

Women in the Ballard dynasty of music printers (1550–1825): a tale of five widows

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The position of women in the book trade has already been the subject of several studies.

Without evoking here the aspects related with the authorship, reading or the collections (these important aspects are out of our subject) and concentrating on the making and the trade of the book, there are some works that have exposed which positions the women have occupied in this so particular world that mixes knowledge, technique and finance.

In 1959, the first French major study on book workers by Paul Chauvet leaves no room for women.¹ It was not until a generation later, with the almost simultaneous publication of a generic study by Natalie Zemon Davis on women in the milieu of Lyonnais artisans² (mostly devoted to silk and printing trades) in 1980 and a case study on Charlotte Guillard in 1983 by Beatrice Beech³, that the veil was lifted on their real role, ranged from anonymous

¹ Paul Chauvet, *Les Ouvriers du Livre en France : des origines à la Révolution de 1789* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1959).

² Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Women in the « Arts mécaniques » in Sixteenth-Century Lyon', in *Lyon et l'Europe : hommes et sociétés. Mélanges d'histoire offerts à Richard Gascon* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1980), pp. 139-167, revised in 'Women in the Crafts in Sixteenth-Century', *Feminist Studies*, 8/1 (1982), pp. 46-80.

³ Beatrice Beech, 'Charlotte Guillard: A Sixteenth-Century Business Woman', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 36/3 (1983), pp. 345-367. Charlotte Guillard was already co-signing acts during the lifetime of her two husbands and, after her second widowhood, published about 160 books under her own name, in various fields, of which only a part consisted of reprints of works published by her two husbands. During her last decade of practice, she joined forces with her nephew by marriage Guillaume Desbois. Several testimonies praise her interest in intellectual matters and her abilities as a businesswoman. Other case studies have appeared on

and unpaid manual tasks to a visible and assumed managerial function. More recently, Susan Broomhall gave a new synthesis on the subject in 2002,⁴ again focusing on the French 16th century, while Rémi Jimenes resumed in 2017 the study of Charlotte Guillard in a book where her relations with the literary circles are very thorough, as well as the technical and financial aspects of her production⁵.

These studies have highlighted the various ways in which women reached these positions (through marriage, widowhood or inheritance), the reasons why their position is less visible than that of their husbands (need for domestic occupations and pregnancies, less education, inequality of civil status between married women and their husbands, unequal regulation of guilds...) with their consequences, such as their lack of visibility in the bibliographic addresses of printed works and the frequent precarisation of widows. In spite of all these difficulties to appreciate the true share of women in the book trade, this very trade remains one of those where they are most visible because, in addition to the numerous archival documents that have been found, the book is one of the few categories of products

women printers in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, such as: Georges Lepreux, 'Les correcteurs d'Yolande Bonhomme en 1545', *Revue des Bibliothèques*, 20 (1910), pp. 11-13 ; Michel Simonin, 'Trois femmes en librairie: Françoise de Louvain, Marie L'Angelier, Françoise Patelé (1571-1645)' in D. de Courcelles and C. Val Julián (eds), *Des femmes et des livres: France et Espagne, XIV^e-XVII^e siècles* (Paris: École des Chartes, 1999), pp. 149-173 ; Béatrice Beech, 'Madeleine Boursette : femme d'imprimeur et veuve', in N. Pellegrin (dir.), *Veufs, veuves et veuvage dans la France d'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Champion, 2003), pp. 146-156.

⁴ Susan Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade in Sixteenth-Century France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2002, repr. 2018). In addition to a summary of the role of women in the book trade, authorship and collections, interesting connections are made between these various aspects, as well as comparisons with other trades practiced by women during the Renaissance.

⁵ Rémi Jimenes, *Charlotte Guillard : une femme imprimeur à la Renaissance* (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2017), available at <https://books.openedition.org/pufr/10095?lang=fr>

that survives today and where their names can still be read.

In a work published in 1997, Roméo Arbour broadened the field in the period 1600-1650 and synthesizes their practices of the trade, specifies their editorial orientations and provides a rich repertoire of these women printers.⁶ For the following periods, the studies are less numerous and we do not yet have a large synthesis.⁷ The documentation to which we can refer is still focused on the 16th and 17th centuries.

The present study is a case study, examining the lives and positions of women in the Ballard dynasty, a family of music printers who practiced from 1550 to 1825, divided in eight generations.⁸ It has the advantage of being very long and relatively well documented for the first generations; it thus allows us to observe how these women were able to occupy some of the positions that were observed at that time within the book industry; similarly, we will try to appreciate how the fact that this family devoted itself to music publishing may have influenced their situations.

The Ballard dynasty and the first four generations (1550-1715)

It is necessary to recall beforehand the particular place of the Ballard house within the Parisian printing industry. Under the Ancien Régime, it grew throughout the 16th and 17th

⁶ Roméo Arbour, *Les Femmes et les métiers du Livre en France, de 1600 à 1650* (Chicago: Garamond Press and Paris, Didier Érudition, 1997).

⁷ References will be given below, in relation to Mme Boivin and Jeanne-Élisabeth de Sequeville.

⁸ Such a dynasty had only rare equivalents in the French-speaking world. We can cite a few others: the Estienne in Paris and Geneva, Didot or Houry families in Paris, Saugrain in Lyon and Paris, Berger-Levrault in Strasbourg and Nancy.


centuries, to the point where it occupied four or five presses simultaneously and employed a team of a dozen workers. If its production is mostly centered on music, about a third of it is not, but consists in librettos, edicts, liturgies, treatises or various works.⁹ Several of the successive directors became deputy and then syndic of the *Communauté des libraires et imprimeurs de Paris*, so that, even if this firm works in one of the "margins" of the book market (such as the markets of prints or maps), it has always been visible among the Parisian printing houses. Unfortunately, almost all of its archives have been lost in 1750, making it necessary to conduct an exhaustive search in the notarial archives to reconstruct its history (about 500 archival documents are now available).


Between about 1575 and 1670, the Ballard firm enjoyed a *de facto* monopoly in French music publishing, having gradually dissuaded other printers from competing with it. This *de facto* monopoly became from 1672 onwards a *de jure* monopoly for music typography. The multi-century holding of the privilege of *Seul imprimeur du roi pour la musique* by its successive directors obviously favored this preeminent commercial position, which it kept until about 1725. Having tried for too long to reserve for itself the market of music typography, it underestimated the importance of the market of engraved music, first emerging, then competitive and finally preeminent, which ended up relegating the Ballard firm to a minor position. Moreover, it neglected to export its goods abroad for a long time, so that its European visibility depended on the goodwill of its foreign competitors.


We will first summarise the history of the first four generations of the Ballard dynasty, before specifying the position that women held in it, while placing them in a more collective picture.


⁹ The ratio of non-musical production is variable but increasing over time; in the last fifty years music is only marginal.

For the first half of the Ballard dynasty, I have extracted all known archival documents related to women, in their family, managerial or financial aspects. The very simplified family tree which follows has been drawn up to highlight the main parameters which will be discussed: their marriage, the number of their children (which indicates their involvement as mothers and the level of inheritance division) and their social origin. The community they were coming from is illustrated with these four symbols:

 : community of the king's officers

 : community of the book trade

 : musicians community

 : medical community

[INSERT FIG 1. HERE]

Fig 1: the first four generations of the Ballard dynasty: summary of marriages, filiations, associations and originating communities

In the company founded in 1551 by the partners Adrian Le Roy and Robert I Ballard¹⁰, the first, a king's lutenist, was responsible for the editorial tasks while the second was responsible for the technical tasks. Their skills were clearly complementary as they combined content and container expertises. Adrian Le Roy had married Denise de Brouilly, the daughter of the Parisian bookseller Jean de Brouilly, which gave him access to the book trade. He and his partner secured the privilege of *Seul imprimeur du roi pour la musique* (sole printers of music

¹⁰ On this first generation, see François Lesure and Geneviève Thibault, *Bibliographie des éditions d'Adrian Le Roy et Robert Ballard (1551-1598)* (Paris: Société française de Musicologie, 1955), with all necessary references.

of the king), which had become vacant since the death of Pierre Attaignant around 1551. They could also take advantage of some relations with the court: Le Roy, as a king's lutenist, was in frequent contact with court musicians, while Robert I Ballard, married with Lucrece Dugué since 30 October 1559¹¹ had in-laws who also frequented the court, such as Jean Dugué, the king's organist, and his wife Perrette Edinthon, from a family of lute players. Both Adrian and Lucrece were coming from a community that was likely to facilitate links with the King's household (especially with the musicians of the King's Chamber and Chapel); the Dugué family was also related to the lute player Guy de Clinchant and to Nicolas Millot, master of the children of the King's Chapel. Such friends and relatives were likely to provide music for printing (foremost Adrian Le Roy himself, who gave some twenty books of his works to his presses). Thus was the beginning of a particularly active music printing workshop, which surpassed all its competitors in Paris and in France.

The premature death of Robert I Ballard in 1588 led Adrian Le Roy to manage the workshop alone, first, then to be associated with Lucrece for five years (1593-1598), while she became guardian of her seven minor children. Fourteen editions appeared between 1593 and 1595 with their two names. After Le Roy's death in 1598, she went into informal partnership with her son Pierre I Ballard from 1599 until 1606. The death of her husband in 1588 and that of her partner in 1598 caused some disorganisation in the workshop, but with a very reduced production (in which the economic crisis following the *Ligue* crisis had its share), Lucrece could keep the business afloat despite the pitfalls, and let his son work alone after 1606. This succession from Robert I to Pierre I at the head of the workshop takes place in several steps which will be detailed below.

¹¹ She brought a 450 *livres tournois* dowry (later abbreviated as « lt ») and could keep a 200 lt dower.

Pierre I Ballard, second manager of the workshop,¹² married Sansone Coulon on the 23rd August 1605; she brought a dowry of 4.200 lt and was a daughter of a *valet de chambre* of the Duke of Anjou. She was married in community of property and co-signed several deeds with her husband concerning rents or family estate. Between 1606 and 1620, she gave birth to twelve children and died prematurely between February 1622 and 1624. She left no visible trace in the running of the workshop, but Anne Guyot, Pierre I's second wife, will be much more active in this respect.

Anne Guyot was the widow of Philippe Le Vacher, violinist of the King's Chamber, from whom she already got seven children. She married Pierre I on 27 April 1625 and contributed 1500 lt to the community; her husband gave twice as much and provided her with a dower of 100 lt. The couple got three more children. Naturally, she co-signed deeds related to the family's income and property, and specifically those related to the estate of her first husband. When Pierre I Ballard died in October 1639, the eldest son of Pierre I, Robert III, is not ready to run the workshop yet. Anne prefers to keep half of the property, keeps an eye on the business until her son-in-law can settle and get down to work. Their association ends on 1st June 1657, when she sells her shares to Robert III.

Robert III Ballard, third manager of the workshop, gave his company a high profile during his years in office (1639–1672).¹³ Production increased and diversified with librettos, liturgies, spiritual poetry and royal edicts; Robert III became co-administrator of the *Confrérie des imprimeurs*, deputy (1647-165) then syndic (1652-1657) of the *Communauté des imprimeurs*

¹² On Pierre I Ballard, see Laurent Guillo, *Pierre I Ballard et Robert III Ballard, imprimeurs du roy pour la musique (1599-1673)* (Sprimont: Mardaga and Versailles: CMBV, 2003), vol. I, pp. 15-32, with all necessary references.

¹³ On Robert III Ballard, see Guillo, *Pierre I Ballard*, pp. 32-57, with all necessary references.

et libraires de Paris, then consul (from 1650) then judge-consul of the *Corporation des marchands* from 1666. Between 1659 and 1670, he was co-administrator of the Saint-Jacques-aux-Pèlerins hospital and, around 1664–1667, general receiver of the *Grand bureau des Pauvres de la ville et faubourgs de Paris*. In short, Robert III went from being a bourgeois and an officer of the king to a notable figure in his city. This social rise had its downside: the protection of Nicolas Fouquet allowed him to play a double game in the *Provinciales* affair of 1656; he became the target of the Jesuits, who attacked him in a violent pamphlet accusing him of prevarication, misappropriation of funds, licenses in the appointment of printers and peddlers, trafficking in seized books, and so on.¹⁴ Moreover, the accounts rendered by Robert III for his management of the *Grand bureau des Pauvres* showed a negative balance of 32,181 lt, a very heavy debt likely to burden his estate.

Robert III's health declined since 1669, and he died on 2 November 1672. Since 1644, he had been working to buy back the shares of the two houses in the rue Saint-Jean-de-Beauvais (they were scattered in his family as a result of successive divisions). At the end of his life, he still owned the entirety of these two houses, two shops in the *Galerie du Palais*, and portions of four other houses. His estate (to which he added his stock of books and the workshop) was substantial, but he had heavy debts and many children; the question then arose of securing the business and transmitting it to his eldest son, Christophe.

On 8 July 1640, Robert III Ballard married Marie Robinot, daughter of the late Antoine Robinot, wealthy bookseller in Paris, whose guardian was Pierre Rocolet, bookseller and printer to the king. She had nine children, and co-signed with her husband many various deeds (purchases, shares, leases, rents...) related with family affairs. As I will explain below, she had a determining role in the transmission of the Ballard workshop from her husband to

¹⁴ *A Monseigneur le Procureur général...* Paris BNF (Impr.), 4-FM-25041. See Guillo, *Pierre I Ballard*, pp. 43-44.

her son. After Robert III died (2 November 1672), Marie was appointed guardian of her five minor children on 7 November 1672, and had an inventory of the estate taken on 18 November (which her children renounced on 7 February 1673, to be more onerous than profitable). To manage Robert III's estate, a trustee was appointed, who made direct reimbursements to the Hospital, sold houses or shops, and transferred or divided annuities. Some thirty deeds followed between August 1674 and December 1675 to make the settlements. Once the estate was settled, only remained the two adjoining houses in the rue Saint-Jean-de-Beauvais, *Au Mont-Parnasse* and *Au Bellérophon*.

On Marie Robinot, we have a brief account of 18 December 1660 in the travel diary of Christiaan Huygens: "After dinner in the rue St. Jacques, bought music books and the psalms of P[ère] at Ballard. His wife extremely civil, pretty girl. Did not want to sell their music types"¹⁵. She was buried on 11 December 1688, according to a death notice reproduced below, which is one of the very rare material traces of the Ballard wives.

[INSERT FIG 2. HERE]

Fig. 2. Funeral announcement for Marie Robinot, widow of Robert III Ballard. Paris AN: MC/PL//40, 5868, © Archives Nationales)

The fourth manager of the Ballard workshop is Christophe;¹⁶ he will lead the firm to the top of its production, in particular with the many operas staged by the Académie royale de

¹⁵ Henri L. Brugmans. *Le séjour de Christian Huygens à Paris et ses relations avec les milieux scientifiques français, suivi de son journal de voyage à Paris et à Londres* (Paris: P. André, 1935).

¹⁶ On this fourth generation, see Laurent Guillo, *Christophe Ballard, imprimeur-libraire en musique sous Louis XIV* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022), with all necessary references, especially pp. 9-90.

Musique, composed by Lully, Desmarets, Campra and others. He married Marie Lamiel on 28 February 1673. The dowry amounted to 1500 lt (of which only half passed to the community) with a dower of 500 lt; the bride was already 29 years old. Marie Lamiel had an only son, Jean-Baptiste Christophe Ballard, who took over the family workshop in 1715 after the death of his father. Among all the Ballard wives, she is the one about whom we know the least. Her signature can be read on a single annuity in February 1682, and the date of her death remains uncertain, between 1682 and 1698! It is amusing to see that she came from the community of printmakers, whereas her husband Christophe Ballard had long defended the primacy of musical typography against the competition of music engraving.

From virtual influence to managerial leadership: a range of situations

These first four generations alone provide sufficient examples to illustrate the diversity of these women's positions within the Ballard dynasty.

First of all, it should be noted that the five wives mentioned came from three different social milieus: the milieu of the king's officers (which could open doors in the royal administration and facilitate procedures), that of the musicians (which could provide the material for the presses, and many of the king's musicians were published by the Ballards) and that of the book trade (which could facilitate contacts, lead to hirings or suggest collaborations). In fact, the extreme scarcity of correspondence and family archives means that no document has been found to prove that the Ballard wives had any traceable influence in any of these three fields (but it is well known that such influences do not often leave traces); however, three situations where such influences could have been exerted will be mentioned below. It can also be assumed that, overall, the combination of these three

backgrounds could only have favoured the development of the company.

The visibility of these women and their work is extremely variable. Between Marie Lamiel, of whom we have only one signature and whose year of death is unknown, and Lucrèce Dugué, who for several years took over the management of the company and who put her widow's name on the books next to that of her son Pierre I, there seems to be a wide gap in behaviour. But is it as wide as that?

Some of the tasks mentioned by Roméo Arbour¹⁷ as being accessible to women and not requiring any particular physical strength are related to production, such as correcting proofs, ruling luxury copies, folding quires, assembling and sewing them before binding, and even the binding itself ; some others are related to management and commerce: setting up shop windows, selling at the counter, accounting, correspondence, cleaning the shop. There is no record of the Ballards' accounts to prove this,¹⁸ but it can be assumed that many of these tasks were performed by the printer-bookkeeper's wife, or one of his older daughters, and that they were unpaid.¹⁹ This hidden work, which is still too often observed today among many craftsmen or tradesmen, surely contributed to the firm's profitability, without the name of the wives ever being associated with it. So many cases of what Natalie Z. Davis calls "The married woman as unpaid artisan".²⁰

Although the records are silent on this point, we can assume that the space available to women in the houses of *Mont-Parnasse* and *Belléophon*, in the *rue Saint-Jean-de-Beauvais*,

¹⁷ Arbour, *Les Femmes*, chapter III.

¹⁸ For the 16th and 17th centuries in France, only the records of a bookseller in Grenoble are known, see Henri-Jean Martin et Micheline Lecocq, *Livres et lecteurs à Grenoble : les registres du libraire Nicolas : 1645-1668* (Genève: Droz ; Paris: Minard, Champion, 1977), 2 vol.

¹⁹ And all the more so because at that time family ownership and accounting were not separate from that of the business, unless it was organised as a company.

²⁰ Davis, 'Women in the Crafts', pp. 57-58.

extended to the private areas, the shop, the back room and the office, perhaps the stock; it did not extend to the areas of the workshop devoted to composition or the press. The women probably had as little contact as possible with the journeymen and apprentices, who formed a male group whose work could be very physical, whose approach was a little rough, whose dirty jokes and hazing practices were quite severe.²¹ Except, perhaps, when they had to direct or supervise the workshop, which happened on several occasions.

The death of the director of the workshop, when his eldest son was not old enough or unable to take over the management without running too many risks, placed his widow in a number of simultaneous necessities: to continue to manage the workshop in order to guarantee the continuity of the family's income, to put the designated successor in a position to establish himself, to ensure the future of her children and to proceed with the division of the property between the heirs. Three of the six Ballard wives mentioned above were in this situation (Lucrèce Dugué in 1588, Anne Guyot in 1639 and Marie Robinot from 1669). All three played a decisive role in these episodes, each time in a different way. In contrast to the points made above about the influence of their background or hidden work, the archives speak for themselves here. Before discussing them in detail, it is worth recalling the regulations in force.²²

²¹ For a discussion of the boundaries between professional and private space and the rules of cohabitation between men and women in the printing industry (in the English context), see Cait Coker, 'Gendered spheres: theorizing space in the English printing house', *The Seventeenth Century*, 33/3 (2017), pp. 1-14.

²² On the civil status of women under the Ancien Régime and its evolution, see Pierre Petot et André Vandebossche, 'Le statut de la femme dans les pays coutumiers français du XIII^e au XVII^e siècle', in *La Femme. IIe partie. Recueils de la société Jean Bodin pour l'histoire comparative des institutions*, 12 (Bruxelles : Éditions de la Librairie encyclopédique, 1962), pp. 243-254, and Jean Portemer, 'Le statut de la

Throughout the Ancien Régime, the married woman was placed under the guardianship of her husband. The vast majority of marriage contracts were signed according to the custom of Paris (i.e. community of property between husband and wife, excluding previous debts or mortgages). The wife can sign the deeds that concern her if she is authorised to do so by her husband; she can also co-sign the deeds concerning their joint property: this community of property gives her the right to look at, but not to act on, the affairs of her family.

If she becomes a widow, she acquires an autonomous legal status and retains half of the community property (the other half to be distributed among her husband's heirs). This autonomy allows her to take over the workshop on her own account, or to join forces with the person who is going to take it over. Widows were ill-prepared for this management role, having never been trained themselves, and having only acquired training 'on the job' in their own workshop. While some were unable to prevent their business from falling into precariousness, others took on these responsibilities successfully, sometimes for as long as it took for a successor to take over the workshop, sometimes for the long term.²³ And the fact that some widows were able to take on these tasks naturally suggests that they had done them before, at least to assist their husbands.²⁴ These situations were not exceptional, since Sylvie

femme en France depuis la réformation des coutumes jusqu'à la rédaction du Code civil' in *idem*, pp. 447-497.

²³ Among them, Charlotte Guillard (already mentioned above) is one of the most remarkable figures: twice widowed, she printed under her own name for some twenty years afterwards.

²⁴ It is worthwhile here, because running a workshop is a complex intellectual, technical and financial affair, to distinguish more clearly where the widows could fit into this organisation. In general, as soon as the workshop grew enough, the daily technical organisation (such as distributing the tasks and presses, defining the priorities, synchronizing between composition work and press work), the supervision of the quality of the production and the cohesion of the team were the business of a senior journeyman (or *prote*), whose name is

Postel-Lecocq estimates that 13% of Parisian women ran a workshop in the 16th century.²⁵

The role of widows in the world of printing and publishing had been recognised since the publication of the first general code regulating the profession in 1618.²⁶ However, their professional autonomy was not total, since they could not hire a new apprentice²⁷ or obtain the status of master printer as they had not completed an apprenticeship, an obligation that had been enacted in 1571.²⁸ This half-hearted status did not give them real equality of opportunity with their male competitors : the legal emancipation given by widowhood was actually counterbalanced by increased regulatory constraints (and this point can be seen as the regulatory expression of a male stranglehold on this trade).

Often, this situation of a printer's widow only lasts a few years, the time it takes to

often unknown, and who occupies a specific position in the workshop, such as the proofreader (on *protes*, see Chauvet, *Les Ouvriers*, pp. 311-312). The director, for his part, had to supervise the whole, but also manage contracts, privileges, relations with authors, the Chambre syndicale, associated printers or even the police, paper and material purchases, wholesale transactions, etc. If the master printer dies but the *prote* remains, the workshop can still function, provided that the widow replaces her husband, i.e. she takes on tasks that are more managerial than technical.

²⁵ Sylvie Postel-Lecocq, 'Femmes et presses à Paris au XVI^e siècle: quelques exemples', in H.-J. Martin and F. Dupuigrenet Desroussilles (eds) *Le Livre dans l'Europe de la Renaissance: Actes du XXVIII^e colloque international d'Études humanistes de Tours* (Nantes: Promodis, pp. 253-263), see p. 261.

²⁶ *Lettres patentes du Roy pour le reglement des libraires, imprimeurs & relieurs de cette ville de Paris...* (Paris: Pierre Mettayer, 1618). See <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k96231129> for a 1621 reprint. Discussed in Chauvet, *Les Ouvriers*, pp. 79-83.

²⁷ An apprentice, at a certain level of training, can work hard without costing much. Having fewer apprentices meant a significant drop in profitability.

²⁸ *Edit du roi sur la réformation de l'imprimerie* (Gaillon, mai 1571). See <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9749240m>, discussed in Chauvet, *Les Ouvriers*, p. 43-47.

pass on the business to a son or a new husband²⁹, but the widow can keep shares in the business. Later she can sell her shares to her successor, thus ensuring a living for her last years. The three widows whose activities are described below fall into this category of « short managerial period ».

Lucrece, Anne and Marie: three widows and three estates

Lucrece Dugué, widow of Robert I Ballard since 1588, first replaced her husband in his association with Adrian Le Roy, as the music books published between 1593 and 1595 show (no deed of association has been found). After Adrian's death in 1598, she turned to her second son Pierre, then aged 19, and published under both their names from 1599 to 1606. Lucrece remained discreet, however: since 1593, she published as the widow of Robert I Ballard, not under her maiden name,³⁰ and she did not sign any preface. The young age of her son Peter explains on the one hand that his education may have been incomplete (but Lucrece would have relied on a senior journeyman); on the other hand it explains that no partnership contract was found around 1598 since Peter I was still a minor. On 29 November 1598, Lucrece obtained letters patent for six years for the printing and sale of all kinds of vocal or instrumental music in her name and that of her son (letters known only by the editions which quote them). The situation was regularised in 1605 and 1606 with five acts: the letters patent

²⁹ In the Ballard family, the transmission is generally to the eldest son, as we shall see below.

³⁰ This can of course be interpreted as a form of erasure, but it has an obvious commercial reason: changing the 'brand' of a product always carries the risk of losing a share of the customer base. In this case, there was no point in changing the name because the business would be taken over by another Ballard. There are many other examples where the widow carries on business under her widow's name and not her maiden name.

are renewed on 21 August 1605 for ten years (letters there again quoted in the editions), Pierre I henceforth of age marries Sansonne Coulon on 23 August 1605,³¹ a deed of association between mother and son is passed in due form on 15 April 1606 for a management with common expenses in which it is expressly specified that she keeps the registers of account and reserves the right to audit them.³² On 18 May 1606 Lucrèce agrees that the musical editions will be printed under her son's name and at his own expense.³³ Finally, on 25 June 1607 she sells all the stock to her son and rents the house *au Mont-Parnasse* to the newlyweds, with the exception of the room for her own use.

It is not known to what extent Lucrèce had been involved in her husband's work before her widowhood, but the efficiency of her management of both her professional and family affairs suggests that she was already familiar with the business. The numerous acts preserved in this period show her managing alone affairs relating to the workshop as well as those relating to her family (land sales, leases, works, annuities, etc.). She was therefore at the helm throughout the transition between the first two generations of the dynasty, serving as their pivot with two successive associations. The records show that she continued to manage the family property and inheritances until about 1620; the settlement of her own estate did not occur until 22 June 1621.

By probably assisting her husband and then taking an active part in the management of the workshop after his widowhood, Lucrèce reproduced on a small scale what Charlotte Guillard had done on a larger scale. She succeeded in protecting and reviving the business,

³¹ Paris AN, MC/ET/XXIX/114, f. 256.

³² Paris AN, MC/ET/XI/86, summarized in Madeleine Jurgens, *Documents du Minutier Central concernant l'histoire de la musique (1600-1650)*, 2 [Études XI-XX] (Paris: SEVPEN, 1974), p. 869.

³³ Paris AN, MC/ET/LXXIII/157, f. 579r.

which was no easy task. As Deborah Parker points out,³⁴ the outcome was never a foregone conclusion, and many companies declined after a poorly managed succession. It was necessary to obtain the renewal of privileges, re-sign contracts, invest in family and intellectual networks, and find enough to keep the presses going, even outside the usual productions.

Did Lucreèce have a say in the editorial choices? From 1593 to 1598, when she was associated with Adrian Le Roy, the production is so weak that one would look in vain for any artistic inflection: there are only reprints and a few new air books, a fashionable form. But from 1598 to 1606, when she was associated with Pierre I, two contradictory phenomena can be noted. Shortly after the death of Claude Le Jeune in 1600, the systematic publication of his works began in 1601, until 1612.³⁵ It was undertaken by his daughter Cécile Le Jeune and then by his niece Judith Mardo. Even if the importance of Claude Le Jeune's work largely justifies its publication, the fact that Le Jeune's daughter and niece were able to deal with Lucreèce Dugué may have had a facilitating effect. On the other hand, after Lucreèce's withdrawal from the association in 1606, Pierre I launched a collection of court airs for voice and lute in 1608 which was very successful, coupled with a collection of the same airs in polyphonic version.³⁶ Here one has the impression that Lucreèce's departure may have unleashed her son's ambition and thus curbed it while she was in office. What was the truth of this?

The succession between the second and third generations takes place in a different context.

³⁴ Deborah Parker, 'Women in the Book Trade in Italy, 1475-1620', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 49/3 (1996), pp. 509-541, see p. 533.

³⁵ See Guillo, *Pierre I Ballard*, p. 14.

³⁶ See Guillo, *Pierre I Ballard*, pp. 136-137.

Pierre I died in October 1639 at the age of sixty, the usual age for the time, after an illness already declared in January 1638. His eldest son Robert III (born around 1606) was already a mature man and had been widowed in 1637 to Marguerite Le Vacher, a daughter of his mother-in-law Anne Guyot. He had incurred debts, led a dissolute life and had not yet become a printing master in spite of his advanced age, which made it difficult for him to obtain a patent as the king's sole printer for music. A ruling by the King's *Conseil privé* gave him three years to pay off his debts.³⁷ The problem posed by the succession is not one of age but of managerial risk resulting from his behaviour, his disagreement with his mother-in-law (the succession of Marguerite Le Vacher almost turned into a lawsuit)³⁸ and probably insufficient technical competence.

Here again, a series of deeds enables us to trace the stages of the succession, before and after the death of Pierre I. On 8 January 1638, Robert III obtained a patent of provision and retention on the office of King's printer for music, in survival of his father and at the same wages.³⁹ Prudent, Anne Guyot decided to keep half of her household goods and to form an equal partnership with her son-in-law, by a promise made in January 1638 and formalised on 12 August 1642,⁴⁰ to oversee the business until her son-in-law could completely take over the business, and even beyond. On 24 October 1639, Robert III obtained his letters of provision as the king's sole printer for music,⁴¹ and finally became master on 4 January 1640.⁴² The workshop was visibly affected by the succession, with only two editions coming off the

³⁷ Paris AN, V/6/128, 16 avril 1639.

³⁸ Paris AN, MC/XLIX/309, 27 avril 1640, transaction between Anne Guyot and Robert III Ballard.

³⁹ Paris BnF (Mss.), Français 22077(15).

⁴⁰ Paris AN, MC/ET/XLIX/314.

⁴¹ Paris AN, X/1A/8654, f. 6v.

⁴² Paris BnF (Mss.), Français 21842, f. 123r, 4 janvier 1640.

presses in 1640, after which production resumed normally. This association did not end until 1st June 1657,⁴³ when Anne sold her shares to Robert III; in return she obtained a life annuity of 400 lt, food, a room, a toilet and a kitchen in the house au *Mont-Parnasse*, which she kept for herself for life and without rent. In addition, Robert III had to pay 6,000 lt to Anne's heirs and assume half of the debts incurred during the association (such as paper purchases). During her last ten years, Anne led a discreet life. She died on 28 December 1666; her inventory drawn up on 30 December revealed only two pieces of furniture, some silver crockery and 146 lt in cash.⁴⁴

Unlike Lucrèce Dugué, Anne Guyot never put her name on the music books during the time of her association (probably because the privilege was not in her name); she remained a dormant partner, with no intervention in the management (other than overseeing the accounts, probably), and no influence on editorial choices. The publication in 1665 of *Pièces pour le violon à quatre parties par différens auteurs*,⁴⁵ a very unusual publication, is perhaps an exception, as it came from the repertoire of the *Violons du roi*. Anne Guyot was the widow of Thomas Le Vacher, one of the *Violons du roi*, and she had therefore known this milieu composed of musicians who were officers of the king. Could she have had an influence on the publication of these pieces?

The succession between Robert III and Christophe is a third opportunity for a Ballard wife to take charge of the business, again before her husband's death. In 1669 she foresaw the difficulties to come, perhaps advised by her notary, and the situation was delicate. On 23 May 1669, she renounced the community of property with her husband and on 1st June obtained a

⁴³ Paris AN, MC/ET/XLIX/341.

⁴⁴ Paris AN, MC/ET/XI/207.

⁴⁵ Guillo, *Pierre I Ballard*, n° 1665-L, RISM 1665⁶.

separation order.⁴⁶ She obtained the reimbursement of the sums she had given him at his marriage and her share of the sums received from the sale of buildings, gifts and inheritances, to which was added a maintenance allowance of 300 lt per year. This procedure reduces the size of her husband's estate, protects her property from his debts and, above all, she can now intervene in her own name in transactions with her son Christophe.⁴⁷

These preparations having been completed, she was able to sell the printing equipment and the bookshop to Christophe Ballard on 7 October 1672 for 6,000 lt (two thirds of which Christophe had borrowed from the family),⁴⁸ having taken care to ensure that this property was counted for her in the division of property with her husband. On the following 28 October, Christophe bought the two houses of Mont-Parnasse and Bellérophon from his parents for 20,000 lt in return for an annual rent of 1,000 lt ;⁴⁹ from then on he had all the tools in his hand to continue working and the continuity of the business was assured. Robert III's death occurred 2 November 1672. In fact, Marie had arranged for the workshop equipment and the stock of books to be passed on to the son before the father's death, so that the syndicate that managed his debts could not sell them as it will sell the other properties. The result was that Christopher received the whole of his father's business, his brothers and sisters got nothing... Marie died in 1688, interfering in the settlement of her husband's estate until December 1675, but without interfering in her son's affairs; nor did she have any influence on the editorial choices of the Ballard house.

Marie was the pivot of a professional relationship between her husband and Pierre Rocolet, a sworn bookseller and printer to the king. On the death of her father Antoine

⁴⁶ Paris AN, Y//8834.

⁴⁷ On the advantages of renouncing community of property, see Portemer, 'Statut de la femme', pp. 461-462.

⁴⁸ Paris AN, MC/ET/XI/240.

⁴⁹ Paris AN, MC/ET/CV/868.

Robinot, the guardian of the minor children had been Pierre Rocolet. He signed several contracts with Robert III to rent two shops in the *Galerie des Prisonniers* du Palais, which had come into Robert III's possession through his wife (17 January 1642, 17 June 1645). On 11 July 1642, Rocolet was the godfather of one of Robert III's daughters. In addition, Robert III printed two works by Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac for Rocolet (1644, 1646) and he associated him with some other printers in the privilege of *L'Imitation de Jésus-Christ* by Pierre Corneille, from 1654. They also published shared editions of the same work, which were very profitable for Ballard.

The three examples of Lucrèce Dugué, Anne Guyot and Marie Robinot show that, in contrast to their usual discretion during their husbands' professional activity, they were able to manoeuvre skilfully at the time of the succession between father and son at the head of the workshop. What appears to be a clear commitment to the business - and which was also a struggle for survival - must not hide a fundamental discrimination that they were forced to accept: the transmission from father to son of the office of King's Printer. As soon as a Ballard received the office of sole printer to the king for music, he obtained for his eldest son a patent of survivorship (*lettres de survivance*) allowing him to succeed his father.⁵⁰ It never happened that the designated son died before taking over the office, or that there was only one daughter among the children. When the father died, the letters of survivorship were commuted

⁵⁰ On the various modes of survivorship, see Marcel Marion, *Dictionnaire des institutions de la France aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Paris: A. & J. Picard, 1923, repr. 1993), p. 523, and Roland Mousnier, *La Vénéralité des offices sous Henri IV et Louis XIII. 2^e éd.* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1971), pp. 513-514. This situation, obviously unfair, at least had the advantage of preventing the heirs from tearing each other apart to succeed their father. But it did not prevent Pierre III Ballard from challenging the position of his elder brother Christophe...

to letters patent, giving the faculty to practice and exploit the privilege. These wives had to comply with this constraint, which prevented them from becoming the king's printer in their turn. This should not hide a lack of ambition, for once the constraints of the privilege and its survivorship had been lifted, Elisabeth-Catherine, daughter of Jean-Baptiste Christophe Ballard, was able to run a very successful business in music publishing and trade on her own for a long time.

The last four generations (1715–1825)

From the fifth generation of the Ballard dynasty onwards, three successive wives of the workshop managers (Marie-Anne Geneviève Paulus-Dumesnil, Marie-Anne Delormel and Thérèse-Victoire Bauche) came from the community of the book trade, and Catherine Cottin is an exception. In these last generations, therefore, links with the book trade prevailed, but the importance of the Ballards in music publishing diminished significantly.⁵¹

[INSERT FIG 3. HERE]

Fig 3: the last four generations of the Ballard dynasty: summary of marriages, filiations, associations and originating social groups

Catherine Cottin (ca. 1670–1760), wife of Jean-Baptiste Christophe Ballard (active from 1715 to 1750), was the daughter of François I Cottin, surgeon to the king and living in Marly, and

⁵¹ On these last generations, see Anik Devriès and François Lesure, *Dictionnaire des éditeurs de musique français. Vol. 1 : des origines à 1820* (Genève: Minkoff, 1979), pp. 24-27.

the late Marie Jubin. Her marriage of 15 November 1698 was agreed under the custom of Paris and her dowry amounted to 1,500 lt; her uncle François II Cottin gave another 5,400 lt to increase it. Four children are known, including Christophe Jean-François, his father's successor. On 11 July 1713, Catherine received from her father an annuity of 250 lt in advance of her inheritance. Her husband died in May 1750; she survived him until 14 October 1760. There is no evidence that she was involved in the management of the firm, since we only see her co-signing deeds relating to the ruling of the estate (property, annuities, etc.).

In the next generation, the wife of Christophe Jean-François I Ballard (active from 1750 to 1765) is Marie-Anne-Geneviève Paulus Dumesnil, daughter of the printer and bookseller Gilles Paulus Dumesnil (1651–1721) and Marie Lemercier. She married Christophe Jean-François I Ballard (1701–1772) on 6 July 1739, with a dowry that also included printing material. Among her four children, her son Pierre Robert Christophe was to be his father's successor and she went into partnership with him in 1779. They obtained a decree from the king's *Conseil privé* to be able to exercise together the office of the sole music printer of the king, as did Lucrèce and Pierre I in 1605.

It is in this sixth generation that the figure of Elisabeth-Catherine Ballard (1705–1776) arises; she's not a Ballard wife but a Ballard daughter.⁵² She married François Boivin in 1724,⁵³ a music merchant who in 1720 had bought the music stock of Henri Foucault (established under the sign of *La Règle d'or*), in partnership with the composer Michel Pignolet de Montéclair.⁵⁴

⁵² On Madame Boivin and her business, see Anik Devriès, *Édition et commerce de la musique gravée à Paris dans la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle : les Boivin, les Leclerc* (Genève, Minkoff, 1976), with all necessary references.

⁵³ Paris AN, MC/ET/LXXXIX/365 (2 July 1724).

⁵⁴ Paris AN, MC/ET/XXXIX/316 (15 July 1721).

His dowry amounted to 20,000 lt, partly made up of music printed by his father (this dowry wasn't paid in full but was completed on his father's death in 1750).

Widowed on 25 November 1733 (she was only 28 years old),⁵⁵ the *Veuve Boivin* gave a considerable boost to her business. She published numerous engraved editions and cross-published with other competing shops, those of the Jean-Pantaléon Leclerc and Charles-Nicolas Leclerc. She could cross-sell with Ballard and published general catalogues of all music available in Paris from 1731 onwards;⁵⁶ it appears she was much more efficient than her father in exploiting the new markets (especially instrumental music). On 2 March 1753 she sold her business to Marc Bayard for 36,400 lt⁵⁷ and in 1750 she gave up her shares in the Ballard business to her elder sister Madame Trumeau.⁵⁸ Twenty years long, she thus assumed the role of a full-fledged company manager, and made her company the model for the competitors. She died on 14 February 1776 in Chartres, where she had retired to one of her sisters' home.

Unlike the widows mentioned above, *Élisabeth-Catherine Ballard* (known as *Madame Boivin* and later as the *Veuve Boivin*) did not limit herself to running the business until she found a successor. As she printed exclusively engraved music, her business was not subject to the Ballard family monopoly, which only applied to letterpress music. As she was still young and already trained in business, she was able to develop her business without any regulatory hindrance, and did not need to hire journeymen or apprentices as the engraving was contracted out to several independent engravers. She was thus able to prosper by freeing

⁵⁵ Paris AN, MC/ET/LXXXIX/419 (5 December 1733): inventory of François Boivin.

⁵⁶ *Catalogue général de musique, imprimée ou gravée en France...* (Paris: [Ballard], 1731). Paris BnF (Mus.), RES VMD-34.

⁵⁷ Paris AN, MC/ET/LXXVIII/720 (2 March 1753).

⁵⁸ Paris AN, MC/ET/LXXXIX/560 (23 April 1755).

herself from several constraints: the burden of an expensive stock,⁵⁹ the maintenance of a team and the respect of a rather complex typographic regulation... and perhaps her husband. She managed what is now called an 'agile' business, able to react quickly to changing markets. In doing so, she also contributed to the decline of her father's printing business (which had neglected the engraving market for too long) and its extraordinary development heralded the evolution of Paris as the capital of European music publishing in the second half of the 18th century.

Mme Boivin's life is typical of many widows who worked in the book trade in 18th century France.⁶⁰ As in the 17th century, it was still not possible for them to take up an apprenticeship (whereas for typesetting and proofreading, a good knowledge of the language and a certain dexterity were only required). It was still possible for them to take over the family printing business, but without taking on apprentices. Their proportion at the head of a workshop or shop was far from negligible: Sabine Juratic estimates that between 1700 and the Revolution, the percentage of widows among booksellers and printers varied between 16% and 27%.⁶¹ Their printing houses were counted in addition to the 36 Parisian printing houses (their

⁵⁹ The use of engraved plates makes it possible to reprint from time to time what is just necessary for the sale.

⁶⁰ Geraldine Sheridan, 'Women in the Booktrade in Eighteenth-Century France', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 15/1 (1992), pp. 51-69 ; Sabine Juratic, 'Les Femmes dans la librairie parisienne au XVIII^e siècle', in Fr. Barbier, S. Juratic et D. Varry (eds), *L'Europe et le livre : réseaux et pratique du négoce de librairie, XVI^e-XIX^e siècles* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1996), pp. 247-296. A more focused study on Lyons is available: Dominique Varry, 'Women in the 18th Century Lyons Book-Trade' (2009), <http://dominique-varry.enssib.fr/Women>. In addition to these studies, there are pages devoted to women in more general works, but no large-scale study has yet been devoted to their position in eighteenth-century French bookselling or printing.

⁶¹ See Juratic, 'Les Femmes', p. 252.

number had been limited by the edict of 1686), as a necessary and tolerated exception to the regulations.⁶² They were refused the status of master, and thus membership of the trade union. However, they formed a sort of parallel trade union, with a dean and sub-dean, capable of expressing to the trade union the claims relating to their affairs.⁶³ Whether they were still married or already widowed, the presence of servants or nannies allowed them to save time and fatigue in the management of their household, and thus to devote themselves more effectively to the shop as well as to the workshop,⁶⁴ and the records reveal that they were present at all levels of the process: printing, engraving, binding, book sales and distribution. The significant development of engraving in music will also provide them with numerous opportunities, as they were the majority in this trade, compared to men.⁶⁵ As Sheridan points out,⁶⁶ the vast majority of printers' and booksellers' widows did not remarry and on average they practised under their own name for 23.2 years long (19.5 years for the *Veuve Boivin*). This is a sign of the interest they might have had in remaining masters of their own business, especially as if they wanted to keep their workshop they could only marry a man who was a master of the book trade business, and therefore better equipped than they were in terms of regulations.⁶⁷

⁶² *Code de la librairie et imprimerie de Paris* (Paris : Saugrain, 1744), p. 200.

⁶³ Sheridan, 'Women in the booktrade', p. 52.

⁶⁴ Olwen Hufton, 'Women and the family economy in eighteenth-century France', *French historical studies*, 9 (1975), p. 1-22.

⁶⁵ Élisabeth Fau, *La Gravure de musique à Paris des origines à la Révolution*. Unpubl. diss., Paris: École nationale des Chartes, 1978.

⁶⁶ Sheridan, 'Women in the booktrade', p. 58, after *Liste alphabétique de Mesdames les veuves existantes au 1^{er} janvier 1748*. Paris BnF (Mss.), Français 22079 (14).

⁶⁷ *Code Saugrain (1744)*, pp. 212-215, which summarises the regulations for widows.

But not all these widows had the dazzling success of the *Veuve Boivin*. When they were not fortunate enough to have a senior journeyman, those who ran a printing house could only carry out their workshop, or be helped by a member of their family (a father, a son). They gave up on heavy printing and fell back on edicts, pamphlets or stationery, subcontracted to other printers or booksellers and earned just enough to live on while waiting for a hypothetical remarriage (their printing shop would then serve as a dowry), or resolved to sell or rent their workshop.⁶⁸ This is why, in the 18th century, there were more widows in the book trade than in the printing trade: the book trade did not require the management of a workshop, which was both a technical and costly constraint.

An example of this less glorious destiny can be found in a dissident branch of the Ballard dynasty, which rebelled against the primacy of the privilege of king's sole printer of music. Born around 1659, Pierre III Ballard, younger brother of Christophe Ballard,⁶⁹ had learned his trade from his father Robert III and then worked for Christophe. Received into the Community on 7 September 1694,⁷⁰ he set up as a printer in July of the same year by taking over Lambert Roulland's workshop.⁷¹ On 23 October 1694 he married Jeanne-Élisabeth de Sequeville, daughter of a lawyer of the Parliament of Paris, with a dowry of 3000 lt.⁷² The following year, her sister Marie-Marguerite de Sequeville married the composer Jean-Baptiste Drouard de Bousset,⁷³ whose numerous books of airs were published by Christophe Ballard.

⁶⁸ Several cases are reported in Sheridan, 'Women in the booktrade', p. 62.

⁶⁹ On Pierre III, see Guillo, *Christophe Ballard*, pp. 91-99.

⁷⁰ Paris BnF (Mss.), Français 21856, f. 72-73 et f. 134v.

⁷¹ Paris BnF (Mss.), Français 21856, f. 134r.

⁷² Paris AN, MC/ET/CV/945.

⁷³ Paris AN, MC/ET/CV/948.

Pierre III's printing house did not produce much; he mainly subcontracted for Parisian booksellers and printed royal edicts. In 1695, however, he published five music books, four of which were books of airs by his brother-in-law Bousset. Did Bousset push him to compete with his elder brother Christophe? Were the two Sequeville sisters the relays of an influence of the composer on the printer, or of the latter on the former? In any case, Christophe exercised the prerogatives of his privilege and, after a short trial with his younger brother, signed a transaction with him which prevented him from continuing in this enterprise.⁷⁴

Pierre III died prematurely on 11 October 1701, leaving two minor daughters (of whom Christophe was the guardian) and a pregnant wife.⁷⁵ The latter will break the community of property with her husband,⁷⁶ manages to keep the printing house and continues to work, printing on average two or three books per year until about 1710. She moved to rue des Noyers, and occasionally joined forces with Henri Foucault to publish engraved music, until 1716. She sold her printing house in January 1719 and remarried Joseph Ribouëlle, an employee of the Bureau des entrées du roi at the barrière Saint-Martin.⁷⁷ She thus abandoned the trade.

The last two generations of the Ballard dynasty still offer examples of two widowhoods. In the seventh generation, Pierre-Robert-Christophe Ballard (active from 1765 to his death in 1812) married on 24 January 1769 Marie-Anne Marguerite Delormel (d. 1822). She was a daughter of the printer Pierre-Nicolas Delormel and Marie Dubosc, and thus from a family of wealthy printers and booksellers. It is worth seeing that the Delormel firm had succeeded the

⁷⁴ Paris AN, MC/ET/XI/342.

⁷⁵ Paris AN, MC/ET/XLIX/422: inventory of Pierre III Ballard.

⁷⁶ Paris AN, MC/ET/XLIX/422.

⁷⁷ Paris AN, MC/ET/LXXXIX/396: inventory of Élisabeth Lesieur, mother of the Sequeville sisters.

Ballard firm in exploiting the privilege of printing the librettos of the Royal Academy of Music since the 1740s. Marie-Anne Marguerite got four children, including Christophe Jean-François II Ballard (active from 1812 to 1825), and it is with this last member of the Ballard family that the dynasty died out.

On 1st February 1804, he married Thérèse-Victoire Bauche (1760–1829), widow of the printer Antoine Vinchon (1746–1802), who had married her on 1st February 1779. They had a son Auguste-Jean-Baptiste Vinchon who was mainly an artist but printed few books until 1855. After the death of Christophe Jean-François Ballard in 1825, Thérèse-Victoire Bauche printed from 1826 to 1829 under the name of Veuve Ballard. She is another example of a Ballard widow who perpetuated the business after her husband death. At that time and since several decades, the Ballard production was limited to theatre booklets, tickets or posters, various brochures, administrative publications and a few books. Her long-standing speciality in musical typography had disappeared, swept away by modern techniques: engraving and lithography.

Some closing remarks

From this examination of the position of women in the Ballard dynasty, we can retain a few striking facts. First of all, having probably worked alongside their husbands for the first three generations, they skilfully manoeuvred to ensure that the Ballard printing works could be passed on without damage to their son or son-in-law, who was given the privilege of sole king's printer for music, but their managerial exercise was limited to this pivotal period. Their situation was the result of a triple condition: the possibility of working as a printer's widow, the impossibility of taking over the printing works in their own name as they did not have a

privilege, and the interest of associating with a son in order to be able to take on apprentices and oversee the accounts. They are very involved at these crucial moments in the company's history, when funds are lacking, when some major children can claim their share, when some technical or managerial skills have disappeared, when the family has to be able to count on a successor who isn't always ready to run the workshop. It is as if the transmission of life, in families, was somehow transcended in the transmission of the company, in the professional environment.

It was only later, in the fourth or sixth generation, that they aspired to remain at the head of their establishment for twenty years or so, with varying degrees of success: one (Madame Boivin) with real success at the head of an engraved music publishing house, and the other (Jeanne-Élisabeth de Sequeville) with some difficulty at the head of a printing house which she eventually sold. In both cases, they were freed from the constraint of surrendering a workshop in which their husbands had a privilege and were able to try their hand in their own name.

Of all these constraints, whether familial or regulatory, we observe that the existence or absence of the privilege of king's sole printer for music, which the Ballard heirs successively held, played a major role in their future.

I am not aware of any other study of the position of women in a French printing dynasty that allows for functional comparisons. It is worth mentioning, however, a short account of the role of women in the Estienne dynasty, published in conjunction with an exhibition on the Estienne held at the Edward Worth Library in Dublin in 2016.⁷⁸ In this dynasty too, women ran the business for some years, such as Guyonne Viard, widow of Jean Higman, remarried to

⁷⁸ Agathe Vezine, *Women in the Estienne family*, <https://estiennes.edwardworthlibrary.ie/estienne-family/women-printers> (2016),

Henri I Estienne, then widowed again and remarried to Simon de Colines, or Denise Barbé, widow of Robert II Estienne (1530-1570) in Geneva, who maintained her printing business for five years before marrying Mamert Patisson in Paris in 1575. Here too, they assumed a managerial transition role between several branches run by men.

A major difference with the Ballard dynasty is the accession to the profession ‘by widows’. Henri I Estienne (1460–1520) could establish himself as a printer through his marriage to Guyone Viart, widow of the printer Jean Higman. Such situation never occurred in the Ballard family, where the business always passed on from father to son. Agathe Vezine also notes that by marrying the son of another printer’s dynasty, women can strengthen the cohesion between the different firms, as between the Estienne and Badius families. She also concludes that women were of fundamental importance to the continuity of the business: they allied themselves not only with printers but also with leading humanists (as if, in the case of the Ballards, a Ballard daughter married a famous composer, but this never happened).

The roles of women in the major dynasties of the Ballard and Estienne families were therefore markedly different. In the Estienne family, they often acted as intermediaries with allied families, whereas in the case of the Ballards, they worked above all to preserve the continuity of the dynasty across generations.