# Meister and Jupille: Lives and Afterlives of Pasteur’s First Rabies Vaccine Patients, 1885-1940

The first unusual thing about Joseph Meister and Jean-Baptiste Jupille was that they lived. In 1885, each of these boys from rural France suffered something that had historically tended to mean certain death: they were bitten by rabid dogs. Meister, a nine-year-old baker’s son from Alsace, was attacked in a field near his home on the morning of July 9 as he carried out an errand for his parents; Jupille, a fifteen-year-old shepherd from the Jura, was wounded on October 15 as he rushed to defend a group of young children from an infected canine. Following their bites, each boy was sent to the scientist Louis Pasteur in Paris, who decided to treat them with his experimental rabies vaccination. Both survived. The second unusual thing about Meister and Jupille was that being attacked by a rabid dog was just the beginning. The boys’ fates became entwined with Pasteur and his legacy. They each continued to correspond with the scientist in the years following their treatment, and even after his death they both found work at the Pasteur Institute. The boys’ names also became widely known in France during the Third Republic and after, where they were central to the narratives of Pasteur’s success that were disseminated through newspapers, school textbooks, salon artworks, and popular visual media.

This article argues that to understand the cultural significance of the rabies vaccinations in French culture, we must explore how these two boys became powerful and enduring reservoirs of public fascination in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I show how Meister, the wounded child from the lost province of Alsace, fused themes of nationalism, vulnerability, and salvation that were especially compelling during the Third Republic. Pasteur recognized the nationalistic potential of the boy’s story at the time, but its power endured long after France had recovered Alsace-Lorraine. Meister’s story became especially prominent in the interwar period, for example as a character in Sacha Guitry’s popular representations of Pasteur’s biography on stage and in film. Similarly, Jupille has remained an important part of the cultural image of Pasteur’s medical innovation. Two of the most famous visual representations of the rabies vaccinations are primarily of Jupille: the woodcut of him receiving his vaccination from Dr Jacques-Joseph Grancher (fig. 1), which is only secondarily a depiction of Pasteur, and the statue of Jupille wrestling the dog that bit him, which stands outside the Pasteur Institute in Paris. The latter was reproduced on, among other things, the five-franc “Pasteur” banknote that circulated from 1967 to 1972. Situated in its immediate context of fin-de-siècle France, however, the story of Jupille resonated with important contemporary concerns. As Frédéric Caille has shown, Jupille’s story fed a fascination with “citizen saviors” who carried out acts of everyday heroism.[[1]](#footnote-1) Furthermore, I suggest that Jupille’s heroic intervention also offered a resolution of the conflict between disciplining physical excess and sustaining virility that was staged with special clarity on the figure of the adolescent male after the French defeat of 1871.

This study thus contributes to our understanding of the extraordinary cultural imprint of Pasteur’s discoveries on French culture during the Third Republic. Pasteur himself was a uniquely compelling icon. In a context where voices from across the political spectrum agreed that France needed to celebrate inspiring and unifying “great men” who would exemplify the nation’s values and virtues, but disagreed vehemently on who they were, Pasteur was a rare figure who bridged the gap between competing pantheons.[[2]](#footnote-2) The archetype of what Christian Amalvi calls the “consensual hero,” Pasteur was at once a celebrated scientist, public Catholic, and devoted patriot. While republicans and conservatives might interpret his meaning differently, almost everybody could agree on his heroic status.[[3]](#footnote-3) The Republic sponsored an enormous state funeral for Pasteur in October 1895; but the service was religious, and his body was interred at Notre-Dame until its transfer to his private burial crypt at the Pasteur Institute.[[4]](#footnote-4) Eventually, however, the pomp dissipated. A generation ago, historians of science deconstructed the myth that held the French scientist up as a solitary genius who rose to dominance through the sheer force of his scientific findings. Gerald Geison showed how Pasteur consciously exaggerated his discoveries through publicity stunts and experimental sleights of hand, while Bruno Latour argued that a network of forces, most notably the hygienist movement, was required to win Pasteur influence for even his most powerful scientific proofs.[[5]](#footnote-5) Yet while important studies by Bert Hansen, Mary Hunter, and Richard Weisberg have explored visual representations of Pasteur and his discoveries, our understanding of the diffusion and reception of Pasteur’s innovations in late-nineteenth-century French culture remains incomplete.[[6]](#footnote-6)

The development of the rabies vaccine warrants our attention here since it played a crucial role in tipping the scales of Pasteur’s celebrity; most notably, it justified the fundraising campaign that led to the foundation in Paris of the first of what would become a network of Pasteur Institutes in 1887 (opened 1888).[[7]](#footnote-7) To understand this, we must first recognize that rabies has always been a disease that looms much larger culturally than it does epidemiologically. The death rate from the disease in France ranged between about twenty-five and fifty people a year in the decades preceding Pasteur’s discovery, and was often towards the lower end of that range.[[8]](#footnote-8) Harriet Ritvo clearly outlined the three main explanations for the special horror that rabies nonetheless conjured. First, “the disease could incubate for many months,” inducing a “long period of dreadful anxiety” in the bitten human, who often could not even be sure if the biting animal was rabid. Second was the fact that “rabies caused excruciating pain and certain death.”[[9]](#footnote-9) Third, as Ernest Renan put it, receiving Pasteur at the Académie Française in 1882, rabies generated “the mistrust which is always intermixed with our caresses of the animal in which nature best shows us its benevolent smile.”[[10]](#footnote-10) In other words, without the lingering threat of agonizing death, we might truly trust our friends, the dogs. As Kathleen Kete has shown, the politics of pet-keeping in nineteenth-century Paris only added new questions to these longstanding anxieties, with debates over whether the disease originated with pampered lapdogs or scruffy street curs. Speculation could multiply because, until Pasteur isolated rabies as a virus spread through animal saliva, its origins and mechanism were poorly understood. Many people, including leading scientists, believed that the disease could arise in animals through “spontaneous generation.” Prevailing myths surrounding rabies connected it with sexual over- or under-activity, or claimed that afflicted humans were driven to bite their fellow men.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Pasteur’s research in the 1880s overturned these ideas and even offered hope of an end to the horrifying effects of rabies infection. But, as historians of other national settings have made clear, the reception of Pasteur’s rabies treatment varied according to cultural context. Bert Hansen has shown that the compelling tale of a group of four children from Newark who were sent to Paris definitively shaped expectations surrounding medical progress in the twentieth-century United States and created tropes for the “medical breakthrough” that would be consistently imitated over the following decades. Yet, as Neil Pemberton and Michael Worboys have explained, Pasteur’s discovery met a more ambivalent reception in Britain, where it felt the ire of anti-vivisectionists, competed with alternatives such as muzzling and quarantine, and only gradually became accepted as a legitimate treatment.[[12]](#footnote-12) In Pasteur’s home context of France, this article will suggest, the differently compelling stories of Meister and Jupille together played an important role in mediating Pasteur’s discovery into wider French culture during the Third Republic, but their impact can only be understood by exploring their resonance with specific contemporary concerns.

## Meister, Jupille, and Pasteur

At around 5am on July 4, 1885, a nine-year-old boy called Joseph Meister ran across the countryside near his hometown of Steige to carry out an errand before school. His parents were Francophone Alsatians, living under German rule following the French defeat of 1870-1. Meister’s father was a baker and needed some yeast from a brewery in nearby Meisengott (now Maisongoutte). As Meister approached the town from across the intervening fields, a dog belonging to the local grocer, Monsieur Vonné, ferociously attacked him. The dog had already attacked its owner and numerous local animals, especially pigs. It bit the young boy fourteen times on the legs before a local locksmith beat it off with an iron bar. Meister returned to his parents with the yeast and his injuries, which were cauterized twelve hours later. German officials killed and autopsied the dog. They found straw and wood in the dog’s stomach, and so concluded that it had been infected with rabies. Meister’s family seem to have come up with the idea of seeking a cure in Paris when the grocer Vonné told his story at a local inn. Three medical students happened to be visiting, who told him that Pasteur was reported to be carrying out rabies experiments. On discovering this, the group seems to have instantly resolved that they seek help from the eminent scientist three hundred miles away in the capital. At 5am the following day (July 5, 1885), Meister, his mother, and the grocer Vonné took three successive coach journeys from Steige, across the Franco-German border to the nearest railway station, from where they took a train to Paris. They arrived at Gare de l’Est that evening with no clue how to find Pasteur, and so addressed themselves to various Parisian hospitals, several of which apparently refused to help them, until a doctor took pity and directed them to the École Normale.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Pasteur had begun his research into rabies during December 1880, when he saw a boy afflicted by hydrophobia in the Hospital Sainte-Eugénie. When he injected the dying boy’s saliva into two rabbits, both developed the disease and died. Although these early experiments revealed the means of the virus’ transmission, it took Pasteur years to develop a promising method of prophylaxis. By summer 1884, his efforts focused on removing desiccated nervous material – usually spinal cords – from the cadavers of infected animals – typically rabbits and guinea pigs – and mashed it into a broth. He then injected this material into other animals – mostly dogs – over a course of days. Beginning with dried nervous tissue that was several weeks old, he would gradually increase the virulence of the injected material until, ultimately, he was injecting the dogs with a *bouillon* composed of fresh nervous tissue extracted from animals in the throes of infection.[[14]](#footnote-14) By the time the three Alsatians arrived in Pasteur’s office, he had only completed this course of inoculation on twenty of his fifty or so experimental dogs, and none had yet survived thirty days from their final vaccination.[[15]](#footnote-15) Pasteur claimed throughout his life that Meister was the first human subject he attempted to vaccinate. Geison demonstrated that this was untrue: Pasteur had used his access to Parisian hospitals to carry out secret, inconclusive, human trials on two infected patients in May and June of the same year.[[16]](#footnote-16) These two subjects were in a more advanced state of infection than Meister, and thus arguably provoked fewer ethical problems. But as recently as June 12, 1885, he had refused to try his new method on a farmer bitten by a rabid animal.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Pasteur concluded that Vonné had no risk of infection, since he had been bitten through his clothes. But the scientist and his associates made the momentous and potentially controversial decision to administer a vaccine to the much more seriously wounded Meister on July 6, which was repeated in increasingly strong doses over the following ten days. Pasteur could not make the injections into Meister’s torso as he was not medically trained, so instead he supervised his doctors and offered the child sweets to distract him. During the course of injections, Pasteur arranged for Meister and his mother to stay in the École Normale’s fencing hall on the Rue Vauquelin. His research assistants took Meister for walks through the Jardin des Plantes and let him play with the laboratory guinea pigs. After completing the course, Pasteur intended to keep the boy under observation in Paris until August 1, but the Meisters petitioned him to return to Alsace, where Joseph’s father was struggling to take care of the business and the other five children with a bad leg. On July 23 the Meisters left Paris on the night train with one of Pasteur’s blankets and strict instructions to keep the scientist abreast of his health.[[18]](#footnote-18)

For the first fortnight after Meister’s return Pasteur remained anxious about the boy’s condition and struggled to sleep.[[19]](#footnote-19) Since the incubation period for rabies could often extend to thirty days, Meister’s good health on departure was no guarantee of the procedure’s success. The impatient family, by contrast, seemed satisfied. They exacerbated Pasteur’s anxiety by only writing every three or four days.[[20]](#footnote-20) By late August, however, Pasteur started to grow confident of his success. He boasted of the boy’s condition in letters to luminary friends, although he did not yet publicize his results.[[21]](#footnote-21) He had good reason. Despite Pasteur’s claims that Meister would inevitably have developed rabies based on his wounds, the disease’s infection rate had never been precisely established. Pasteur also knew that his enemies might claim that the dog had not been infected in the first place; the German authorities apparently reinvestigated the dog in November 1885 for exactly this reason.[[22]](#footnote-22)

This combination of confidence in the safety of the procedure and uncertainty about the scientific reaction to its results meant that, when Pasteur received a letter from the Jura asking if he would treat another boy who had been attacked by a rabid dog, he was inclined to accept. On October 16, 1885, the Mayor of Villers-Farlay, a Monsieur Perrot, wrote to Pasteur detailing an incident that had occurred two days earlier.[[23]](#footnote-23) In a field outside the town, a dog had set upon a group of six young shepherds, all in their early teens. On witnessing the situation, fifteen-year-old Jean-Baptiste Jupille, the village policeman’s son, attacked the dog with his whip. The animal launched at him, sinking its teeth into Jupille’s left hand. The strong boy prized open the dog’s jaws with one hand to release the other. He then tied its muzzle closed with his whip, took off his clog (*sabot*) and beat the dog unconscious. Jupille’s wounds were cleaned and cauterized twenty minutes after the attack. The vet’s autopsy concluded that the animal was rabid. Pasteur ordered the mayor to send the boy to Paris.[[24]](#footnote-24) As with the Alsatian Meister, Jupille’s geographical origins had a particular significance to Pasteur. Villers-Farlay was just fifteen kilometers from Arbois, where the scientist had grown up and still kept his country home. Pasteur remembered being eight years old in 1831 when a rabid wolf attacked numerous people and animals in the area, eight of whom died of rabies; in 1886, he would commission the mayor Perrot to research this incident for him out of medical and personal curiosity.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Like Meister, Jupille was lodged next to the École Normale on the Rue Vauquelin, this time with Pasteur’s laboratory assistant Jean Arconi, who took him for walks around the Jardin des Plantes.[[26]](#footnote-26) Pasteur was cautious about the possibility of success. Jupille arrived for treatment at the École Normale on October 20, six days after he had been bitten. This was a good deal later than Meister and increased the chance that the virus had already reached an unstoppable stage. Nonetheless, after only seven days of treatment, Pasteur went to the Académie des Sciences to deliver his paper entitled “Method for Preventing Rabies after a Bite.” Here, he announced not only that he had been successful with Meister, but also recounted the story of Jupille. He began: “The Academy will not be able to listen impassively (*sans émotion*) to the story of the act of courage and presence of mind of the child that I began to treat last Tuesday.”[[27]](#footnote-27) The assembled scientists apparently burst into spontaneous applause. On October 29, Pasteur completed Jupille’s course of treatment. Unlike Meister, the boy was in no rush to return to his home village but chose to stay in Paris for a further week with his aunts.[[28]](#footnote-28) He checked in every day at the laboratory before, on November 7, Pasteur gave him enough money to take the train back to the Jura.[[29]](#footnote-29) When he reached home a few days later, he would, like Meister, post the scientist regular updates on his health.[[30]](#footnote-30)

By the time Jupille left Paris, Pasteur’s paper at the Académie had already attracted a slew of new bite victims to the École Normale. Each day a new casualty arrived from a different *département*. By the middle of November, Pasteur had already treated his first patient from overseas: Dr John Hughes from Oswestry in Shropshire, England.[[31]](#footnote-31) If Meister and Jupille had furnished the press with stirring individual stories, the world now sent Pasteur examples of bewilderingly large or distant groups. In December 1885, four child victims from Newark set sail for Paris funded by a public subscription in the *New York Herald*. They returned to a huge crowd on January 14, 1886.[[32]](#footnote-32) These were followed three months later by a group of Russians who came from a single village near Smolensk, nineteen of whom had been bitten by the same wolf – and not all of whom arrived soon enough to be saved.[[33]](#footnote-33) By April 12, 1886, only six months after presenting his method, he had treated 726 patients from every corner of Europe, as well as Algeria, North America and Brazil. By August 1886, a year after the first vaccination, Pasteur’s laboratory had treated nearly two thousand bite victims.[[34]](#footnote-34) Stereotypical representations of the peoples of the world flocking to Pasteur’s laboratory in search of his new cure soon became a cliché in celebratory visual media ranging from official histories to chocolate boxes.[[35]](#footnote-35)

For all the interest of these groups, however, no patients took on such a special aura within metropolitan France as those first two boys, neither of whose relationships with Pasteur ended with the treatment. Perhaps because the scientist had watched three of his own children die from infectious diseases, he often maintained affectionate exchanges with his child subjects.[[36]](#footnote-36) Pasteur’s approach to the two boys can also be seen as an extension of his broader patriarchal self-conception. During his time as sub-director of the École Normale Supérieure in the mid-1860s, Pasteur had helped provoke a student rebellion through his disciplinarian practices, which extended to roaming student bedrooms confiscating books and cracking down firmly on smoking or misbehavior in the chapel.[[37]](#footnote-37) He ran his laboratory as a “family business” in the paternalist tradition of nineteenth-century firms, lodging his students and assistants “above the shop” and not allowing them to stray too far from the lab.[[38]](#footnote-38)

Pasteur’s bond with Meister seems to have been particularly strong. Although we only have Meister’s letters until December 1886, we know that the two continued to correspond until at least 1890. Conscious of the expense of such an exchange for a family like the Meisters, Pasteur sent stamps and money orders with most of his letters. His reimbursements often far exceeded the postal costs; for example, on January 14, 1886, he included a money order for one hundred francs.[[39]](#footnote-39) Pasteur’s letters had a simple and consistent mantra: obey your parents and work hard at school. In response, Meister reported on his health, his lessons, his ever-grateful parents, and the joy he took from playing with his two rabbits and two guinea pigs. At Pasteur’s expense, he had studio photos taken in the suit he was wearing when he was vaccinated, which he sent to Madame Pasteur (fig. 2).[[40]](#footnote-40) Whether or not he obeyed his parents, he certainly worked hard at school. We can trace rapid improvements in the quality of Meister’s French across his letters to Pasteur. In late 1885, his letters were still littered with errors, for example the quasi-German “*fotograffié*.”[[41]](#footnote-41) Nonetheless, by comparison with his parents’ own letters to Pasteur, the ten-year-old boy seems to have been well on his way to becoming the most literate member of his family.[[42]](#footnote-42) Unfortunately the family had bigger problems than spelling. Encouraged by the care Pasteur had shown them, Meister’s mother wrote to him in summer 1886 asking him to employ her husband, whose business was in trouble. Pasteur was reticent about employing Joseph’s father, but he wrote to friends in Alsace, wondering whether he might be able to secure the boy a scholarship, or pull strings with the Prince of Hohenlohe, the Imperial Lieutenant of Alsace-Lorraine who had once visited Pasteur’s laboratory.[[43]](#footnote-43) The plan seems in the end to have come to naught, although the Pasteurs invited Meister to stay with them in Arbois that October.[[44]](#footnote-44)

Meister continued to target Pasteur as a source of patronage. In 1888, Meister wrote requesting a reference letter to enter the seminary at Strasbourg or Metz. Although the eminent scientist was happy to comply, Meister was still rejected.[[45]](#footnote-45) In 1890, Meister wrote again seeking employment in Pasteur’s laboratory.[[46]](#footnote-46) This time Pasteur invited the fourteen-year-old to Paris, and he took up work as a domestic in the rabies section. According to a later radio interview with Meister, during this period he was bitten by a rabid guinea pig and had to be vaccinated for a second time, albeit without Pasteur’s knowledge.[[47]](#footnote-47) For reasons that remain unclear, Meister returned to Alsace to work at the family bakery after only a year in Paris. Life in Steige continued to be difficult. In 1896 Meister did military service in the Germany army, which he resented. Soon afterwards, his older brother Léon decided to become a baker, which seems to have ruined Joseph’s chances of inheriting the family firm. Meister sought work at a nearby bakery belonging to the Klein family, and married one of the baker’s daughters, Elisa. The couple inherited the business in 1908 but it soon went into decline, and in 1912 Meister was forced to sell the property to a local merchant.[[48]](#footnote-48) By the summer of 1912 Meister was thirty-six years old with four children to support. Although his illustrious mentor was by now long dead, he again turned to the Pasteur name. Meister appealed to the Pasteur Institute for work and, despite recognizing his advanced age and poor qualifications, Dr Roux and Pasteur’s grandson, Joseph Louis Pasteur Vallery-Radot, decided they would “do their best to find something” for Pasteur’s celebrated subject.[[49]](#footnote-49) In the event, this meant inviting Meister to Paris to work as a concierge at the Institute, which he did until his death in 1940.

Jupille’s life was just as bound up as Meister’s with Pasteur and his legacy. Following Jupille’s return to the Jura, Pasteur wrote him letters similar to those he sent Meister, encouraging him to work hard at school; he even teased him that the younger boy was making surer progress with his writing.[[50]](#footnote-50) The two remained in contact until Pasteur’s death in 1895. Jupille started working for the Pasteur Institute in 1897. He seems to have started as a janitor before subsequently being appointed as a concierge, and ultimately head porter. Throughout, his salary was supplemented by the French government through the Ministry of Public Instruction.[[51]](#footnote-51)

During the interwar period, the Institute’s two main entrances were staffed by the famous survivors: Meister at number 28 and Jupille at number 25 (figs. 3-4).[[52]](#footnote-52) While at the Institute, around 1910, Jupille even featured in a range of staged publicity photographs, looking on as new patients received the rabies vaccine.[[53]](#footnote-53) Both also managed to secure employment for decent portions of their families at the Institute. By the 1930s, Meister’s daughters Maria and Madeleine were employed as secretaries while his son Albert was an assistant in the laboratories.[[54]](#footnote-54) Jupille’s oldest son Émile and daughter Louise (known as Olga) were both appointed as laboratory technicians, while his younger brother Frédéric worked first as an assistant on typhoid experiments, and then as a nurse. Olga was immortalized in medical language when, in 1913, she developed alongside Alexandre Besredka the Besredka-Jupille egg broth method for growing bacteria such as gonorrhea in agar cultures.[[55]](#footnote-55) In 1923, Jupille retired from the Institute. A few months later, at the age of fifty-three, he died at home in Joinville-le-Pont, just outside Paris on the other side of the Bois de Vincennes.[[56]](#footnote-56)

## Jupille and Meister in French Culture

The two boys’ trajectories through life after vaccination were, then, remarkably similar. Both remained in contact with Pasteur, both depended heavily on the Pastorians’ patronage after his death, and both ultimately moved their families to Paris. Yet the two boys’ representational afterlives were starkly different.

From the beginning, Pasteur was determined to commemorate Jupille’s actions in many public and private forms. As we saw above, Pasteur’s famous paper to the Académie des Sciences on October 27, 1885, which announced his rabies vaccination method, had ended by detailing Jupille’s self-sacrifice and current treatment. Pasteur was, as Richard Weisberg and Hansen put it, a “supremely confident risk taker,” and giving the paper in the midst of Jupille’s treatment – after only one apparently successful course of vaccinations – was typical of Pasteur’s habit of provoking spectacular publicity for early findings, including through what Geison called “public deceptions.”[[57]](#footnote-57) It also tied Jupille’s fate to that of Pasteur’s science.

Shortly after Pasteur’s paper, the scientist and Jupille gave a joint interview to the *Journal des Débats* that accentuated the boy’s raw vitality. Jupille – described by Pasteur as a “strapping young fellow,” and by the journalist as a young man with “ruffled hair” and “keen brown eyes” that “shone under the strong arches of his eyebrows” – rolled up his sleeves and told his story. Pasteur, meanwhile, indulged in black humor to convey the power of his materials. Touring the journalist around his shelves of flasks, he remarked: “There is enough here to kill everybody in Paris, and to give birth to the most murderous epidemics.” On passing a rabbit dissection, Pasteur enthused: “If I injected you with that, you would be rabid in seven days.” Jupille, on the other hand, would soon be free to “throw himself on every rabid dog he meets.” [[58]](#footnote-58)

Pasteur’s investment in the story was such that he purchased, and perhaps even commissioned, a depiction by Émile Isenbart of the scene of Jupille’s attack for his house at Arbois, where it still resides (fig. 5).[[59]](#footnote-59) Isenbart’s bucolic canvases of the Franc-Comtois countryside tend to exude sparsity and stillness. He had a fondness for riverside scenes with the Doubs passing through and hills on the horizon; sometimes a few farm animals or some rural buildings grace the scene, and occasionally one or two people.[[60]](#footnote-60) Juxtaposed with Isenbart’s other work, the Jupille picture has a strange effect: it is as if the painter has simply taken one of his peaceful clearings and inserted the section in the foreground, where a boy is beating a rabid dog to death with his clog, while the surrounding cows remain oddly impassive. The contrast between the idyllic setting and the violent scene, while jarring, represented precisely the kind of irruption of natural threat into everyday life that Pasteur saw his discoveries as taming.

As Caille has suggested, the extraordinary popularity of Pasteur’s achievement with the rabies vaccination depended in part on the “collusion of exemplarities” that Jupille’s act unlocked: if Jupille was the model of the altruistic savior, then Pasteur was the “savior of the savior.”[[61]](#footnote-61) Moreover, Jupille’s courageous defeat of the rabid dog could also stand allegorically for Pasteur, who put himself at risk to triumph over a malicious disease. His decision to experiment on the boys was itself, of course, a performance of personal risk, which jeopardized not only their lives but also his reputation.[[62]](#footnote-62) This image of the scientist’s selfless embrace of danger was embodied in the Swedish physician Axel Munthe’s anecdote of visiting Pasteur during his research in 1885: “I once saw him with the glass tube held between his lips draw a few drops of the deadly saliva from the mouth of a rabid bull-dog.”[[63]](#footnote-63) Such stories circulated through other media, most notably the popular Czech illustrator Alphonse Mucha’s drawing of Pasteur extracting a dog’s saliva.[[64]](#footnote-64)

Despite his personal investment in propagating Jupille’s story, however, representations of the boy should not only be seen in terms of the light they cast onto Pasteur; they also derived their power from prominent tendencies in contemporary French culture. As Caille has shown, the 1880s and ‘90s marked the apex of the celebration of the “citizen savior,” of which Jupille provided a prominent example.[[65]](#footnote-65) A range of legal interventions, voluntary subscriptions, and prizes in the early Third Republic sought to grant ordinary French heroes, from firemen to mothers, with national civic and media recognition. On Caille’s account, this democratization of the “cult of great men” was part of the popular embedding of a political system that defined itself as both meritocratic and founded on the free individual.[[66]](#footnote-66) In this context, the proliferation of medals, prizes, and laudatory newspaper stories of heroic deeds in nineteenth-century France reflected “the desire to interpret acts of rescue as a type of behavior that revealed something more general about social and human relations.”[[67]](#footnote-67) For a democratizing society, in other words, the celebration of examples of altruistic courage among ordinary citizens functioned as a kind of reassurance.

Jupille’s humble origins made him particularly suitable for the role of citizen savior. After Pasteur’s paper at the Académie, one of his colleagues, Baron Félix Hippolyte Larrey, suggested that they nominate Jupille for the Académie Française’s Prix Montyon for Virtue. First endowed in 1784, this honor had been designed to reward virtuous actions by people who could not “issue from a social position above that of the bourgeoisie”; by 1885, this condition had been simplified to “the French poor.”[[68]](#footnote-68) The Académie granted Jupille the honor on October 29 along with a cash reward of one thousand francs, given by an anonymous donor.[[69]](#footnote-69) Shortly afterwards, an organization called the Caisse des Victimes du Devoir wrote to Pasteur letting him know that they had also decided to award Jupille two hundred francs.[[70]](#footnote-70) Jupille seems to have been the first beneficiary of this charitable trust, which officially opened on October 25, and sought to provide a unified alternative to the public subscription campaigns that erupted in response to cases of brave injury reported in the press.[[71]](#footnote-71) Formal state recognition followed in November, when the Ministry of the Interior awarded Jupille a silver medal for “acts of courage and devotion.”[[72]](#footnote-72) A further indication of Jupille’s prominent position is that when Maxime du Camp gave the public address on the Académie Française’s prizes for virtue on November 19 1885, he concluded with the story of Jupille’s courageous rescue of the children, followed by his own salvation at the hands of Pasteur.[[73]](#footnote-73) This denouement – which apparently brought the listening scientist to tears – subtly resonated with Du Camp’s closing affirmation “that if the virtuous poor are numerous in France, the bad rich do not exist.”[[74]](#footnote-74)

Beyond this wider investment in finding examples of lower-class heroism, Jupille’s story resonated with debates about youth and masculinity in the early Third Republic. As historians such as Judith Surkis, Christopher Forth and Anne-Marie Sohn have shown, teenage boys preoccupied educationalists, moralists, political theorists, militarists and many other groups besides in the closing decades of the nineteenth century: they were the emergent new citizens of a republican democracy, the products of a newly universal educational system, and the soldiers of a defeated nation.[[75]](#footnote-75) For the prominent school reformer Henri Marion, “adolescence was the crucible of morality.”[[76]](#footnote-76) As Surkis demonstrated, for liberal republicans like Marion, the role of young men’s educators was to channel the passions that emerged with puberty into good works and habits, without letting them deviate into unhealthy excesses. The best means of tempering adolescent passions was duty, and especially the sense of duty to one’s fellow men forged by the solidarities of the family and the nation.[[77]](#footnote-77) But duty and solidarity needed to be properly calibrated. Sohn has shown how mid-century rural French male sociability was characterized by violent solidarity. Young men in rural France would fling themselves into fights that were not their own to prove their masculinity. Increasingly uncomfortable with such practices, local authorities in the third quarter of the century encouraged men to break with such established village norms of sociability by calling instead on authorities to resolve disputes, and by treating fights as private affairs rather than communal showdowns.[[78]](#footnote-78)

Jupille had literally risked life and limb to save six children from a rabid dog. Like Sohn’s village brawlers, Jupille proved his manly character by launching himself into the fray, but he did so for selfless reasons. He thereby offered a model of adolescent masculinity that harnessed strength and violence without indiscipline. His heroism perfectly embodied Marion’s twin instincts: on the one hand, the adolescent male’s impulsive self-abandon; on the other, a refined and spontaneous sense of social duty. Newspaper reports stressed the fact that he acted on instinct – “the courageous shepherd did not hesitate” – alongside his calm indifference to the danger of the act – “without losing his *sang-froid*, the boy introduced his right hand into the dog’s muzzle” – all in the service of saving the children.[[79]](#footnote-79) As one educational book for young people in the 1890s put it: “Jupille could have fled. To escape the danger, he would only have had to stood where he was, well away from it; instead, he moved towards it.”[[80]](#footnote-80)

The image of the virulent Jupille selflessly launching himself on a dangerous animal with scant regard for his own welfare proved powerful, and artistic representations sought to embody this theme of virtuous adolescent masculinity. An index of Jupille’s cultural appeal was that visitors to the 1887 Paris Salon could see the efforts of not one but two sculptors depicting his struggle with the rabid dog: Émile Louis Truffot’s “Le berger Jupille” (fig. 6) and Athanase Fossé’s “Le berger Jupille luttant contre un chien enrage” (fig. 7).[[81]](#footnote-81) Beyond the specific appeal of the story, this scene had various potential intersections with contemporary artistic taste. On the one hand, the iconography resonated with artistic visions of rural France. Jupille’s wooden clog was a crucial element in his defeat of the rabid dog, but also tapped into a rich vein of representations of sturdy peasants and their struggles that dated back to at least Jean-François Millet’s *Un Vanneur* (*The Winnower*, 1848). By the mid-1880s, clogs had become so synonymous with the new art of the peasantry that many rustic painters had even adopted them in identification with the supposed primitivism of the regions they portrayed.[[82]](#footnote-82) On the other hand, however, these sculptures were symptomatic of contemporary artists’ intense and growing engagement with medical themes. Visitors to the 1887 Salon will also have seen, for example, Laurent Gsell’s group portrait of Pasteur and his doctors administering the rabies vaccine to patients of varying ages and ethnicities.[[83]](#footnote-83)

While the City of Paris purchased Fossé’s work and initially commissioned a reproduction, this does not seem to have materialised.[[84]](#footnote-84) Truffot’s work, however, won Pasteur’s special admiration, and the scientist commissioned a bronze version which has stood outside the entrance to the Pasteur Institute in Paris since its opening in 1888; he even supplied the artist with a photograph of Jupille to improve the likeness.[[85]](#footnote-85) Pasteur had form in shaping the artistic representation of his findings: he had, for example, engaged closely with the artist Albert Edelfelt during his painting of the famous 1885 portrait of the scientist entranced by a bottle of virulent rabies virus.[[86]](#footnote-86) The Pasteur family chose a similar image of the strapping young Jupille neutralizing the rabid dog for the extraordinary Byzantine crypt underneath the Institute, which received Pasteur’s remains on December 27, 1896. The walls of this tiled chamber bore angelic figures who proclaimed four virtues – Faith, Hope, Charity and Science – alongside murals that represented Pasteur’s most famous scientific advances, such as grapevines for fermentation and sheep for the vaccine against anthrax. Contemporaries noted “the incongruous coexistence of modern laboratories and an ancient-style Christian tomb under the same roof,” affectionately comparing the Pastorians’ devotions with the practitioners of “primitive religions.”[[87]](#footnote-87) Above the images of the animals on which Pasteur built his reputation – a field of innocent rabbits and snarling, rabid dogs – an even more muscular and adult-looking Jupille than Truffot’s binds his strap around a dog’s jaw. Over his shoulder is a flask of desiccated rabbit spine: the elixir that will save him (fig. 8).[[88]](#footnote-88)

As Mary Hunter has argued, Truffot’s work was particularly apt for its role at the Institute since Jupille could stood in at once for “Pasteur’s intellectual and scientific struggle against the disease,” “the battles fought by laboratory science against Nature,” and “Pasteur’s role, and [that of] science more generally, in the protection of children and families.”[[89]](#footnote-89) Yet, since the same is true of Fossé’s piece, attending to the subtle differences between the two sculptures might help explain Pasteur’s preference. In Fossé’s work, a barefoot Jupille, kneeling in torn clothes over the bound and submitted dog, raises the wooden clog that will imminently crash down on the animal’s head. By contrast, Truffot depicted Jupille at the moment of peak physicality, as he pried one hand free from the dog’s jaws with the other; in this assembly, the clog sits by the boy’s foot. A contemporary critic judged that Truffot’s sculpture had captured “the energy and tenacity of the struggle” more effectively than Fossé.[[90]](#footnote-90) More fundamental differences in the dynamic of the scene also separate the two sculptures. In the vertical plane, while Fossé’s assembly clearly establishes Jupille’s dominance over the animal and essentially captures the moment of its execution, Truffot depicts the tipping point of a more equal struggle, with Jupille rising as the dog falls to the ground. Both accentuate the boy’s peasant character through his bare feet and clothing, but while Fossé’s Jupille is boyish, with a slim torso and thin arms, Truffot’s Jupille is more adolescent, with muscular forearms and strong hands. If both sculptures ultimately depict the male youth’s triumph over the threat of unruly nature, Truffot’s vibrant tussle contrasts with Fossé’s image of the mortal submission of man’s best friend and was thereby more assimilable to an idealization of adolescent masculinity.

If Jupille could stand for heroism, then the nine-year-old Meister offered a story of vulnerability and salvation that had particularly strong potential within the context of French nationalism. Meister was a boy from the lost territory of Alsace to which Third Republic’s nationalism attached such heavy significance, who spoke French, and came to Paris with his mother in search of rescue. The fervently patriotic Pasteur himself felt a strong personal connection to both Alsace and the Franco-Prussian War: he had lived in Strasbourg for several years as a young scientist, and had personally recovered his son Jean-Baptiste from the routed French forces outside the town of Pontarlier in January 1871.[[91]](#footnote-91) When Pasteur filed for a patent for his beer-making process in June 1871, he even requested that all beverages made using the technique would be labelled as “beers of national revenge.”[[92]](#footnote-92) The scientist mourned the loss of Alsace in the decades following the defeat and displayed several examples of art symbolizing the region in his home, including a print of his close friend Jean-Jacques Henner’s iconic *L’Alsace: Elle attend*.[[93]](#footnote-93)

Little surprise, then, that Pasteur immediately grasped the political possibilities of Meister’s situation. On August 22, 1885 he wrote to Louis Liard, the director of higher education: “I am delighted that this new success will be *credited to France*, and that the first human subject whose rabies was stopped after being bitten will have *come from Alsace*.”[[94]](#footnote-94) The image of the rabies vaccine as an act of national benevolence that issued from the French capital to its provinces would be repeated long after Pasteur’s death in schoolbooks such as the 1906 edition of the *Tour de France par deux enfants*. This celebrated tale followed André and Julien, orphans from France’s other amputated province of Lorraine, as they left for France in the wake of the defeat of 1870-1, and educated young readers about the wealth of French traditions and achievements they discovered along the way. In a chapter dedicated to Pasteur’s discoveries, André recounted on receiving a photograph of the scientist: “We are happy to have this portrait. Pasteur is particularly venerated in our *commune* because a local child, bitten horribly by a rabid dog, was healed at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. In the old days such an accident would have been fatal, but never again.”[[95]](#footnote-95) Weaving the national into the imperial, the book’s narrative then segued into the foundation of the Pasteur Institute at Nha Trang, with the byline: “France, forever generous, gives to all, selflessly, its beneficence and aid.”[[96]](#footnote-96)

Whereas Jupille’s story seems to have found most resonance in the 1880s and ‘90s, Meister’s cultural prevalence peaked in the interwar period. Tellingly, popular visual representations of the Meister vaccination in the 1920s and after tended to depict Madame Meister in traditional Alsatian dress and headgear to accentuate the family’s origins.[[97]](#footnote-97) The most prominent text to propagate the Meister and Jupille stories into the new century was Pasteur’s son-in-law René Vallery-Radot’s *La Vie de Pasteur*, published in 1900, which put a heavy accent on the scientist’s selfless devotion to work, affection for children and deep-felt ethical dilemmas.[[98]](#footnote-98) Through his various interpretations of this biography on stage and screen, the dramatist Sacha Guitry brought the Meister story to new audiences. His five-act play *Pasteur* was first performed at the Théâtre du Vaudeville on January 23, 1919.This brazenly nationalistic post-war biographical production placed Meister’s vaccination at the center of the story. Guitry’s Pasteur was a patriotic, child-loving genius who, wracked by honorable doubts about the ethics of experimenting on a wounded boy, decided to risk his reputation for the boy’s life.[[99]](#footnote-99) In keeping with the melodramatic fashion of contemporary boulevard theatre, the play pitted an improbably pure figure of Pasteur against his aging scientific enemies and off-stage German adversaries.[[100]](#footnote-100)

Guitry stressed the story’s nationalistic and anti-German overtones. In the fourth act, for example, Pasteur is reunited by surprise with the healthy Meister immediately after having told a colleague that he has refused yet another German honor. His grounds are clear: “Alsace is a question of humanity for me. They tore it away from me; I don’t know them anymore.”[[101]](#footnote-101) Having opened with Pasteur tending to his students as war broke out in 1870, the play ended with the Republic’s jubilee celebration on Pasteur’s birthday in 1892, and a concluding exclamation of “Vive Pasteur!”[[102]](#footnote-102) Guitry changed other details for less obvious reasons, such as replacing Meister’s mother with his grandfather. Meister himself was invited to the premier of Guitry’s play. While we cannot know what he thought of his own representation, a (possibly ghost-written) article in *Paris-Midi* suggests that he was profoundly struck by Lucien Guitry’s Pasteur: “The great artist marvelously imitated the great scholar’s gestures and appearance. Even I could have been fooled, were Lucien Guitry not slightly too tall.”[[103]](#footnote-103)

Perhaps in an effort to repeat the success of the play, Sacha Guitry directed a film version of Pasteur’s life – his first talkie – which was first shown at the Cinéma Colisée in Paris on September 20, 1935 and soon distributed widely. The following year, Warner Brothers produced an American biopic of the scientist under the title *The Story of Louis Pasteur*, with Paul Muni as Pasteur and Dickie Moore as Meister.[[104]](#footnote-104) Again, the Meister story featured prominently, and not only did the American producers reinstate the boy’s mother to the story, but they also arranged his relationship with Pasteur into a more historically faithful sequence. Spurred in part by these films, Meister became a minor international celebrity in the late 1930s. During its Fiftieth Anniversary celebrations in 1937, the Pasteur Institute made much of Meister, his continuing good health and employment, and the Ministry of Health awarded him a silver medal in a special prize-giving. In addition to the autobiographical piece in *Paris-Midi*, Meister was profiled by mass-market American magazines like *Life* and *Rotarian*, and also interviewed on French radio in 1938.[[105]](#footnote-105)

Meister’s nationalist resonance did not end with the catastrophe of the following year. Following the armistice on 25 June 1940, Guitry forged relationships with the leading figures in Occupied Paris and sought to restart the capital’s cultural life in earnest. His first project was to perform the play of *Pasteur* as the show that would reopen the Théâtre de la Madeleine. The play’s overt nationalism was politically sensitive. Initially, the Propagandastaffel demanded that Guitry cut the scenes where Pasteur rejected German honors, as well as the closing scene where the cast sang the *Marseillaise*. But, following a meeting with Goebbels’s delegate in France, Guitry managed to have the passages reinstated. The play was thus performed, uncensored, from July 31 until August 17.[[106]](#footnote-106) For Guitry, it was the first of many successes in Occupied Paris.

This revival of *Pasteur* framed a heart-rending coincidence. On June 13, 1940, Meister’s wife and daughters had left Paris in fear of the imminent German attack. Meister seems to have struggled to maintain contact with his family and became convinced that they were dead. At 8am on June 24, 1940, in his apartment over the Pasteur Institute on 25 Rue du Docteur Roux, he committed suicide using the gas-hose from his oven. An hour before his funeral three days later, Meister’s family returned, expecting to greet their father. It was, as the Pastorian malariologist Hubert Marneffe noted in his diary, a “diabolical irony of fate.”[[107]](#footnote-107) In the chaos of the Occupation and Exodus, Meister’s suicide did not immediately make the front pages; but once life resettled in Paris, various newspapers took an interest.[[108]](#footnote-108) Journalists found the coincidence with Guitry’s revival of the play, in which Meister’s character was so central, to be especially evocative. The microbiologist Casimir Cépède pasted one especially long lament from the press into his diary. It ended: “Every night, in occupied Paris, Sacha Guitry’s *Pasteur* is performed. Every night, the little Joseph Meister reappears on the stage; every night he is saved.”[[109]](#footnote-109)

## Conclusion

Images and narratives of Meister and Jupille played an important role in the absorption of Pasteur’s rabies vaccination into French culture. As the first people in history to be successfully vaccinated after a bite from a rabid animal, their stories held an intrinsic appeal, but the two boys from rural France saved by the scientist in Paris took on a special symbolic potential in the Third Republic. Meister’s combination of childhood vulnerability and Alsatian origins was especially powerful in the wake of the French defeat of 1870-1, but it would also be revived at other moments of tension between France and Germany – such as through performances of Guitry’s play in 1919 and 1940. A further measure of the charge of these overlapping themes of nationalism and vulnerability is the endurance of an apocryphal story about Meister’s tragic death: that he killed himself with his First World War pistol when German soldiers demanded entry to Pasteur’s crypt during the fall of Paris in 1940. A Resistance newspaper first seems to have put this story into circulation, and it has been reproduced in both authoritative histories and, most recently, Patrick Deville’s twenty-first-century literary hit *Peste et choléra*.[[110]](#footnote-110) By contrast, the figure of Jupille resonated with fin-de-siècle concerns about popular virtue and disciplining male adolescents, providing an exemplary story of a young man channeling his supposedly natural taste for risk towards a moral end. His valiant struggle over the rabid dog became iconic, not least through Truffot’s sculpture that still stands outside the Pasteur Institute in Paris.

To an extent, Pasteur and the Institute were responsible for cultivating these resonances, for example through the sponsorship of the Jupille statue, or the long employment of both boys as concierges at the building, where they formed a sort of living exhibition of Pasteur’s success. The Pastorians clearly stood to gain something from maintaining the boys’ public profile: the boys’ symbolic resonance reflected back onto Pasteur as both the savior of children and their benevolent patriarch, and these attributes of the individual scientist reflected onto the Institute itself. Jupille’s fearless, virtuous triumph over nature could serve as an allegory for Pasteur’s selfless combat against a deadly disease, while Meister’s position as an Alsatian who had been saved in the French capital reinforced the scientist’s presentation as a national hero. In exchange, the boys received economic support and patronage, including in the form of housing and employment for their wider families, which was especially valuable given their precarious circumstances. The limitations of the archive ultimately prevent us from knowing in any detail how the boys responded to their unlikely celebrity, or to how tightly their fates became tethered to that of Pasteur. All we have to go on, in the end, are the words of Meister when he was interviewed in 1938: “I dreamed of living in his shadow…”[[111]](#footnote-111) Certainly, Meister and Jupille have lived on in French culture in the wake of the looming figure of Pasteur. But this article has suggested that these two boys’ stories also held an independent appeal, which can only be understood by rooting them in the contexts from which they emerged and in which they have risen to prominence.

## Contributor’s Note

Robert D. Priest is senior lecturer in modern European history at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is the author of *The Gospel According to Renan: Reading, Writing, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century France* (2015).

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank audiences at the Institute of Historical Research, the “Doctor, Doctor” conference at Oxford, the Institute of French Studies at New York University, and Royal Holloway for their feedback on earlier versions of this piece, as well as Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, for funding research in Paris. He is grateful to Daniel Beer, Ruth Harris, and Rebecca Spang for their comments at different points during the gestation of this work, and especially to the three anonymous reviewers, whose close engagement with the work helped substantially improve the final piece. Finally, the author would like to record his gratitude to the late Jean-François Meister, Joseph’s grandson, for his generosity in assisting with this research.

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1. Caille, *Figure du sauveteur*, 54-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. On the pursuit of heroes in the Third Republic, Amalvi, *Les Héros des Français*;Ben-Amos, *Funerals*, chap. 5; Datta, *Heroes and Legends*, esp. 11, 19-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Amalvi, *Les Héros des Français*, 163-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ben-Amos, *Funerals*, 237-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Geison, *Private Science*; Latour, *Pasteurization of France*. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Hansen, *Picturing Medical Progress*, chap. 3; Hansen, “Pasteur’s Lifelong Engagement”; Hunter, *Face of Medicine*; Weisberg and Hansen, “Collaboration of Art and Science”; Weisberg, “Representation of Doctors,” chap. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ben-Amos, *Funerals*, 237. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Geison, *Private Science*, 178n5; Kete, *Beast in the Boudoir*, 97. An engaging general treatment of the enduring human fascination with rabies is Wasik and Murphy, *Rabid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Renan, “Réponse au discours de réception.” [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ritvo, *Animal Estate*,180-1, 187-8; Kete, *Beast in the Boudoir*, 103-8. Even the doctor Axel Munthe who worked with Pasteur seemed happy to imply that rabid men might be predisposed to bite (perhaps for the sake of a good story): *San Michele*, 66-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Hansen, “America’s First Medical Breakthrough”; Pemberton and Worboys, *Rabies in Britain*, esp. chap. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. I draw particularly on the most detailed account of Meister’s life: Dubail, “Joseph Meister,” 93-148. Most of the details of the story can be found in a manuscript account by Meister’s father: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Papiers Louis Pasteur (hereafter BnF), NAF 18110, ff. 400-1, letter from Joseph Meister (père) to unknown, Jan. 19, 1889. The family memory of and sources for Meister’s association with Pasteur are explored in Meister, “La saga des Meister.” [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Geison, *Private Science*, 239-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Geison, *Private Science*, 252. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Geison, *Private Science*, 193-205. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Geison, *Private Science*, 233. On the ethics in context, see Gelfand, “11 January 1887.” [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. BnF NAF 18105, ff. 123-5, letters from Mme Meister to Pasteur, Jul. 21-6, 1885. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Vallery-Radot, *La Vie de Pasteur*, 604-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Pasteur to Madame Meister, Aug. 3, 1885, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:30*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Pasteur to Ernest Legouvé, Léon Say, and Louis Liard, Aug. 20-22, 1885, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:33-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Dubail, “Joseph Meister,” 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. BnF NAF 18094, f. 92, letter from M. Perrot to Pasteur, 16 Oct., 1885. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Pasteur to M. Perrot, 17 October 1885, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:42. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. BnF NAF 18094, ff. 86-92, papers collected by M. Perrot concerning the 1831 wolf attacks near Villers-Farlay (1886/1909); see also Geison, *Private Science*, 177-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Pasteur to M. Perrot, Oct. 20, 1885, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:43. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Pasteur, *Traitement de la rage*, 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Pasteur to M. Perrot, Oct. 31, 1885, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:46. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Pasteur to M. Perrot, Nov. 7, 1885, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:46. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Pasteur to Jupille, Jan. 14, 1886, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:58. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Pemberton and Worboys, *Rabies in Britain*, 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. On the Newark boys, Hansen, “America’s First Medical Breakthrough.” [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The Smolensk incident attracted major contemporary press attention, see Thirion, “Pasteur et les Russes,” 22-35; Munthe, *San Michele*, 66-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Pasteur, *Traitement de la rage*, 31-5, 41; *Correspondance*, 4:94. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Institut Pasteur/Musée Pasteur, Photothèque (hereafter IPP), MP13026, from the series of *imagettes* for Chocolaterie d'Aiguebelle, c. 1900. See Hunter, *Face of Medicine*, 73-82. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Vallery-Radot, *Life of Pasteur*, 425. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Nord, *Republican Moment*, 37; Glachant, “Pasteur disciplinaire,” 97-104. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Geison, *Private Science*, 46-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Pasteur to Jupille, Jan. 14, 1886, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:58. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Pasteur to Meister, Sep. 19, 1885, *Correspondance*, 4:39; BnF NAF 18105, f. 134, letter from Meister to Pasteur, Oct. 5, 1885. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. BnF NAF 18105, f. 134, letter from Meister to Pasteur, Oct. 5, 1885. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Compare his handwriting and spelling with BnF NAF 18105, ff. 123-5, letters from Mme Meister to Pasteur, Jul. 21-6, 1885 and NAF 18110, ff. 400-1, letter from Joseph Meister (père) to unknown, Jan. 19, 1889. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Meister’s mother’s letter is presumed lost but known from Pasteur to Dr Weber, Sep. 3, 1886, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:101-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Pasteur to Meister, Sep. 27, 1886, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:110. On this letter, Meister, “La saga des Meister,” 170-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Pasteur to Joseph Meister, Aug. 25, 1888 and Dec. 29, 1888, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:254, 273-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Pasteur to Joseph Meister, 22 September 1890, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:313. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Meister, “La Saga des Meister,” 171. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Dubail, “Joseph Meister,” 138-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Letter cited in Dubail, “Joseph Meister,” 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Pasteur to Jupille, Jan. 14, 1886, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:58. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Löwy, “On Hybridizations,” 667. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Paris, Archives de l’Institut Pasteur (hereafter AIP), WOL B2, letter from Maurice Mesnil to Élie Wollman, Jun. 5, 1985. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. IPP, D71, D71 bis, D73, D74, D789, and D2363. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Meister, “La Saga des Meister,” 174 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Besredka and Jupille, “Le Bouillon à l’œuf.” [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Bazin, *Vaccination*, 471. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Weisberg and Hansen, “Collaboration of Art and Science,” 72; Geison, *Private Science*, 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. For example, *Journal des débats* (30 Oct. 1885). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Little is known of the provenance of the painting beyond that Pasteur consulted Perrot about its delivery in a letter, Dec. 22, 1886, in Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:132. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. See the paintings collected in Calley, *Émile Isenbart*. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Caille, *Figure du sauveteur*, 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Geison, *Private Science*, 231. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Munthe, *San Michele*, 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. IPP D76, Alphonse Mucha, *Louis Pasteur prélevant de la salive sur un chien enragé* (1882). [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Caille, *Figure du sauveteur*, 54-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Caille, *Figure du sauveteur*, 77-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Caille, *Figure du sauveteur*, 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. *Registres de l’Académie Françoise, 1672-1793* (Geneva, 1971), 4:168-9, cited in Caradonna, “The Monarchy of Virtue,” 447; Du Camp, *Prix de vertu*, 13. On the prize from the 1870s-1900s, Caille, *Figure du sauveteur*, 109-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Du Camp, *Prix de vertu*, 9, 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Pasteur to Philippe Jourde, Nov. 1885, Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:47. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. See the drawing “Les victimes de devoir” of Jupille beating the dog with his clog by Reichan, IPP, MP17998. In 1889, the Republic recognized the Caisse as a foundation of public utility. Caille, *Figure du sauveteur*, 41-44. On the category of the “victime de devoir,” see also Deluermoz, *Policiers dans la ville*, 289-93. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. *Journal officiel*, “Partie officielle.” [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Du Camp, *Prix de vertu*, 54-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Du Camp, *Prix de vertu*, 58; for Pasteur’s tears, *Le Temps*, “Faits divers.” [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen*; Forth, “*La Civilisation*”; Sohn, *« Sois un homme ! »*. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen*, 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen*, 53-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Sohn, *« Sois un homme ! »*, 417-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. *Petit Journal,* “Lettres, sciences et arts”; *Petit Parisien*, “Dévouement.” [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Lemaistre, Alexis. *L’Institut de France*, 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Hansen, “Pasteur’s Lifelong Engagement,” 374. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Lübbren, *Rural Artists’ Colonies*, 32 [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. *La vaccine de la rage* (1887), which is the central subject of Hunter, *Face of Medicine*, chap. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. “Acquisitions de la Ville au Salon,” *L’Art français: Revue artistique hebdomadaire* 11 (July 10, 1887). [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Pasteur to Grancher, Oct 18., 1887, Pasteur, *Correspondance*,4:220-1 [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Weisberg and Hansen, “Collaboration of Art and Science.” [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. See the discussion in Ben-Amos, *Funerals*, 239. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. On the crypt and the rituals that surround it, Perrey, “Les figures du sacré.” [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Hunter, *Face of Medicine*, 84-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Thiébault-Sisson, “Le Salon de sculpture,” 370. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Vallery-Radot, *La Vie de Pasteur*, 273-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Pasteur, *Études sur la bière*, 346. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Hansen, “Pasteur’s Lifelong Engagement,” 359-60, 378. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Emphasis added. Pasteur, *Correspondance*, 4:35. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Bruno, *Le Tour*, 304. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Bruno, *Le Tour*, 305. Velmet also discusses this example in *Pasteur’s Empire*, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. *Le Pélerin*, 2380 (Nov. 5, 1922); this continued well into the twentieth century, see e.g. IPP MP29892, school poster depicting the Meister vaccination c. 1960 [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Vallery-Radot, *La Vie de Pasteur*, 600-5 (on Meister), 618-21 (on Jupille). [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Guitry, *Pasteur*. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Datta, *Heroes and Legends*, 27-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Guitry, *Pasteur*, 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Guitry, *Pasteur*, 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Meister, “« Je te tiens au fond de mon cœur comme propre enfant… ».” The media commented on Meister’s appearance in the audience, see e.g. *Messidor* 7:12(20 Jun. 1919), 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Hansen, *Picturing Medical Progress*, pp. 138-40; *Boys’ Life* (Apr. 1936), 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. *Life* (20 Mar. 1939), p. 71; Dujarric de la Rivière, “Pasteur of France.” [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Desanti, *Sacha Guitry*, 254-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. AIP MRF.ARC.13, diary of Hubert Marneffe. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. For example, *Journal des débats*, “Suicide.” [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. AIP CEP. B18, vol. 129, cutting in Casimir Cépède’s journal from an unknown newspaper, dated Aug. 30, 1940. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. *Les Lettres françaises*, “Le fils de Meister,” uncovered thanks to Meister, “La Saga des Meister,” 180; see also Dufour and Carroll, “Great Myths Die Hard,” 21-2. Dubos’s popular 1950 biography first brought the myth to a wide audience: *Louis Pasteur*, 336. Deville, *Peste et Choléra*, 116. Deville’s book won the Prix Fnac, the Prix Femina, and the Prix des prix littéraires. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Meister, “« Je te tiens au fond de mon cœur comme propre enfant… ».” [↑](#footnote-ref-111)