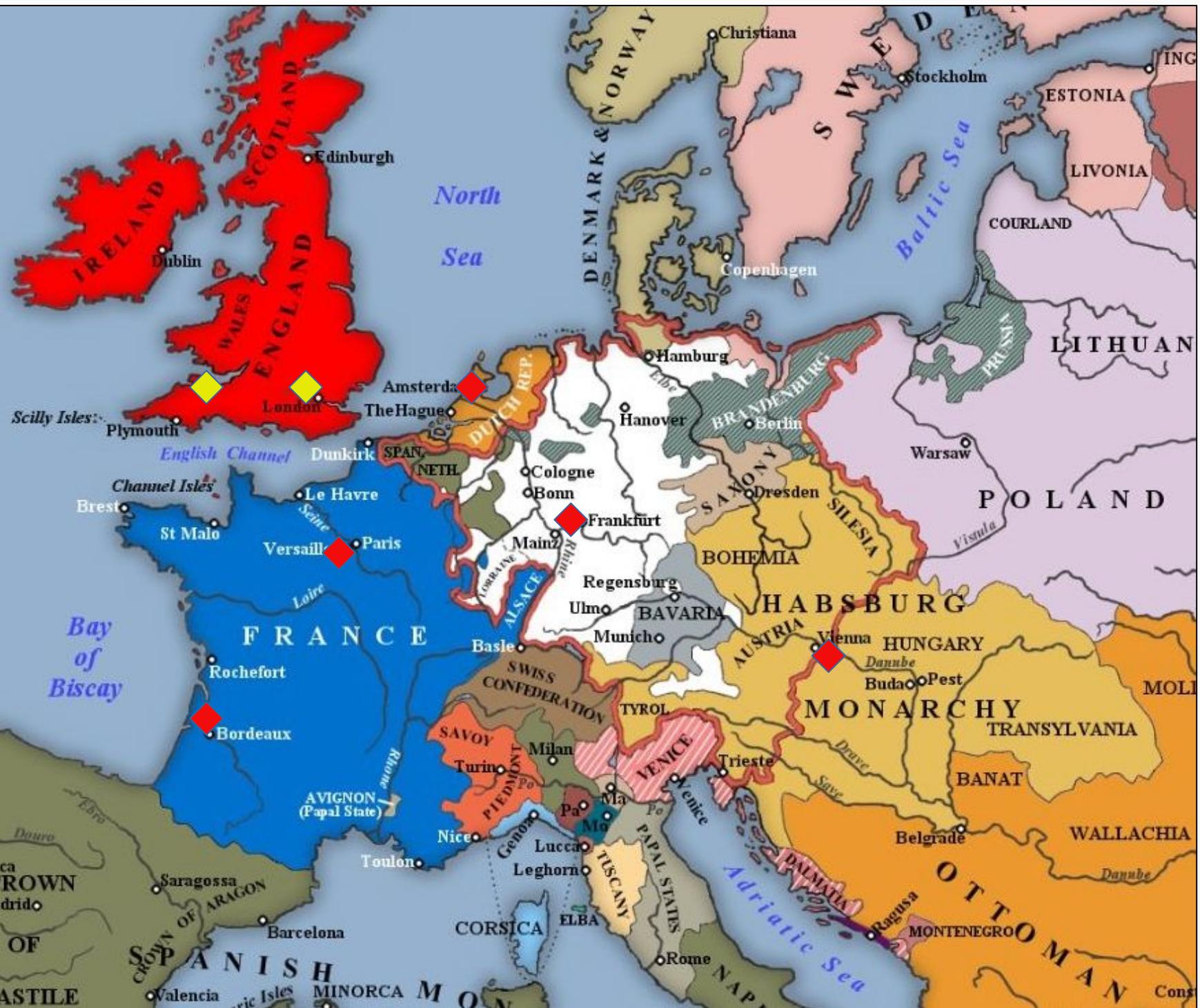
- A map of Central Europe from the late 18th century, showing the territories of the Holy Roman Empire in light red. The map also includes the Spanish Monarchy (yellow), Brandenburg-Prussia (green), Venice (pink), and the Minor German States (white). A legend at the bottom identifies these entities.

Mo - Modena  
Ma - Mantua  
Pa - Parma

## ***Henry Sully's Life Trajectory:***

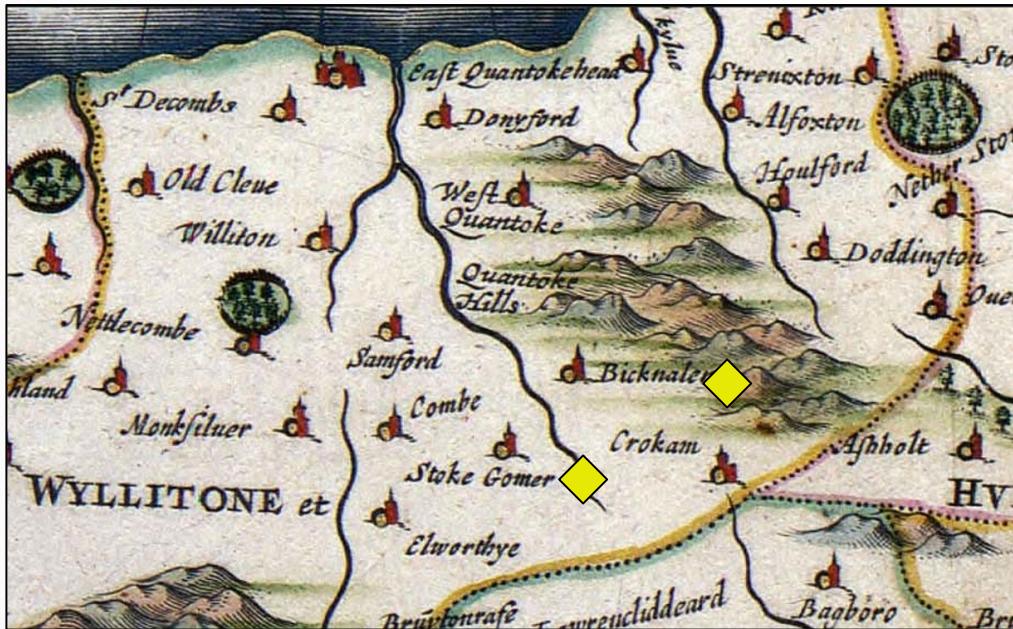
- 1679-1694 – Somerset
  - 1694-1706 – London
  - 1706-1707 – The Hague
  - 1708-1711 – Leiden
  - 1711-1713 – Frankfurt
  - 1714-1715 – Vienna
  - 1715-1721 – Paris/Versailles
  - 1721-1721 – London
  - 1722-1728 – Versailles/Paris

*Robert St-Louis 2024*



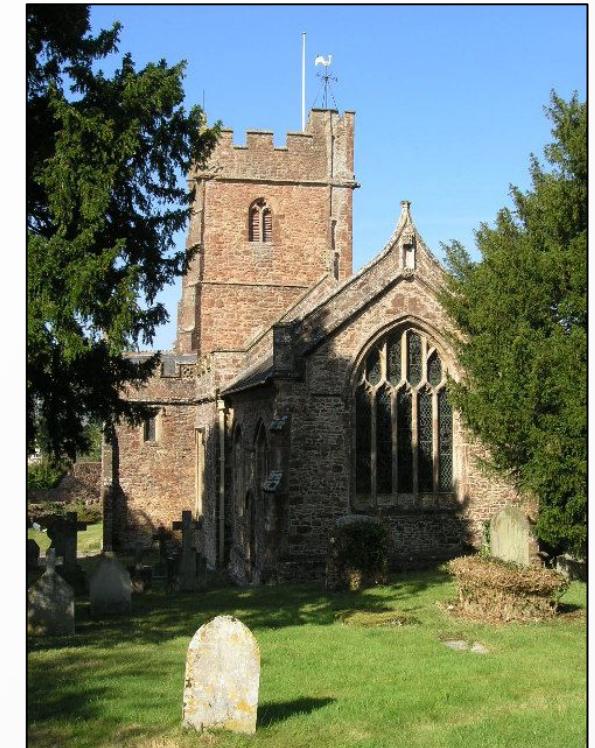
# Family origins

- *Henry's birth registered on 12 February 1679 in town of Stogumber, Somerset, England*
  - *an important center of wool cloth making from 12<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries*
- *Parents are Richard Sully (a tailor) and Dinah Gunning*
  - *Of nearby village of Bicknoller (married in 1659)*
- *Henry likely attended grammar school there*
- *Huguenot ancestry not clearly established*



Left: portion of 1648 map of Somerset County

Right: St George church in Bicknoller (originally built in 12<sup>th</sup> century)



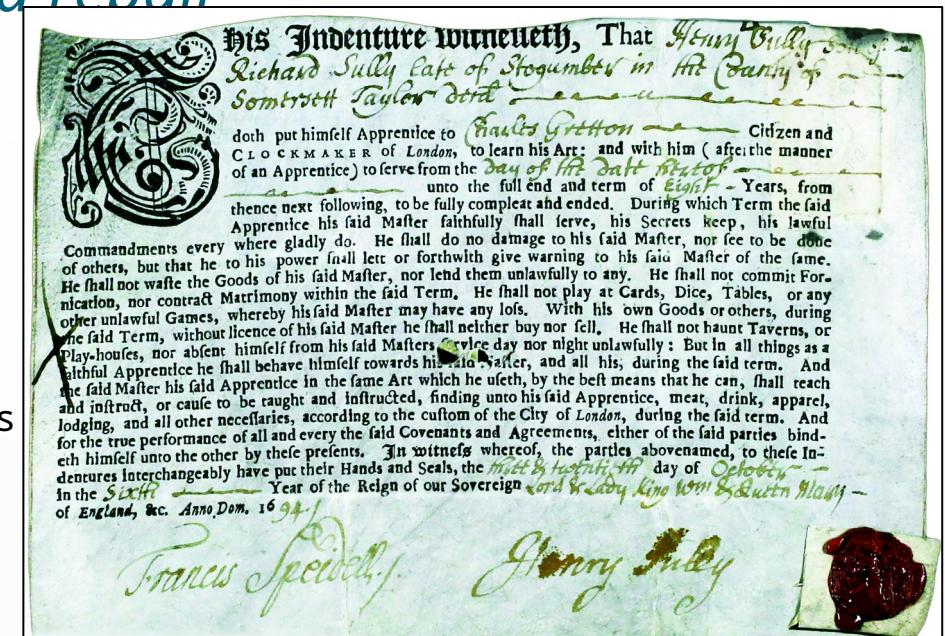
# Apprenticeship in London

- *Henry was apprenticed under Charles Gretton in London*
  - *from Oct. 1694 to 1702*
  - *journeyman under Gretton to April 1705*
- *Not uncommon for boys from counties to go to London*
  - *Gretton himself, and for ex. Tompion and Edward East*
- *Apprenticeship was long and thorough (7-8 years), boy was provided room and board*
- *Learned tool making, watch/clock making and repair*

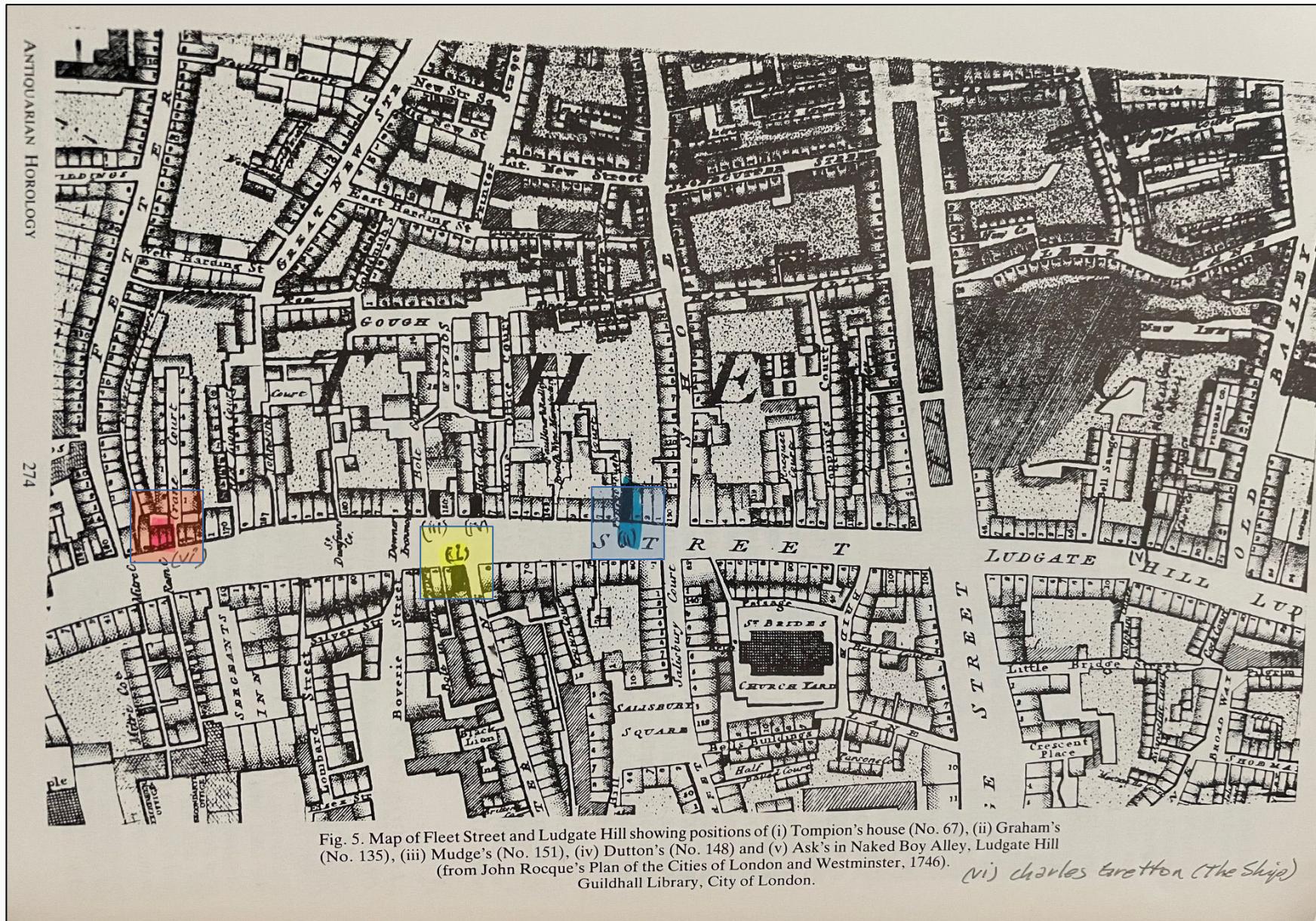


Left: portion of 1746 map of London. Gretton's shop (The Ship) indicated in red.

Right: Facsimile of Sully's apprenticeship indenture to Gretton, his father identified as deceased.



# Apprenticeship in London



Left: portion of 1746 map of London.

Charles Gretton's shop -*The Ship*-  
(CC 1672-1731) indicated in **red**.

Thomas Tompion's shop - *The Dial and Three Crowns* - in **yellow**  
(CC 1671-1713).

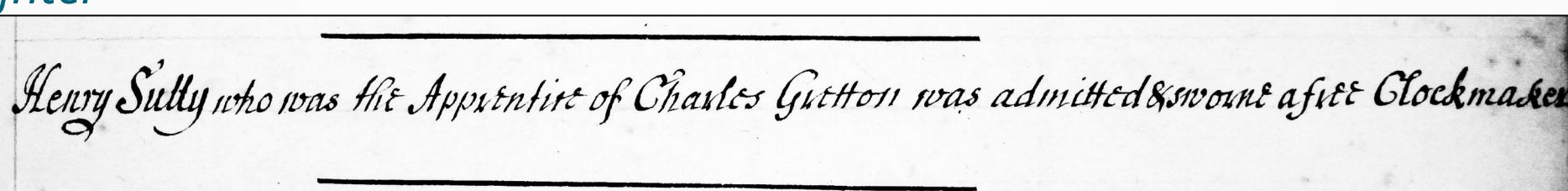
George Graham's shop (CC  
1695-1751) in **blue**.

# Career start in London

- In 1703, Sully met influential people to discuss his plans to build a clock to measure longitude at sea
  - Christopher Wren, Duke of Somerset, Isaac Newton, astronomer John Flamsteed
  - This elusive goal would consume him on-off for his last 25 years
- Henry briefly opened a shop after "freed" by Clockmaker's Company in 1705
  - Samuel James started an apprenticeship with him
  - British Museum has a London watch movement with his name
- By August of 1707, Sully was married, living in The Hague, and baptizing his first daughter



Watch signed "Henry Sully London"



# Move to the Continent

- Close ties between *England* and *Netherlands* in horology (*Fromanteels* for ex.)
- 1585-1672 : “Dutch Golden Age”
- 1689-1713 : *England* and *Netherlands* were allies in wars
- *Sully had great admiration for dutch Christian Huygens (1629-1695), great horological inventor, and marine clock innovator*
  - *Sully may have been directed to seek out Huygens' collaborators*
  - *May have read some of Huygens' papers in Leiden Univ., and seen his movements*



# Settling on the Continent

- *With his wife Anne Horton, Sully had 4 children in succession*
  - *Anna, Henry, Jean, Henrietta (born 1707-1710)*
  - *Anne died soon after 4<sup>th</sup> child, leaving Sully a widower*
  - *Two tutors were assigned to help raise the children*
- *He made a living repairing watches and clocks*
- *In Leiden, Sully wrote his first horological booklets*

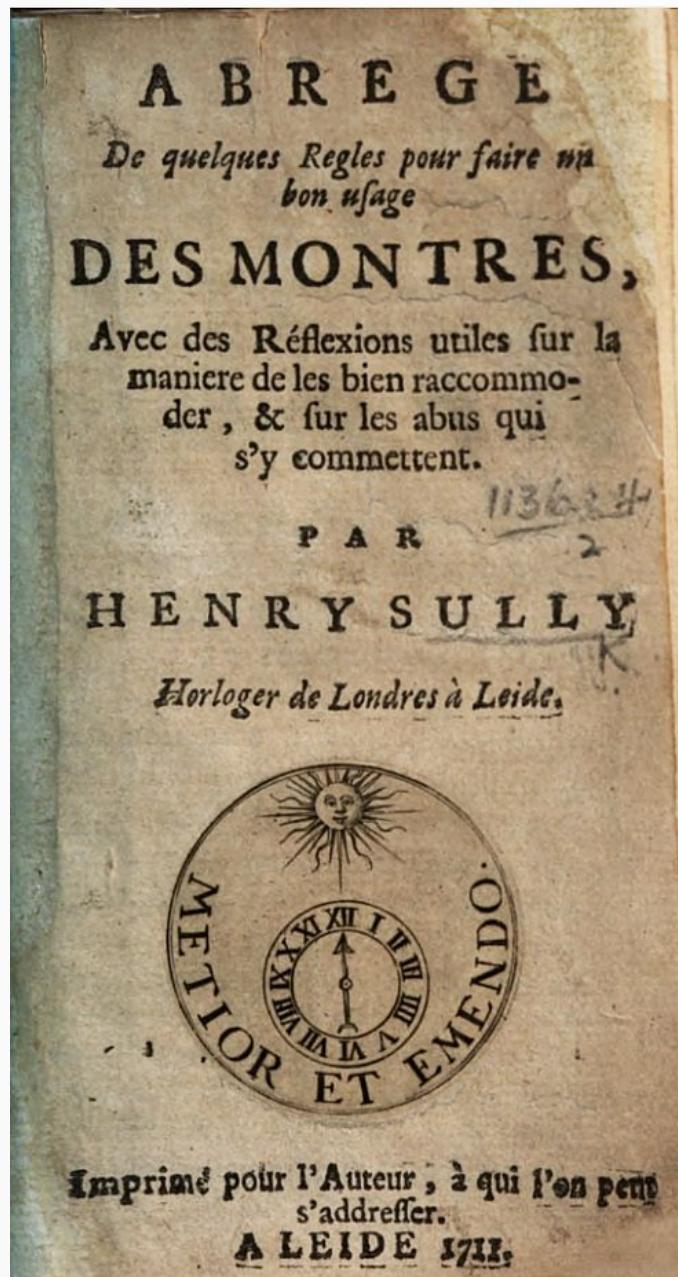


New church at the Spui, The Hague,  
ca. 1650

*“We clock enthusiasts tend to become bogged down in the details of the clocks, their style, age, fine engraving, unusual escapements. We tend to forget that the maker was not a clock-making machine, but a real person often with far more of a burden in the form of the stresses and worries of life than we experience ourselves.”*

- Brian Loomes, writing about John Smorthwait (1675 - 1739)

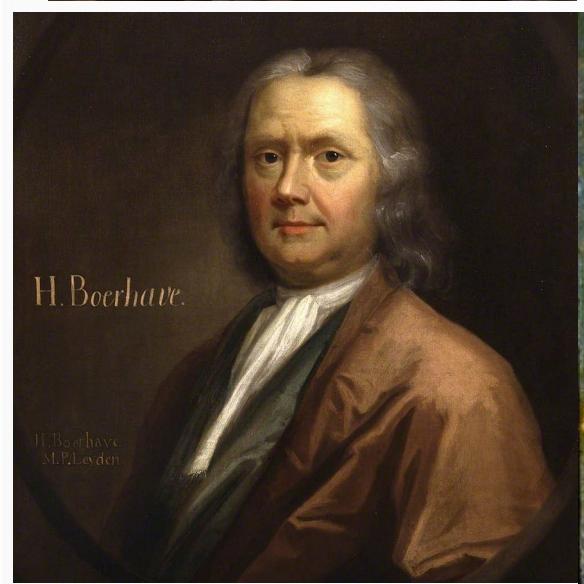
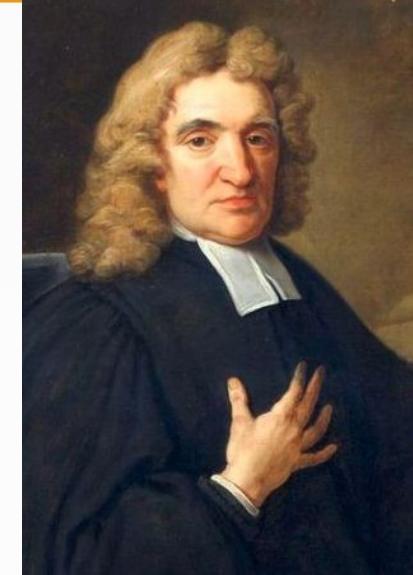
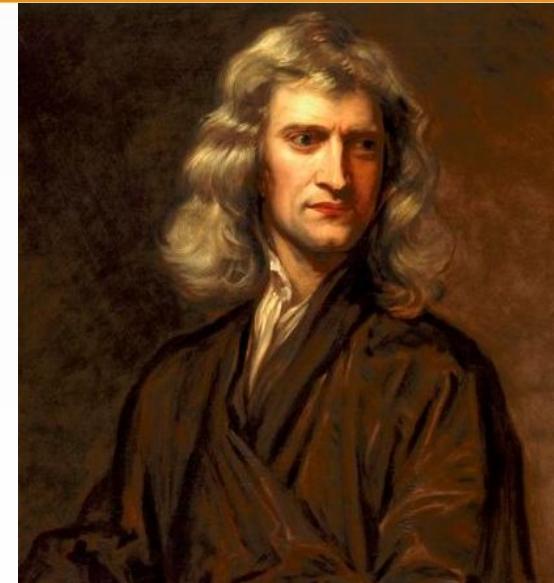
# A horological writer is born



- *His first publication -24 page booklet*
  - *Self-published in Leiden 1711*
  - *Augmented edition printed same year, third printing in Germany following year*
  - *Like all his books, written in French*
  - *Aimed at watch owners (affluent clientele)*
  - *Additional income for needy single parent*
  - *Great advertising for his repair business*
    - *"if those who own watches, of whatever kind or quality, and from which they don't receive satisfaction, want to entrust me to repair and overhaul them, I pride myself that they will be completely satisfied in all aspects.*
    - *the author also advises young clock/watch-makers who may wish to perfect their art, that they will find in him for honest rates all the instructions necessary to make them capable of exercising it [their art] happily and successfully."*

# Illustrious contacts / benefactors

- As in London before, Sully met and befriended illustrious men on the Continent - some became his benefactors
  - Possibly he met them through his horological repair shop
- Dr. Hermann Boerhaave (1668-1738): a Dutch botanist, chemist, and physician of European fame
- Leopold Philippe of Arenberg (1690-1754): the 4th Duke of Arenberg (became a close patron, and brought Sully to Paris)
- Prince Eugene Francis of Savoy-Carignano (1663-1736): a Paris-born field marshal, held office at the Imperial court in Vienna, and was one of the great collectors of art, antiques, books, and scientific objects the world has ever known. Sully devoured horological books in his vast library
- Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716): one of the most important mathematicians and natural philosophers



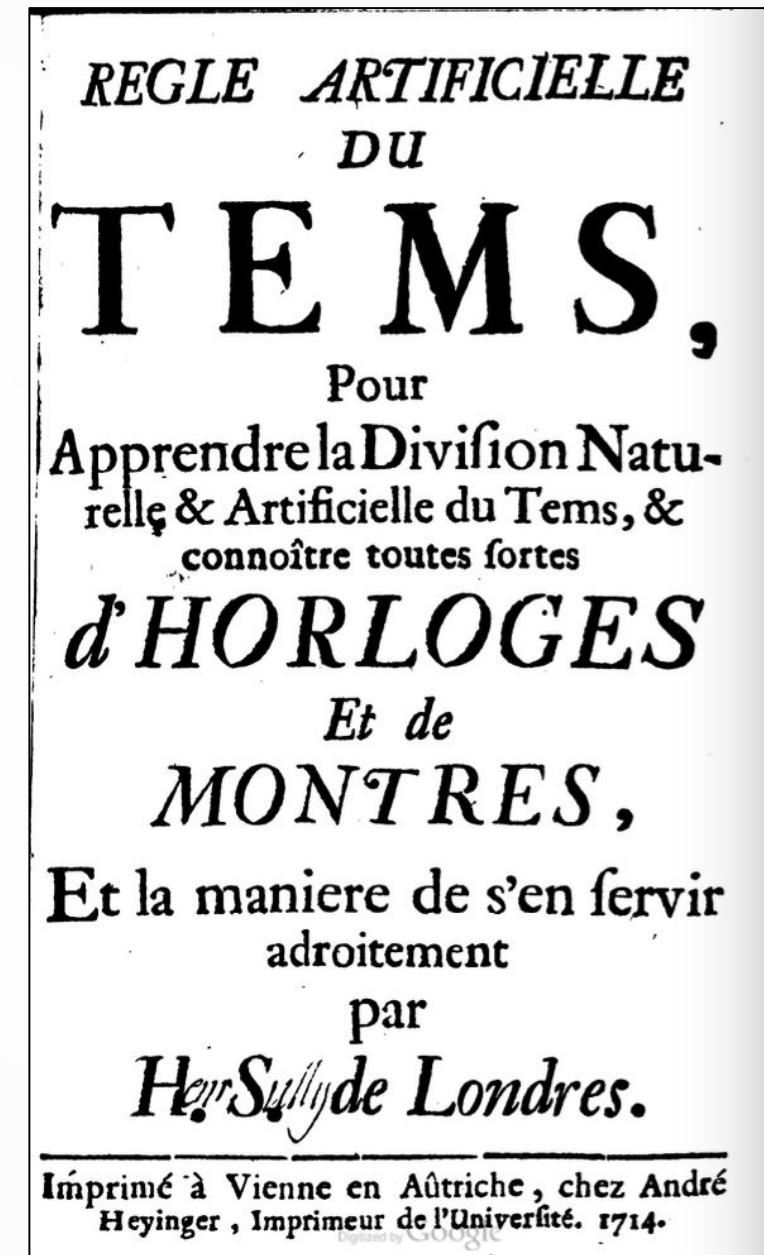
Left to Right:

Top (London): Christopher Wren, Charles Seymour - Duke of Somerset, Isaac Newton, John Flamsteed

Bottom (Continent): Boerhaave, Duke of Arenberg, Prince Eugene, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz

# Moving on the Continent

- *Sully spent 2 years in Frankfurt Germany, probably repairing timepieces, but also writing his most famous book*
- *He is said to have accompanied Duke of Arenberg and Prince Eugene on the battlefields, to keep their officers' watches accurate*
- *He was in Vienna in 1714-15, interacting with famous dignitaries, repairing watches, and publishing his book "Règle artificielle du tems"*

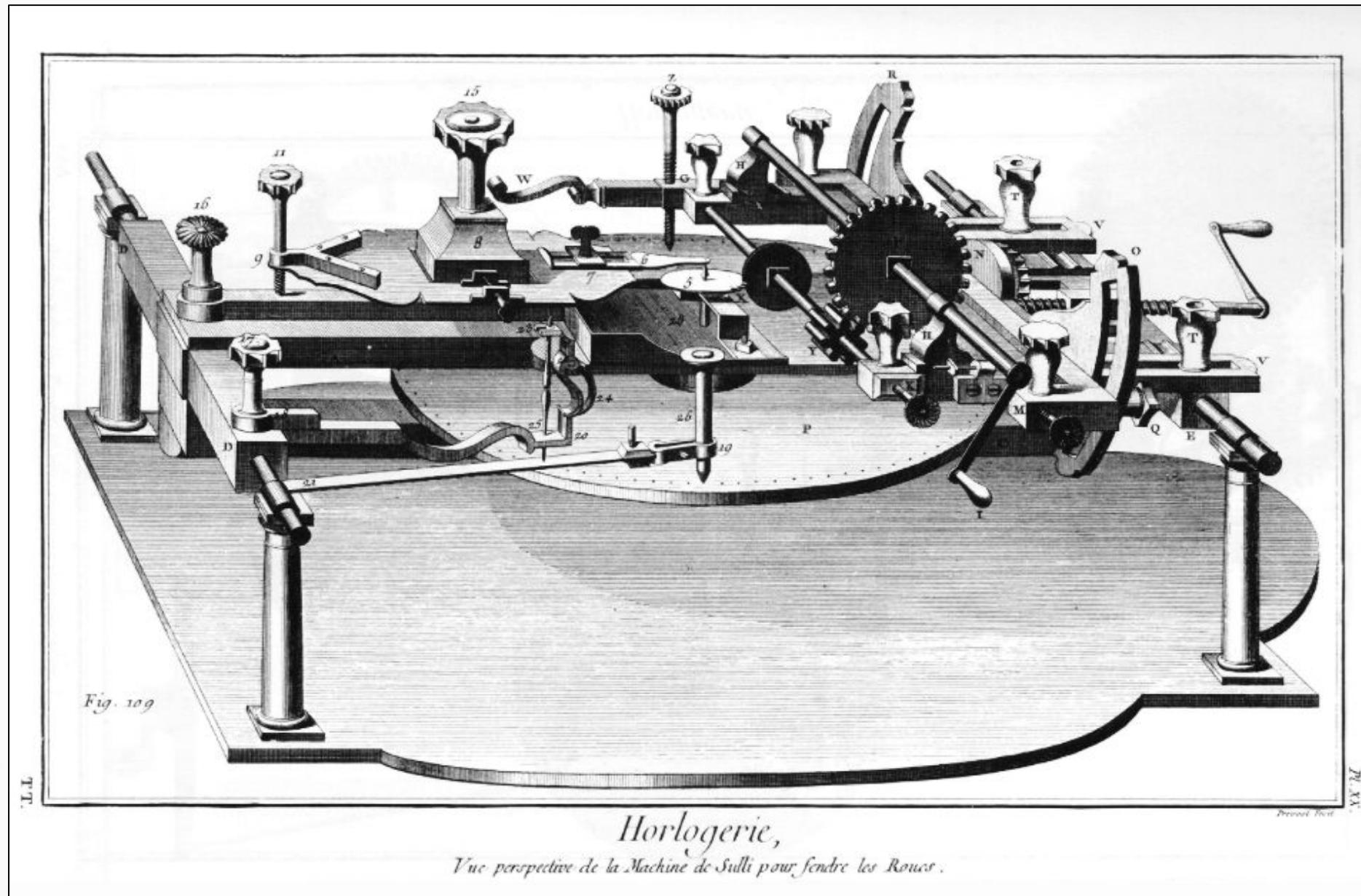




Engraving of Sully  
from 1714 edition  
of his book *Regle  
Artificielle du tems*  
(detail)

*When I consider how few skillful artists there are who can ably repair both good and bad watches, I can only feel sorry for the people who own them, exposed to the trickeries of bad workers who, by getting involved in something they don't understand, only bring doubt and dishonour to such an interesting and useful Art. I am sorry that I cannot deal with this matter in more detail without condemning many people in our Art, which is not my goal. Moreover, there are many honest people in this profession who just lack opportunities and the inclination to learn how to work better.*

# Sully was also a very capable toolmaker

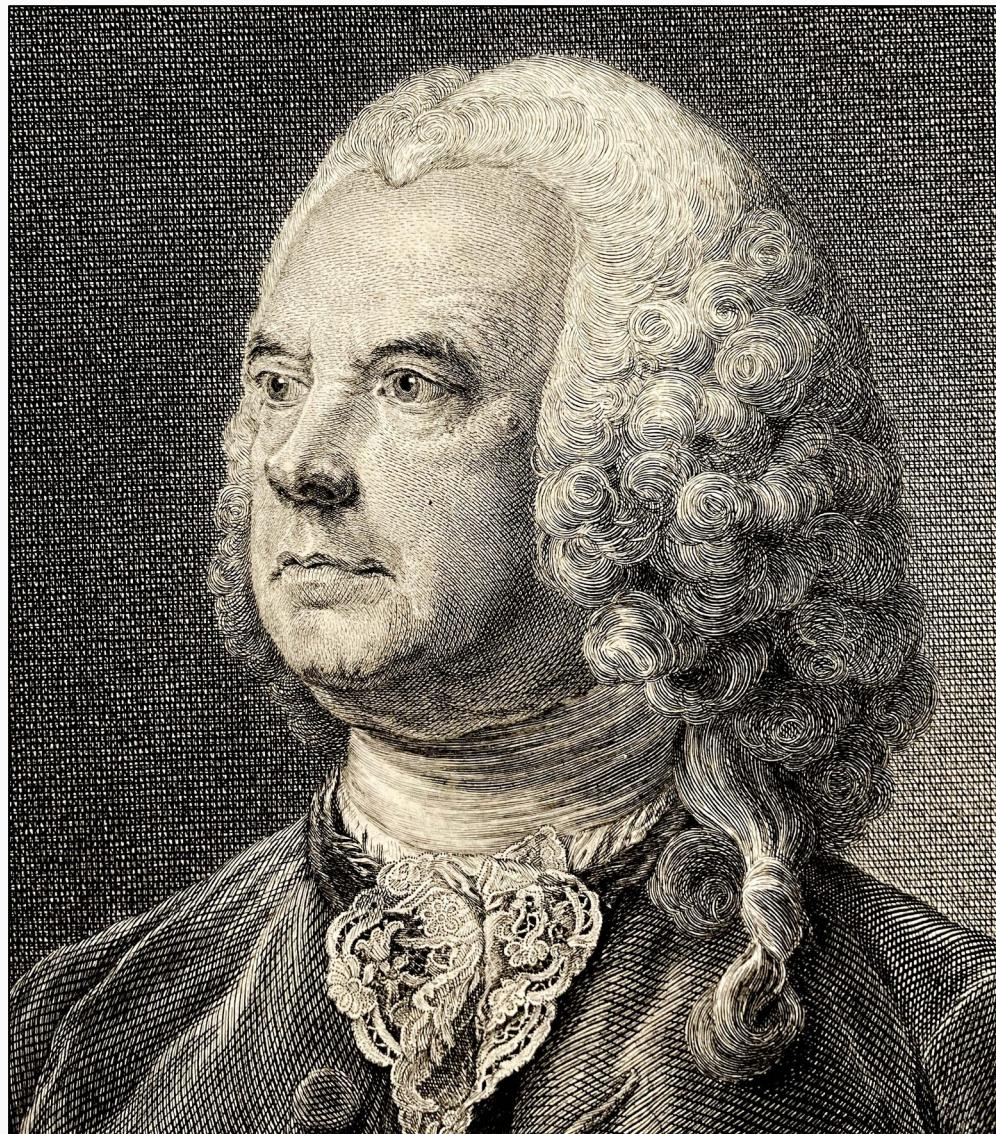


Sully's machine to cut wheel teeth, featured in several horological books of the eighteenth century. Probably made around 1700-1710.

# Sully's fame takes off in Paris

- *Sully followed Arenberg to Paris in 1715-16, with letters of reference from Leibniz*
  - *War between France and Austria had concluded in 1714*
- *Historical context*
  - *1685: Revocation of Edict of Nantes resulted in exodus of Huguenots from France (to England, Germany, Geneva, etc)*
  - *French domination in watchmaking declined, London rose (East, Tompion, Quare, Graham - Golden Age in England horology)*
  - *By 1700, french watchmaking was at a low point, hard to even get workers*
  - *After death of Louis XIV (1715), French economy in ruins*
- *English spring maker William Blakey (1688-1748) introduced Sully to Julien Le Roy (1686-1759)*
- *Le Roy and Sully became collaborators and friends until Sully's death 12 years later*
- *Sully married Angélique Potel on November 22, 1716*
  - *Two more children (Jeanne Angélique, Charles Henry), JLR godfather of this last son*

# Julien Le Roy



- Born in Tours in 1686, died in Paris in 1759
- Trained by his father in horology
- Sent to Paris at 17 to work with and learn from great watchmakers there (Le Bon, others)
- Quickly earned reputation for his knowledge and skill
- (\*) Had four sons, the eldest (Pierre) followed in the family tradition
- Produced fine watches, clocks, sundials, & tower clock movements
- Became the greatest and most respected *horloger* in Paris, loved by his workers
- Created many innovations and improvements
- President and treasurer of *Société des Arts*
- Led a profitable business for over 40 years
- (\*) His stature in Paris rivals that of Thomas Tompion in London
- Shared his innovations with other *horlogers*, which led to France again becoming a leading horological nation
- (\*) In 1737, Le Roy re-wrote Sully's book, published it with his own memoirs, including a biography of HS

1717  
H.S.

# DESCRIPTION D'UNE MONTRE DE NOUVELLE CONSTRUCTION.

Présentée à l'Académie  
Royale des Sciences à Paris,  
au mois de Juin 1716.

Par H. SULLY Horloger.

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# MEMOIRE HISTORIQUE SUR LA MONTRE DE M. SULLY,

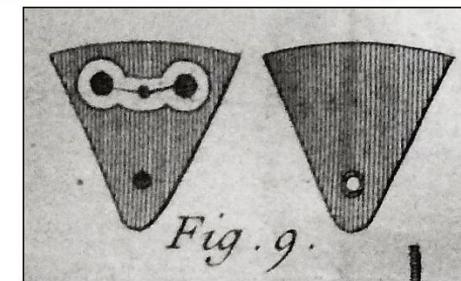
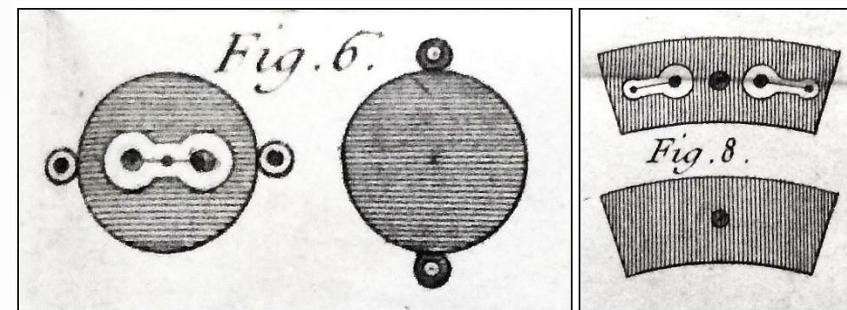
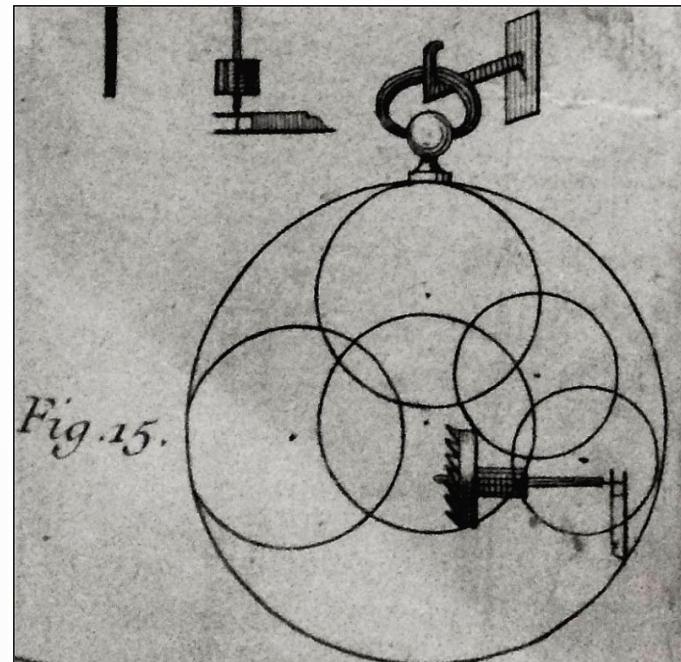
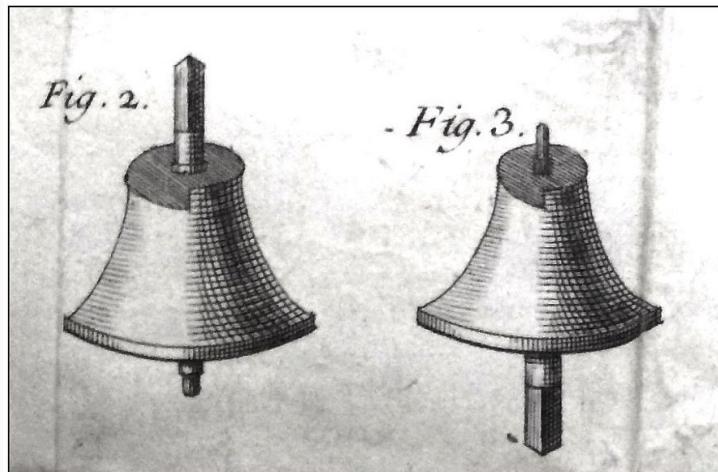
*Et sur des Moyens pour supléer  
aux Réervoirs dont il parle  
dans sa Description, pages  
220. & 221.*

**V**ers le mois de May de  
l'année 1715. feu Mr Sul-  
ly, alors Pensionnaire de  
Mgr. le Duc d'Aramberg, & de-  
meurant avec lui dans un Hôtel  
garni de mon Voisinage, me  
M. vi.

1737  
JLR

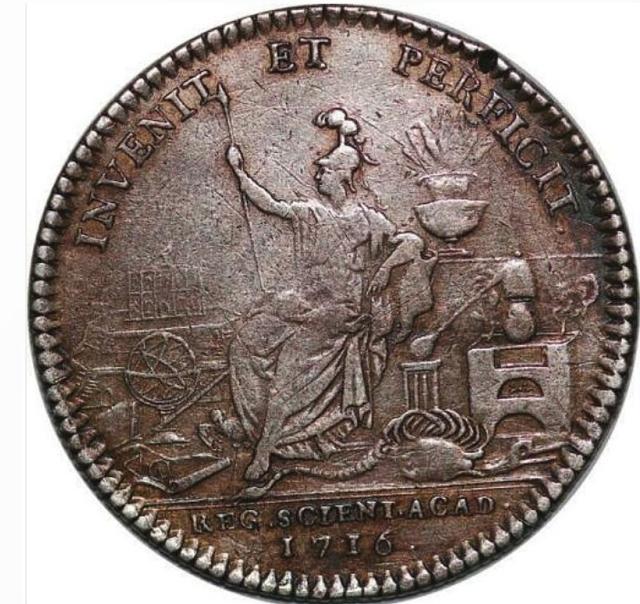
# *Watch of new construction (with Julien Le Roy):*

- Built over several months by friends Le Roy and Sully
- Capillary oil sink was a major improvement
- Winding arbor on opposite end of the fusee
- Orientation of the escape wheel for better hanging
- Various other aspects that had mitigated impact



# 1716: Watch of new construction (with Julien Le Roy)

- Watch presented by Sully to 35 members of the Académie Royale des Sciences, on May 1716
- No mention of Le Roy given by Sully
- Watch design elements well received by members
- Sully also presented a design for a marine watch he had been working on in secret
- After this, Sully applied to join the Paris Guild of Horlogers (clock/watchmakers)
- Guild members petitioned against it, including Julien Le Roy
- Upon refusal, Sully was given a royal pension to reward him for his efforts
- He and Le Roy made up and remained friends
- Later, Sully was approached to lead a new horological factory



# 1770: Watch inspired by Sully's "new watch"

Geneva, Hotel Des Bergues, Oct 23, 1999

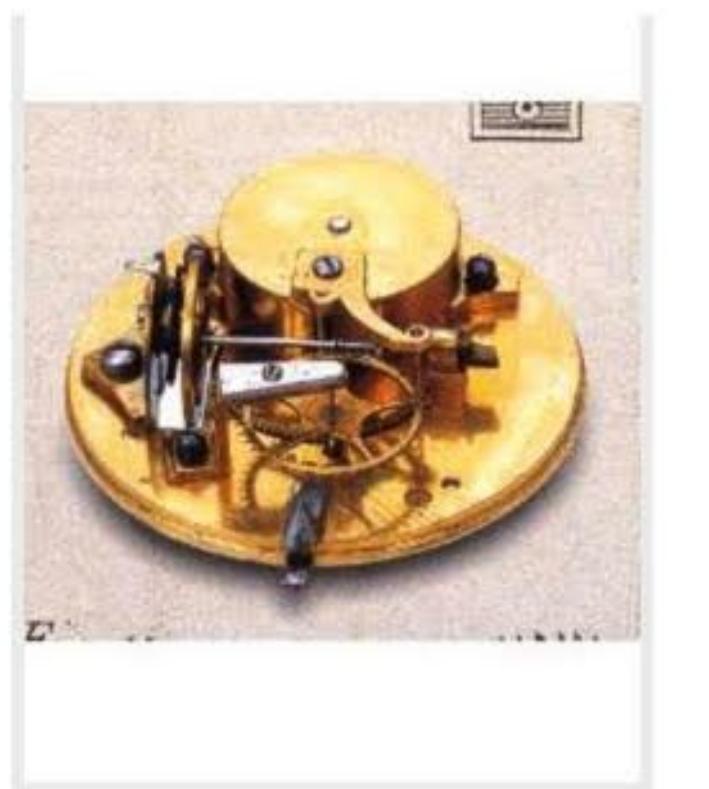
LOT 5 ★

French, circa 1770. Important and extremely rare watch with Sully frictional rest escapement, constructed on the principle of the watch elaborated in 1715 by Julien Le Roy and Henry Sully, constructed by Julien Le Roy and presented by Sully to the Académie des Sciences on June 10, 1716.

CHF 13,000 - 15,000

Sold: CHF 11,500

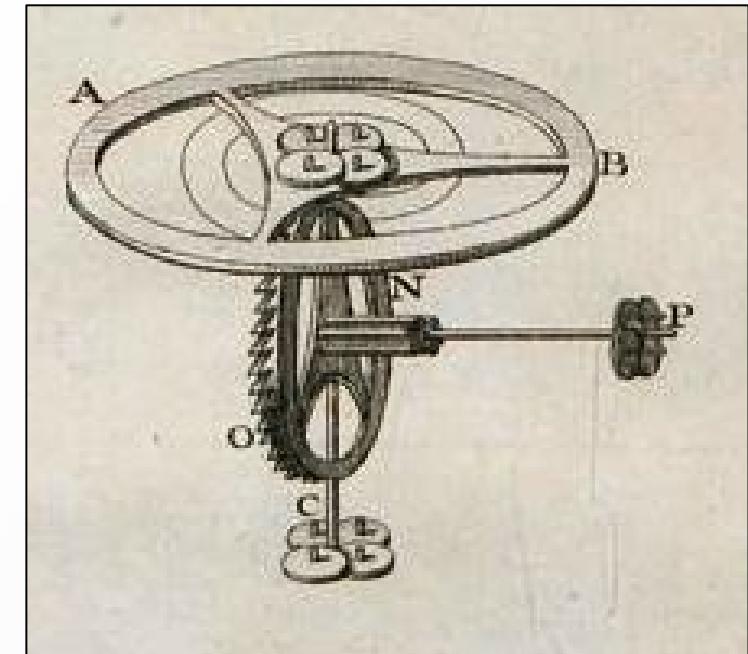
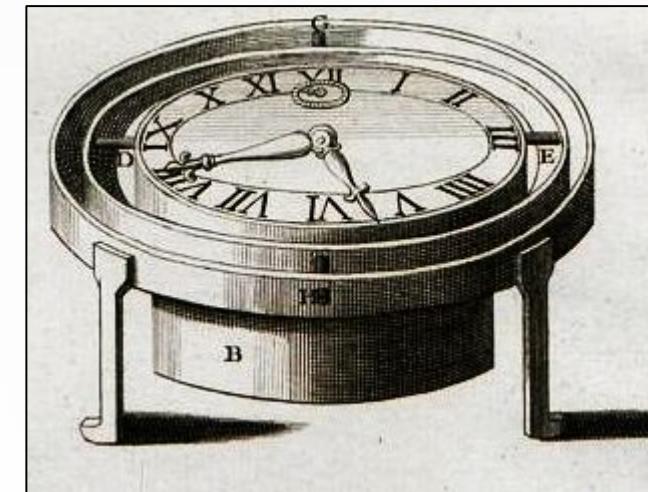
C. Silver gilt Louis XV with glazed back. D. Slightly later white enamel with radial Arabic numerals and outer minute ring. Later blued steel hands. M. Hinged gilt brass, fixed barrel with revolving arbor, three wheel train used in conjunction with a form of Sully's frictional rest escapement with double pallet and single escape wheel, so arranged that the balance staff is kept horizontal in both "hanging" and "lying" positions. Plain brass three-arm balance, flat balance spring. Diam. 47 mm.



Image

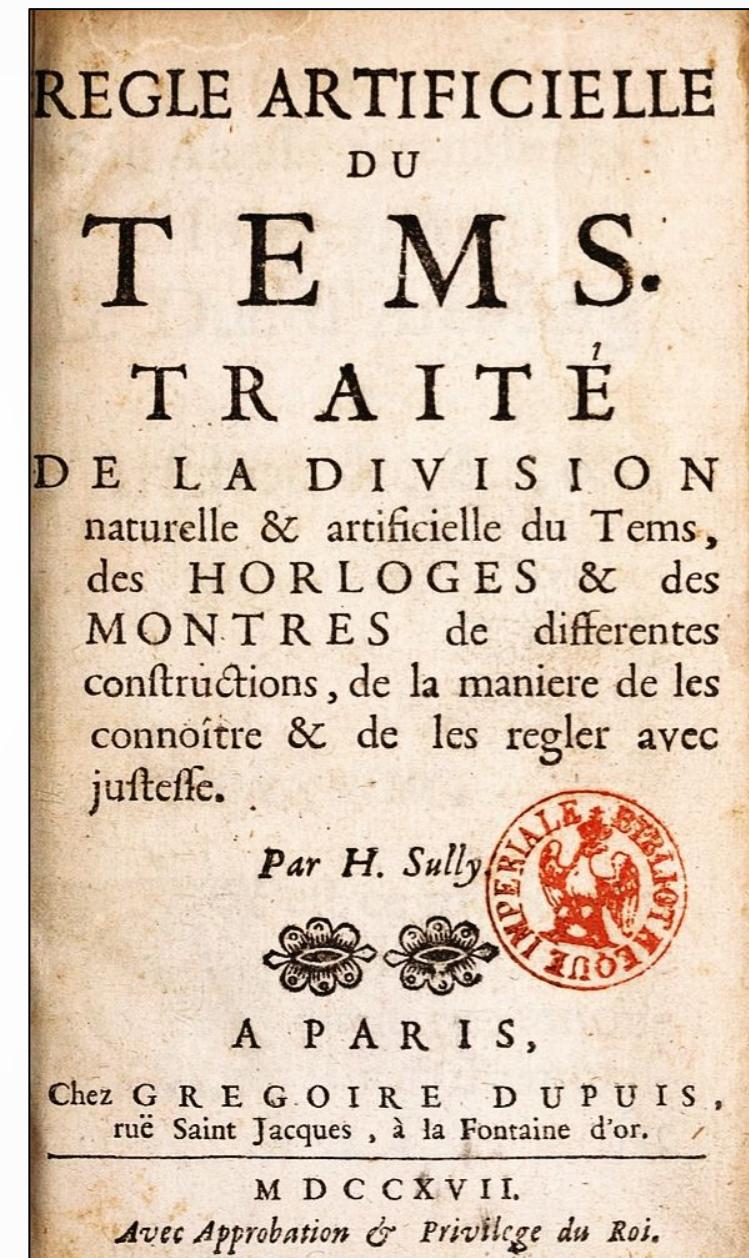
# 1716: Presentation to Académie of his “marine watch”

- Marine watch presented by Sully to the Académie Royale des Sciences, later in 1716
- Le Roy had seen parts of it when he visited Sully's apartments some months earlier
- Evidently, Sully had been secretly busy working on this prototype in his spare time
- He was to later develop a larger pendulum marine clock but did not immediately realize the watch was the better solution to the longitude problem
  - as Harrison found decades later with H4
- The watch was on gimbels to remain horizontal during movements of the sea going ship
- It featured an escapement later named after him
- He used rollers on the more sensitive pivots to diminish friction (Harrison was to use these later, but credit was never given to Sully)
- The royal pension awarded to Sully was also in recognition of these efforts



# 1717: New edition of his book, and Société des Arts

- Sully decided to republish his book in Paris, adding new introductory sections
- On the heels of his success at the Académie, this further enhanced his notoriety in educated circles of Parisian society
- Along with Julien Le Roy, his brother Pierre, spring maker Blakey, a geographer, a mathematician, a goldsmith, Sully formed "La Société des Arts"
  - This grouping of various "artistes" regularly met to share ideas, new inventions, which promoted cross-pollination between the different disciplines
  - In contrast to the "Académie Royale des Sciences", which dealt more with "scientific" subjects
  - The Société met at the Louvre and led by the former librarian of Louis XIV
  - It disbanded after a few years, but was reborn in 1728, largely due to Sully's energy and enthusiasm



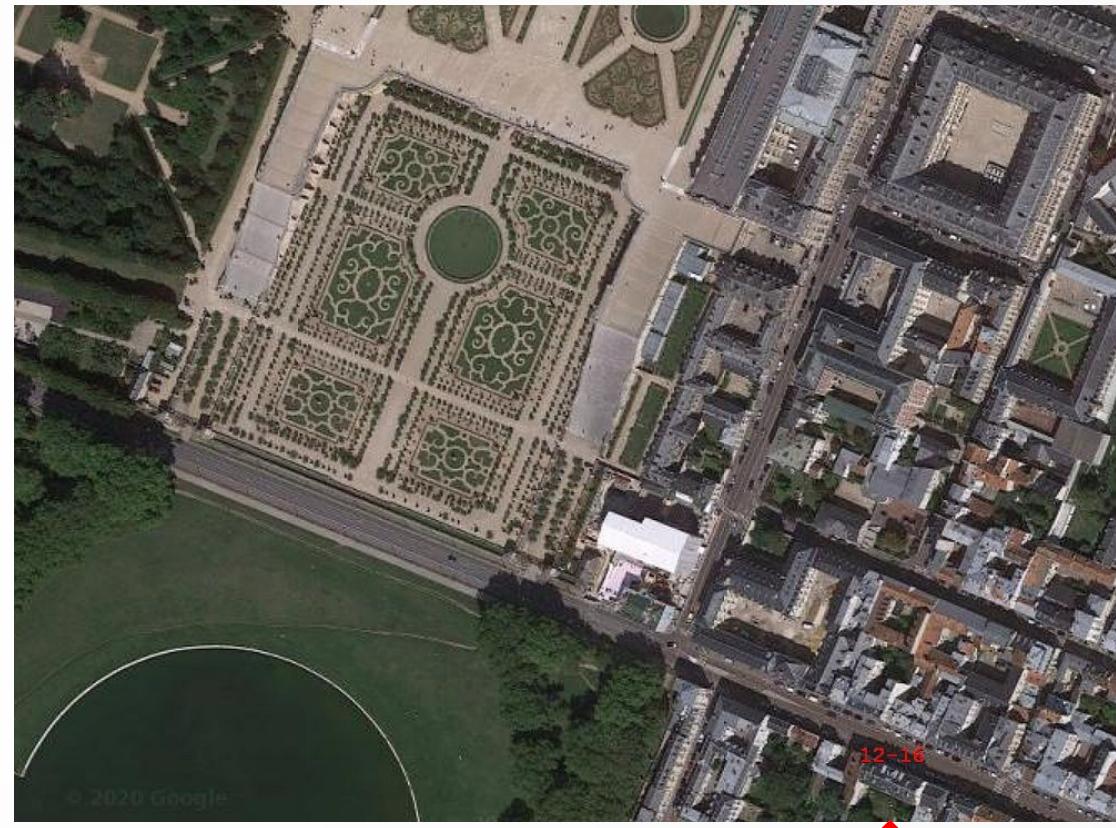
# 1718: Creating a horological factory and school in Versailles

- After Louis XIV's death in 1715, France's economy was in a sad way (expenditures on War, palaces, etc)
- The regent (Duc d'Orléans) was given the rule until Louis XV was of age to take the throne in 1723
- A Scottish financier, John Law, had the ear of the Regent and was given free rein to implement novel measures to restore the French economy
  - Creation of a Royal Bank, government bills and notes (paper money), Mississippi Company
- He also proposed to bring trained English workers to setup factories in France
  - Metalworking, glass-making, woolen manufacturing, watchmaking, shipbuilding
- In giving Sully the pension for his horological work, Law offered (or Sully proposed) to have him create and lead a horological factory
- This was a completely new undertaking, bold and historical



# 1718-19: Creating a horological factory and school in Versailles

- Sully went to England and enticed 60 workers (and their families) to come work in France under him
- Versailles was chosen for the site since the town was depressed and far enough from Paris guild
- Large empty private homes on Orangerie street were converted into workshops at great cost
  - Tooling and supplies procured/installed
  - A customer base had to be developed
  - Supply networks established for watch parts
  - Dwellings arranged for workers/families
- The factory/school was promoted in newspapers
- Sully lived in an affluent home where he would welcome clients and showcase the timepieces
- The stress of organizing and leading this, dealing with English and French workers, ensuring good products and customers, must have been intense
- Probably the highest point in Sully's professional life – at age 40, he felt he had finally "arrived"



Factory at 12-16 Rue de l'Orangerie

# 1720-1: Closing the horological factories and schools

- For reasons somewhat unclear, Sully was dismissed as Director of the Factory/School
  - His assistant James Reith may have undermined him, and replaced him, enriching himself
  - The “Mississippi Bubble” burst (20% inflation) and caused the downfall of Law who then fled France
    - The Law factories folded in ensuing months
    - Not a good time for selling expensive timepieces
  - Sully convinced the Duc de Noailles to let him start a competing factory at St. Germain en Laye
  - This ran for about a year before closing as well
    - Negative economic conditions prevailing
    - Unwillingness of French customers to buy French watches made in the English style
    - Nevertheless the factories had an **indirect positive impact**
      - Knowledge transfer from English workers
      - Training of new French horological workers
      - Increased attention to quality of French watches



Watch signed “Reith Versailles”



Duc de Noailles (1678-1766)

## 1720: An example from the factory at St. Germain en Laye

- A clock in the French style sold at auction in England in 2022
- The movement was signed "Sully a St. Germain en Laye"
- One of the rare timepieces with Sully's name to have survived
  - Also a few of his marine chronometers (Greenwich and Science Museums)



# 1720-1: Sully briefly returned to London, then back to Paris

- When the two horological factories closed, many workers were left stranded in Versailles w/families
- British government allocated funds to repatriate the English workers back from France
- Sully, Reith and a few others tasked with the repatriation, as well as closing and dismanteling
- Archives at Kew in London speak of frustation of some workers, who claimed Sully et al served themselves first and foremost from the funds
- While in London Sully resumed his efforts in marine timekeeping, advancing his designs
  - He approached several powerful people and politicians to obtain financial support, unsuccessfully
  - England was suffering its own bubble ("South Sea")
- Sully had to rejoin his family in Versailles
  - Resumed repairing watches for a livelihood
  - Continued working on his marine clocks



Newspaper cartoon depicting investors lamenting the "South Sea Bubble" speculative financial collapse in 1720

# The challenge of longitude

- *Determination of longitude difficult during long sea voyages*
  - *Much loss of time, life and ships/cargo resulted from this*
  - *Most pressing and challenging scientific problem at that time*
  - *1714: British longitude prize announced (Queen Anne) -20,000 pounds*
- *From early on, accurate timekeepers seen as likely solution*
  - *Other ones were magnetism, lunar cycles, moons of Jupiter, etc.*
- *Many tried over the years to devise a longitude timekeeper*
  - *Gemma Frisius ca. 1530*
    - *Robert Hooke (1635 - 1703) \**
    - *Christian Huygens (1629 - 1695) \*\**
      - *Abbé de Hautefeuille (1647 - 1724)*
      - *Henry Sully (1679 - 1728) \*\**
        - *John Harrison (1693 - 1776) \*\*\**
          - *Thomas Mudge (1715 - 1794) \**
          - *Pierre Le Roy (1717 - 1785) \*\*\**
            - *Ferdinand Berthoud (1727 - 1807) \*\**
            - *Arnold, Earnshaw, Breguet, etc. \*\*\**



# The challenge of longitude

- *A marine timekeeper requires at least 3 key elements:*
  - *Detached escapement,*
  - *Thermal compensation,*
  - *Isochronous balance spring*
  - *Should not gain/lose more than 3 sec/day during 6 week voyage*
- *State of horological science did not allow an effective solution until the later 1700's*
  - *Sully came up with ideas but was still a few decades too soon*
  - *Emphasis was still on heavy slow-frequency pendulum clocks, not higher frequency balance watches - Sully was close but ran out of time*
- *John Harrison started working on his marine clocks in 1726 and produced H4 watch around 1760*
- *Pierre Le Roy (likely inspired by Sully) finally produced a working marine clock ca. 1763, after ~20 years*

# 1721-6: Sully focuses on his marine timekeeper

- Sully had been working at it on and off since his apprenticeship days in London
- Back from London with little money, he probably saw this as his last best chance at financial success
- With help of a few faithful workers, he endeavored to produce and demonstrate a working clock
- Great interest around Paris, several rich enthusiasts and ambassadors placed orders
- Sent three clocks and letters to George Graham in June 1724 asking for insights
  - Got some response from Graham
  - Movement may have inspired Mudge and Harrison?
  - Graham met Harrison in 1730 and gave him more support than to Sully
- Made other presentations to the Académie des sciences (1724)

Régence gilt bronze cartel d'alcôve signed for Henry Sully at Versailles c.1725 – £17,000 at Keys.



Plaque reading *H Sully A Versailles,  
Invenit 1721 et Fecit 1725.*

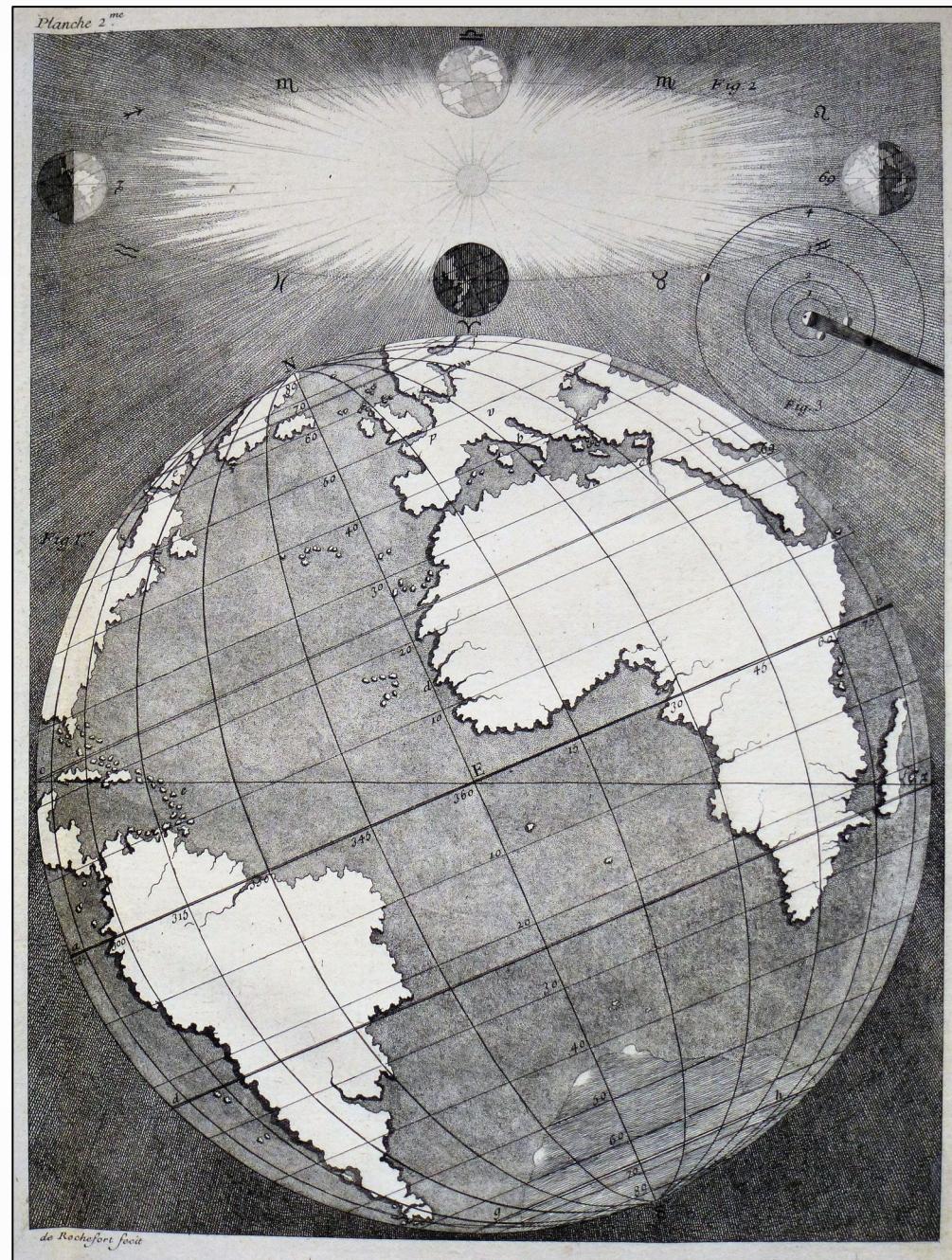
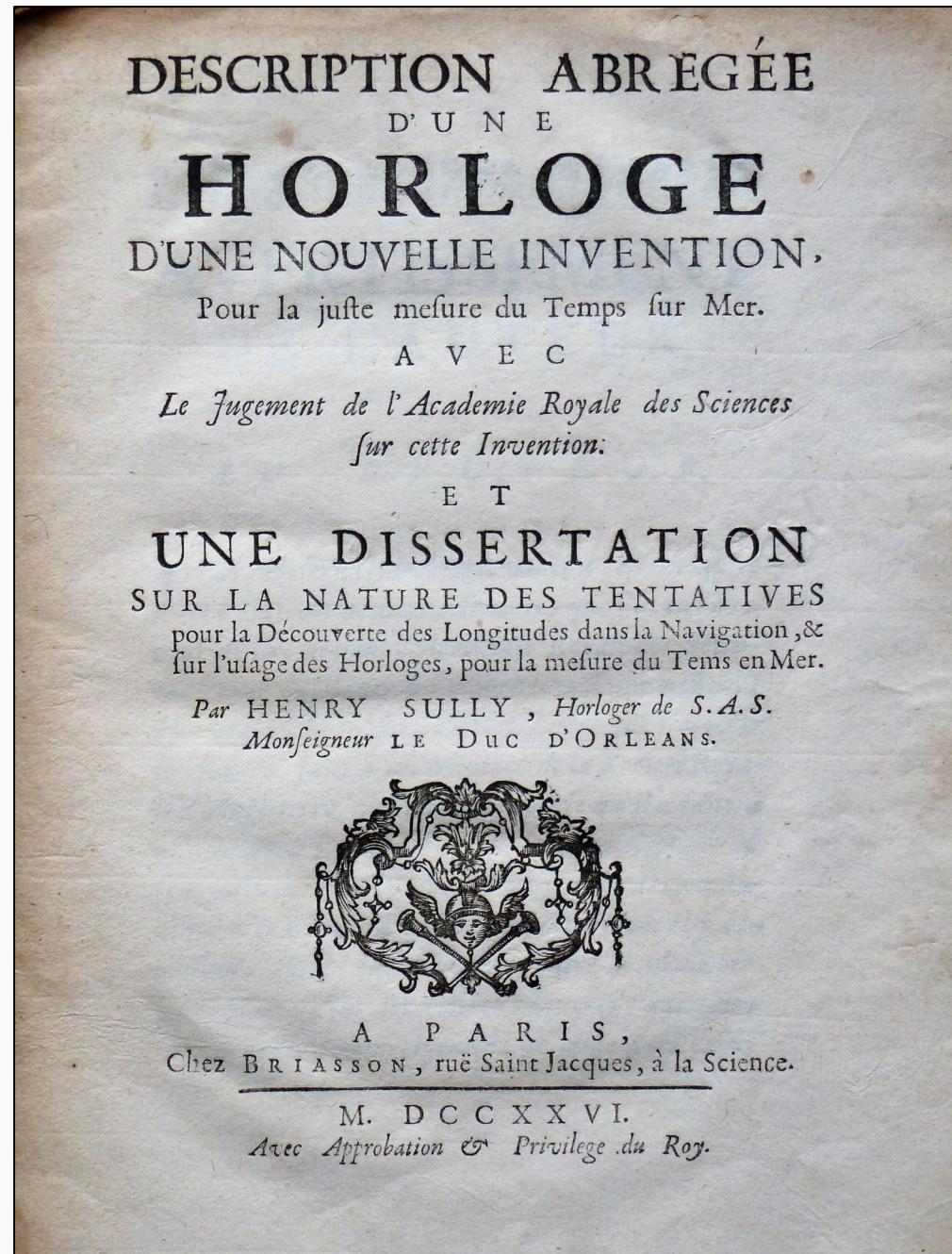
## 1721-6: Sully focuses on his marine timekeeper

- *Sully's clock was tested vigorously in a cart drawn over rough roads and worked well*
- *Arranged for sea trials in the Bordeaux estuary in Summer 1726 (with their Science Academy)*
- *Results were promising but mitigated*
- *Unfortunately his own "frictional-rest" escapement proved unreliable after some time*
  - *forced to substitute with inappropriate verge*
- *He realized he had gone as far as he could, and the final solution would elude him*
- *His 1726 book on his marine timekeeper contains the closest to an autobiography*
  - *Footnote listing all the people with whom he had discussed his plans over 20 years*

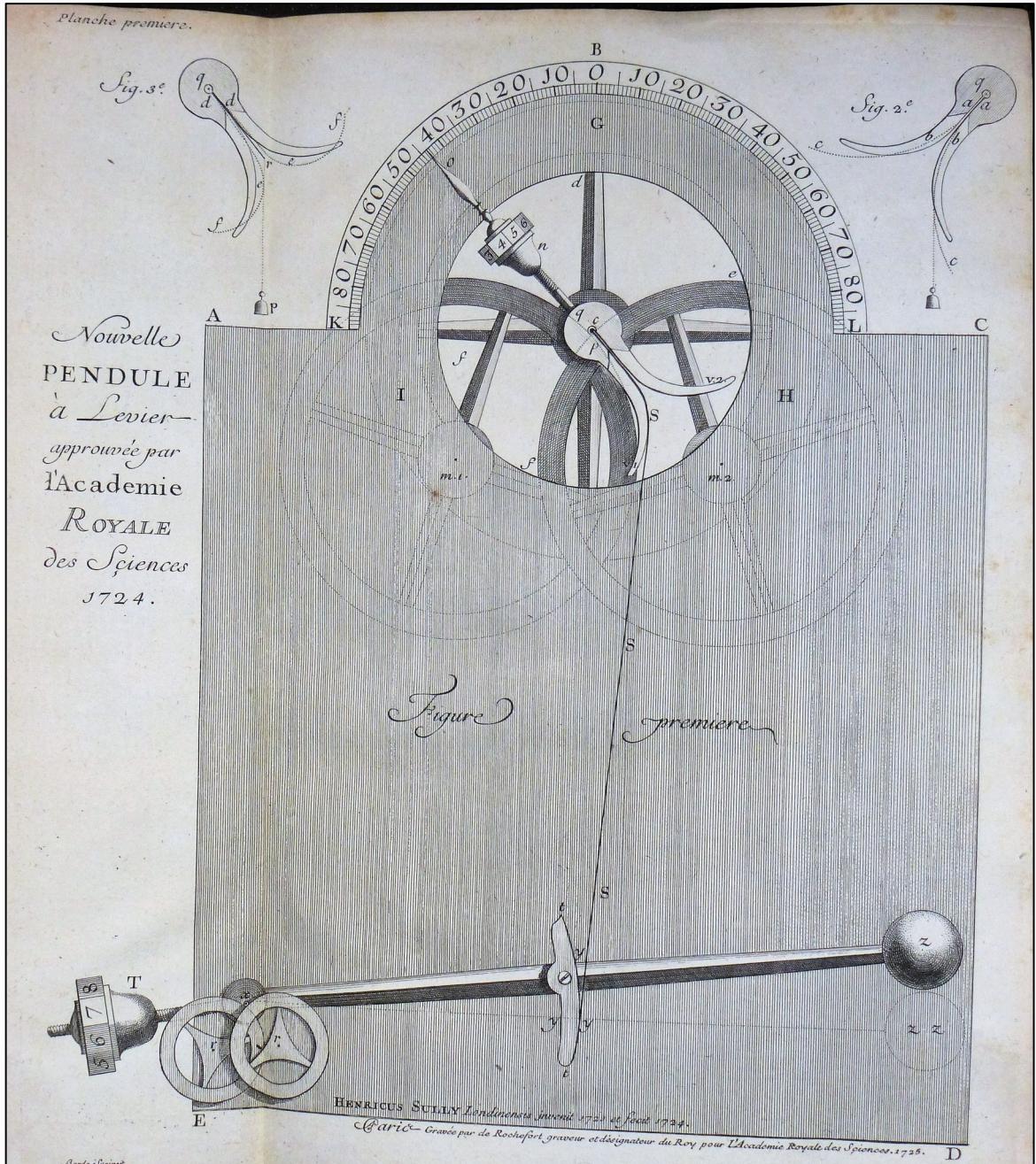
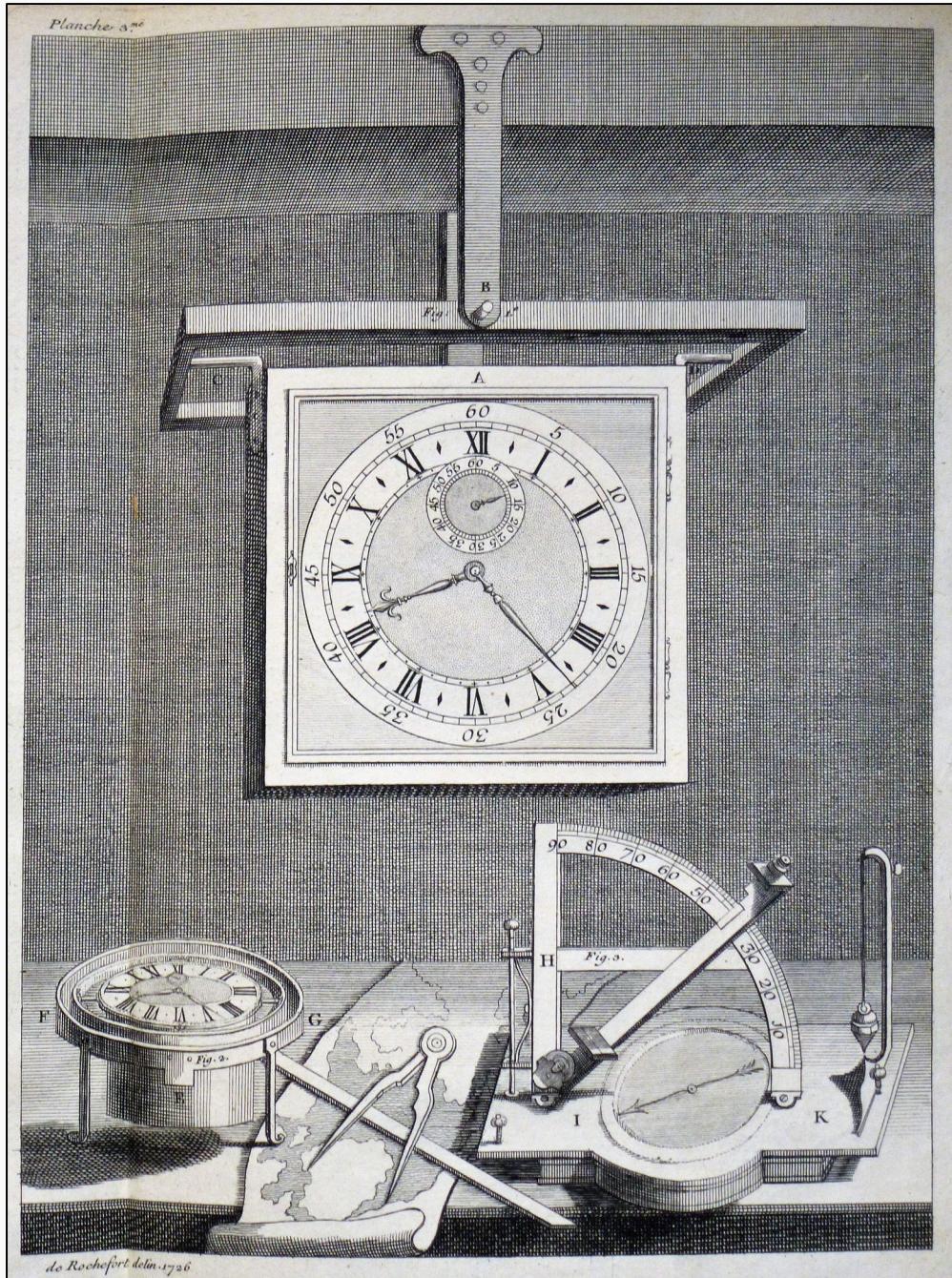


Bordeaux estuary ca. 1759

# 1721-6: Sully focuses on his marine timekeeper

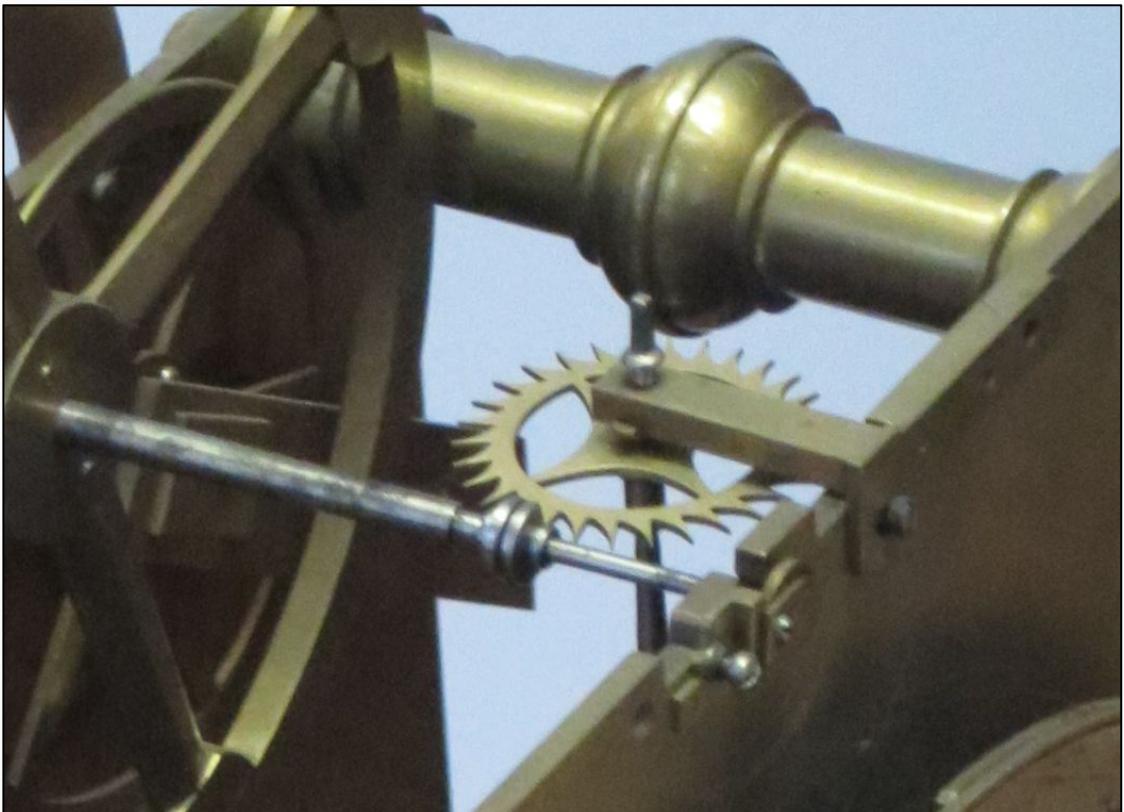


# 1721-6: Sully focuses on his marine timekeeper



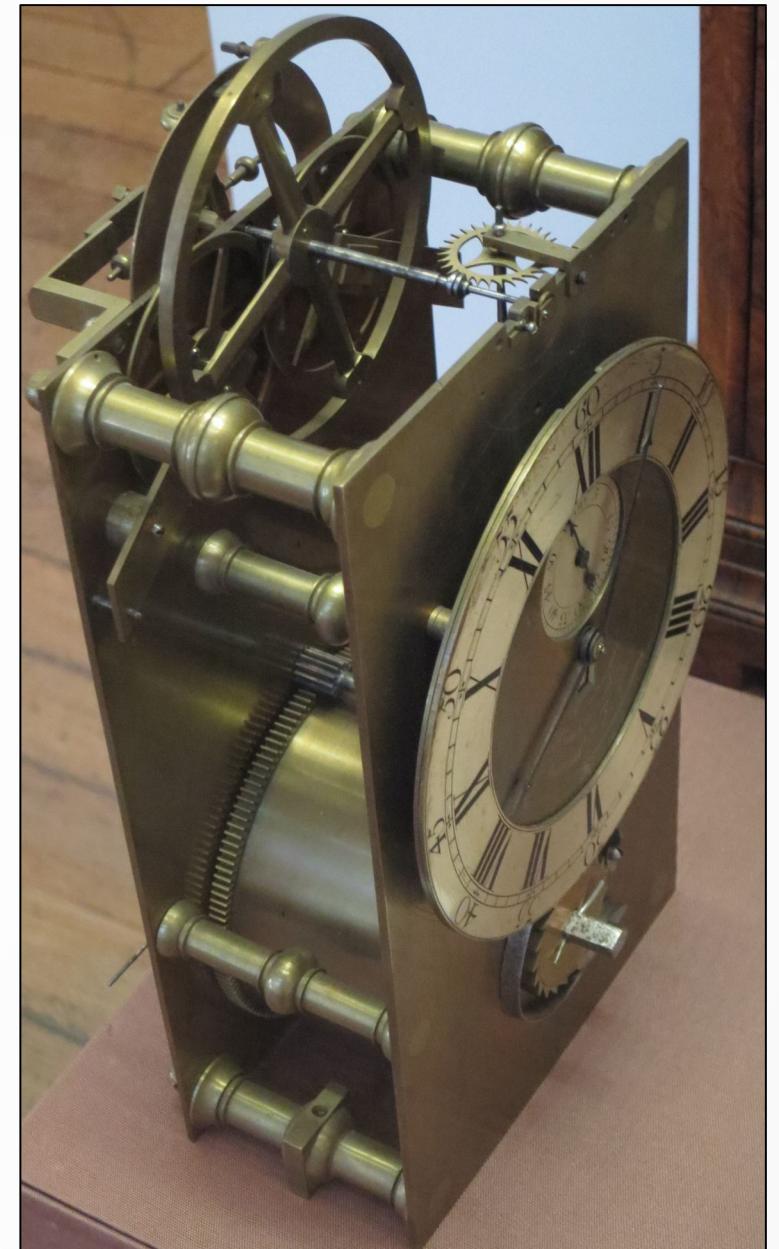
# 1726: Sully comes up short on marine timekeeper

- While carrying out trials in Bordeaux, creditors took away most of his tools in Paris
- Troubling letter to Montesquieu ("I feel like hanging myself")
- After likely period of depression, he shared all his findings and correspondence in a book written and published in 1726
- Examples of his clock survive at London museums



Right: clock sent by Sully to Graham in 1724 (?), now in the Science Museum in London

Left: detail showing Sully's escapement

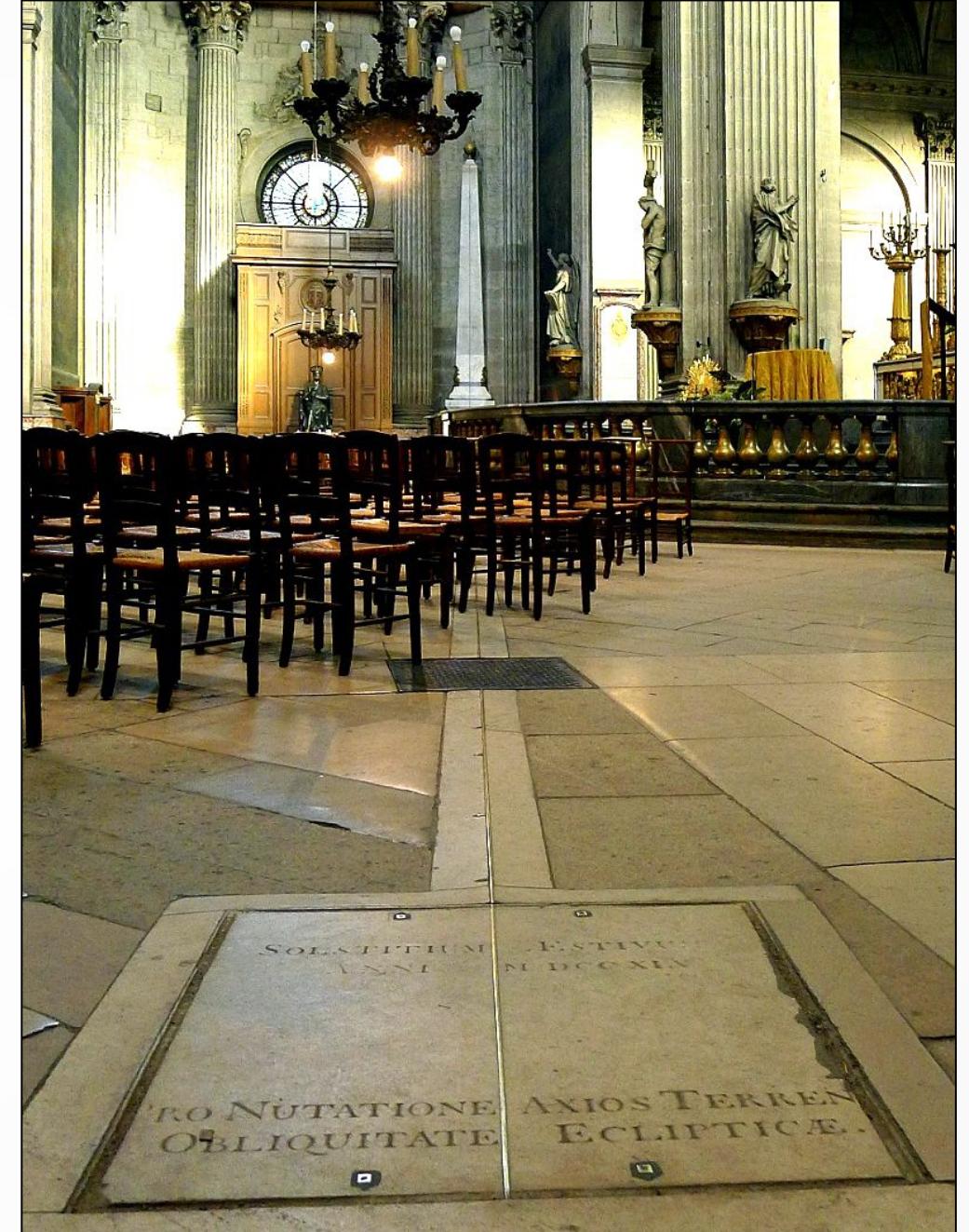
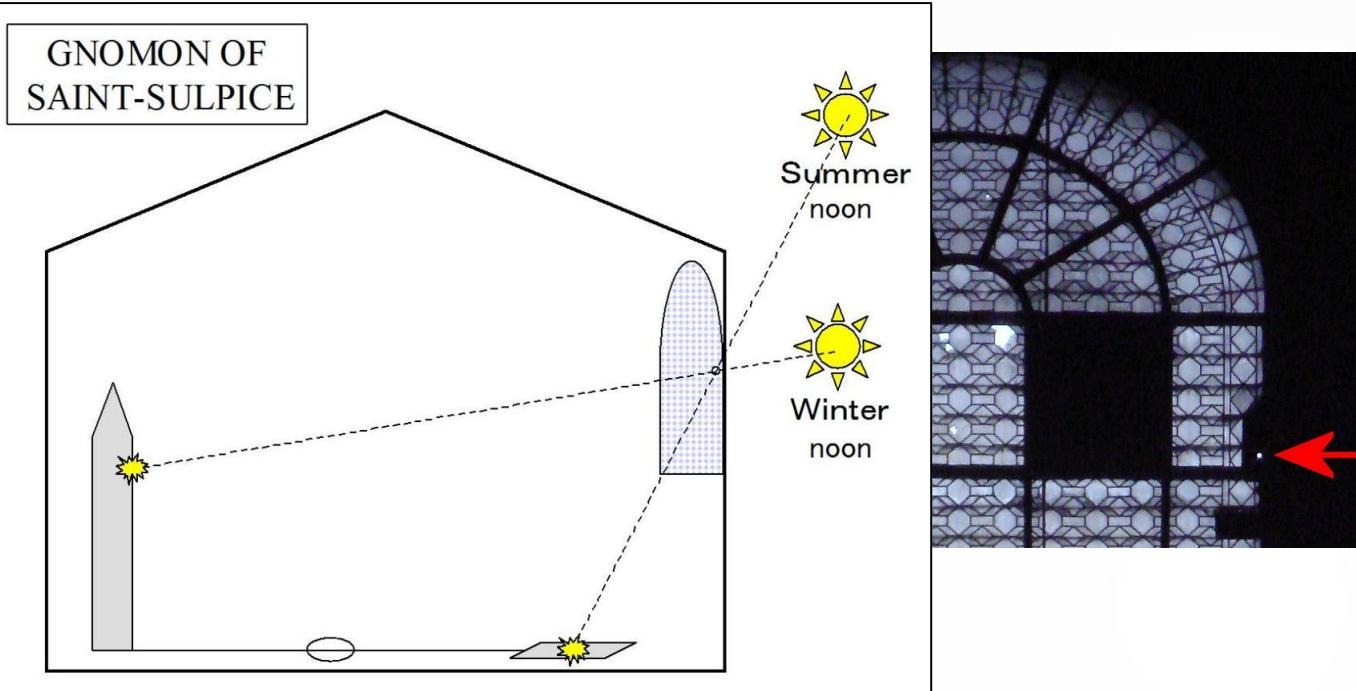


# 1727-8: The last years of Sully's life

- Announced ambitious writing plans
  - 6 volume treatise on horology (suggested by Leibniz 12 years before)
  - Translating his famous book Règle... into English
- Reinvigorated Société des Arts (with Le Roy etc.)
- Started Gnomon of Saint Sulpice Church in Paris
- Died destitute, 13 October 1728, short illness
- Buried at unknown location in the church



# 1727-8: Gnomon of Saint Sulpice Church in Paris



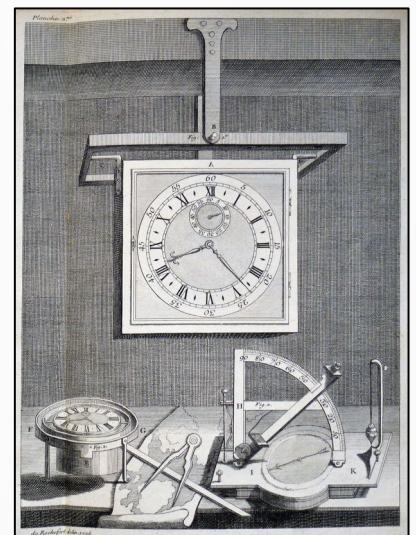
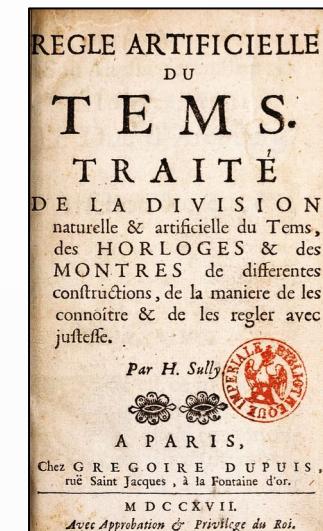
# Henry Sully – Influence on future writers

- 1737: *Julien Le Roy* – new revised edition of Règle artificielle du temps, along with many of his memoirs
  - Contains important biographical chapter on Sully
- 1741: *Antoine Thiout* – Traité d'horlogerie, mécanique et pratique
  - Includes 10 page article by Sully on verge escapement
- 1755: *Jean-André Lepaute* – Traité d'horlogerie
- 1751-72: *Diderot & D'Alembert* – Encyclopédie
  - Includes many articles on horology by Jean-Baptiste Le Roy
- 1763: *Ferdinand Berthoud* – Essai sur l'horlogerie
  - Closest to achieve vision of Sully's all encompassing treatise

**To this day, Sully's writings never translated into English...**

# Henry Sully – Highlights of his life

- When Sully finally met up with Father Time, he could look back on his life
  - Trained & approved London clockmaker
  - Supporting father of 5 or 6 children
  - Known and respected by many notable men in England and Europe
  - Significant horological inventor
  - Important and influential writer
  - Creator and leader of two first horological factories
  - Promoter of intellectual exchanges
  - Key player in marine timekeeping
  - Renowned tool maker
  - Creator of important church gnomon in Paris
  - Many initiatives deemed for betterment of society



*"Henry Sully (horology's martyr), is a figure that stirs the imagination."*

- Paul M. Chamberlain: It's About Time (1941)

*"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 they had had more taste for their fortune, than for the perfection of their works: the late Mr. Sully was one of these."*

- Julien Le Roy: Règle artificielle du temps (1737)

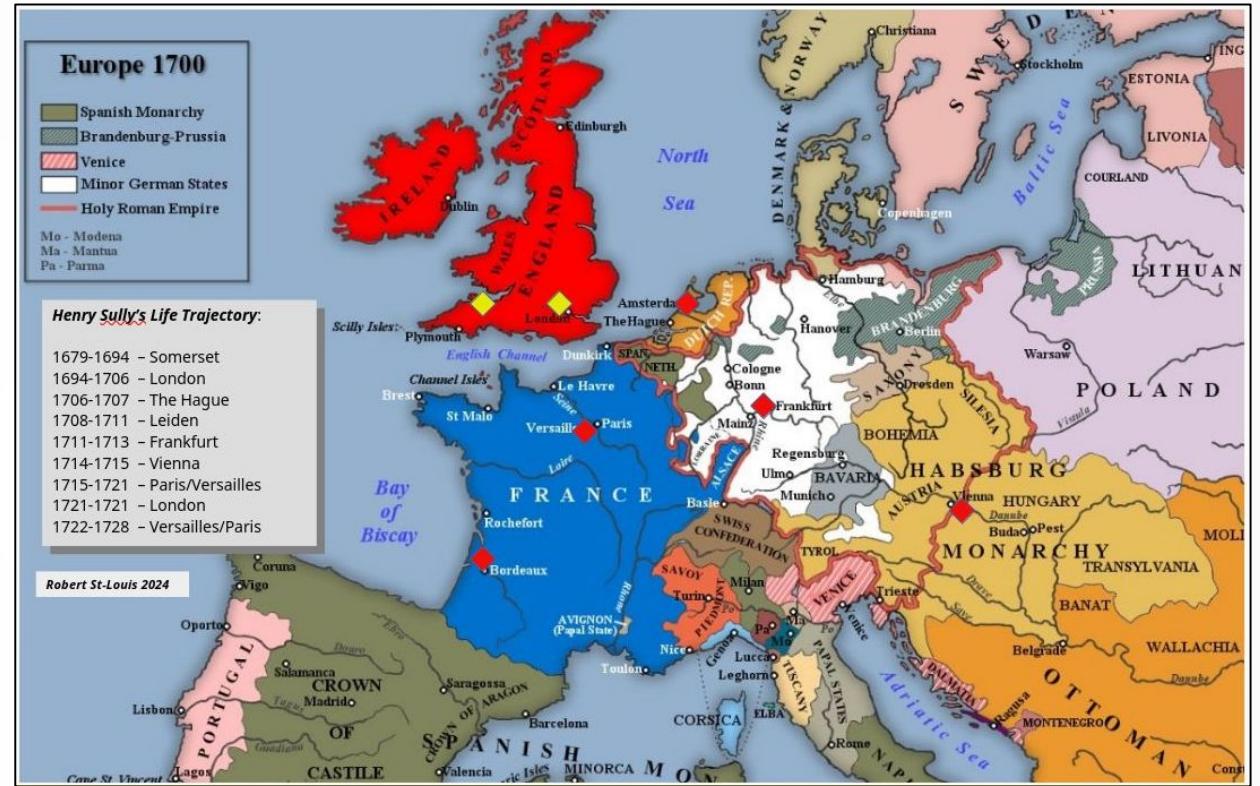
*"[Sully] was specious, adept at self-promotion, willing to turn his coat rapidly, and noticeably lacking in loyalty or gratitude for past favours."*

- J.R. Harris: Industrial Espionage and Technology Transfer (1998)

*"At the time of his death, [this most ingenious and unfortunate man] was working on a new design of marine timekeeper, and if his life had been prolonged, it is quite probable that he would have triumphed over both the mechanical and financial difficulties."*

- Rupert Gould: The Marine Chronometer (1923)

# Henry Sully (1679-1728)

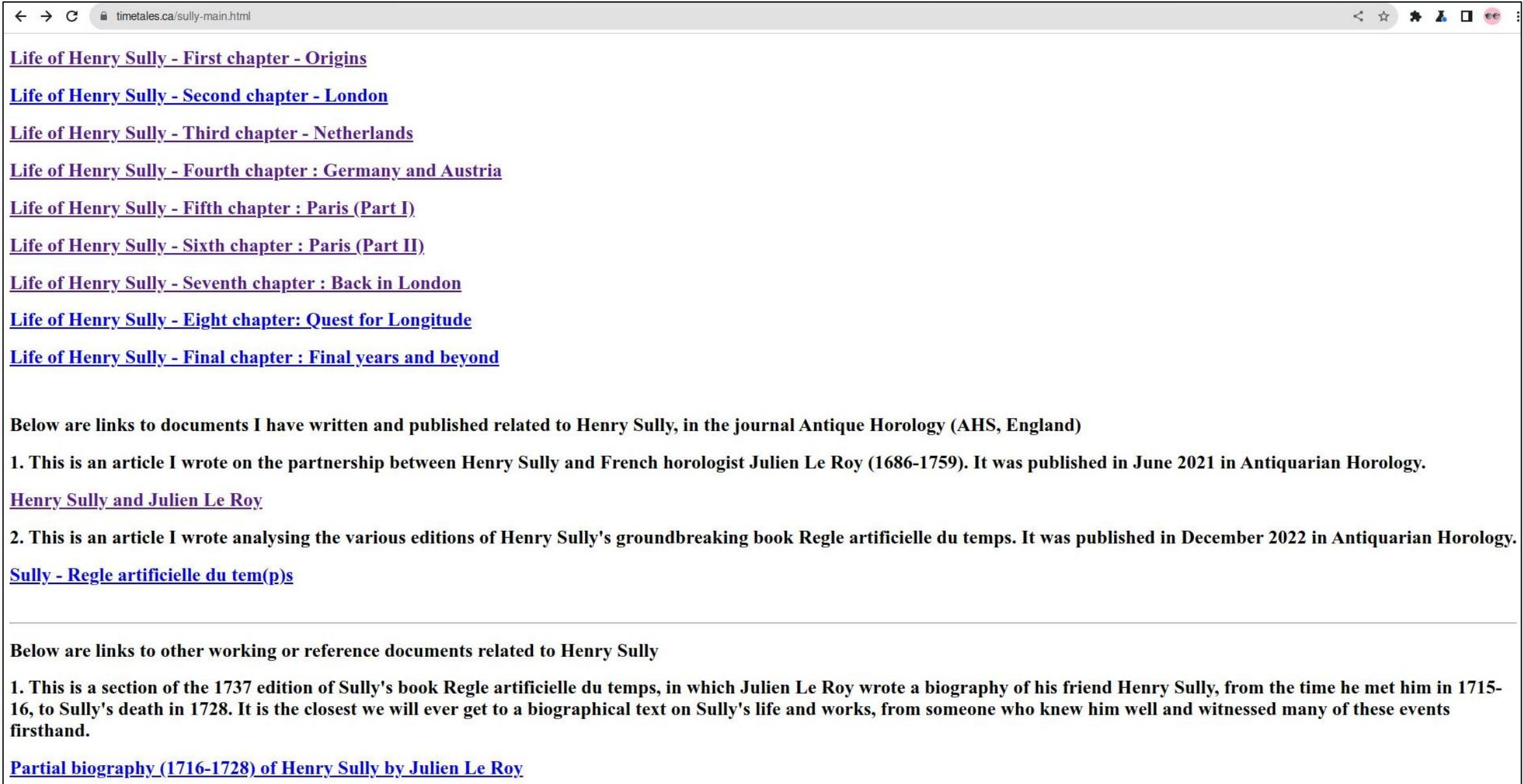


Thank you for your attention.

Merci de votre attention.

- Robert St-Louis [www.timetales.ca](http://www.timetales.ca)

***Much more information on Sully is freely available on my site:  
[www.timetales.ca/sully-main.html](http://www.timetales.ca/sully-main.html) - Robert St-Louis, Ottawa, Canada 2024***



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [timetales.ca/sully-main.html](http://www.timetales.ca/sully-main.html) in the address bar. The page content lists ten blue hyperlinks under the heading "Life of Henry Sully".

- [Life of Henry Sully - First chapter - Origins](#)
- [Life of Henry Sully - Second chapter - London](#)
- [Life of Henry Sully - Third chapter - Netherlands](#)
- [Life of Henry Sully - Fourth chapter : Germany and Austria](#)
- [Life of Henry Sully - Fifth chapter : Paris \(Part I\)](#)
- [Life of Henry Sully - Sixth chapter : Paris \(Part II\)](#)
- [Life of Henry Sully - Seventh chapter : Back in London](#)
- [Life of Henry Sully - Eight chapter: Quest for Longitude](#)
- [Life of Henry Sully - Final chapter : Final years and beyond](#)

Below this list, there is a section titled "Below are links to documents I have written and published related to Henry Sully, in the journal Antique Horology (AHS, England)". It contains two numbered items:

1. This is an article I wrote on the partnership between Henry Sully and French horologist Julien Le Roy (1686-1759). It was published in June 2021 in Antiquarian Horology.  
[Henry Sully and Julien Le Roy](#)
2. This is an article I wrote analysing the various editions of Henry Sully's groundbreaking book Regle artificielle du temps. It was published in December 2022 in Antiquarian Horology.  
[Sully - Regle artificielle du tem\(p\)s](#)

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Below are links to other working or reference documents related to Henry Sully

1. This is a section of the 1737 edition of Sully's book Regle artificielle du temps, in which Julien Le Roy wrote a biography of his friend Henry Sully, from the time he met him in 1715-16, to Sully's death in 1728. It is the closest we will ever get to a biographical text on Sully's life and works, from someone who knew him well and witnessed many of these events firsthand.  
[Partial biography \(1716-1728\) of Henry Sully by Julien Le Roy](#)

# Extra slides...

# Some historical context

## Horology

- 1657: Huygens developed pendulum clock
- 1675: Huygens invented balance spring for watches
- 1685: Revocation of Edict of Nantes resulted in exodus of Huguenots from France (to England, Germany, Geneva, etc)
- French domination declined, London rose (East, Tompion, Quare, Graham - Golden Age in England horology)
- By 1700, french watchmaking was at a low point
- 1714 Longitude Prize under Queen Anne

## Rulers of France and England

- 1643-1715 : Louis XIV
- 1715-1723 : Regency (Duke of Orléans)
- 1723-1774 : Louis XV

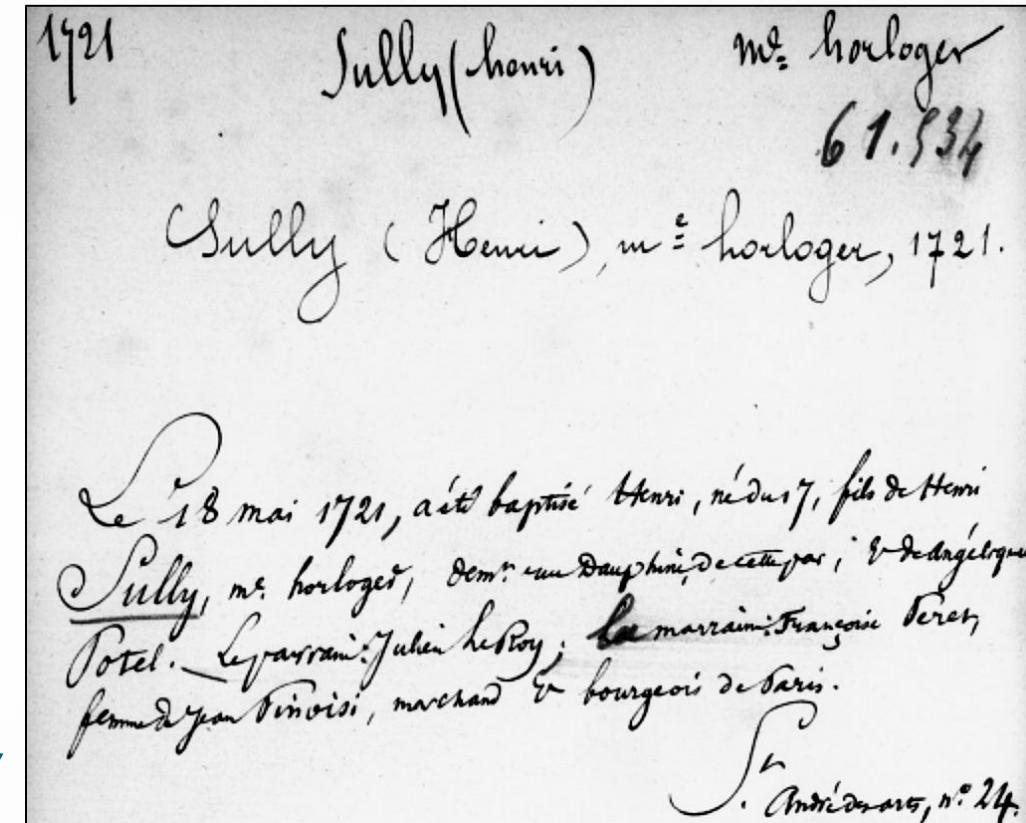
- 1689-1702 : William and Mary
- 1702-1714 : Anne
- 1714-1727 : George I
- 1727-1760 : George II

## Anglo-French wars

- 1688-1697 : Part of Nine Years War
- 1702-1713 : War of Spanish Succession

# Henry Sully – Fate of his youngest son?

- In 1721, Sully had a last son, also named Henri
  - Julien Le Roy was his godfather
  - In August 1754 issue of a bi-weekly ad paper in Paris:
    - Sale of effects after death of Mister Solly, watchmaker
      - Furniture, wardrobe, stock from his shop, tools, etc.
      - Apartment available to rent on Harlay Street
    - Julien Le Roy lived and worked on Harlay
  - Quite possibly, "Solly" was Henry's last son Henri, whom Julien had taken under his wing and trained in the profession



Entry from Léon Laborde files ca. 1860  
(Director of Empire archives)  
66,000 files, many original records were  
burned in May 1871 by Communards