

Concerning the Daries Brothers
Errors and Corrections

by

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Daries!! What did this name suggest to Marianists before January-February 1962, when Yves Chaille published his study: *Aux origines d'une Congrégation vendéenne* in *La Revue du Bas-Poitou et des Provinces de l'Ouest*? Very little. For some, a vague remembrance of having read, in the biography of their founder by Father Joseph Simler (Bordeaux-Paris, 1902), that in Spain, during the French Revolution, a deacon of that name had had the idea of founding a Society of Mary but had failed for lack of the energy needed to bring such an enterprise to fruition.

Father Chaille, FMI, resurrected the memory of Bernard Daries who had died heroically taking care of the victims of a putrid fever at Lillo, in Spain, on July 2, 1800, on the verge of returning to France and becoming a priest. In reading this work, filled with details on the Daries family and conscientiously documented, Marianists discovered that Bernard and two of his brothers, Pierre and Jean, had been pupils at the college of Mussidan when the three Chaminade brothers (Jean-Baptiste, Louis, and William Joseph) were teaching there between 1783 and 1790. In fact, both the archives of the Society of Mary and the departmental archives of Dordogne corroborate this information with numerous indisputable documents.

Later, many other studies and essays have placed at our disposal new materials. In presenting *Le V. Père Baudoin et sa famille spirituelle* and *Le P. Baudoin en Espagne*, in *Revue Sainte-Marie*, in 1968 (vol. 1, pp. 1-5; vol. 2, pp. 4-9), Chaille shares what he had discovered in the Daries dossier at the monastery of Tournay (Hautes-Pyrénées). In 1969, in his thesis for a doctorate in letters, *Les nouvelles congrégations de Frères enseignants en France de 1800 à 1830*, Father Zind devoted several pages (61-65) to Bernard Daries and to his proposed Society of Mary.

Four years later, Father Maurice Maupilier, FMI, gave us *Louis-Marie Baudoin et ses disciples*, where, naturally, in some fifteen pages (48-63), he recalls the life of Bernard Daries. In 1975, it was Father Louis Antoine, Capuchin, who published *Deux spirituels au siècle des lumières: Ambroise de Lombez, Philippe de Madiran*. There we can see what the author had learned about the Daries brothers: that Philippe Doussau de Madiran was their maternal uncle and that he had left a manuscript, *Abrégé de la vie de M. Bernard Daries*, “written at Lérin in Navarra, Spain, 1800.”

In his turn, Jean Séguy, of the National Center for Scientific Research, has written about the religious congregation proposed by Bernard Daries. This essay appeared in 1984 in the *Revue de l'histoire des religions* under the title of *La Société de Marie dite d'Espagne*. The author did not fail to devote a few words to Bernard and his family.

More recently, the same is true for Dom Billet, a monk at Tournay (Htes Pyrénées), who, in the *Mélanges Charles Molette* (vol. II, Abbeville, 1989) proposed to “present in a more precise manner the project of Bernard Daries, while placing it into the larger context of his biography, his devotion to Mary, and especially his personal notions on the end of time” (p. 887).

With so much material, we should not have lacked any information on the Daries family.

Alas! In history, we must always deal with the possibility of errors. There are those that are negligible and those that are important, those that are merely curious and those that are banal, those that are explicit and those that are implicit, those that are inevitable and those that are unpardonable, those that are ordinary and those that are surprising—and others, like the following, all regrettable to some degree.

On that point, the prize undoubtedly goes to the author of *Deux spirituels au siècle des lumières*. There were four priests in the Daries-Dousseau family: a brother of Madame Dousseau (Jacques), and three children whom she had of her husband Macaire (or Macary): Pierre, Bernard, and Jean. Pierre, born in Madiran on January 13, 1768, died there on December 17, 1849. Jean was born on May 6, 1777, and died as curate of Lanne on April 7, 1814. Bernard, born on October 6, 1772, in Madiran, died at Lillo, near Madrid, on July 2, 1800. Misled by his confrere, Irénée d'Aulon, Louis Antoine flounders when he speaks of each.

He barely mentions Pierre (p. 254). What does he say of him? That he was a priest in 1789. In fact, though, in 1789 he was only twenty-one years old. On the testimony of his uncle, Philippe de Madiran, he was then studying theology at the seminary of Larressore in preparation for the priesthood that he received in 1792 from Bishop Le Guien of Neufville.

He knows Jean (p. 254) but seems not to have known in the least that on September 7, 1789, in the seminary of Mussidan, this Jean, 12 years old, received an award in recompense for his work and his conduct in the first year of grammar. He thinks him already a priest at that time, confusing him with another Daries, pastor at Artagnan. In his place he has the pastor of Lanne die on April 17, 1814 (p. 185), though he died ten days earlier (p. 189, n. 6).

What about Bernard? According to Louis Antoine, he practiced medicine at Lillo in 1795 (p. 255). However, he was named a doctor only on May 27, 1799. He has him die in Madrid (p. 199) on May 19, 1800 (p. 256), though his death in fact took place at Lillo on July 2, 1800. Moreover, according to Louis Antoine, his novel (in the style of Bernardin de Saint Pierre) would have been written at Lillo (p. 255), though Bernard was present in that city only from May 1 to July 2, 1800, busy day and night in caring for the victims of an epidemic of putrid fevers.

If I add that, under his certainly charming style, “the land of Notre Dame de Garaison” becomes “the land of Paraison” (p. 198); that Peyrehorade changes to Peyrorade (p. 185); that Saint Lanne changes its gender (p. 185); and that (p. 183) Father Léonard d'Auch is presented to us as having cited the name of Philippe de Madiran in 1782 “because this brother had depicted the portrait of

Father Amboise de Lombez in an historic letter dated 1789”—one can certainly note that Father Louis Antoine deserves a revisited and corrected edition.

Fortunately, the other authors who have shown an interest in the Daries brothers are not as far from the truth. However, it is to be regretted that they were not more exact.

Chaille wrote that Jean Daries was born on May 6, 1770. Starting with that, and since Pierre was born on January 13, 1768, and Bernard on October 6, 1772, he could say: “The two older brothers of Bernard were ordained priests....” Yet, the Jean Daries in question was not born on May 6, 1770, but on May 6, 1777, according to his baptismal certificate. Therefore, only Pierre was older than Bernard. What might have led Chaille into error is the fact that in the Daries family, there was another Jean, older than his three brothers, but one who never aspired to the priesthood and continued his father’s small business. Chaille should have been more cautious because of the way in which Philippe de Madiran presented the four children of his sister, naming Jean, the future priest, after Bernard and qualifying him as “his little brother.”

In Chaille’s article we also read that Bernard Daries died on July 2, 1802, but here it is no doubt a question of a typo that escaped the proofreader at the time of the printing, for the author had clearly written that the death took place on July 2, 1800. However that may be, there is no doubt that, basing themselves on Chaille, Jean Séguy (op. cit., p. 38) and Dom Billet (op cit., p. 888) attributed two older priest brothers to Bernard.

Following M. Maupilier (op. cit., pp. 48 and 61), Dom Billet points out that one should read Marie Doussau and Jacques Doussau instead of Marie Rousseau and Jacques Rousseau. That author also has Pierre Daries die of the plague at Cordoue, around 1800, though he in fact died at Madiran on December 17, 1849, as is attested to by his death certificate.

Though very precise with Maupilier, Dom Billet does not notice that in his contribution to the *Mélanges Charles Molette*, he happens, no doubt by oversight, to change to Louis the name Maurice of the one whom he wishes to correct (op. cit., p. 887). He also has Philippe Doussau be born in 1737 (p. 888) instead of 1739, and attributes eleven children to the parents of the Daries brothers, though Philippe de Madiran had written: “The children of my sister (Marie Dousseau, spouse of Macaire Daries) were, as I remember, ten, of whom four were in heaven a few years after their birth” (p. 888). He also mistakenly attributes five children (p. 888) to the parents of Philippe de Madiran, though the latter tells us: “We were seven siblings who closed our eyes when leaving our dear father and mother—three boys and four girls” (*Épître historique faite pour une âme pieuse*). He also placed the Convention in 1790 (p. 889) and called Marione the deacon Jacques-Etienne de Martonne who, at Mussidan, was a friend of Bernard Daries (*Arch. dép. de la Dordogne; Minutier Buisson 3E 6.471, acte du 7 Juin 1783, et 6.472, acte du 10 mai 1784*). Like Chaille, he considered Jean Daries, future pastor at Lanne, as older than his brother

Bernard. He also wrote that the latter “defended successfully a general thesis of philosophy” and said that Bernard, at the end of his studies at the small celebration which closed the school year, developed brilliantly some of the questions which he had studied under G. J. Chaminade as his teacher (op. cit., p. 888).

To his credit, I must note that, before him, Father Zind had attributed eleven children to the parents of Bernard without indicating the source of his information. He had also spoken of a thesis on physics and mathematics defended by Bernard (op. cit., p. 61). Zind was more exact than Billet when speaking of physics and mathematics since the presentation of Bernard dealt with all the sciences studied at that time in the class of philosophy. But he was less precise in placing the “defense” in 1788 (op. cit., p. 62) instead of 1789, the very date printed on the announcement preserved by the monks of Tournay (Hautes-Pyrénées) and on that in the departmental archives of the Dordogne in Périgueux.

Jean Séguéy has treated almost the same subject as Billet, but under a different optic. He had not thought it suitable to make a personal study of the Daries family. Thus, from the point of view of history, he should not be reproached for anything more than giving twelve children to the Daries couple, and of having made Jean Daries, priest, older than Bernard, and of having substituted Louis-Xavier Chaminade for his brother Jean-Baptiste as superior of the college-seminary at Mussidan.

As conclusion of this little review of the inexactitudes or errors which affect the history of the Daries family, I shall point out the surprise which is reserved for researchers of the parish registers preserved in the departmental archives of Hautes-Pyrénées in Tarbes. As to the request I had made for the certificates of baptism, and therefore of birth, of Bernard, of Jean, and of Jeanne-Augustine Daries, the archivist had at first answered that those certificates were not in the registers at Madiran. Was that possible? I asked for more research. In fact, all three were found—but under the name Aries, and the three children in question was said to be born of Macaire Aries and Marie Doussau. I have often found the suppression of an initial D in the names of certain persons, but it was question of certificates issued during the Terror—at that time, there was a desire to avoid every appearance of nobility. But in 1772, in 1777, in 1779...and at Madiran!!

Who, then, cast a spell on the civil status of the Daries family?