MIRIAM C MEIJER

The Fifth Ascent of Mont Blanc

from the diary and letters of A G Camper (1759-1820)

For centuries mountains had been despised as oppressive landscape disfigurements and obstacles to humanity's movement across the earth. However, beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, the ruling classes of Europe began to seek out the mountains precisely because they were wilderness.[1] The dramatic change between the old view and the new view towards nature, summed up by the term Romanticism, is evident in the letters that the young Adriaan Gilles Camper (1759-1820) sent to his famous father, the Dutch anatomist Petrus Camper (1722-1789). This correspondence, which described Adriaan's 1788 attempt to ascend Mont Blanc, surfaced when I was researching the papers of his father, Petrus Camper, and discovered the descendant who had inherited the letters.[2]

If, by 1788, it was common for tourists to visit the glaciers, Adriaan Gilles Camper and William Woodley (ca.1762-1810) were the first Grand Tourists to actually climb Mont Blanc. The Grand Tourist was one who travelled for the sake of the picturesque. Touring independently through Chamonix, Woodley became the second Englishman to reach the summit while Camper became the first Dutch alpinist to attempt the ascent. Motivated neither by science, money nor fame, Woodley went up Mont Blanc for purely athletic reasons. This made the fifth ascent the first act of alpinism as a pure sport. With two local guides,[3] the créole reached the summit in the midst of a blizzard whereas poor Camper was physically forced back less than 120 metres from the top.[4] Marc Théodore Bourrit (1739-1819) only got as far as the Petits Mulets, yet published four accounts of this climb.[5] While Woodley left no account,[6] Camper wrote a diary in French, which resides in the Amsterdam archives.[7] The letters which I found are a slightly different account of the same Grand Tour.[8] My discovery of Camper's letters sheds light on the fifth ascent of Mont Blanc. Alpinist historians only had Bourrit's version, since Camper's manuscript diary remained unknown outside the Netherlands.[9] While Bourrit played a leading part in mountaineering history, he also publicised an entirely dishonest version of the first ascent of Mont Blanc.

Bourrit, a Genevan bourgeois journalist and artist, helped to make Chamonix a fashionable resort and the name of a hitherto little-known mountain a household word. A strong walker but an ineffective climber, Bourrit published many books on the valley. Scarcely any traveller in the last quarter of the eighteenth century failed to refer to Bourrit and to the part which he played in publicising the Alps. Likewise, Camper wrote to

his father that he 'travelled with the books of Mr de Saussure and Mr Bourrit.'[10] But Bourrit created a legend that denied the achievement of Dr Michel-Gabriel Paccard (1757-1827) because a humble village doctor, almost singlehanded and without a vast retinue of guides and servants, had done as well as or better than either Horace-Bénédict de Saussure (1740-1399) or Bourrit himself.

De Saussure, obsessed with the idea of making observations of natural phenomena from the summit of Mont Blanc, had offered a money prize for the discovery of a practicable route to Mont-Blanc's dome. The Chamonix chamois-hunters and seekers of rock-crystals wanted to make the whole climb in one day, because it was universally held at the time that no one could spend a night on the glaciers and survive. Jacques Balmat des Baux (1761-1834), a local hunter, accidently survived a night spent at the unprecedented height of 12,000 feet. Although burned by snow, his visit to Dr Paccard sealed the fate of Mont Blanc. Paccard had been studying Mont Blanc for three years with a telescope and had planned a new route to the summit. Paccard wished to establish the still-disputed supremacy of Mont Blanc beyond doubt by barometric readings from its peak. While Balmat's object was De Saussure's reward, each man needed a companion to act as a witness, so Paccard offered to take Balmat as a porter.

On 7 June 1786, Paccard and Balmat carried a blanket, sufficient provisions, and alpenstocks shod with heavy iron points; they climbed unroped, without axes, ladder or veils. They had a compass, a thermometer and a barometer with a tripod stand. Defective or damaged on the way, the barometer read much too low. The immediate effect of Paccard's historic achievement, which was the first to make barometric observations, was to blaze the way for future climbers.[11] By planting a baton on the top, Paccard proved that Mont Blanc's summit cone was not a deterrent mass of hard ice and that neither the thin air nor the low temperature (even at sunset) harmed humanity.

Even though Balmat ascended Mont Blanc for the second time on 5 July 1787,[12] while assessing the mountain's condition for De Saussure, his climb was eclipsed by De Saussure's. The first ascent of Mont Blanc was not the most famous in its history; nor was the second. Obscure villagers could not do for mountaineering what was done by an internationally-known Genevan aristocrat and professor of science. On 1 August 1787 De Saussure set off with his valet and 18 guides led by Jacques Balmat.[13] They carried many heavy scientific instruments, some of them capable of giving very accurate readings. They wore black crêpe masks to keep off the glare, the usual iron-shod alpenstocks, some short-handled axes, crampons,[14] ropes, a ladder, and a tent large enough for the entire party. The first night they slept on the Montagne de la Côte, where De Saussure's men had previously built a hut. But the second cabin[15] seemed too close and they passed the second night much higher up (on the Grand Plateau) in the tent. De Saussure spent three hours on the summit, testing the boiling point of water, the

temperature of the snow, and the pulse of his guides. He hoped for an almost supernatural revelation: the discovery, all at once, of the Alps' articulation and their geological formation. While nothing of all that came about, De Saussure was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society the following year. However, from an historical perspective he achieved much more: it was De Saussure who made mountain-climbing a rational occupation for the comfortable classes. De Saussure's writings wiped away the age-old superstitions with which Europeans regarded mountains but also Paccard's *raîson-d'être* for a book. A week later, a Fellow of the Royal Society, Colonel Mark Beaufoy (1764-1827), also reached the summit of Mont Blanc. His account of the fourth ascent was not published until 30 years later.[16]

Paccard never published an account of the first ascent. Publicity about his expedition was pre-empted by Bourrit who, moved by jealousy, gave the whole credit of the enterprise to the porter Jacques Balmat.[17] It was Balmat who found the passage and Balmat alone who arrived on the summit. While it was true that Paccard became snow-blind on the way down and was partly led by Balmat, the better-educated doctor was an experienced mountaineer and the man in charge. The two men's different abilities had complemented each other, but Paccard had only engaged Balmat because his usual guide was not available, and not as a guide but as a porter.

Paccard sent an anonymous '*Ajustement*'' to the *Journal de Lausanne* (24 February 1787) and published two certificates, signed by Balmat, stating the real facts (12 May 1787). Bourrit did not persist with his allegations, but the Lausanne newspaper, giving the true account, was not widely read, whereas Bourrit's sly 'Letter' was circulated widely. Bourrit succeeded in discrediting Paccard to such an extent that, when the doctor wrote an account of the climb, he could not find a sufficient number of subscribers to get it printed.[18] As late as 1832, at the age of 70, Bourrit repeated his falsified story to Alexandre Dumas the elder, whose book continued the legend, in which Balmat was supposed to be the hero and Paccard was made to cut an almost grotesque figure. This version persisted well into the twentieth century.

The debunking of the legend began only in 1892 with the publication of an English climber's diary (that of Gilbert Elliot, Earl of Minto) which revealed a suggestive clue. The Swiss historian Heinrich Dübi found the diary of Baron von Gersdorf who had watched Paccard's ascent from Chamonix through a telescope. In 1920 the American Henry F. Montagnier found, among the baron's papers, a letter by Paccard, dated 31 May 1787, which stated: 'I have not yet published the account of my first trip to the Mont-blanc...a thousand shackles have been the cause. I was up against the authors who had written on our Alps up until now.' Paccard no doubt meant Bourrit and De Saussure. Six more alpinist historians have since rehabilitated Paccard.[19] Bourrit never attempted Mont Blanc again after this expedition. Jacques Balmat also avoided any more expeditions. The

fifth ascent of Mont Blanc, three years later, ended a brief first phase in the history of Mont Blanc ascents, for the summit was not reached again for another 14 years, in 1802.

In his later books Bourrit could no longer acknowledge his failure at ever reaching the Mont Blanc summit. He couched his prose in such a way that it led the reader to believe that he had been successful! For example, referring to the events of 1787, Bourrit referred to himself in the third person: 'It was therefore only in the following year that he, in his turn, reached the summit.' Elsewhere he stated 'He reached the summit when his son became unwell.'[20] Another version read: 'We could not doubt but that we were on the summit'[21] and yet another: 'Finally I reached the summit at my ninth attempt.'[22] Camper's texts rectify Bourrit's manipulations of the truth.

In her first book, Claire-Eliane Engel questioned if Bourrit exaggerated the weather in order to excuse his failure. She reconsidered in a later edition because a storm on Mont Blanc can be dangerous. The wind can turn the final slopes into a raging inferno. The lack of air in the big ice troughs of the plateau causes many people, even excellent climbers, to suffer from mountain sickness. Clothes too thin, poor shoes, insufficient cover against the strong light, no spikes, alpenstocks of ten feet length which were used incorrectly,[23] and ladders, which were more bother than of assistance, caused many to fail. They went in needlessly large groups with too much stuff. De Saussure needed 17 guides to carry his instruments but they also carried an aristocrat's folding bed with mattress, sheets and covers, two frock-coats, three vests, three waistcoats, six shirts, travel clothes, a white costume, boats, gaiters, large pointed shoes, short pointed shoes, regular shoes, and slippers. That Woodley's and Camper's expedition required 22 guides and porters to accompany what were essentially three tourists and a child was needlessly exaggerated.[24]

A Grand Tour, which began in Paris and led him throughout Italy and the Alps, brought young Camper to Chamonix.[25] The ever-active Bourrit was there once more, with his 16-year-old son, to try his luck. Bourrit wrote that he reluctantly agreed to let Woodley (aged 26) and Camper (aged 28) join his expedition and that they each had to organise their own team. The expedition grew into a grand total of 26 people.[26] The leaders, Jean Baptiste Lombard and Jean-Michel Cachat, were guides who had both accompanied De Saussure. They carried two tents (one was De Saussure's), a ladder 40 feet long, and provisions for six days. Camper described the bizarre spectacle to his father:

> August 4 we left at six o'clock in the morning, we four gentlemen and 22 guides. By noon we reached the top of the mountain called la Côte, where we ate lunch and prepared to climb the glacier of Bossons, part of which we had to cross and we did it with some difficulty. These were our preparatory measures: each person had shoes armed with nails [cleats], iron crampons, an iron-tipped stick, also a black gauze veil over the face, and leggings. We looked like negroes or devils.

> We had great difficulty getting across the glacier, sometimes we had to climb down into caverns next to frightening precipices and sometimes climb over snow bridges. The danger was such that we had to rope four persons together to prevent someone from the danger of falling into an abyss without the possibility of being fished out. We also had ladders and thus the caravan went along, a march impossible to describe, for six hours.[27]

Camper narrated how, after five hours of walking, the company came to the Montagne de la Côte, from where they went to the glacier, and everyone, who had foreseen these things, put on their 'gaiters/spats and iron spurs'. Camper was quite overcome by the glacier world, and described with horror 'the appalling abyss' to which he exposed himself and which he could not conquer with 'the greatest efforts'.

They slept at the Grands Mulets, where De Saussure had a cabin built, which Camper described in his letters as 'the most awful little cabin in the world'. They hoped to achieve the entire trip in 24 hours the next day, the second day. Beaufoy had taken three days; De Saussure four. Surprisingly enough, Bourrit had little to narrate about this first night, whereas Camper was at his most verbal in describing how uncomfortable it was. Camper's letter to his father was even more detailed than his diary:

> All night long we heard the noise of avalanches sounding like the most awful claps of thunder. We heard the movement of pieces of ice from the glacier, etc. in short, I felt so awful and I believed that the descent of the cliff would be so hazardous that it seemed unlikely that I would ever see you again and I bitterly regretted my venture; but one must put up a good front in a losing situation, turning back was impossible.

The following morning, 5 August, the caravan started before daybreak in three groups, following the same route as De Saussure. The guides insisted on the whole party being roped, as the only guarantee against death or disaster. In his diary Camper described the rope's purpose:

> To cross a bare field of ice one harnessed 3 or 4 persons together on a long rope so that a piece two feet long hung free, in case of the bad luck that someone fell in the snow covering a crevasse.

Bourrit, the more literary of the two, compared the binding of the rope to a ceremony which no one failed to recognise as their salvation. The travellers were roped in three different parties to their respective guides.

With their faces covered in black mourning crêpe, Camper thought they looked like 'negroes or devils'. Charles E. Mathews concluded from Bourrit's texts that the procession not only looked like a funeral but that

the pace was also funereal. Bourrit was in the lead, behind the guides who blazed the trail, followed by his son, Woodley and then Camper. After lunch at the Great Plateau, however, Bourrit found himself at the back of the line with his son. Woodley was at the head, Camper in the middle, and the intervals between the three groups widened as they advanced. Bourrit called the group to stay together in vain. The company spread more and more apart. Two of Bourrit's six guides gave up altogether, and remained stretched out on the snow. In all the early ascents the guides deserted half way or dropped sleeping in the snow. While De Saussure ascribed this to the action of the high altitude, the more sceptical Charles E. Mathews attributed the guides' lassitude to the excessive use of alcoholic drinks during the journey. Camper's letter, however, backed up De Saussure: 'The thinness of the air affected the guides so much that half of them stayed put and could no longer move.' In his diary Camper described how the path was less dangerous but that 'one sank knee-deep into the snow with each step. It was often necessary to step in the footstep that had been made by one's forerunner; it is hard to imagine how tiring this is in thin air,' i.e. the snow was crusted. Bourrit called for water and vinegar for the unconscious guides but no one knew who was carrying them.

A storm sprang up, it began to snow and it became bitingly cold. Camper and Bourrit described how the mountain 'smoked like a volcano'. Although only three guides remained with him – Jacques des Dames, Jean Baptiste Lombard ('Le grand Jorasse') and Tournier l'Oiseau – Bourrit recalled with resentment that 'Mr. Woodley broke with our tempo and left us behind.'[28] No doubt the weather forced the pace of both the athlete and his guides, who were in better condition and faster than the others, to reach the summit. Camper stopped, tired of fighting the wind. According to Bourrit, Camper gave up in despair and hastily beat a retreat, 'terror imprinted upon his countenance', telling Bourrit that he believed the first detachment was lost. Bourrit describes how he was seized with a desire to succour the Englishman and his guides, and actually got as far as the 'large and last rock', the Petits Mulets, at the base of the crown of Mont Blanc, 120 metres from the summit. The cold, according to Bourrit, became excessive. The snow blown up by the wind nearly blinded him, the tracks were becoming obliterated and his son was sick. He had no alternative but to return, which did not prevent Bourrit (noted Claire-Eliane Engel) from describing the spectacular view at length.[29] In his diary, Camper described the descent as exceptionally beautiful; but in a private letter to his father, he made excuses for his surrender:

> The Englishman and I were the first to reach the base of the last peak, the highest one of the Mont Blanc.[30] But there was such a strong wind that it was difficult to remain there. My stockings were freezing around my legs and I was very much afraid that they would freeze even more. The snow blinded us. We still had a good hour's walk

ahead of us, so I took off with the two of my six guides who were left. The other four were stretched out as if they were dead on the snow. I covered a little more than a quarter of the distance, but my breathing and strength began to fail me to such a degree that, since I was unable to proceed faster, my only prospect was to freeze to death or to have my feet, which I could barely feel, frozen. The wind became even more violent and my two guides were already very tired so that I was forced to backtrack and abandon the idea of reaching the top, which would have been of little profit. The Englishman was better equipped than I was; his two guides were the strongest of the bunch. He climbed to the top, but his reward was somewhat frozen feet, one guide with three frozen fingers and the other with great damage to his eyes.

I then encountered Mr. Bourrit and his son. I told him that I was giving up, but I urged him to persist if he could. Like me, he attempted it, but soon could go no further and also retraced his steps. So, that is how our plan failed. You can well imagine how great the obstacles were for me to give up. But at that moment all the pleasures of life flashed through my mind and I realised that I was putting them at very great risk. It occurred to me how much I would regret losing the use of my legs, etc. In the end prudence carried the day and I know from the circumstances that it was just in time.

We rested for a while on the great plateau and then returned to the cabin, where I suffered greatly from the cold during the night, because the wind picked up so much.

August 6 we left very early, by a different path, looking for a less difficult route across the glacier[31] and I was very happy when, about noon, we felt grass under our feet and saw a cowpath not far away. We reached Chamonix about 3:30. I had no difficulty during the descent, but toward nightfall I began to feel great discomfort in moving my feet, then my legs swelled enormously and I was in such pain that I could no longer move. Lying in bed and feverish, the pain became so terrible that I shivered for more than three hours and I imagined already that gangrene would set in, etc. The next day I was still limping very much and my legs remained swollen.[32]

Camper and Bourrit had waited for their missing comrade on the Rochers Rouges. His son recovered, Bourrit claimed that it was a happy moment when he perceived Woodley descending safely with his guides. Bourrit could hardly contain his anger:

> Finally reunited under the tent we waited for the Englishman and his four guides; one can understand the reproaches I was going to and would have given them if they had not already suffered the pains from their rashness: the Englishman had frozen feet and one of his guides had his eyes in the worst state.[33]

J. A. Bierens de Haan, the only one to compare Camper's diary with Bourrit's versions, noticed the lack of joy among the early alpinists. Participants were constantly mountain-sick, fell exhausted in the snow, had to be dragged further, or be threatened to be thrown in a crevasse in order to snap them out of their depression. Part of this mentality derived from the Romanticism of the times.

The Romantic rhetoric in Camper's long-lost letters illustrates the drawing power of the once disdained mountains to the very Low Countries. Certain dangers were magnified by ignorance and imagination while the real dangers were only partially appreciated, such as the risk of disaster from avalanches on Paccard's route. While the passage of the Alps was doubtless sufficiently terrifying to a novice who was expecting to be frightened, the imagination of the eighteenth century magnified the difficulty and the danger until nearly every traveller who had accomplished the feat fancied himself more or less of a hero.

Camper's cockiness in his earlier letters reflected the self-congratulatory stance of many of his fellow tourists in the Savoy. His generation were testing how far their powers of pictorial appreciation could overcome a natural distaste for danger and discomfort. Without using the word 'sublime' in his text, Camper's sudden turn to terrifying experiences can only be interpreted as a means of seeking the sublime. Although a scientist (he studied geology in Paris and he sent his father lapidary materials from Mont Blanc), Camper described the physical beauties of the mountains, valleys, and streams, imitating the style of Rousseau's last writing, *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (1782). He determined what was 'picturesque' and used his five senses to describe nature in the raw. Such descriptions were absent from the clinical records in De Saussure's and Beaufoy's publications.

In contrast to his father, who defined beauty in terms of proportion or utility, Adriaan Camper leaned towards primary emotional drives. His distinguished father would never have scampered over rocks for the sake of enjoying landscapes. Adriaan descended into coal mines and ascended the Alps with great enthusiasm – signs of a significant transformation in two short generations. Yet the storm on Mont Blanc killed Camper's aesthetic desires as he lay, after the descent, feverish in bed with swollen legs, while Woodley still limped badly a week later. Camper did not think that Bourrit *père* would do any more climbing that year.[34] Bourrit must have been nervous because he argued defensively in a footnote: 'The narrative that he [Camper] made in his country seemed so incredible that he did not dare to talk about it.'[35]

At the time, De Saussure's 'scientific' publications appeared to make all other accounts valueless. Paccard could not find subscribers owing to Bourrit's disparagements, which insisted on the little interest offered by summit observations made in a hurry. Bourrit and De Saussure were very jealous that an insignificant village doctor of 29 could become world-famous by publishing a book. Paccard's lack of a book made De Saussure the first to ascend Mont Blanc.

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2 Mary Camper-Titsingh. This paper would not have been realised without her generosity and assistance. I also thank Hans-Georg Leuzinger, Zurich architect and alpinist, and my parents for their contributions.

3 Jean-Michel Cachat (1756-1840), called 'le Géant' and 'sans peur', Dominique Balmat and perhaps Alexis Balmat.

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7 Adriaan Gilles Camper, 'Aanteekeningen betreffende zijn reizen in Frankrijk, Italie, enz.', University of Amsterdam Library manuscript, in French, ms. II E 2. I refer to this as 'the diary'.

8 Mary Camper-Titsingh donated her ancestors' letters to the University of Groningen. Robert P. W. Visser and Hans Bots have prepared a book manuscript based on these new letters.

9 An excerpt was translated into Dutch and published by J. G. S. van Breda, *Levens-schets van Adriaan Gilles Camper* . Goesin-Verhaeghe (Gent), 55-60, 1825. It was reprinted in M. Wiegersma, 'Adriaan Gilles Camper, De Eerste Nederlandse Alpinist' in *De Berggids: Orgaan van de Nederlandsche Alpen Vereeniging,* 43-44, June 1950.
Consequently only J. A. Bierens de Haan was aware of this source for the fifth ascent. J. A. Bierens de Haan, 'Prehistorisch Nederlands Alpinisme' in *Een Halve Eeuw Nederlands Alpinisme, 1902-1952.* Uitgave Nederlandsche Alpen-Vereeniging (Leiden), 25-36, 1952. They were not aware of the letters I discuss here.

10 Letter, AGC to PC, Münster, 21 July 1788.

11 Paccard published his barometric results in the *Journal de Lausanne,* 166, 4 August 1787. Paccard inaugurated a route which is today the 'voie normale' and climbed by many hundreds of people every year. However, fatalities are also suffered annually.

12 With Jean-Michel Cachat ('le Géant') and Alexis Tournier ('l'Oiseau'), using a deviation of Paccard's route, later known as De Saussure's route. *Journal de Lausanne,* 21 July 1787.

13 Horace-Bénédict de Saussure, his servant Têtu, Jacques Balmat ('Mont Blanc'), Pierre Balmat, Marie Couttet, Jacques Balmat (Mme. Couteran's servant), Jean-Michel Cachat ('Le Géant'), Jean-Baptiste Lombard ('Jorasse'), Alexis Tournier, Alexis Balmat, Jean-Louis Devouassoux, the brothers Jean-Michel, François, Michel and Pierre Devouassoux, François Couttet, François Ravanel, Pierre-François Favret, Jean-Pierre Cachat and Jean-Michel Tournier. The guides with the nicknames were so called because they had ascended the points which the sobriquets indicate. Albert Richard Smith, *The Story of Mont Blanc.* David Bogue (London), 93, 1853.

14 As now, crampons consisted of climbing irons or steel frames with projecting spikes attached to the soles of the boots.

15 At the Grands Mulets, although these rocks were not yet named as such. According to Montagnier, the name only originated among the guides about the time of Woodley's ascent. Henry F. Montagnier, 'A Further Contribution to the Bibliography of Mont Blanc, 1786-1853' in *AJ 30,* 121n, 1916. Camper explicitly stated the 'Grands Mulets'.

16 Beaufoy went with his Swiss servant, J.-M. Cachat, Charlot Charlet and eight other guides, but Balmat was not among them. Beaufoy's observations (on August 9, 1787) of the latitude and the altitude of the sun proved inaccurate. At the time of Beaufoy's climb, Bourrit was in Chamonix and wrote a rather ungracious account of Beaufoy's success following a pompous description of his own (disguised) failure of the following year (1788).

17 Bourrit, 'Lettre de M. Bourrit sur le Premier Voyage fait au sommet du Mont Blanc, le 8 août dernier', September 20, 1786. Reprinted in the *Mercure de France*, the *Esprit des Journaux*, the *Mercure Historique et Politique de la Haye*, the *Cahiers de Lectures* (under the title 'Jacques Balmat le Conquéran du Mont-Blanc'), the *Journal de Paris*, etc. The earliest account in English of the conquest of Mont Blanc was: 'Account of the success of a young man belonging to CHAMOUNI, who acts as a Guide to Travellers passing MOUNT BLANC' in *The Scots Magazine 48*, 526-528, November 1786. Bourrit first recalled his personal exploits, then he began the praises of Balmat.

18 Only Paccard's *Prospectus* inviting subscriptions to defray the cost has survived. Nothing whatever is known of Paccard's narrative manuscript. The discovery of his Notebook only gives a few lines about the actual ascent.

19 Charles Edward Matthews, Douglas William Freshfield, E. H. Stevens, Thomas Graham Brown, Sir Gavin Rylands de Beer and Claire-Eliane Engel.

20 Bourrit, *Description des Cols ou Passages des Alpes, vol 1*, 95, 1803.

21 Bourrit, *Itinéraire de Genève, des Glaciers de Chamouni, etc.*, 193-94, 1808.

22 Bourrit, *Itinéraire de Genève, Lausanne et Chamouni*, 232, 1791.
Sir Gavin Rylands de Beer, 'Marc-Théodore Bourrit: The Biography of an Early Alpine Enthusiast' in *Escape to Switzerland.* Penguin Books (New York), 122, 1945.

23 Edward Whymper, *Chamonix and the Range of Mont Blanc: A Guide* John Murray (London), 1896. This appeared confirmed in Bourrit's illustrations for De Saussure's journey.

24 J. A. Bierens de Haan, 'Prehistorisch Nederlands Alpinisme' in *Een Halve Eeuw Nederlands Alpinisme, 1902-1952.* Uitgave Nederlandsche Alpen-Vereeniging (Leiden), 29, 1952.

25 For the real reasons for and the consequences of his tour, see Miriam C. Meijer, *Race and Aesthetics in the Anthropology of Petrus Camper (1722-1789).* GA: Rodopi (Amsterdam/Atlanta), 23-24n, 144, 1999.

26 Jaques Balmat ('le Mont-Blanc)*, Dominique Balmat*, Jean-Michel Cachat ('sans Peur')*, Alexis Balmat*, Tournier L'Oiseau, Balmat des Dames, Jean Baptiste Lombard ('Le grand Jorasse'), François Favret, Louis Bossenet, Alexis Désaillou, Jaques Cupelin, François Coutet, Michel Devuassou, Marie Bellin, Michel Ravanel, Charlot Mercure, Michel Fege, Michel Rosset, Colin Balmat, Pierre Devuassou de Barras, Pierre Cachat ('la mâchoire'), Jean Balmat.
* The four guides with an asterisk had reached the summit.

27 Letter, AGC to PC, Münster, 21 July 1788.

28 Bourrit, *Itinéraire de Genève, de Chamouni, du Valais ...* etc, 192.

29 Bourrit even claimed that he saw the Mediterranean from this height. 'In fact, it is denied at Chamouny that Mons. B. ever was at the top of Mont Blanc, or at any part of it, whence, from the form of the mountain, the Mediterranean could be visible. The whole history is much laughed at by Dr. Paccard, and the old guides of Chamouny.' Captain J. Undrell, RN, 'An Account of an Ascent to the Summit of Mont Blanc in August, 1819' in *Annals of Philosophy 17*, 379n, 1821.

30 Probably to the right of the Bossons glacier.

31 They ascended by De Saussure's route, the short route over the top of the mountain called 'La Côte', but descended by Paccard's route, the longer path leading over the Glacier des Bossons.

32 Letter, AGC to PC, Münster, 21 July 1788.

33 Marc-Theodore Bourrit, *Itinéraire de Genève, des glaciers de Chamouni, du Valais et du Canton de Vaud* , 195-196, 1808.
[Revised edition of *Itinéraire de Genève, Lausanne et Chamouni.* Paschoud (Geneva), 1791.]

34 Letter, AGC to PC, Geneva, 13 August 1788. Adriaan later met De Saussure.

35 Bourrit, *Description des cols, ou, passages des Alpes, vol. 1.* G. J. Manget (Geneva), 94nl, 1803.