



# Memoirs of the Bastille: The Annotated Edition

*Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linguet*

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The Bastille is most known for being destroyed - it has endured as a symbol of absolute power that fell to popular anger. But few people, even in France, know anything about the actual prison, notably what it was like inside and the details of how the prisoners were really treated. As it happens, Linguet, once quite famous as a lawyer and journalist, was not only in it, but wrote about the experience, and did so only a few years before it fell - some of have said this book provoked its fall. Certainly it helped raise popular indignation against what many Parisians knew only as a looming presence at the end of one of its main streets. Ironically, most of what Linguet describes is less sinister than many ideas people had then and some still have now of the prison - its very secrecy made it seem more ominous. An accomplished journalist, Linguet describes arrival at the prison, the rooms, the furniture, the food, the guards, the rules, the chapel, even the clock (which showed two chained figures) and a wealth of other details. His own description of the castle is an enduring classic. But this annotated edition adds a great deal of additional information, even describing the various types of toilets in the cells. Extensive footnotes offer additional background and explanations of Linguet's references. This edition also includes an appendix with examples of input and exit forms, a description of the entire complex, two annotated views of the Bastille complex, a closer look at the meals served there and another prisoner's letter, with further descriptions of the conditions there, as well as an extensive bibliography. Whether your interest is in the French Revolution, the Old Regime, the history of prisons, or the forgotten but fascinating Linguet himself, this modern edition of an eighteenth century classic offers a wealth of material. NOTE: This edition is identical with that previously published by Jim Chevallier; the work has been retitled to distinguish it from standard public domain versions without annotation.

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