

Hooke, Luke Joseph (1714-96), catholic theologian, one of three children of Nathaniel Hooke (d. 1763), historian of Rome and Mary Gore, English protestant, was born in Dublin. He was brought to Paris in the 1720s probably by his father who acted as secretary to his uncle, Nathaniel Hooke (1660-1738), Jacobite and French diplomatic agent. When his father quit Paris for England, his son remained with his granduncle and his wife, Lady Eleanor McCarthy Reagh (1683-1731) in the rue St Jacques du Haut-Pas. He took his masters in arts in 1734. It is likely that he got to know Denis Diderot at this time. The following year he entered the Seminary of St Nicolas du Chardonnet, as a student for the Dublin archdiocese. Bachelor of theology of Paris University in 1737, he succeeded as Hprior of Saint-Germain-des-Vaux in 1738. In 1739, during his licence in theology, his thesis, defending the ecumenicity of the council of Florence, was referred to the *parlement* of Paris. Completing his licence in 1740, he was appointed professor of theology in 1742 to succeed his countryman, James Wogan (d. 1742). He supported the Jacobite rising of 1745. Building up a reputation as a modernising theologian and keeping abreast of intellectual developments in England, he prepared his lecture notes for publication in 1751. Before the text appeared Hooke agreed to preside the thesis of Jean Martin de Prades, a priest of Montauban diocese and contributor to the second volume of the *Encyclopédie*. Although the faculty awarded the grade, de Prades was subsequently charged with deism. Hooke was implicated and, a victim of faculty politics, lost his chair. Despite this setback he published two volumes of his *Religionis naturalis et revelatae principia* in 1752, a third appearing two years later with a *Monitum Lectori*. The *Principia*, often mistaken for mere apology, actually sought to build bridges between traditional theology and the new science. It abandoned the scholastic system of presentation and attempted to integrate Newton into its theological system. It included a remarkably positive assessment of human desire. There were Venetian (1763) and German (1783) editions. Reprinted in Minge's *Theologiae Cursus Completus* (1860) it influenced generations of catholic theological textbooks. In 1762 Hooke was appointed chairman of a faculty of theology committee set up to examine Rousseau's *Émile*. Buoyed up by the successful conclusion of this charge, he put his name forward for election to a vacant theology chair. His

election was contested by the archbishop of Paris who later ordered a boycott of his lectures. In the ensuing legal wrangle Hooke published his *Lettre de M. l'abbé Hooke à Mgr l'archevêque de Paris...* (1763). He was forced to resign his chair in 1766. However, he retained the support of many of his colleagues and, in 1767, was appointed professor of Hebrew and Chaldean. He developed strong links with the English Benedictines resident in Paris. Among these was Dom John Bede Brewer who, in 1774, undertook to republish and expand the *Principia*. Hooke translated into French some of his father's writings on Roman history under the title *Discours et réflexions critiques sur l'histoire et le gouvernement de l'ancienne Rome* (1770-84). He participated in public debates concerning Roman history. In 1775 he welcomed Samuel Johnson to Paris. He edited *Les Mémoires du maréchal de Berwick* in 1778. In the same year he was appointed chief librarian at the Mazarine and, under his enlightened rule, the library's collection grew considerably. In 1791, he refused to take the oath to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. This exposed him to a plot mounted by his assistant, le Blond, to remove him from the library. He fought back through a series of published letters and petitions to the King, the National Assembly and, later, the provisional executive of the French Republic. In 1791 he published *Principes sur l'origine, la nature, la souveraineté, l'étendue et l'alliance des deux puissances*, an important pamphlet on the relations between ecclesiastical and civil powers. It contains a strong argument for an independent state church. Deprived of his position at the Mazarine he retired to St Cloud where he died, in poverty, on 12 April 1796.

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