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Middle-Class Genealogies in Eighteenth-Century Paris: Fathers or Progeny?

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Since the reign of Louis XIV, and even more so in the eighteenth century, genealogy had been, for the French nobility, a sort of mundane, and at the same time essential social practice. The monarchical state regularly required the production of genealogy to provide written evidence of one's quality and seniority in nobility¹. Thus, genealogy was legally binding to evidence, by means of authentic instruments, the aptitude to be appointed to some high-profile positions at the king's court, in the army or in judicial courts. The inherited social skills increasingly played a major role in a noble's career. Then, this new formality of practices devalued the ancient use of evidence produced orally and threw suspicion on « incredible genealogies. » Indeed, these imaginary genealogies of noble families used to be proofs of one's specific and superior nature². Nevertheless, the Age of Enlightenment established the development of a professional culture of genealogy, which slowly prevailed over the research undertaken by scholars. The 17th century witnessed the expansion of local Armorial Records paying tribute to the nobility of the provinces. This trend came to a halt in the 18th century: the king's court, the royal genealogists and the army urgently requested legally-based evidence. In doing so, they organised a competition between individuals rather than glorify noble families³. The historiography has however paid little attention to the use of genealogy outside the milieu of the (high-profile) nobility⁴. It is commonly accepted that, in other social milieus, the use of genealogy belonged to plain ego-documentation, whether in narratives or diaries. The aim was thus to strive to respond to some specific problems such as material inheritance or family's self-consciousness⁵. The mundane nature of this type of genealogy,

Corrected version by Sébastien Le Pipec, EHESS.

1. Robert Descimon, « Élités parisiennes entre XV^e et XVII^e siècle : du bon usage du Cabinet des titres », *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes*, 1997, n° 155-2, p. 607-644 ; Robert Descimon and Elie Haddad (ed.), *Epreuves de noblesse. Les expériences nobiliaires de la haute robe parisienne (XVI^e-XVIII^e siècle)*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2010 ; Germain Butaud and Valérie Piétri, *Les enjeux de la généalogie (XII^e-XVIII^e siècles). Pouvoir et identité*, Paris, Autrement, 2006.

2. Roberto Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili. Scritti di storia nell'Europa moderna*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1995 ; R. Descimon, « La haute noblesse parlementaire parisienne. La production d'une aristocratie d'Etat aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles », in Philippe Contamine (ed), *L'Etat et les aristocraties (France, Angleterre, Ecosse). XII^e-XVII^e siècles*, Paris, Presses de l'École normale supérieure, 1989.

3. Valérie Piétri, « Bonne renommée ou actes authentiques : la noblesse doit faire ses preuves (Provence, XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles) », *Genèses*, 2009 n° 1, p. 5-24.

4. See the recent and comprehensive overview provided by Olivier Rouchon (ed), *L'opération généalogique. Cultures et pratiques européennes, XV^e-XVIII^e siècle*, Rennes, PUR, 2014

5. André Burguière, « La mémoire familiale du bourgeois gentilhomme : généalogies domestiques en France aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles », *Annales ESC*, juillet-août 1991 (46-4), p. 771-788 ; François-

unencumbered by overlaid symbolism, might indicate that outside the nobility, people encountered real difficulties to track their ancestors' antiquity. Above all, this kind of practices may well fall into the category of more illustrative or emotional purposes than demonstrative ones, similar to those which the new transatlantic world was soon to embrace⁶.

Examining rare surviving documents from non-noble backgrounds leads however to temper this idea. Surprisingly, the French National Archives have preserved four genealogical rolls (*rouleaux généalogiques*) in a series of miscellaneous documents⁷. It is more than likely that these scrolls were displayed and unfolded by pulling the sheet down. They are 60 centimeters long and 50 to 65 centimeters wide. They are inserted in a neat wooden framework with marks of nail fixing, which predate their transfer to the archives. Once the scrolls are unwound, they can be read the usual way, from the left to the right. Each couple is placed ahead of their descendants, if there are any. All these scrolls have been made between 1760 and 1780 and display the descent of six couples (including two widows who remarried), i.e. several hundreds of individuals along 5/8 successive generations, over a period of 150 years, from the beginning of the seventeenth century. The list is meant to be exhaustive, or almost exhaustive, and highlights family ties and degrees of kinship that probably no European system would not recognise as valid, all the more so as it appears ill-timed for urban elites⁸.

Therefore, these scrolls raise some important issues. How have they been designed and produced? On a deeper level, what kind of family experience enabled them or made them necessary to exist as such? Even though these genealogies provide a great diversity of family names, levels of social status and fortunes, they demonstrate that a certain degree of cohesion existed within families. They evidence too how their authors succeeded in establishing this cohesion over a long period. Finally, they show how family in the Age of Enlightenment was not merely characterised by a process of individualisation and differentiation (the "making of the self"), depending on material success or failure, or on cultural choices for each member⁹. Thus, we would like to show, by presenting this case, how genealogy revealed the contemporaneity of family ties, enhancing horizontal bonds rather than the antiquity of the lineage.

Physical description

Joseph Ruggiu, *L'individu et la famille dans les sociétés urbaines anglaise et française (1720-1780)*, Paris, Presses de l'université Paris-Sorbonne, 2007, p. 45-56.

6. François Weil, *Family Trees. A History of Genealogy in America*, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 2013.

7. Paris, Archives Nationales (AN), MM 716¹⁻⁴.

8. David W. Sabeau, Simon Teuscher and Jon Mathieu (eds), *Kinship in Europe. Approaches to long-term development (1300-1900)*, Oxford, Berghahn, 2007.

9. F.-J. Ruggiu, « L'utilisation de la notion d'identité en histoire sociale », in Marc Belissa, Anna Bellavitis, Monique Cottret, Laurence Croq and Jean Duma (eds), *Identité, appartenances, revendications identitaires, XVIe - XVIIIe siècles*, Paris, Nolin, 2005, p. 395-406 ; Dror Warhman, *The Making of the Modern Self. Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2004.

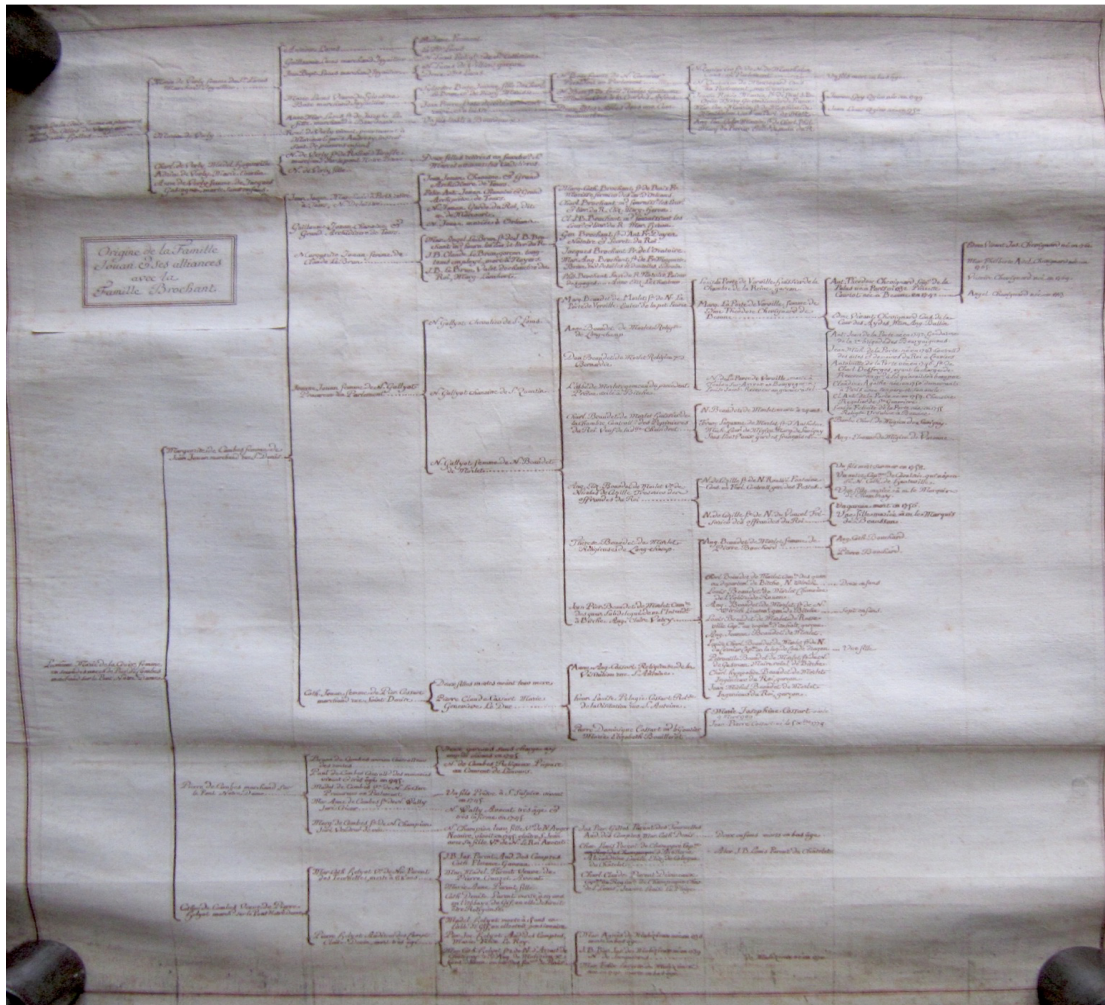
It is absolutely clear that these genealogical scrolls are not based on patrilinear filiation or agnatic lineage, which characterised the nobility at that time. These are descending genealogies, mainly on the maternal side, encompassing all the matrimonial alliances of the same family nucleus. The seven children of Jean-Baptiste Brochant and Marie-Angélique Lebrun (married in 1689) are the common denominators of the four documents, which implies they relate with one another and form a corpus in its own right. In fact, the titles of these scrolls (whose dates are unknown) read: « alliances de la famille Brochant avec la famille X » or « alliances de la famille Brochant par M ou Mme X ». The name “Brochant” enjoyed a high-level status among the members of the eighteenth-century Parisian bourgeoisie¹⁰. Among the Brochant family are to be found, indeed, wealthy suppliers of the royal household (*marchands fournisseurs de la Maison du roi*), judges at the merchant court (*juge-consuls*), heads of major guilds (i.e. *Six Corps des Marchands*), hospital administrators and churchwardens of the main parishes. The properties of the family were as substantial as those of aristocratic families, if not more: some merchants were millionaires in *livres tournois*. All these functions determined who the notables in Paris were, and they were central to the local political life and its organisation at the time¹¹. Thus, the genealogies did not intend to highlight the antiquity of the Brochants, but rather their many allies. Comparison with notarial acts reveals that few family members had been sidelined, although some branches were actually less prominent. The descendants of some collateral branches were not systematically stated. Nevertheless, the degree of kinship connecting all those who lived in the 1740s-1770s was thoroughly indicated.

The origin of the scrolls is still quite uncertain. They were probably seized during the French Revolution from one of the last mentioned individuals (or from the chapel of a convent). One handwriting only can be identified: all things considered, one professional genealogist, on the basis of documentation supplied by the family itself, may have authored them. The presentation of each individual is usually succinct: name, surname, possibly some dates; marks of affection are rarely mentioned. Yet some sketches of a narrative are to be found with such phrases as « mort en mer » (dead at sea), « mort ruiné » (died bankrupt), « enseignait les pauvres » (teacher to the poor). Such terms cannot come from the notarised documents. This type of memory seems rather characteristic of oral family tradition.

10. N. Lyon-Caen, « *Au Petit Paradis des Brochant : transmission et reproduction familiale chez des marchands drapiers parisiens, XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles* », in Anna Bellavitis, Laurence Croq et Monica Martinat (eds), *Mobilité et transmission dans les sociétés de l'Europe moderne*, Rennes, PUR, 2009, p. 245-262.

11. Laurence Croq, « Essai pour la construction de la notabilité comme paradigme socio-politique », in Jean-Marie Laurence (éd.), *La Notabilité urbaine X^e-XVIII^e siècles*, Caen, Centre de recherche d'histoire quantitative, Histoire urbaine, 1, 2007, p. 23-38 ; N. Lyon-Caen and Mathieu Marraud, « Multiplicité et unité communautaire à Paris. Appartenances professionnelles et carrières civiques, XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles », *Histoire urbaine*, 40, 2014/2, p. 19-35 ; L. Croq et N. Lyon-Caen, « Le rang et la fonction. Les marguilliers des fabriques parisiennes à l'époque moderne », in Anne Bonzon, Philippe Guignet, et Marc Venard (eds), *La paroisse urbaine du Moyen Age à l'époque contemporaine*, Paris, Le Cerf, 2014, p. 199-244.

Consequently, the genealogies way well be records of some of the narratives shaping the collective memory of the families concerned in that particular time. Dates of birth, marriage or death, as well as professions are not always indicated. No information is actually mentioned for some branches. The display of siblings seems to abide by the broadly chronological order of births or marriages (the scrolls carried on indicating births until the 1770s), but the dating remains relatively imprecise. All of this suggests that kinship was fundamentally conceived as a linear succession of generations.



Origine de la famille Jouan & ses alliances avec la famille Brochant (AN, MM 716).

Thus, objectifying these genealogies is quite challenging, owing to the fact they were built on a somewhat scientific framework, which scholars in social sciences today may well fully endorse. Especially since social history, nowadays, is committed to unearthing the dynamics of economic and social inequalities within pre-modern families. What sphere of belonging did these genealogies intend to emphasize?

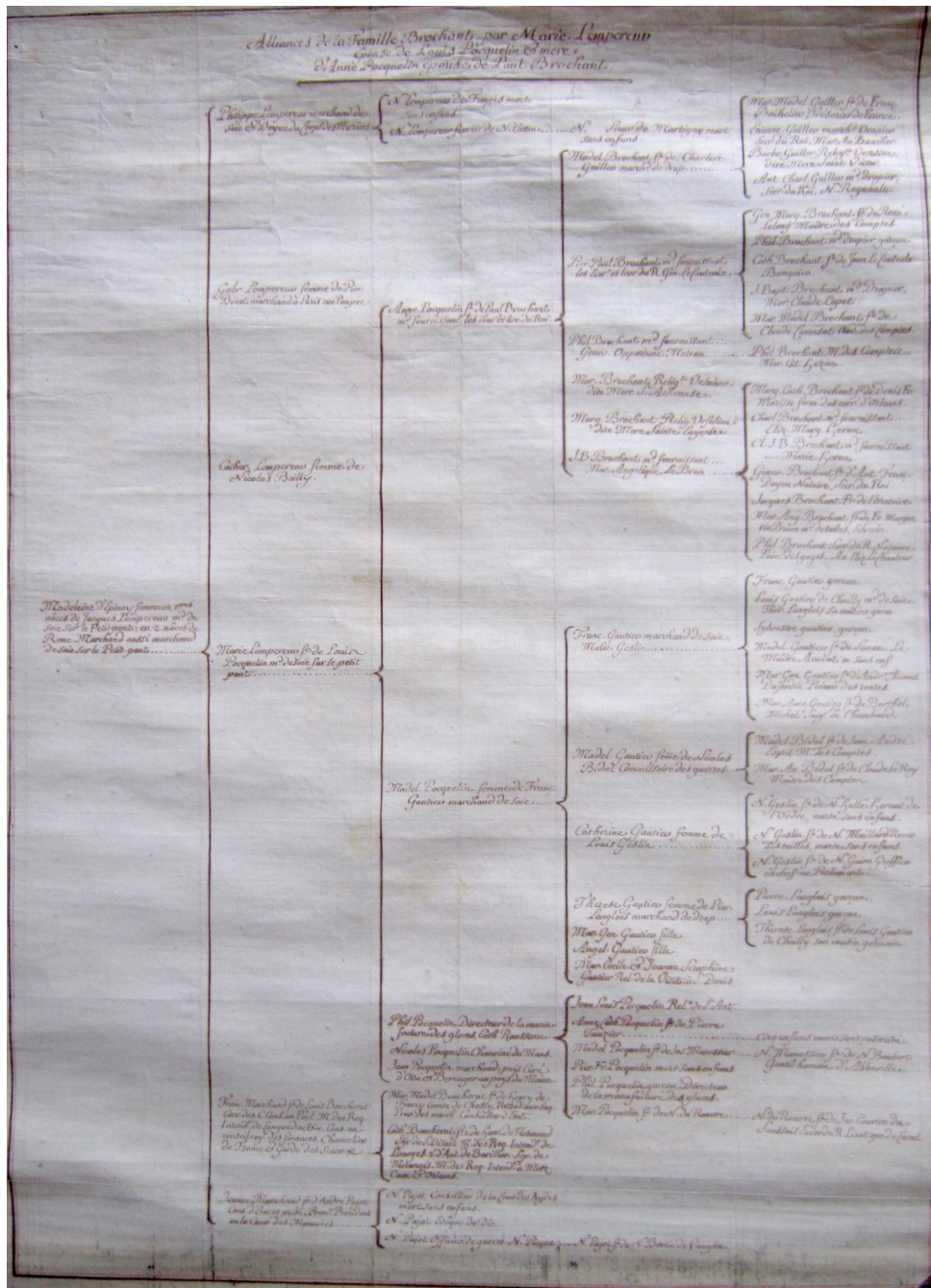
Some typical bourgeois content?

None of these scrolls was meant to covering up social statuses: insolvent merchants or small officers in the provinces are qualified as such, as well as judges of the Parliament of Paris. However, this must be nuanced. Pierre de Combes is the

entry point for one genealogy. He is simply presented as « marchand », that is to say, in the minds of eighteenth century people, a member of the prestigious *Six Corps*. In reality, he was a plain cattle dealer¹². The fact remains that stating the social status bluntly was a bold choice that contrasts with options of other families who were climbing the social ladder. Indeed, some families preferred to obscure their bourgeois origins by, on the contrary, nearing the nobility's norms. Then, they often attempted to falsify their genealogies, due to the fear of disrepute. For example, at the end of the eighteenth century, the ennobled family De Berny, whose ancestors were prominent (but commoners) drapery merchants in Paris, claimed to be the descendants of a Piedmont noble family, who was supposed to have allegedly settled in England in the fifteenth century. Around 1770, powerful aristocrats and even the king of Sardinia endorsed that narrative¹³.

12. Paris, AN, Minutier central des notaires (MC), étude XIII, liasse 35, 21 février 1642, account balancing by Pierre de Combes, « marchand bourgeois de Paris » and cattle dealer.

13. N. Lyon-Caen and M. Marraud, « Le prix de la robe : coûts et conséquences du passage à l'office dans la marchandise parisienne v. 1660-v.1780 », in R. Descimon and E. Haddad (eds), *Epreuves de noblesse, op. cit.*, p. 233-256.



Alliances de la famille Brochant par Marie Lempereur (AN, MM 716)

In the particular case of these scrolls, there is no concern whatsoever regarding social shame. The heterogeneity of social statuses did not represent any threat to the Brochants' reputation, and they were not inclined to consider themselves as nobles. In fact, the most illustrious branches of the family are not described better than the poorest. The scrolls even forget to reference several high-ranking magistrates, such as a *conseiller au Parlement de Paris* or a *maître des requêtes*, although they knew them, undoubtedly¹⁴.

As a matter of fact, these genealogies mainly include wealthy bourgeois merchants. The key point is that their close family ties connect social spaces that

14. Paris, AN, MM 716¹: the "conseiller au Parlement" Bruno-Maximilien Bertin de Vaugien (1685-1756), is not reported as such; MM 716⁴: Edme Vivant (1733-1800) is reported as "conseiller des Aides", but he is appointed as "maître des requêtes" in 1775.

historians often isolate from one another. Here, they are articulated entities, bound to one another. In this case, genealogical practising did not aim to comply with the rules of social superiority, the way the nobility and the monarchy wanted to promote it at the time. It is not a question of leaving unworthy ancestors or relatives aside, nor is it about pretending that the social status of the family was identical as a century earlier. On the contrary, it shows how this multiplicity of positions, ranks, *états*, professions, could map out a wide range of individuals freed from the necessity to legitimatise their relationship by social homogeneity. Those who commissioned the scrolls present their ties with people of all walks of life: aristocrats (the “marquis de Chambray”, the “marquis de Beaussan”), lower officers of the taxation authorities (“contrôleur des actes à Louviers”) or private soldiers (“gendarme de la deuxième brigade des Bourguignons”)¹⁵. Fundamentally, the scrolls emphasise that most of these people were Parisians, thus enhancing their geographical bond. The places of residence of the earliest ancestors are accurately described: « marchand sur le Petit-Pont » for Pierre de Combes, or « marchand de la rue Saint-Denis » for Jean Jouan. These two streets were crucial places for Parisian trade at the beginning of seventeenth century¹⁶. Yet the Brochants came from Dreux, a small town confining Normandy. They arrived in Paris only circa 1614, when Mathurin Brochant married Marguerite Hacte. From the Brochants’ point of view, there was some value to describing their Parisian parents-in-law’s ancestors as having local roots. To affirm one’s Parisian-ness, defined by this enduring presence within the urban institutions, was an effective way to assert a certain social status or to claim symbolical rights¹⁷. This localness offered prospects in matrimonial, patrimonial and commercial matters. By doing so, they exposed the crucial role of spatial distinction beside the social one. But the Brochants did not need genealogical confirmation of their social status.

This was not fortuitous. In early modern France, the bourgeoisie as a legal category was defined by the combination of city dwelling and economic and political leadership¹⁸. With these scrolls, some Parisian notables wished to prove their centrality within various branches of their own family, but also within different groups of all the elites. The scrolls gathered a wide set of merchants families capable of testifying to their long-lasting presence in a single place-- in this case the capital city -- into a single profile. There is no doubt that the Brochants’ genealogies intended to reflect such a capacity. Thanks to them, several families, including noble ones, showed they could only interconnect through such go-between bourgeois notables.

15. Paris, AN, MM 716⁴.

16. Jean-Louis Bourgeon, « L’île de la Cité pendant la Fronde. Structure sociale », *Mémoires Paris et Île de France*, 1962, XIII, p. 23-144.

17. Jean-Noël Retière, « Autour de l’autochtonie. Réflexions sur la notion de capital social populaire », *Politix*, (16-63), 2003, p. 121-143.

18. Pierre Bonin, *Bourgeoisie et habitanage dans les villes du Languedoc sous l’Ancien régime*, Aix-en-Provence, Presses universitaires d’Aix-Marseille, 2005. For an opposite use of the word, see Sarah Maza, *The Myth of The French Bourgeoisie. An Essay on the Social Imaginary, 1750-1850*, Harvard, 2003.

From genealogy to notarial deeds

Even if these scrolls demonstrate a longstanding presence in Paris, they equally emphasise kinship bonds at the time they were written. They certainly gather together hundreds of people under the same ancestors' names, celebrating the ties they shared. Undoubtedly, this was their real objective for they did not highlight ancient periods as much as might be expected.

Obviously, families did not need to make daily use of this inclusive perception of their kinship. As a matter of fact, most common types of notary contracts did not offer this feature. When settling the marriage before a notary, it was standard practice to summon parents and friends to sign and ratify the contract¹⁹. This practice means that all these witnesses approved of patrimonial arrangements, thus committing all the members of the two families. They eventually became guarantors of the matrimonial contract²⁰. We may interpret that their substantial number reflects the family's cohesion and their scarcity may well reflect weak links²¹. Even on marriage contracts, signatures were usually those of the siblings, uncles and aunts, and close cousins. Until the 1770s, the Brochants resorted to fewer than 20 witnesses, although they were the instigators of this broad genealogical inquiry. There is no systematic correlation between the family introduced by these contracts and the more extended family displayed by the scrolls. Sometimes, though, this extended family emerges, precisely within this merchant bourgeoisie. Between 1710 and 1770, upper middle class families related to the Brochants, such as the Nau, Caron or Judde, called on a very large proportion of their parents for signing many marriage settlements. As many as more than a hundred people came to ratify matrimonial contracts, which were business arrangements too, whereby families broke into such "protected" markets as the king's court or the army (canvas, wool, silk...). When the children of Michel Judde, a *mercier* tradesman, got married (between 1717 and 1731), 126 different witnesses, only from the Judde family's side, showed up to sign the contracts²². All the partners were equal, benefitting from a similar status in the great Parisian bourgeois institutions (*Six Corps des marchands*, municipality, merchants court, parish councils, hospital boards...).

19. Scarlett Beauvalet et Vincent Gourdon, « Les liens sociaux à Paris au XVII^e siècle : une analyse des contrats de mariage de 1660, 1665 et 1670 », *Histoire. Economie. Société*, 1998 (17-4), p. 583-612 ; Adeline Daumard et François Furet, *Structures et relations sociales à Paris au milieu du XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1961, p. 83-89 ; Pierre-André Rosental, *Les sentiers invisibles. Espace, familles et migrations dans la France du 19^e siècle*, Paris, éd. de l'EHESS, 1999, p. 147-151.

20. M. Marraud, *La bourgeoisie parisienne*, *op. cit.*, p. 48-58.

21. Sébastien Jahan, *Profession, parenté et identité sociale. Les notaires de Poitiers aux temps modernes (1515-1815)*, Toulouse, 1999, p. 190-193 and Id., « Parenté et stratification sociale. Les témoins au mariage dans la France du Centre-Ouest (XVII^e-XVIII^e siècle) », *Liens sociaux et actes notariés*, *op. cit.*, p. 187-204.

22. M. Marraud, *De la Ville à l'État. La bourgeoisie parisienne, XVII^e-XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2009, p. 49-58.

the renewed, enduring family identity across times. This identity emerged from a common village origin, or from a merchant company, and was enhanced through history by connecting one generation to the next. In the 18th century, even if the matrimonial alliances drew business interests closer, leading to marks of nobility, they also commemorated a common history often rooted in ancient times. In the 1780s, Marie-François Messaiger, a descendent of a family of Parisian grocers bore the name of “De Quincy”, which recalled the village in the Brie (near Meaux) his ancestors had left around 1630²⁴.

Yet the scrolls reflect these various layers of kinships bound in a present family unit, celebrating their own past made of matrimonial and renewed economic alliances, which had its origin in former seventeenth century Parisian commercial practices.

A spiritual family

Exposing these family bonds may have had to do with financial solidarity, with some determination to redress the material distortions between relatives entailed by the passage of time. In fact, there are many traces of assistance given to poor relatives in the wills drawn up by the richest branches: they could receive a pension or be hosted in their houses. In his will, in 1783, clerk Jacques Brochant, probably one of those who commissioned the scrolls, provides some support to the demoiselles Soyer, mentioned in the genealogies, and recommended them to his heirs; yet they were his seventh-degree cousin²⁵. In 1787, Mme de Senneville, the wife of a wealthy financier (*payeur des rentes*), came to assist the widow of a boilermaker. The two ladies were tenth-degree cousins, using kinship terms to address each other (« ma cousine », « ma parente »)²⁶. Their common ancestor died in 1636, one century and a half earlier...

Is it possible that all this genealogical work have been used to identify poor relatives in order to assist them by charity? It may well have been so. By connecting the different branches, these donations seem to be more acts of charity than mere economic ones. The kinship, as it appeared both from the scrolls and notarial acts, must be understood as a Christian structure that embraced the family as a community of faith and salvation. This is not surprising, since the Enlightenment way of thinking was particularly lacking in the Parisian bourgeoisie, especially among great merchant families. The faith these families had acquired, until the 1770s, was characterized by a Jansenist trend, i.e. a deep sympathy for the clergy who had appealed the papal bull *Unigenitus Dei Filius* (1713) by requiring the meeting of a general council. In the Augustinian framework of Jansenism, charity remained an efficient concept expressing Christian love towards one's relatives above all. They should be united on earth as in heaven²⁷. These theological prescriptions were related to down-to-earth

24 M. Marraud, *La bourgeoisie parisienne, op. cit.*, p. 56.

25. Paris, AN, MC, XVII 1022, 13 juillet 1783 et XVII 1035, 10 septembre 1785, will of the abbot Jacques Brochant.

26. Paris, Archives départementales, D⁴ B⁶ 6963, 28 août 1787, dossier de faillite Delaporte.

27. Generally : Anita Guerreau-Jalabert, « *Spiritus et caritas*. Le baptême dans la société médiévale », in Françoise Héritier and Élisabeth Copet-Rougier (eds), *La Parenté spirituelle*, Paris-

practices that sought to strengthen the unity of families and their leadership at the head of urban institutions. Celebrations of masses and services in memory of the deceased equally offered opportunities for family reunions. In his will (1781), Charles Guillier d'Hericourt, the son of a couple mentioned in the scrolls, charged his heirs with proceeding to print a sufficient number of invitations for such services, to be distributed within the families Guillier, Le Couteulx de Vertron and Brochant²⁸. Indeed, that is why the scrolls may have their origin in the religious institution, which organised such ceremonies.

The memoirs written by Mme Lempereur (another family introduced in the scrolls) report the following event: as late as the 1780s, the Clément family, i.e. the generation of the children of the project's supervisors, arranged family reunions and prayer meetings in their mansion house (the hôtel de Salm-Salm, near today's Luxemburg Gardens) where three brothers lived together, all of them high-ranking magistrates; two of them married the daughters of drapery tradesman Jean-Baptiste Brochant (one of the scrolls' instigators). Parents, relatives, and even servants then dined and prayed together. Like for a real ceremony, or a rite of passage to adulthood, one of the youngest family members read the prayers out loud, standing at a table and next to a candle, surrounded by the rest of the participants who knelt²⁹. As a result, the family embodied a community of faith and salvation. This is all the more true because the family was an adept of a specific religious sensibility within the broader Catholic Church, while energetically rejecting any other option (Molinism, Quietism, Salesianism). Given that they sometimes accurately referenced children died in their infancy, it is clear that the genealogies took also the form of a register of souls for whom to pray. Furthermore, the large number of clerics and nuns mentioned in the scrolls strengthened the religious capital of the family, which enabled to overcome all spiritual divisions. Even some Jesuits living in the seventeenth century are to be found in this Jansenist documentation. Chancellor Maupeou's supporters too, although all Jansenists had fiercely opposed his reforms in the early 1770s³⁰. Between 1771 and 1774 the monarchy abolished the former parliaments in order to upgrade the administration of justice and also to dry out a source of opposition. And indeed this reform achieved its purpose for a while but, at the same time, created political cleavages within the Parisian society. In fact, Maupeou's reforms undermined the devotion the Parisian bourgeoisie felt for the monarchy: clearly, matrimonial choices were not only accounted for socially or financially reasons, but also along spiritual affinities. Despite the heterogeneity of social positions and religious choices, the

Bâle, Éditions des Archives contemporaines, 1995, p.133-203 ; in the specific case of the Jansenism : N. Lyon-Caen, *La Boîte à Perrette. Le jansénisme parisien au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2010, p. 142-215.

28. Paris, AN, MC, XCVIII, 639, 12 mai 1781, testament.

29. BnF, 4-Ln27-94896, *Ma vie et mes souvenirs* : memoirs of Anne-Henriette Desplases (1765-1851), spouse of Jean-Baptiste-Denis Lempereur, edited by Louis Bour in 1945. We warmly thank M. and Mme Boisseau who entrusted us with the complete and revised tapescript.

30. Durand Echeverria, *The Maupeou Revolution: A Study in the History of Libertarianism*, Baton Rouge, 1985, Mathieu Marraud and Eric Viguié, « La réforme Maupeou, un révélateur de la question officière (1770-1774) », in R. Descimon and E. Haddad (éd.), *Epreuves de noblesse, op. cit.*, p. 61-82

Brochant's scrolls highlight the fact that salvation could not be achieved individually but collectively. Although these genealogical writings are set in the age of Enlightenment, they remained somewhat deeply rooted in the Catholic past and they revived such documents as mortuary rolls. One ought not to consider that these writings participate in the changing image of what the family was becoming in the 18th century. Rather, they possibly reflect how many bourgeois families were made to tackle the fact that gaps in wealth and social statuses gradually widened within the family.

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* *

By describing parents and relatives, the genealogies of the Brochant family have less to do with some glorified past, potential source of honorability, than with the present, or even the future. One may even assume that the scrolls sought to identify people of the same condition within the family, in order to plan forthcoming marriages. All the traditional system of matrimonial exchange emphasised unions between relatives of parents-in-law, in order to thoroughly conform to the canonical norms³¹. At any rate, one cannot claim that these genealogies were employed to select possible future spouses or possible future godparents for christenings. But they definitely enhanced the vision of a family determined not only by royal law, which governed kinship, but also along geographical and religious standards. The horizontal orientation of the family connections, as they appear in the scrolls, was the main feature of the Parisian bourgeoisie, composed of closely intertwined families. Based on elective and co-option leadership functions, this milieu of notables saw the field of kinship as a unique electoral body, embedded within great guilds or courts where different kinsmen were serving together or successively³². In their view, extended kinship was a political community of some sort. Within its frame, they managed their career and prepared elections to the prominent urban functions. Ideally, the values of alliance and filiation tended to be equivalent in order to undermine the social divisions between the local political system's outsiders and insiders. And this system was preempted by a group whose members came to form a class of patricians³³.

It should be noted that the scrolls endeavoured to advocate this particular meaning of what formed a family when the political community of Parisian notables was declining. They underwent a period of profound change in the 1770s-1780s, evolving from a closed world, based on a society strongly rooted locally, to a more globalised one. By opening up professional and juridical statuses, these years are

31. Gérard Delille, « La France profonde. Relations de parenté et alliances matrimoniales (XVI^e-XVIII^e siècle) », *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 70-4, 2015, p. 881-930.

32. M. Marraud, « Communauté conjugale et communauté politique. Les usages de la coutume de Paris dans la bourgeoisie corporative, XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles », *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 2011, n° 2, p. 96-119.

33. Laurent Coste, *Les lys et le chaperon. Les oligarchies municipales en France de la Renaissance à la Révolution*, Bordeaux, Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2007.

marked by increasingly atomised ways of thinking, which in turn multiplied the possibilities of social relationships between individuals³⁴. Sharing sociabilities, lifestyle, and culture gradually substituted blood ties and depreciated all the previous forms of affiliation based on legal or customary communities. The scrolls may be considered as a refuge to cope with tremendous changes, notables' reaction to the emerging of a society conceived as a self-sustained and secularised entity³⁵. Paradoxically, they are likely to evidence the ending of family identifications through this system of notability. From then on, emphasis was placed on individuals and couples. Admittedly, it cannot be said that the scrolls are representative of the entire Paris middle-class. In fact, the contrary case of the De Bernys indicates that even within the upper bourgeoisie, there was no unanimity. But generally speaking, until circa 1770, family culture in the Parisian bourgeoisie was deeply marked by « corporate Catholicism » (*catholicisme corporatif*)³⁶, which allowed to entwine beliefs and belongings with different communities across the whole urban space. Both institutional and religious frameworks maintained the social unity of the bourgeoisie, according to principles quite different from those the Revolution was soon to employ to define this word³⁷.

34. David Garrioch, *The Formation of the Parisian Bourgeoisie, 1690-1830*, Harvard University Press, 1996 ; Id., « La sécularisation précoce de Paris au XVIII^e siècle », *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 12 (2005), p. 35-75 ; Dominique Julia, « Déchristianisation ou mutation culturelle ? L'exemple du bassin parisien au XVIII^e siècle », in Michel Cassan, Jean Boutier and Nicole Lemaitre (eds), *Croyances, pouvoirs et société. Des Limousins aux Français, études offertes à Louis Perouas*, Treignac, Les Monédières, 1988, p. 185-239 ; N. Lyon-Caen, *La Boîte à Perrette*, *op. cit.*, p. 508-522.

35. Laurence Kaufmann and Jacques Guilhaumou (eds), *L'invention de la société. Nominalisme politique et sciences sociales au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, éd. de l'EHESS, 2003 ; David Bell, *The cult of the nation in France. Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1820*, Harvard University Press, 2001.

36. Robert Descimon, « Le corps de ville et le système cérémoniel parisien au début de l'âge moderne », in Marc Boone and Maarten Prak (eds), *Individual, corporate and judicial status in European cities (late middle ages and early modern period)*, Leuven/Apeldoorn, Garant, 1996, p. 73-28.

37. Jean-Pierre Jessenne (dir.), *Vers un ordre bourgeois ? Révolution française et changement social*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007.