

War, *Noblesse* and Identity in Early Modern Champagne:
A Study of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673)

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
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Graduate Department of History
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War, *Noblesse* and Identity in Early Modern Champagne:
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Clare A. Dale

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The *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), one of many *recherches de la noblesse* carried out by the French monarchy throughout France in the late medieval and early modern periods, provides a public record of the lives of the nobility of this frontier region. Ostensibly a means to return *faux nobles* to the tax rolls, the *recherches de la noblesse* also had a social function. Contemporary treatises on nobility in France make it clear that the acquisition and maintenance of nobility required a sustained public display of character and social value; this thesis argues that, in this cultural and ideological context, the *recherches de la noblesse* served as a means by which an individual noble or lineage could craft and promote a particular social identity. By chronicling the lives of individuals and families whose claims to *noblesse* were successful, the published genealogies and documentary evidence provide insight into the public discourse on the nature of nobility and noble identity in Champagne.

Using the multi-generational evidence supplied by the 507 families included in the published findings of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), this thesis shows how war shaped the definition, acquisition and maintenance of *noblesse* in this region. It reveals that, far from rejecting traditional ideas about the role military service and activity

played in determining noble status, the majority of Champagne's nobles sought to fashion an identity that reflected their professional and cultural dedication to the conduct of war.

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Dale - Introduction

War, *Noblesse* and Identity in Early Modern Champagne

War, *Noblesse* and Identity in Early Modern Champagne: A Study of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673)

INTRODUCTION

Trying to understand seventeenth-century European history without weighing the influence of war and military institutions is like trying to dance without listening to music.¹

A. Nobility and war

The social history of *noblesse* (nobility) in early modern France is inextricably linked to the study of the conduct and culture of war as, since the Middle Ages, war had been central to the definition of *noblesse*. War, and participation in it, provided a socially and professionally acceptable outlet for noble service and acted as the means by which those who claimed noble status could seek to justify their social status, their influence and their privileges.² It was argued that, as their debt of service to the state was paid in blood, shed willingly on the battlefield in defence of the monarchy and its power, the privileges enjoyed by nobles were merely the best and most fitting way in which the crown – and by extension French society – could acknowledge their sacrifice. Regardless of the origins of that nobility, however, the hierarchical nature of French society meant that finding a publicly recognized

¹John A. Lynn, “Tactical Evolution in the French Army, 1560-1660,” *French Historical Studies* 14 (1985): 167.

²For a more detailed discussion of war as a factor in the definition of *noblesse*, see Chapter One.

means of justifying and supporting a claim to *noblesse* was crucial to an individual's social acceptance and survival. The power of those who held noble status – and their ability to wield power of any sort – rested on the willingness of all levels of French society to accept and acknowledge their claim to *noblesse*. This thesis explores how involvement in military activity, whether in the teeth or the tail of the army of the French state or in retinues of the haute noblesse, underlay and supported claims to noble status in seventeenth century Champagne. By examining the ways in which the noble families of Champagne commemorated their military activity as a means to elaborate their claim to noblesse, this thesis ventures into unmapped terrain which lies in between social and military history and it allows historians to understand how nobles in *ancien régime* Champagne perceived the role played by their military experience and sacrifice in constructing memory and identity and in securing their continued social ascendancy.

The Social History of Nobility in Early Modern France

As historians of France are aware, defining *noblesse* became increasingly difficult as the early modern period progressed. With the rise of a new nobility based not in the profession of arms but in the offices of the crown's growing bureaucracy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, came questions about the nature of nobility and the means by which those deemed to be noble could express their own understanding of what it meant to be noble. Assessing the nature and extent of this change is central to the historiography of early

modern France, particularly the historiography of nobility where questions as to how nobles were defined by society, how they defined and understood their social status, and how they expressed that understanding dominate recent works.

Such an approach to the history of nobility is, however, relatively new; it is only in the last fifty years that the history of nobility in early modern France has shifted from a highly politicized interpretation which stressed the greatness of the nobility and its importance to the state, to a more nuanced socio-cultural interpretation of the nature of *noblesse* predicated on understanding the meaning and function of nobility in French society. Although *Annales* founder Marc Bloch had been advocating a more socio-cultural approach to the history of *noblesse* since the 1930s,³ it was not until the 1950s that scholars began to explore in greater detail how French society and, more importantly, nobles themselves understood their social status.

It could be argued that, although its focus is the early to mid-eighteenth century, Franklin L. Ford's *Robe and Sword: The Regrouping of the French Aristocracy after Louis XIV* provided an interpretive template for a number of historians of nobility in early modern France. Ford argues in this work that the period from the death of Louis XIV (1715) until the publication of Montesquieu's work of enlightened political theory, *L'esprit des loix* (1748)

³See: Marc Bloch, "Sur le passé de la noblesse française: quelques jalons de recherche," *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, 8 (1936): 366-378.

was one in which the *noblesse* of France sought to regain the power and influence that had been taken from it by the crown during the rule of Louis XIV. Citing literary and juridical treatises, Ford examines the social structure of the *noblesse*, its demography and the values placed by nobles themselves on political activity, particularly the parlementaires' use of the *remonstrance*. He argues that by 1715, the "robe" nobility had eclipsed that of the "sword" in every meaningful way: *hauts robins* were more numerous, richer, more powerful and, in his analysis, as aristocratic as the members of the "sword" which he characterizes as being generally in decline. The two groups, he argues, were linked in that many *haute robins* were related by marriage to members of well established military families. Thus, Ford's rather narrow study portrays the noblesse of early eighteenth century France as being dominated by progressive, educated, highly placed lawyers (the *haute noblesse de robe*) who, due to their merit and ability as officers in the royal courts and administration, had eclipsed the backward, traditional "sword" nobility to such a degree that the "robe" and not the "sword" would become the dominant force within France's elite in the eighteenth century.⁴

What developed in the wake of Ford's work was an interpretation that posits a "crisis of the nobility" evolved in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; this alleged crisis was portrayed as the result of social, professional and political jealousy felt by the *noblesse d'épée* in the face of competition from the rapidly growing *noblesse de robe*.

⁴Franklin L. Ford, *Robe and Sword: The Regrouping of the French Aristocracy after Louis XIV* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953).

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, a number of scholars – including Davis Bitton, Robert Mandrou and J. H. M. Salmon⁵ – produced studies of *noblesse* based largely on analysis of the many social, legal and political treatises produced throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in France. In keeping with an *Annaliste* paradigm, it was argued that, as these treatises were largely concerned with the ways in which *noblesse* could be acquired and the means by which it could and should be maintained, they provided a way in which to understand the collective *mentalité* of the nobles and their society. Moreover, it was suggested that given their concerns for delineating the origins and functions of *noblesse*, these treatises were also concerned with the relationship and interaction of those categories of nobility that appeared to dominate early modern France: the *noblesse d'épée* (nobility of the sword) and the *noblesse de robe* (nobility of the robe). For Bitton, Mandrou and Salmon, the desire of these treatises to lay out in precise detail the origins and nature of *noblesse* – no less than their proliferation in the early seventeenth century – points to the existence of a crisis of identity among those who considered themselves to be noble.

⁵See, for example: Davis Bitton, *The French Nobility in Crisis, 1560-1640* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969); Robert Mandrou, *Introduction à la France moderne: essai de psychologie historique 1500-1640* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1961; reprint, 1974); J. H. M. Salmon, *Society in Crisis: France in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1975; reprint, London: Methuen, 1979); John David Nordhaus, "*Arma et Litterae*": *The Education of the Noblesse de Race in Sixteenth-Century France*, unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Emory University, 1974 and Denis Richet, "Aspects socio-culturels des conflits religieux à Paris dans la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle," *Annales E. S. C.* 32 (1977): 764-789.

Davis Bitton, in *The French Nobility in Crisis, 1560-1640*, argues that during a period which saw the rise of an increasingly centralized state in France, the conflict between the *noblesse d'épée* and the *noblesse de robe* was profoundly unsettling for what he characterizes as a traditional nobility which defined itself through its military service. Bitton's interpretation stresses a theory of the progressive economic, social and political dispossession of the *noblesse d'épée* as they faced competition for positions at court, prestige and power from the lawyers, *parlementaires*, *financiers* and other administrators who were integral to the new political and financial bureaucracy.⁶ Consequently, Bitton's work depicts a *noblesse d'épée* which, responding to a perceived social and professional threat, sought social refuge in a steadfast belief in ideals of *noblesse* which placed great emphasis on virtue, character and personal service to the monarch. Bitton also argues that members of the *noblesse de robe*, many of whom were recent *anoblis*, also felt the need to establish what he calls "a recognized social function." He suggests that the *robins* also sought refuge in social ideology and that a number of them took to producing treatises which argued the need for education and merit (rather than virtue and honour) as the basis for *noblesse*.⁷ Thus, the picture painted by Bitton (and to a lesser extent by Mandrou and Salmon),⁸ is of a noble society divided into two inherently hostile camps: the stubbornly traditional military nobility who belittled formal

⁶Bitton, *The French Nobility in Crisis, 1560-1640*, 6-18, 26-39.

⁷*Ibid.*, 42-56.

⁸Mandrou, *Introduction à la France moderne: essai de psychologie historique 1500 - 1640*, 101-113; and Salmon, *Society in Crisis: France in the Sixteenth Century*, 92-112.

education and eschewed service in the new royal bureaucracy and the ambitious and educated newcomers who sought to take on an increasing and more dominant role in the affairs of state.

It is important to note that this approach to the study of nobility in early modern France was not universally adopted in the 1960s. Robert Forster's *The Nobility of Toulouse in the Eighteenth Century: A Social and Economic History*, which was published in 1960, gave some indication of the interpretive model future scholars would adopt. In this work, Forster focuses on how the development of groups of *parlementaire* and municipal nobles affected social and cultural change in Toulouse. These *anoblis*, he notes, "formed a single social group setting a uniform tone to the city's judicial and political direction, sustaining its economy, and patronizing its intellectual and religious life."⁹ While some barriers still kept some from entering what he calls the "blood nobility,"¹⁰ Forster argues that the *parlementaire* and judicial nobles of Toulouse still managed to acquire all the outward trappings of established nobility (such as land and offices) and that they developed a corporate cultural ethos and social network that enhanced their social status and solidified their prestige. He concludes that, in Toulouse, there was "no new challenge to [the] traditional order of society"

⁹Robert Forster, *The Nobility of Toulouse in the Eighteenth Century: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1960), 22.

¹⁰For example, he notes that there was still a strong belief in eighteenth century Toulouse that four generations of nobility on the paternal line was needed to be considered *noblesse de race*. *Ibid.*, 26.

and that a “nobleman’s position was secure in all of the hierarchies whether based on blood, office, or material resources.”¹¹

Forster’s focus on non-military nobility was also used by other scholars who, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, were increasingly calling into question the picture painted by Bitton and others of conflict and of the social, economic and professional dispossession of the traditional military nobility by the rising *anoblis*. In “The Shadow of the Sixteenth Century in Seventeenth Century Absolutist France,” Ellery Schalk suggests that, if historians of the nobility wish to talk in terms of fear or crisis they must acknowledge that any such fear likely stemmed not from competition, but from the chaos of the post-civil and religious war period. Using popular plays and literature, Schalk argues that the crisis, if there was one, was rooted in a desire to observe rather than break social and institutional boundaries – in other words, not to oppose the social and political uniformity that the growing centralized state may have foisted upon the elites of France.¹²

Another scholar to question the crisis theory directly is James B. Wood. His early studies of the nobility of the *élection* of Bayeux in lower Normandy set out specifically to challenge the theory that a decline of the traditional, military nobility occurred by looking at

¹¹*Ibid.*, 157-158.

¹²Ellery Schalk, “The Shadow of the Sixteenth Century in Seventeenth Century Absolutist France,” in *Society and Institutions in Early Modern France*, ed. Mack P. Holt, 153-159 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991).

the registrations of nobles for the feudal levies (*ban et arrière ban*) and fief *dénombrements* for this area.¹³ Using quantitative methods, Wood's analysis shows clearly that the established nobility in Bayeux was not under any economic, professional or political threat from the *anoblis* of the region.¹⁴ His later monograph, *The Nobility of the Élection of Bayeux, 1463-1666: Continuity through Change*, elaborates on these ideas. In it he shows that established families continued to have access to seigneuries and outlets of suitable professional activity in administrative, legal and military service and even intermarried with recently ennobled families.¹⁵

Other scholars have also sought to examine the validity of a robe-sword dichotomy by analysing the role played by the *noblesse* in France in financial, administrative and judicial institutions. For example, by tracing the social origins and economic and political resources of the *parlementaires* of Rouen from 1499 (the year in which Normandy's *parlement* was founded) until 1610 (the end of the reign of Henry IV), Jonathan Dewald challenges the

¹³James B. Wood, "Decline of the Nobility in Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Century France: Myth or Reality?" *Journal of Modern History* 48 (1976): 1-3. See also: James B. Wood, "La structure sociale de la noblesse dans le baillage de Caen et ses modifications (1463-1666)," *Chronique des Études normandes. Annales de Normandie*, 22 (1972): 331-335.

¹⁴Wood, "Decline of the Nobility in Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Century France: Myth or Reality?," 4-24.

¹⁵James B. Wood, *The Nobility of the Élection of Bayeux, 1463-1666: Continuity Through Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). Please see Chapter Two for a more detailed discussion of this monograph.

traditional historiography regarding the formation and outlook of the *noblesse de robe* and dispels ideas of conflict between these *parlementaires* and established nobles in Normandy by examining the details of their professional lives.¹⁶ His detailed analysis shows that Rouen's magistrates "grew out of aristocratic society, rather than in opposition to it."¹⁷ He notes that many of these *parlementaires* were from established families, thus positing a connection between access to office in the *parlement* and the prior establishment of noble status in Rouen and the surrounding area. In examining their recruitment and marriage patterns, their economic resources and kin networks, Dewald argues that the *parlementaires* of Rouen were not only an integral part of noble society in Normandy but that they themselves identified with their professional status and based their ideas of self and their social worth on their status as important members of the royal government.¹⁸ In this way, he argues, Rouen's *parlementaires* should be considered as one component of "a single reasonably coherent landed elite" rather than as one camp in a hostile social conflict. He also adds that, given these findings, the robe-sword dichotomy holds true for Rouen *only* if one

¹⁶Jonathan Dewald, *The Formation of a Provincial Nobility: The Magistrates of the Parlement of Rouen, 1499-1610* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 8-22.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁸Jonathan Dewald, "Magistry and Political Opposition at Rouen: A Social Context," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 2 (1974): 76-78.

considers the conflict to be one between social equals in different professions and not between what he characterizes as “castes.”¹⁹

Scholars have also studied the lives and careers of provincial and municipal *robins* to challenge the robe-sword dichotomy. For example, Donna Bohanan’s work on the nobilities of Provence and Brittany directly confronts the crisis interpretation, arguing that it is not applicable to elites in southern France.²⁰ Her work on the nobles of Aix-en-Provence in the seventeenth century depicts a group of established and newer nobles, all of whom so valued service to the state that the price of offices in this region rose by around 400% between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.²¹ For Bohanan, there cannot be a “sword” and “robe” conflict in Aix-en-Provence as the assimilation of old and new families did not allow for the creation of the polar professional and cultural opposites of “robe” and “sword” but,

¹⁹Dewald writes that, in the case of Rouen, the conflict between “robe” and “sword” must be seen as one between “. . . individuals and professional groups; they were not conflicts between alien castes or, more fundamentally between an elite that was urban and progressive on the one side and one that was rural and backward on the other.” Dewald, *The Formation of a Provincial Nobility: The Magistrates of the Parlement of Rouen, 1499-1610*, 309.

²⁰Donna Bohanan, “The Sword as the Robe in Seventeenth Century Provence and Brittany,” in *Society and Institutions in Early Modern France*, ed. Mack P. Holt, 51-62 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991); and Donna Bohanan, *Old and New Nobility in Aix-en-Provence, 1600-1695: Portrait of an Urban Elite* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1992).

²¹Bohanan, “The Sword as the Robe in Seventeenth Century Provence and Brittany,” 54; and Bohanan, *Old and New Nobility in Aix-en-Provence, 1600-1695: Portrait of an Urban Elite*, 32-44.

instead, nurtured a social and cultural environment in which a more collective, urban, humanistic and patrician attitude towards the nature and responsibilities of the elite could develop.

The work of Sharon Kettering has also shown how nobles accessed and wielded political power through personal and institutional means. The common theme in Kettering's extensive analyses has been the importance of patron-client ties to the internal dynamics of what she characterises as an incompletely centralized government in early modern France and the opportunities this provided nobles, even ones of lesser status, through building patron-client relationships.²² Indeed, in her study of Provençal power brokers, she shows clearly that, although noble power brokers could be characterized as "a new type of state builder" in the seventeenth century, the patron-client networks they created and maintained could act as a significant rival to royal power. Moreover, Kettering argues that through their basis in a hierarchical and reciprocal exchange relationship, patron-client networks reflected and built upon ideas held by members of the *noblesse* about loyalty, favour and honour and acted as an organizing principle within the elites of early modern France.²³

²²For example, see: Sharon Kettering, "Patronage and Kinship in Early Modern France," *French Historical Studies*, 16 (1989): 408-35; Sharon Kettering, "The Patronage Power of Early Modern French Noblewomen," *The Historical Journal*, 32 (1989); and Sharon Kettering, "Patronage in Early Modern France," *French Historical Studies*, 17 (1992): 839-862.

²³Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3-39, 42-65.

Another dominant theme in the recent historiography of the nobility in early modern France has been the suggestion that the *noblesse* was, in fact, evolving into what might be characterized as a modern elite, one that was keenly aware of its political and social worth and one which expressed its desire for political power and its developing sense of self and identity through cultural and political channels. The work of Arlette Jouanna, for example, shows how both the established nobility and the *anoblis* perceived the nature of their status and their function within French society. In *L'idée de race en France au XVIème siècle et au début de XVIIème siècle (1498-1614)*, she argues that by the end of the sixteenth century both established nobles and the recently ennobled viewed *noblesse* as a socially organic state. In this view – one found in many of the treatises of the mid to late-sixteenth centuries²⁴ – *noblesse* was part of the divinely ordained hierarchy and, consequently, the social distinctions among French society were natural. She also argues that, after the 1550s, concerns regarding the nature of *noblesse* manifested themselves in a focus on lineage and the moral characteristics necessary for the *noblesse* to survive as an elite. While her claim that these developments sprang from a desire among the elites to relate the changing nature of their society to the natural order rather than to defend their privileges and interests can be called into question, she acknowledges that the public discourse on *noblesse* changed as the composition of the nobility itself evolved. As the number of *anoblis* grew in the late sixteenth century, ideas of valour – which were often used to defend the superiority of

²⁴For a more detailed discussion of this view of *noblesse* and others put forth in treatises written and published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, please see Chapter One.

nobility based in military service – were used in support of a *noblesse* based on the juridical functions which many of France's *anoblis* carried out in the courts and administration. She posits that, by 1614, concerns over lineage, professional function and social status and privilege were such that they came to dominate the Estates General held in that year.²⁵

Jouanna's later work builds on these themes of the nature of the noble order and power, and of their perception of their role within French society. For example, *Le Devoir de révolte: La noblesse française et la gestation de l'État moderne, 1559-1661* explores the connection between noble perceptions and ideas about function and power, and the growth of a centralized monarchy in France. She suggests that the nobles of France (in particular, the *haute noblesse*) saw themselves as equals to the monarch and as important defenders of the body politic. She argues that the various noble uprisings that dominated the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were motivated by individual noble discontent rather than by any collective desire to thwart the actions of the crown. This theory is explored through a detailed analysis of contemporary literature, noble patronage and personal networks and the political activity of the *noblesse*. Ironically, she notes that, in the wake of the violence and upheaval of the civil and religious wars, members of France's *noblesse* found it in their interests to uphold rather than challenge the actions of the crown in order to defend their own privileges and status. In this way, the beliefs held by members of the *noblesse* produce a

²⁵Arlette Jouanna, *L'idée de race en France au XVIème siècle et au début de XVIIème siècle (1498-1614)*, 3 vols (Lille: Université Lille III, 1976).

group willing to take action – at times in opposition to the crown, at others in defense of it – to safeguard their perception of the natural social and political order.²⁶

Along with the works of Ellery Schalk and Jonathan Dewald, those of Kristen Neuschel and Mark Motley show how questions of culture, education and perception of social and personal worth are central to understanding not just what *noblesse* meant in practice but what those who claimed nobility believed it to mean. Often using the same early modern treatises cited by Davis Bitton and others who advocated a crisis interpretation, these scholars see in these treatises indications not of crisis on the scale envisioned by Bitton but, rather, indications of a reassessment and a move towards a definition of nobility that reflected the changing political and social reality of early modern France.

For Schalk, the crucible for the development of new ideas about the nature and role of nobility came with the unrest of the late sixteenth century. Prior to the Wars of Religion and the Fronde, he argues, military service was still seen by many to be the true vocation of the nobility and belief in the military function of *noblesse* underlay a complex system of social

²⁶ Arlette Jouanna, *Le Devoir de révolte, La noblesse française et la gestation de l'État moderne, 1559-1661* (Paris: Fayard, 1989). This book is divided into three principle sections; the first is particularly useful for its discussion of ideas of *noblesse* during this period. See also: Arlette Jouanna, "Réflexions sur les relations internobiliaires en France aux XVI et XVIIe siècles," *French Historical Studies*, 17 (1992): 872-881.

codes and honours.²⁷ However, Schalk's work suggests that the destruction and violence of the late sixteenth century forced a reconsideration of the military ethos and, as a result, what Schalk calls a noble *prise de conscience* occurred. Thus, to "understand what their role as a social group should be in the new conditions of the time," discussions about the nature of nobility turned to considerations of how to foster virtue, a respect for and interest in institutionalized education and humanistic pursuits as means of responding to the growing wave of anti-military and, consequently, anti-noble sentiment.²⁸ The result was the emergence of a more modern view of nobility founded on a culture rooted in formal education in new academies and on personal merit rather than on participation in war.²⁹ In short, Schalk maintains that by the seventeenth century there emerged not just a new

²⁷Ellery Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree: Ideas of Nobility in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 10-26; and Ellery Schalk, "The Court as 'Civilizer' of the Nobility: Noble Attitudes and the Court in France in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," in *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c. 1450-1654*, eds. Ronald G. Asch and Adolf M. Birke, 245-263 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

²⁸Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree: Ideas of Nobility in France in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 68-87; Schalk, "The Court as 'Civilizer' of the Nobility: Noble Attitudes and the Court in France in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," 258-260; and Ellery Schalk, "Appearance and Reality of Nobility in France during the Wars of Religion: An Example of How Collective Attitudes Can Change," *The Journal of Modern History* 48 (1976): 25-28.

²⁹Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree*, 115-211.

conception of nobility but a different type of nobility with a different perception of its relationship to the crown and to the other members of French society.³⁰

Dewald, in *Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture: France, 1570-1715*, also uses many literary sources to explore “the emergence of an essentially modern culture . . . within a deeply traditional social order” as they “often do show us what contemporaries believed to be possible and the plausible in everyday life.”³¹ He argues that these works, in combination with archival sources, can offer an understanding of social norms and expectations that an approach to noble culture that presumes the existence of a unified noble ideology cannot.³² He suggests that a number of factors – and the ways in which nobles responded to these factors – present a challenge to existing interpretations of noble culture. Dewald posits that, in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in France, competition for offices, commissions and even clientage relationships helped to transform the world and outlook of the nobility and the ways in which it expressed this outlook. For example, he suggests that the rhetoric of virtue and education that came to bear in debates over *noblesse* encompassed ideas about ambition, social mobility and the moral and

³⁰Schalk, “Appearance and Reality of Nobility in France during the Wars of Religion: An Example of How Collective Attitudes Can Change,” 20.

³¹Jonathan Dewald, *Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture: France, 1570-1715* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 1, 10.

³²He writes that this particular book should be seen as “an extended essay on how aristocratic men and women understood their bonds to the society around them at a decisive moment in the evolution of early modern society.” *Ibid*, 1.

intellectual soundness of those who undertook service in the magistracy or in the military. In addition, he notes that cultural distinctions began to mirror educational differences, with military nobles emphasizing a less institutionalized form of literary education for their sons than did those who pursued careers in the magistracy. Desire for power, wealth and status were increasingly expressed publicly, if only in a limited way, by forms of personal writing in which the author could extol his – or even her – virtue and merit. In this way, the alleged homogeneous culture of *noblesse* was challenged by the rise of the noble as a distinct individual who, through new cultural avenues, found ways in which to express his or her own idea of self.

For Neuschel and Motley, consideration of noble culture rests largely on the argument that the emphasis on virtue and the need for education that emerged as part of debates on *noblesse* were not foreign to ideas of a noble military ethos but were means by which either acceptance of a nobility based in military service could be salvaged or a new form of military ethos could be developed. Neuschel's work, which addresses the role honour and loyalty played in ideas of noble power and social hierarchy, considers in some detail the part played by a "warrior culture" in the development of professional and social ties among France's nobility. For Neuschel, the violence of the sixteenth century showed not just an independence from the authority of the crown but, she suggests, the acceptance among the nobility of violence and war making as "a legitimate and familiar activity . . . [that was] an

attribute of their status, a form of social behavior that delineated who they were.”³³ This sense of self, she adds, developed in the context of the growing centralized state and a wave of anti-noble sentiment which only increased in the aftermath of the violence of the late sixteenth century. By the early seventeenth century, she argues, the nobility of France sought ideological refuge in a belief in social distinctions based on virtue and rooted in ideas of honour. Belief in virtue and honour supported traditional noble institutions such as patron-client relationships (which play a significant role in her analysis) and also provided a means by which noble power and influence could be integrated into the royal administration. In this way, ideas of virtue and honour not only legitimated the right of nobles to use violence in defence of their own holdings or in defence of the state but also became a framework for their relationship to the state. Consequently, the socialization and education given to nobles in the seventeenth century – both at formal academies and in the households of social superiors – did not diminish the conduct of war but helped to create a context in which war and its conduct became civilized and acceptable.

Similar social and cultural themes are explored in Motley’s analysis of the education of the court nobility in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He argues that the growing emphasis on education and culture not only served to civilize the nobility by presenting a model of nobility that was likely more palatable to French society but it also

³³Kristen B. Neuschel, *Word of Honor: Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 65.

served to highlight the distinction between those at court and poorer, country nobles. In this way, the education received by nobles at court (in both formal and household settings) served to make a professional distinction between those who were more likely to undertake military careers (nobles at court) and those who were more likely to undertake administrative careers.³⁴

Thus, much of the more recent historiography on the nobility of France seeks to discredit or, at least, diminish a theory of noble society and culture predicated on the existence of a crisis between robe and sword. By examining similarities in the social and professional goals of the traditional nobility and those who were *anoblis* and by documenting a greater degree of social and marital interaction between them than was previously acknowledged, the historiography on *noblesse* has broadened the understanding of nobility in early modern France. Nevertheless, these studies also raise some interesting issues. For example, while these works serve to dispel the crisis theory, many do so by focussing on those individuals who were not, on the whole, involved in military service. And although Schalk, Neuschel, Motley and Dewald cannot and do not ignore the influence of military culture and service on the development of concepts of *noblesse*, their contributions address the uses of military activity and culture within a social context largely as a reactionary

³⁴Mark Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility, 1580-1715* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

element, in part defined in their opposition to the education and culture expressed by non-military nobles.

Unfortunately, studies which directly address the role war played in the acquisition, definition and maintenance of *noblesse* are scarce among the work of social historians of the nobility. One particularly telling example is Robert R. Harding's *Anatomy of a Power Elite: The Provincial Governors of Early Modern France* which focuses on removing the governors and their actions from a military context and placing them into the realm of socio-political history. Published in the late 1970s, Harding's study of the lives and careers of 115 governors³⁵ set out to challenge prevailing belief that the governors were all members of the *haute noblesse* who functioned primarily as military men and received their position as a direct result of their military prowess. This belief, he suggests, was more myth than reality. He posits that this belief stemmed not from the institutional reality of early modern France but from the prejudices of those jurists who questioned the governors' administrative abilities and political motives in the treatises they wrote and published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In Harding's work, the governors are not stubborn members of the *noblesse d'épée* who resent and attempt to undermine the *intendants* sent to help them but, rather, are noblemen possessed of a belief in their importance to the governance of their

³⁵Harding's study focuses on 142 "major" governorships held by 115 individuals in what he characterizes as the most important 11 frontier provinces from 1515 to 1650. He notes that six of these individuals were Dauphins or Queen Mothers (whom he removes from his study) and that many individuals held multiple governorships.

region and of the state as a whole. The *intendants* were, Harding points out, more often their *créatures* than their enemies and it is patronage and personal influence, not their military networks that give the governors their power and prestige. For Harding, the governorships provided a means by which the crown could co-opt noble resources for its own use and a means by which nobles could serve the king and the state. Of course, Harding does not ignore that governors could be called upon to provide a line of defence from foreign attack but he argues that this military function was merely one part of a much greater whole. In other words, their military function was part of their job, not the reason for it.³⁶ Thus, while Harding's work provides new insight into the social and institutional aspects of what was widely considered to be a purely military office, it is a work which seeks to cast these individuals as politicians and not military men. Consequently, it can do little to add to our understanding of how the governors themselves perceived the military aspect of their office, however limited or sporadic.

The same approach characterizes Jay M. Smith's *Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600-1789*. Indeed, while he includes some consideration of how ideas of "merit" and "talent" changed in terms of their application to military activity, service and social status, his focus is on the growth of an idea of "merit" or "talent" firmly rooted in non-military service. Central to Smith's argument is

³⁶Robert R. Harding, *Anatomy of a Power Elite: The Provincial Governors of Early Modern France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978).

the belief that it was precisely Louis XIII's prolonged absences on the battlefield that forced a shift in how both nobles and the state (under Louis XIV) defined "merit" and "talent."³⁷

Thus, while he argues that war – or at least the sovereign's prolonged personal involvement in it – resulted in a significant change in cultural attitudes, he does not explore the impact this development had on the value of military service and activity as a marker of *noblesse* at court or in a wider social context. Like most social historians of the nobility of early modern France, Harding and Smith acknowledge the part that war played in shaping *noblesse*, but give it little serious or sustained consideration.

Military Historians and Nobility in Early Modern France

Of course, it might be argued that social historians of nobility have not asked such questions as they believe them to be the purview of military historians. Thus, while much more could be done by social historians of early modern France to help understand the importance of war and military service to *noblesse*, it is also necessary to consider what military historiography has contributed to our understanding of the nature of nobility. Medievalists such as Philippe Contamine, Sidney Painter and Constance Britain Bouchard have shown clearly that the needs of organizing and conducting war affected the social and political structure of Christian and non-Christian societies alike through the ways in which

³⁷Jay M. Smith, *The Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600-1789* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

individuals who provided military service acquired, maintained and perceived their social superiority.³⁸ The impact of technological innovations on the conduct of battle has been the focus of a number of celebrated works by medieval and Renaissance scholars such as Lynn White Jr., Kelly de Vries, Andrew Ayton and J. L. Price and Bert S. Hall.³⁹

In the historiography of the early modern world, scholarship on war and society is, to a great extent, shaped by a school of thought that has come to be known as the “military revolution.” As a historiographical concept, the “military revolution” explores the interplay between developments in European politics, military technology, field tactics and recruitment that changed the face of war from the sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries.⁴⁰ Michael

³⁸For a discussion of the relationship of war and nobility in Europe prior to the sixteenth century, see, among others: Philippe Contamine, *La Guerre au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1980); Sidney Painter, *French Chivalry: Chivalric Ideas and Practices in Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1940) Sidney Painter, *Medieval Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1951); Constance Britain Bouchard, “The Origins of the French Nobility: A Reassessment,” *The American Historical Review*, 86 (1981): 501-532; and Constance Britain Bouchard, *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble: Chivalry and Society in Medieval France*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998. See also: William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force and Society since A. D. 1000* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

³⁹Those scholars writing on military technology and medieval society include: Lynn White Jr., *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962) Kelly De Vries, *Medieval Military Technology* (Lewiston, NY: Broadview Press, 1992); Andrew Ayton and J. L. Price, eds., *The Medieval Military Revolution: State, Society and Military Change in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1995); and Bert S. Hall, *Weapons & Warfare in Renaissance Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

⁴⁰The notion that the “Military Revolution” was exclusively an early modern

(continued...)

Roberts' work on the armies of King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden is often seen by members of this school as an interpretive standard for integrating the social context of war into the study of early modern history.⁴¹ In recent years, the work of Geoffrey Parker has also been influential in expanding the parameters of this debate. Published more than two decades after Roberts' initial work, Parker's *The Military Revolution: Military innovation and the rise of the West, 1500-1800* shows clearly how the development of new technology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the resultant new tactics influenced not only the way war was conducted throughout Europe, Asia and the New World, but also how these developments shaped the composition and structure of the societies that waged war.⁴²

This interest in the social impact of technological and tactical innovation has led some "military revolution" scholars to study the links between the changing nature of war and the

⁴⁰(...continued)

phenomenon has recently come under fire from medieval and Renaissance scholars. See: Ayton and Price, *The Medieval Military Revolution*, 1-22.

⁴¹Michael Roberts is often credited with creating this particular school of historical thought. See: Michael Roberts, "The Military Revolution, 1560-1660," in *Essays in Swedish History*, ed. Michael Roberts, 195-225 (Oxford: English Universities Press, 1976). See also: Michael Roberts, *Gustavus Adolphus and the rise of Sweden* (Oxford: English Universities Press, 1973; reprinted 1992). For an overview of the "Military Revolution" as a school of thought in historical scholarship, see: Clifford J. Rogers, "The Military Revolution in History and Historiography," in *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*, ed. Clifford J. Rogers, 1-12 (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995).

⁴²Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military innovation and the rise of the West, 1500-1800*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Yale University Press, 1996; reprint 1998).

growth of centralized monarchical power in France, England and Sweden in the early modern period. The work of John Rigby Hale, John A. Lynn, Michael Duffy, Colin Jones and Philippe Contamine shows that the advent of new battle tactics changed the state's military personnel requirements and that this development, in turn, led often to innovation in centralized administration. They also note that these developments often precipitated the shifts in power and social position that took place within the various noble communities throughout Western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴³ Although not all of these authors might consider themselves historians of the "military revolution," James B. Wood's study of the royal army during the Wars of Religion in France, David Parrott's detailed administrative and political history of army administration and finance under Cardinal Richelieu in the early seventeenth century and John A. Lynn's sweeping military history of the French army from 1610-1715 all provide greater insight into the mechanisms of finance, recruitment, personnel and administration in early modern France. Yet, while the historiography of the "military revolution" purports to place war in its greater societal

⁴³See: J. R. Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe, 1450-1620* (London: Fontana, 1985), Chapters 5, 6 and 9; John A. Lynn, "Clio in Arms: The Role of the Military Variable in Shaping History," *Journal of Military History* 55 (1991): 83-95; John A. Lynn, "The Growth of the French Army during the Seventeenth Century," *Armed Forces and Society* 6 (1980): 568-585; Michael Duffy, "The Military Revolution and the State 1500-1800," in *The Military Revolution and the State 1500-1800*, ed. Michael Duffy, Exeter Studies in History, No. 1, 1-9 (Exeter: Department of History and Archaeology, University of Exeter, 1980); and Colin Jones, "The Military Revolution and the Professionalisation of the French Army under the Ancien Régime," in *The Military Revolution and the State 1500-1800*, ed. Michael Duffy, Exeter Studies in History, No. 1, 29-48 (Exeter: Department of History and Archaeology, University of Exeter, 1980); and Contamine, *La Guerre au Moyen Âge*, esp. Chapters 8 to 10.

context, much of the work done so far focuses on politics and administration, not the cultural and social context within which those who participated in military activity shaped their ideas of society and self.

Recently, there has been an effort to address this lacuna and, in ever increasing numbers, historians of war and society are now turning their attention to how the physical conduct of war and the rise of military professionalization transformed not just the social order of Europe but also the way in which individual soldiers perceived their role in and value to society. Although Michael Roberts once questioned the extent to which non-military historians could be interested in the history of war,⁴⁴ interest in how war affected the formation of family lineages, the role of women in the development and maintenance of military societies and the process by which military participation changed perceptions of social worth and shaped cultural rituals continues to grow among historians. Perhaps the best example of this interest is the increasing number of works dealing with how individual and collective social memory in the latter half of the twentieth century has been affected by the

⁴⁴Roberts suggested that social historians would likely have little interest in the study of war as “the new fashions in tactics, or improvements in weapon-design, were not likely to prove of much significance for their purposes.” Roberts, “The Military Revolution, 1560-1660,” 195.

events of the Second World War, the Cold War and the first Gulf War.⁴⁵ This raises the question: could similar studies be carried out for France in the early modern period?

Thus, while more recent works on the social history of *noblesse* in early modern France are influenced both directly and indirectly by a desire to question the validity of a “robe”-“sword” dichotomy, many of these give emphasis to the development of a

⁴⁵Often the focus of these studies is modern, dealing specifically with the late nineteenth century, the period immediately following World War II, and/or the emergence of the new world order in the late twentieth century. The following lists provide an overview of the scholarship in these areas and are by no means comprehensive. On the relationship between war and the family, see: Clare A. Dale, ed., “The Military and the Family,” *Journal of Family History* 27 (2002); Derek J. Oddy, “Gone for a Soldier,” *Journal of Family History* 25 (2000): 39-62; M. Trustram, *Women of the Regiment: Marriage and the Victorian Army* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Catherine Clinton, *The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984); Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, eds. *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Marc Bloch’s *La société féodale*, Georges Duby’s *Les trois ordres ou l’imaginaire du féodalisme* and Lawrence Stone’s *Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (London: Clarendon Press, 1965) are, perhaps, the best known works on the relationship between war, social hierarchy and culture in pre-modern Europe. Discussions as to the roles played by women in the development and maintenance of a military environment include: Barton C. Hacker, “Women and Military Institutions in Early Modern Europe: A Reconnaissance,” *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 6 (1981): 643-671; Kristen B. Neuschel, “Noblewomen and War in Sixteenth-Century France,” in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, ed. Michael Wolfe, 124-144 (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997). For the influence of war on the history of memory and identity in modern Europe, see: Henry Rousso, *The Haunting Past: History, Memory and Justice in Contemporary France*, trans. Ralph Schoolcraft (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); David Lowenthal, “Fabricating Heritage,” *History and Memory: Studies in the Representation of the Past* 10 (1998): 7-21; Gérard Hoffmann, “Psychologie sociale et histoire militaire: un couple sans histoire?” *Histoire militaire et sciences humaines*, ed. Laurent Henninger (Brussels: Complexe, 1999), 17-24; and Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thornton, “Identifying War: Conflict and Self-Definition in Western Europe,” *War: Identities in Conflict, 1300-2000*, eds. B. Taithe and T. Thornton, 1-121 (Stroud: Sutton, 1998).

professional identity among those nobles involved in non-military (often juridical) service. Similar studies of professional identity and military service for particular regional elites have yet to be conducted. Moreover, even among military historians there has been little interest in assessing those assumptions that seem to underlie military history: namely, that military activity and service had a professional and social value both to the state and to those individuals who participated in it.

War and Identity for Nobles in Early Modern France

Given the fundamental influence war and its conduct had on popular notions of *noblesse* and social value in France since the early Middle Ages,⁴⁶ and the role France's nobility played in the actual conduct of war throughout the medieval and early modern periods, it is important to understand how the nobles of early modern France envisioned their military service. Did they consider it to be a life-long profession or did they see it simply as a necessary, but periodic activity, undertaken only to protect personal and family interests? Moreover, what opportunities for economic, social and familial advancement did participation in war provide the nobility of France? And were these opportunities equal to or greater or lesser than those provided by non-military service? Most important, did they consider military service to be an essential and defining aspect of their nobility?

⁴⁶See, for example: Constance B. Bouchard, "The Origins of the French Nobility: A Reassessment," *American Historical Review* 86 (June 1981): 501-532.

A more comprehensive understanding of the nature of *noblesse* in early modern France cannot be constructed without addressing these questions regarding military activity, military service and the influence they may have had on the professional and social sense of self developed by those who participated in war. This thesis contributes to the growing literature on war, social status and identity (in general) and to the existing literature on the history of nobility in early modern France (in particular) by focussing on the relationship between war and the public and private definition of *noblesse* in sixteenth and seventeenth-century France. Central to this thesis is the contention that both the study of *noblesse* and the social history of war can benefit from discovering the degree to which private and public concepts of *noblesse* may have been shaped by war. To undertake such a study for the whole of France is beyond the scope of this thesis; instead, the role war and military activity played in shaping the social and personal identity of the nobility of Champagne in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provides a useful case study.⁴⁷

For the purposes of this analysis, identity is broadly defined and takes into account ideas created or adopted for or by a society as a whole, or an identifiable sub-group within that society, concerning the purpose of the society or sub-group or the ways in which membership in the group can and should be attained. These ideas about membership can include beliefs about the character of its membership, the status suitable to that character and

⁴⁷Although the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* which is the primary source for this thesis was printed in 1673, the multi-generational nature of the evidence contained within it ranges in date from the late-fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

the responsibilities members owe to society as a whole and/or to other members of the sub-group for that status. They can also include ideas regarding the importance of the group or the sub-group to the on-going success and stability of the society as a whole. Also included in this definition is consideration of how individuals interpret and express these ideas through private and public actions (including professional activity), in declarations produced for public consumption (such as legal documents), and in the construction of professional and family networks and through the observation of cultural rituals which uphold commonly accepted social norms.

In addition, the definition of war is not limited simply to the personal and direct participation of individuals in battle. In addition to actual field service, also included in this definition is participation in military levies (even when such participation did not result in direct involvement in battle), the holding of unit commands and field commissions regardless of whether these commands and/or commissions were exercised, and the acquisition of offices in the military administration. Moreover, the effect of war on traditional non-combatant populations (women and young children) in both physical and cultural terms will be considered part of this definition.

B. The choice of early modern Champagne

The choice of Champagne as my focus is by no means random. This province's geographic location on France's northeastern border with lands of the Habsburg and the

Hohenzollern,⁴⁸ its water systems and its central plain provided direct tactical access to the heartland of France. This made the province particularly vulnerable to invasions from the east and north-east. As Mark Konnert has noted, “trade routes became invasion routes very quickly.”⁴⁹

Since the eleventh century, when the troops of Hugues, *comte* de Troyes served Louis VI, domestic and international conflict provided Champagne’s nobility with the opportunity to serve members of the *haute noblesse* and, by the sixteenth century, the state of France itself. Units from Champagne participated in many of the major conflicts of the medieval and early modern periods, including the Hundred Years War, the border conflicts of the reign of Louis XI, the Italian Wars, and the unrest that followed the rise to power of Charles I of Spain, later to be Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor.⁵⁰ Although the enemy that marched through Champagne during the early modern period was most likely foreign, during the Wars of Religion in the sixteenth century and in the Fronde in the century that followed, the enemy

⁴⁸Until late in the seventeenth century, these lands included the Spanish Netherlands, the Duchy of Lorraine, the Franche-Comté and the Duchy of Bar.

⁴⁹For a discussion of the influence of Champagne’s geography on its people, see: Mark Konnert, *Civic Agendas and Religious Passion: Châlons-sur-Marne during the French Wars of Religion, 1560-1594*, Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, vol. 35 (Kirkville, Mo: Sixteenth Century Journal, 1997), 25-39. See also: Laurence Bourquin, *Noblesse seconde et pouvoir en Champagne aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1994), 7-10.

⁵⁰For a general discussion of military activity in Champagne, see: Anne Blanchard, *Histoire Militaire de la France*, Tome 1 (Paris: Press universitaires de France, 1992), 72-73, 213-240.

could also be French.⁵¹ Moreover, the existence of important and thriving urban centres within Champagne compelled the crown and regional interests to establish some means of protecting the province's growing economy.⁵² Clearly the need for armed troops to protect and defend Champagne did not diminish in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

This need raises an interesting question: what drove Champagne's nobles to take up arms? Some scholars have suggested that the answer to this question lies within the study of the relationship between the conduct of war and the power politics of France's nobility. Of particular interest in this matter is Jean-Marie Constant's theory that historians have undervalued the importance of the *noblesse seconde*. The term *noblesse seconde* refers to those lesser members of France's elite who lacked the economic, social or political resources of the grand noble families, resources that took generations to accumulate. Constant noted that, although their lack of resources limited the ability of the *noblesse seconde* to instigate political and social change, they still played a crucial role in the development of France. Indeed, as it was this group which provided the majority of soldiers and supporters for the ambitious members of the *haute noblesse* and also for the crown, by lending or withdrawing

⁵¹The need for military units in Champagne did not diminish during the French Wars of Religion when "whoever controlled the open plains of Champagne was in a position to bring in reinforcements from Germany, and to deny the same to adversaries." Konnert, *Civic Agendas and Religious Passion*, 16.

⁵²See Penny Roberts, *A City in Conflict: Troyes during the French Wars of Religion*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 13-16, 24-27.

their support in the regional and national struggles for power that came with the rise of centralized monarchy, Constant argues this group had true political and military power.⁵³

The influence of this theory is evident in Laurence Bourquin's book, *Noblesse seconde et pouvoir en Champagne aux XVI^e et XVII^e*. In it, Bourquin demonstrates that the majority of Champagne's noble houses were *petite noblesse* and were tied socially, politically and militarily to the *grande noblesse*. These ties allowed them to play a vital role in the success or failure of the plans of provincial notables and of the monarchy itself in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵⁴ In the course of analysing what Bourquin calls the ability of Champagne's *noblesse seconde* to adapt socially and ideologically as government centralisation encroached on their privileges, he demonstrates that the crown came to play a greater part in defining what constituted *noblesse* in Champagne by reconfiguring its role in the patronage systems and political alliances that existed within this province.

To understand this complex process in its entirety, Bourquin stresses the need to undertake a more specific study of the relationship between *noblesse* and military service. However, Bourquin himself does not attempt to evaluate the relationship between war,

⁵³Jean-Marie Constant "Un groupe nobilaire stratégique dans la France de la première moitié du XVII^e siècle: la noblesse seconde," in *L'État et les aristocraties (France, Angleterre, Écosse), XII^e et XVII^e siècle: Actes de la table ronde organisée par le Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*, ed. Philippe Contamine, 279-304 (Paris: Presses de l'École normale supérieure, 1989).

⁵⁴Bourquin, *Noblesse seconde et pouvoir en Champagne*, 9.

nobility in Champagne and what he calls “les thèses classiques d’histoire nobiliaire: les processus de l’anoblissement, la densité spaciaie [sic] de la noblesse, son évolution démographique, son cadre de vie.”⁵⁵ For Champagne, a study of how war shaped the process of defining, acquiring and maintaining *noblesse* would begin to address the issues raised by Bourquin. This thesis explores one avenue of research through which some initial insight into the relationship between noble identity and war may be gained, through its analysis of the crown’s 1666-1672 examination of claims to noble status in Champagne, the results of which were made public in printed form in 1673.

C. The Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne (1673)

One way to contend with the difficult issue of examining the connections between *noblesse*, war and the construction of noble identity is to consider the varied and largely multi-generational material contained in the *recherches de la noblesse*. The *recherches de la noblesse* were state-ordered investigations into the usurpation of noble status and were conducted throughout France at frequent intervals in the late medieval and early modern periods. They were initially conceived as a means to generate much needed revenue through the fines imposed on *faux nobles* and through administrative fees levied on those whose nobility was upheld. Their impact on the maintenance and regulation of the social order was equally great, however, as while the *recherches de la noblesse* allowed the crown some

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 10.

control over how *noblesse* was defined in France, they also allowed those claiming noble status a great degree of power in crafting their own public image and identity.

The contents of the *recherches de la noblesse* reflect the desire of those who claimed noble status to verify, without doubt, the legitimacy of their claim. Indeed, by focussing on the collection of highly personalized genealogical and documentary evidence, the *recherches de la noblesse* empowered those claiming noble status. On the one hand, the process allowed them to craft an identity which would justify their claims to the social and economic privileges of *noblesse*; on the other hand, the documents claimants provided were more than merely pieces of paper, they documented the cultural and social beliefs by which the nobility of Champagne defined and through which they communicated their perceptions of their own nobility. Thus, as they comprise evidence selected and submitted by those claiming noble status and then publicly adjudicated by royal commissioners, the *recherches de la noblesse* are texts which provide insight into how those who were noble wished to be perceived by the state, by their peers and by the world at large.

In French historiography, those scholars who have been influenced by the *Annales* paradigm have long focussed their efforts on interpreting documents which can reflect both personal and public attitudes and that provide a means of reconciling the political events of

the sixteenth and seventeenth century with the social reality of the period.⁵⁶ Jean-Marie Constant, for example, has pointed to the value of personal texts produced for public consumption for revealing both personal and corporate rationales.⁵⁷ This thesis draws on this interpretive tradition and argues that historians must attempt to utilise surviving records in new ways to answer new questions about the nature of French society – and, in particular, its nobility.

This thesis uses as its primary source the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* which was compiled between 1666 and 1672 by Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin (1624-1687),⁵⁸ the provincial *intendant* for Champagne. At the end of the long process of inquiry, the genealogical and documentary evidence for every successful claimant and/or family within a particular area would be made public through publication; Caumartin's findings were published by the King's Printer (Jacques Seneuze) in a folio text version in 1673.⁵⁹

⁵⁶For a discussion of the *Annales* method of historical interpretation, see: Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929-89* (London: Polity Press, 1990).

⁵⁷Constant, "Une groupe socio-politique strategique dans la France de la première moitié du XVIIe siècle: la noblesse seconde," 279-80.

⁵⁸All further references to Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin will be given as simply Caumartin.

⁵⁹As with many printed texts of the seventeenth century, there is little uniformity in the spelling and grammar used in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673). While
(continued...)

It is important to note at this point that while Charles-René d'Hozier (1640-1732) has, in some instances, been credited with the compilation of this *recherche de la noblesse*, it was Caumartin, as provincial *intendant*, who compiled the 1673 volume.⁶⁰ While Hozier is credited with compiling 34 of the 507 family genealogies included in the published *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), this number represents barely 7% of all genealogies recorded within the work.⁶¹ While Hozier's importance in constructing the

⁵⁹(...continued)

these anomalies might be perceived as mistakes and/or omissions by the modern reader, in seventeenth century France they were accepted and understood by readers. They are of little interest to the historian and do not detract from the historical value of this source. Consequently, when using direct quotes from the family entries of the additional material contained in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) these anomalies are reproduced *verbatim*, when they occur in the text cited. Such anomalies are identified in the text by the use of "[sic]". In all other instances, modern French spelling is used.

⁶⁰Between 1666 and 1672, when the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) was being compiled, Hozier was *généalogiste de la maison du Roi*. Upon the creation of the *Armorial Général* by Louis XIV in 1696, he became *Garde de l'armorial général de France*. Between 1696 and 1700, Hozier administered Louis XIV's plan to regulate the nobility of France – and collect much needed tax revenue – through the verification and official registration of noble coats of arms. As in the process of the *recherches de la noblesse*, disputes over the accuracy and validity of claims resulted in the generation of a great deal of documentation which provide insight into the nature of nobility in France in the seventeenth century. In 1717, the nearly 70 folios of information that Hozier (and his father before him) had generated were deposited in the King's library; in 1720, this information formed the basis of the *Cabinet de Titres* (Office of Noble Titles) a branch of the royal administration dedicated to regulation of the second estate. The records of the *Cabinet de Titres* are now one of the most important collections on deposit at the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*.

⁶¹His authorship of these particular genealogies, a list of which can be found in Appendix I, is clearly noted at the top of the printed genealogy. Each of the 34 bears the declaration: "Généalogie fait de Charles d'Hozier, Généalogiste de la Maison du Roy." In a few of these instances, "d'Hozier" is misspelled as "d'Ozier." The information contained in these genealogies is analysed in more depth in Chapter Four.

parameters of nobility in the very late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century is well established, this thesis maintains that the manner in which the genealogies created by Hozier were differentiated in the public text suggest that his involvement in the creation of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* published in 1673 was limited. It was Caumartin, in his role as provincial *intendant*, who carried out the adjudication of the material submitted according to the instructions outlined in the edict of 1666 and it is to his *notes secrètes* that this thesis will turn for additional insight into the social and cultural context of this particular *recherche de la noblesse*.⁶²

The data presented in this analysis is drawn from the extensive genealogical and documentary evidence contained in two identical copies of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), one on deposit at the British Library in London and one at the Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto.⁶³ Both the University of Toronto and British Library texts used for this thesis contained genealogies and documentary entries for a total of 507 families whose claims to noble status were upheld. An introduction to a late nineteenth-

⁶²These issues are discussed in more depth in Chapter Three.

⁶³A third copy, consulted in the initial planning stages of this thesis but not used in the final analysis, is on deposit at McGill University's Rare Book Room. This third copy differed from the other two only in that it has been separated into two smaller volumes as the result of later rebinding; a decision not to use the McGill copy was made as the second volume was no longer in the possession of the university. Additional copies of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* printed in 1673 exist in various archives throughout France, including the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*. These various copies exist in both single and double volume formats.

century printed edition of Caumartin's *notes secrètes* states that one edition of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* printed by Jacques Seneuze at an unspecified date contains 542 families and that ten others were added at some later date.⁶⁴ Another unidentified copy of the text (used by Laurent Bourquin for his article "La Noblesse de Champagne dans son espace régional vers le milieu du XVIIe siècle") appears to contain references to only 425 families.⁶⁵ The best means to verify that the number of noble families included in the copies of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* consulted for this thesis is, in fact, historically correct is to consult the notes made by Caumartin while conducting his adjudication. These *notes secrètes* were not published at the same time as the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* in the late seventeenth century; however, a facsimile edition based on manuscript sources was published in the nineteenth century. This edition was reprinted in the 1980s. These *notes secrètes*, which are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three, contain lists of

⁶⁴The *notes secrètes* compiled by Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin were his own notes on the process of adjudication and are the focus of discussion in Chapter Three. See: Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin, *Notes de Monseieur de Caumartin sur la recherche des nobles de la province de Champagne en 1673 d'après le manuscrit inédit de la Bibliothèque Nationale in Procez [sic] verbal de la recherche de la noblesse de Champagne suivi des notes secrètes sur ladite recherche*, ed. Pierre-Marie Dioudonnat, 21-129 (Paris: Sedopolis, 1982).

⁶⁵Unfortunately, Bourquin provides no specific reference as to the location and nature of the copy he uses for this article, save for the number of families within it. See: Laurent Bourquin, "La Noblesse de Champagne dans son espace régional vers le milieu du XVIIe siècle," in *Sociétés et Idéologies des Temps Modernes: hommage à Arlette Jouanna*, recueillis par J. Fouilleron, G. Le Thiec, H. Michel, Centre d'histoire moderne et contemporaine de l'Europe méditerranéenne et de ses périphéries, 59-77 (Montpellier : Université de Montpellier III, Centre d'histoire moderne et contemporaine de l'Europe méditerranéenne et de ses périphéries, 1996).

those claims to nobility which were accepted, rejected and deferred pending further evidence and/or review. An analysis of the numbers of claimants included in these lists shows that 552 families initially had their claims to nobility upheld but that, by 1672, 45 of these claims had been rejected or further deferred, leaving a total of 507 families whose claimed had been verified and settled and, thus, could be included in the edition of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* published in 1673.⁶⁶

Throughout the process of analysing the evidentiary content of these two copies of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), constant comparison was made in order to discern any differences in either the nature of the material presented in the various family submissions or any differences in the content of the evidence recorded. In terms of the genealogical and documentary evidence, the University of Toronto and British Library copies differ in only one small point: the latter contains small hand-drawn facsimiles of the coats of arms belonging to each family recorded in the volume. These facsimiles were added to the printed text and are affixed to the printed page, often at the top left hand side, near the family name. The copy on deposit at the Fisher Rare Book Library at the University Toronto does not contain visual renderings of the coats of arms but does contain prose descriptions of them for many of the families. These descriptions are given in the heading of the family entry, along with information as to the number of seigneuries held by a family (if any).

⁶⁶For more detail regarding the numbers of families contained in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), see Chapter Three.

The copies of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* examined for this thesis contained narrative, descriptive prose-style genealogies for each family whose claim to *noblesse* was upheld; these genealogies ranged in length from one third of the printed page to two full printed pages. The genealogies contain not just the names of individuals and, for most, their dates of birth and/or death, but also often contained information regarding the choice of marriage partner, professional activity and military participation. In addition to the genealogies, summaries of the individual pieces of documentary evidence submitted by an individual or family were provided. These summaries, which consisted of one or two sentences outlining the nature and type of document (contracts of sale or purchase, marriage contracts, provisions of office, military commissions, etc.), also contained details as to the document's date of issue and whether it was an original or a copy. A brief one or two sentence commentary on the contents of the document was also supplied.

Once published, a *recherche de la noblesse* functioned as the state's public acknowledgement of the status of those persons listed within it. However, this public catalogue of the nobility of Champagne was central not just to the state's desire to regulate *noblesse* but was also key to the process by which those who were noble made public their collective and individual sense of identity. It is on the ideological and social importance of this public display to the creation and maintenance of the ideal of *noblesse* in Champagne that my analysis focuses.

D. Thesis overview

Chapters One to Four provide a methodological basis for this thesis and introduce the evidentiary basis. Chapter One addresses the question of how *noblesse* was defined in early modern France; it also provides an overview of how selected writers in early modern France perceived the nature of *noblesse*, its privileges and responsibilities. It also introduces the argument that the interpretive approaches used by historians of memory and identity may be of use in understanding the relationship between war and concepts of *noblesse* in early modern Champagne. Chapter Two introduces the reader to the main historical source for this thesis, the *recherches de la noblesse*. It begins by outlining briefly the process by which *recherches de la noblesse* were conducted and compiled. This is followed by an overview of how data provided by various *recherches de la noblesse* has been interpreted by modern historians, with a particular emphasis given to how these studies highlight a connection between the contents of the *recherches de la noblesse* and the ability to assess the means through which individual and collective identity may have been formed by French nobles. Chapter Two concludes by addressing the interpretive challenges raised by the origins and nature of the evidence contained in the *recherches de la noblesse*.

Chapters Three and Four address the nature and contents of the evidence found in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673). Through a general assessment of Caumartin's *notes secrètes*, Chapter Three explores how Champagne's *intendant* carried out his adjudications of claims to *noblesse*. These *notes secrètes* provide insight not just into the

process by which claims were established but, as they can explain why some claims were questioned or rejected, the *notes secrètes* also provide insight into how military activity and military related factors may have shaped or influenced Caumartin's decisions to accept or to reject a claim. Chapter Four provides a general quantitative and qualitative analysis of the evidence provided by all 507 families that is reproduced in the printed text of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673).

An in depth analysis of the influence of war on the patterns of professional activity and on the demography of Champagne's nobility is the focus of the remaining chapters of this thesis, Chapters Five to Seven. To illustrate the trends discussed in these chapters, specific family and individual examples will be used. Chapters Five and Six consider the types of professional involvement and service undertaken by Champagne's nobility. Chapter Five addresses patterns of service in non-military professions such as offices in the magistracy, in finance and in the household administration of the crown and the members of the *haute noblesse*. Chapter Six focusses on service in war and war-related activities such as the *ban et arrière ban*, the traditional feudal levies which continued to be called into service well into the seventeenth century. The motivations behind choice of profession, such as the potential of the type of service for social and economic rewards and the role of war in shaping the structure of noble society in Champagne are addressed in these chapters. Chapter Seven is an analysis of the demographic impact war had on Champagne's noble population throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It suggests that while war could dramatically affect

the potential of a family or lineage to reproduce itself, it also offered opportunities for social advancement. This chapter also considers the influence war had on the choice of suitable marriage partner, as marriage and perpetuation of a lineage were key not just to its biological continuity but also to its social status and advancement.

Chapter Eight is the conclusion to this thesis. It draws together the evidence that, in Champagne, war played an important role in constructing popular and personal definitions of nobility. Moreover, it argues that involvement in military activity was valued both by the nobles of Champagne as well as by the ultimate arbiter of *noblesse*, the state. Chapter Eight posits that although the state may have been able to influence and perhaps even control the acquisition and maintenance of *noblesse* through the conduct of the *recherches de la noblesse*, the process also provided a means by which those who identified themselves as noble could publicly declare and document that sense of self within the generally accepted social and political parameters. And, for the nobility of Champagne, that idea of nobility and sense of self was predicated on an important and traditional aspect of *noblesse*: war.

CHAPTER 1
Noblesse in early modern France

For those who could claim noble status in sixteenth and seventeenth-century France, much depended on their ability to be seen and accepted as noble by their peers and to be acknowledged as such by the state. Professional opportunities, their avenues for political influence and power, and their potential for economic gain all rested upon the ability to be readily identified as “noble.”

While it was often argued that *noblesse* acquired through birth was the truest form of nobility, the possibilities of acquiring noble status in recognition of meritorious service (such as in diplomatic or military posts), as a reward for personal service to the ruler or member of the *haute noblesse* or through the exercise of an ennobling office in the state bureaucracy were increasing at an exponential rate throughout the late medieval and early modern periods. Of course, the fact that *noblesse* could be acquired through non-biological means was not a new phenomenon; ennoblement through *lettres d’anoblissement* given for such services had long been established in France and elsewhere in Europe as a means to augment declining noble populations. Thus, by the seventeenth century, many of France’s noble families owed their status not to birth but to some act of ennoblement in decades or even centuries past. Only a minority of France’s nobles could legitimately trace their lineage back to the period before the Hundred Years War.

What appears to have been at issue by the seventeenth century in France, however, was not the legitimacy of the act or process of ennoblement but rather the rapidly increasing number of avenues through which such ennoblement could be gained. For example, while ennobling offices in the royal bureaucracy could be given to an individual as a gift from the crown, they were as likely to be purchased by lesser nobles as a means of acquiring both a professional and a greater social standing. Rich and socially ambitious commoners, on the other hand, used the purchase of such offices to acquire noble status. Both of these trends were encouraged as successive French monarchs turned to the rather lucrative sale of juridical, financial and other administrative offices for much needed revenue during a time of government expansion and increasing military commitments.¹ From this evolved the *noblesse de robe*, a group which, it has been argued, was derided by some members of the

¹During the early modern period, four types of offices could confer noble status. The office of *commensal du roi* (such as Secretary of State) was, perhaps, the most desired of these offices. This type of office allowed the individual to share the king's life and his table; the proximity and interaction with the monarch, as much as the importance of the office's function itself, conferred the noble status. Of course, it must be remembered that the majority of individuals who held such offices would have been noble at the time they acquired them. The other types of offices that would confer noble status on the holder included judicial office, including offices in the various provincial *parlements*. Again, some holders of these offices, such as members of the *Grand Conseil* and *Maîtres des Requêtes de l'Hôtel du Roi* (an office which conferred first degree nobility) would likely have been noble at the time of their appointment. Offices in the crown's financial bureaucracy, including positions in the *Chambres des Comptes*; *Cours des Aides*; *Cours des Monnaies* and the financial departments of the *généralités*, also conferred nobility, but only after two generations. Holding office in royal finance (as a *receveur des tailles*, *trésorier* etc.) were the favoured means by which many members of France's urban elite made their way into the nobility. Members of the *noblesse de cloche* – the municipal magistrates – were, in the fifteenth century, automatically ennobled. This type of *noblesse*, however, was often "reinforced" by its holders through the acquisition of *lettres patentes de noblesse*.

hereditary nobility and its apologists, but as integral to the growing French state as the hereditary nobility, a group often characterized as a “nobility of the sword” (the *noblesse d’épée*).

To complicate matters further, in addition to legitimate members of the *noblesse* there were always *faux nobles*, individuals whose status was based on their ability to fashion themselves as members of the elite and pass among them without question. The existence of *faux nobles* was common enough in noble society to spur the crown to action and to begin investigations into the usurpation of noble status: namely, the *recherches de la noblesse*. Of course, the focus of the *recherches de la noblesse* was primarily fiscal and through them the state sought to purge the *faux nobles* in the name of additional tax revenues. However, many bureaucrats and nobles in early modern France perceived the process as a means to outline clearly what constituted nobility in France and, consequently, the *recherches de la noblesse* were seen as an important means to reinforce the existing social order. Still, it must be noted that the persistent and continued existence of *faux nobles* in early modern France and the state’s development of a specific bureaucratic process to combat their continued existence are testimony to the importance French society placed on the *public perception* of nobility and on the need to ensure that a public understanding of what constituted noble character and identity could be developed.

Thus, the advent of new political and social forces created an intellectual and cultural environment in which it became increasingly important for individuals to understand just what *noblesse* meant, and for them to be able to communicate this understanding to others in their society. During the reign of Louis XIII, for example, it was not uncommon for members of the *haute noblesse* who were concerned with their own social situation to commission individuals of lesser noble rank to compile treatises which outlined and assessed the merits of the various means by which *noblesse* was acquired and maintained. Not surprisingly, many of these works placed an emphasis on the natural superiority of nobility acquired through birthright; in so doing, they would appear to be defending traditional ideas about the nature and definition of *noblesse*. When read closely, however, it becomes clear that they do not maintain that nobility acquired through birthright was the *exclusive* means by which *noblesse* could be acquired and many extol the virtues of nobility attained through professional and legal avenues.² Concern over the nature of nobility continued to grow in the late seventeenth century and, during the rule of Louis XIV, even the *parlement* of Paris was involved in adjudicating cases that focussed on the possible usurpation of noble status. Cases of this type increased in number over the course of the seventeenth century to the point that, in 1664, the court made a formal declaration as to the uniform process it would adopt in hearing such cases in the future.³

²Roger Mettam, "Definitions of nobility in seventeenth-century France," in *Language, History and Class*, ed. Penelope J. Corfield, 79-80 (London: Basil Blackwell, 1991).

³Jean du Fresne, "Si le fils qui a pris qualité d'Écuyer, en vertu d'Arrêt obtenu par son
(continued...)

Along with the cases heard by the *parlement* of Paris, the treatises on *noblesse* published in early modern France show clearly how this concern over the nature of *noblesse* – and its social and economic implications – was not something that concerned intellectuals alone. Nobles themselves found the topic compelling. Indeed, in a period of social and political upheaval, treatises written by individuals such as Charles du Moulin, Charles Loyseau and Florentin de Thierriat (among others) were sorely needed. By enumerating and explaining the great many possible factors which could contribute to the acquisition and maintenance of *noblesse*, these treatises provided members of the second estate with reliable means by which to navigate their changing social environment.

Through a general analysis of selected sixteenth and seventeenth-century treatises on nobility, this chapter explores how *noblesse* was defined in order to provide an ideological context for this thesis. As this chapter demonstrates, while birth and character continued to figure prominently in determining who was and was not noble, the emphasis on participation in a socially acceptable type of service (to the state and/or one's social superiors) as a means

³(...continued)

pere [sic], doit payer l'amende prononcée contre les Usurpateurs de Noblesse, au cas qu'il ne fût pas effectivement Noble," (23 January 1664, Première Chambre de la Cour des Aydes), Book 3, Chapter 6, *Journal des principales audiences du parlement [de Paris], avec les arrêts qui y ont été rendus, et plusieurs questions et réglemens placés selon l'ordre des temps*, Tome II, *Depuis l'année 1660 jusqu'en 1674* (Paris: Par la Compagnie des Libraires Associés, 1757), 201-204; and *Ibid.*, "Si un mineur qui a usurpé la qualité d'Écuyer, que prenoit son pere [sic], est sujet à l'amend [sic] de deux mil livres, porté [sic] par la Déclaration du Roy, contre les Usurpateurs de Noblesse," Book 3, Chapter 19 (14 March 1664), 244.

to maintain *noblesse* was also emphasized. This emphasis on service and activity placed great importance on the public perception of nobility and, as a consequence, helped to foster an ideological and cultural environment in which participation in war could become an important and readily identifiable public marker of nobility. This chapter concludes that, far from being shunned in favour of non-military service and activity, the conduct of war – as a traditional and widely accepted profession in which a nobleman could display his honour, virtue and general noble character publicly – played a continuing role in delineating the public parameters of *noblesse* well into the seventeenth century.

A. Defining *noblesse* in early modern France

While many of the published treatises espoused many traditional ideas about the nature and duties of nobility, they often also attempted (both directly and indirectly) to reconcile the existence of the *noblesse de robe* and the *noblesse d'épée*. By attempting what amounted to the ideological integration of a new type of nobility into the existing complex social order, the writers of these treatises focussed on those ideas and traditions that could be adapted to the new social reality of *noblesse*. This is not to suggest that the belief in the propriety of being able to separate noble from non-noble was rejected altogether. For example, in 1615 Charles du Moulin wrote that, in the *bailliages* of Meaux and Chaulmont “[les] aucuns sont nobles, les autres non nobles.”⁴ Although expressed simplistically by Du

⁴Charles du Moulin, “De l'état & condition des personnes,” *Les Coustumes Generales et particuliers [sic] de France et des Gaulles, corrigées et annotées de plusieurs Decisions*,
(continued...)

Moulin, the belief that delineating between nobles and non-nobles was a straightforward matter and rested on the individual's being born into a noble family was shared by a number of French writers and cultural observers of the period, regardless of their opinions as to the social validity of ennoblement in general.⁵ But with the rise of the *noblesse de robe*, the means by which nobility was acquired and maintained had to be reinterpreted using broader, yet still socially acceptable, criteria.

Thus, it is not surprising that many of these writers also devoted much of their attention to the nature and proper forms of service that should be undertaken by those who were noble (regardless of how that nobility was acquired). A preoccupation with the proper professional and political forums in which a noble should exercise his – even her – talents was central to traditional theories about the nature of *noblesse*. A nobleman's character made him fit for those types of activities and/or professions where his assumed superior morality and understanding of social propriety, as well as his physical grace and natural ability to command others, could be best displayed. For noblemen, this included offices and positions within the King's household, commissions in the King's army and, as the early modern

⁴(...continued)

Arrests & autres choses notables (Paris: Chez la veuve Marc Ory, 1615), 412.

⁵*Ibid.*, 412-413. See also: Guy Coquille, "Des pairs de France, leur origine, fonction, rang et dignite," *Les Oeuvre [sic] de Maistre Guy Coquille, Sieur de Romenay, contenant plusieurs traitez touchant les Libertes de l'eglise Gallicane, l'Histoire de France & le Droit François* (Bordeaux: Chez Claude Labotierre, 1703), 450-452. Guy Coquille lived from 1523 to 1627.

period progressed, offices in financial or judicial offices. Simply put, in an era where the numbers of non-biological avenues for acquiring *noblesse* were increasing almost exponentially, the need to address the role of professional activity and public duty in forming a sense of noble identity became paramount at both the corporate and personal levels. Consequently, *noblesse* in early modern France drew on a number of different factors including: traditional avenues of acquisition (such as birth and/or reward for service); acknowledgement of the changing political environment (the venality of offices); and an emphasis on the maintenance of *noblesse* through acceptable channels of service and/or public activity as a means of promoting the acceptance and integration of the ennobled into the existing noble community.

Although many of the authors of who wrote on the nature of nobility agreed that the characteristics of virtue and honour were essential in one who claimed noble status, Roger Mettam has noted that “there was much disagreement on the precise qualities implied by these terms.”⁶ On some points, however, there was a good deal of consensus. For example, it was universally agreed that *noblesse* was intricately hierarchical in nature. This intricate hierarchy was seen as a reflection of the natural order of being, as ordained by God.⁷ Just as

⁶Mettam, “Definitions of nobility in seventeenth-century France,” 99.

⁷See, for example: Jean Domat, “Chapitre IV: De la second [sic] espece d’engagemens,” *Le Loix Civiles dans leur ordre naturel: Le Droit Public, et legus delectus* (Paris: Chez Delain, 1777), v. See also: Coquille, *Les Oeuvre [sic] de Maistre Guy Coquille* . . . , 281.

the Heavens had an organizational form in which power flowed from the top down, the structure of French society as a whole, and not just its nobility, reflected the natural flow of social and political power from the King downwards, through his elite, to his common subjects. Charles Loyseau's contention that there could not be an equality of condition among the members of a society and that it was necessary for some to hold positions of power while others simply obeyed, was characteristic of those expressed by other writers. Loyseau also noted that among those who possessed and wielded power, there were a number of orders, ranks and degrees of distinction which reflected the nature of power in France: "les Souverains Seigneurs commandent à tous ceux de leur État, adressans leur commandement aux grands, les grands aux mediocres, les mediocres aux petits, & petits au peuple." Clearly, even among those who obeyed, there was a hierarchy of degree and rank: "il y ait des Superieurs, qui rendent raison de tout leur Ordre aux Magistrats, & les Magistrats aux Seigneurs Souverains."⁸ Thus, the privileges and preferments given to those of noble status were merely reflections of the natural and divinely ordained social division of human kind.

⁸Charles Loyseau, *Traité des Ordres et Simples Dignitez* in *Les Oeuvres de Maistre Charles Loyseau, Avocat en Parlement. Contenant les Cinq Livres du Droit des Offices, les Traitez des Seigneuries, des Ordres & simples Dignitez, du Déguerpiement & Délaissement par Hypotheque, de la garantie des Rentes, & des Abus de Justices de Village* (Lyon: par la Compagnie des Libraires, 1701), 2, paragraph 9. See also: Florentin de Thierriat, "Premiere Partie: De la Noblesse de Race," *Trois Traictez [sic] sçavoir, De la Noblesse de Race, De la Noblesse Civile, Des Immunités des Ignobles* (Paris: Lucas Bruneau, 1606), 1-2.

What was also held to be true was that these privileges and preferments fell into three broad categories: honorific titles and privileges, privileges of service and fiscal privileges. The main fiscal privilege awarded to those of noble status – exemption from the *taille* in certain regions of France – was by no means considered to be the least important, as the existence of the *recherches de la noblesse* attest. Indeed, the *Journal des principales audiences du parlement [de Paris]* contains numerous cases that deal with concerns over what type of offices, professional and social activities would or would not result in an individual being exempted from the *taille*.⁹ The manner in which the privileges of honour and service were to be manifested in the public realm also held great interest. While service to the state was expected of any nobleman (and, to a lesser extent, of any noblewoman),¹⁰

⁹See, for example: Jean du Fresne, “Si un Gentilhomme de la Chambre quoi que roturier, jouït de l’exemption des Tailles,” (dated 1632), Book 2, Chapter 103, *Journal des principales audiences du parlement [de Paris], avec les arrêts qui y ont été rendus, et plusieurs questions et réglemens placés selon l’ordre des temps*, Tome 1, *Depuis l’année 1622 [1622-1660]* (Paris: Par la Compagnie des Libraires Associés, 1757), 130-131; and Du Fresne, “Si les charges Chez le Roy, la Reine & les Princes, qui n’ont point d’exercise actuel, portent privilege pour l’exemption des Tailles,” (1661), Book 1, Chapter 3, *Journal des principales audiences du parlement [de Paris]* . . . , Tome 2 (1661-1674), 3.

¹⁰There were a number of acceptable ways in which a noblewoman could serve the crown, including as a member of the Queen’s Household or by participating in raising royal offspring. More often, however, the concern in these treatises is with the noblewoman’s “responsibility” not to marry a *roturier* (commoner). See, for example: Jean du Fresne, “Si une femme Noble d’extraction, qui avoit épousé un Roturier, rentre de plein droit dans sa Noblesse au moment qu’elle devient veuve, ou si elle a besoît [sic] de Lettres de réhabilitation,” (17 January 1676), Book 3, Chapter 16, *Journal es principales audiences du parlement [de Paris], avec les arrêts qui y ont été rendus, et plusieurs questions et réglemens placés selon l’ordre des temps*, Tome 7, *Depuis l’année 1718 jusqu’en 1722, et un supplément au même Journal, qui remontre [sic] jusqu’en 1623* (Paris: Par la Compagnie des Libraires Associés, 1757), 180; and Jean Papon, Titre 4: “De noblesse,” Livre
(continued...)

such service could and often did provide social and even political advantage as proximity to the king or members of the *haute noblesse* conferred on those in their service a greater degree of real personal, political and social power.

Finding the appropriate avenue of service was complicated by the fact that, in theory, only members of the established hereditary nobility had access to high ranking positions in the army, at court and in the church. By the sixteenth century, however, the reality was very different. While offices in the King's household and at court were usually reserved exclusively for members of the hereditary nobility, offices in the King's financial and judicial bureaucracies could be and were being purchased by those with social ambitions and sufficient financial resources. A similar situation existed regarding the conduct of war. The majority of officers who commanded and served in the French army in this period were noble, but were not exclusively members of what could be called an hereditary or blood nobility. By the early sixteenth century, field commands could not only be given by the crown or by a member of the *haute noblesse* to any individual as a gift, but they were also for sale to anyone with enough disposable cash to purchase one. The social implications of losing this professional purview were of such concern to the *noblesse* of Blois that the issue

¹⁰(...continued)

Cinquiesme: Des Droicts reservez au Roy, *Recueil d'arrests notables des cours souveraines de France* (Paris: Chez la veuve Guillaume Chadiere, 1607), 247.

of the exclusivity of military service was raised during the Estates General held in November 1576.¹¹

In addition to the titles, power and social position that came with the possession of offices in the bureaucracy and/or commissions in the military were those honorific titles and offices bestowed by the crown and members of the *haute noblesse* as a mark of personal esteem. Such honorific titles and offices included those which accompanied membership in one or more of the orders of chivalry which had been established in France since the Middle Ages (such as the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem) and which thrived in the early modern era. Others of these titles and/or offices involved the execution of some form of personal household service thus providing the possibility of additional personal or social distinction for those who possessed such titles. Florentin de Thierriat noted in 1606 that becoming a member of one of the honorary orders of chivalry patronized by the crown automatically ennobled an individual as “la Chevalerie ne se pouvant exercer que par des Nobles.”¹² Of course, an honorific title or office rarely ennobled the holder, as they were most often given

¹¹*Recueil de tout ce qui s'est négocié en la compagnie du tiers État de France, en l'assemblée generale [sic] des trois États, assignez par le Roy en la ville de Bloys, au x. Novembre 1576* (n.p., 1576), 38.

¹²Thierriat, “Premiere Partie: De la Noblesse de Race,” *Trois Traictez . . .*, 188. A similar sentiment is expressed by Gilles André de La Roque. See: Gilles André de La Roque, “De la Noblesse par Chevalerie,” Chapter 22, *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse, De ses différentes especes, De son Origine, du Gentilhomme de Nom & d’Armes, des Bannerets, des Bacheliers, des Écuyers, & de leurs differences. Avec plusieurs Questions & Maximes qui concernent la Noblesse* (Paris: Étienne Michallet, 1678), 81.

to individuals already possessed of legitimate or legitimized noble status. There were also honorific titles used as social designators; these included *messire* and *écuyer*. In the case of these lesser honorific titles, the honour they bestowed on the holder was marginal at best and, in fact, did little more than denote the barest of holds on noble status. While they held little true social value, however, this third category of honorific title was the most common in this period in France and their continued use was testament to the concerns even lowly nobles had about distinguishing their rather limited social position from that of the common man.

The rights and status that such honorific privileges entailed were so valued by the nobility that cases concerning the fiscal and political extent of these rights found their way to the *parlement* of Paris throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹³ By the 1660s, it was clear that the possession of honorific titles and privileges alone could not keep an individual off the tax rolls; yet, concerns over the more public manifestations of honorific titles and privileges continued to be expressed among the *noblesse*. This concern likely stemmed from the fact that their potential for enhancing an individual's social prestige represented some of the most public aspects of *noblesse*. Indeed, some of these honours even sought to reinforce a traditional public image of *noblesse*. For example, only members of the

¹³For some of the cases brought before the *parlement* of Paris on these issues in the late seventeenth century, see: Du Fresne, "Reglement sur les qualitez de Messire, Chevalier & Ecuyer," (13 August 1663), Book 2, Chapter 38, *Journal es principales audiences du parlement [de Paris]* . . . , Tome 2, *Depuis l'année 1660 jusqu'en 1674*, 177; and *Ibid.*, "Si le fils qui a pris qualité d'Écuyer . . . doit payer l'amende prononcée contre les Usurpateurs de Noblesse, au cas qu'il ne fût pas effectivement Noble," (23 January 1664), Book 3, Chapter 6, 201-204.

noblesse could bear a crested coat of arms and wear a sword in public. The stereotypical ideal of the nobleman in the early modern world, therefore, was shaped to some degree not just by the nature of his birth and activities, but by the ways in which he reflected the accepted public image of nobility in his choice of profession, his personal association with and service to others and even in his manner of dress and public deportment.

As a social construct, *noblesse* was further complicated by the fact that the degrees of differentiation within the nobility could be highly subjective and minute in nature. Each member of the *noblesse* – from the King, who sat at the pinnacle of society, down through the *grands* (the *ducs et pairs*, the princes of the blood, and the great prelates of the realm), the hereditary nobility of lesser titles and ranks, the *parlementaire* nobility, nobles whose position came from municipal offices (the *noblesse de cloche*), down to the lowly *écuyer*, *gentilhomme* and impoverished provincial nobles – needed to understand his place within the overall hierarchy. Moreover, it was also imperative that he understand also how his position within the hierarchy related to those held by others.¹⁴ Developing this understanding was not always a straightforward matter. Yet, the ability to show the required and appropriate amount of deference to those to whom one was socially inferior and, moreover, the knowledge of

¹⁴In his *Recueil d'arrêts notables des cours souveraines de France*, Jean Papon provides an extremely detailed discussion of the precision by which this question of precedence was addressed at Court and the advantages of each different level in this order. See: Papon, *Recueil d'arrêts notables des cours souveraines de France*, Arrêt XIII [sic], L'ancienne gravité & ordre de la Cour, 208-210.

what degree of respect and privilege could be extracted from one's own social inferiors was key to functioning within noble society.

Establishing where in the hierarchy of *noblesse* an individual belonged was, in theory, straightforward. A number of writers believed that the fundamental divide within France's nobility was between the established hereditary *noblesse de race* (whose status was acquired through birth) and *noblesse de robe* (whose nobility was acquired through the acquisition of ennobling offices and/or letters of ennoblement). Arguments as to the superiority of the *noblesse de race* rested largely on the legitimacy of birth and the lineage of the individual in question. Many authors considered those whose nobility sprung from a lengthy line of ancestors as being "la noblesse la plus considérée."¹⁵ The growing number of ennobled persons, however, meant that while such opinions about birth could be posited by intellectuals, the legitimacy – in a practical sense – of this new group of nobles also needed to be given due consideration. Thus, while not of noble birth, the purpose and professional activities of the *noblesse de robe* provided the means by which their *noblesse* would be accepted in society, however grudging that acceptance might have been. The political value of their participation in the running of the state, no less than the perception that holders of bureaucratic, judicial and financial offices were exercising a degree of royal power, meant that their actions also fell within the parameters established for proper noble service. In this

¹⁵La Roque, "De l'Origine de la Noblesse," Chapter 1, *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse* . . . , 2.

way, the social division between the *noblesse d'épée* and *noblesse de robe* that was discussed in many of the treatises published in early modern France became not one of "tradition" versus "innovation" but one of a logical division of the two functions of the crown – security and justice – into two readily identifiable professional and social groups.¹⁶

The defence of the crown and the dispensing of its justice provided not only a social legitimacy for those who claimed noble status but also provided professional outlets suitable for the exercise of noble character and ability. The suitability of dividing the nobility along these professional lines was even noted by the English author Henry Clare in *Galliae Speculum* (1673). Clare praised what he considered to be the French king's ability to "maintain an equal poise and temperament in the State" by according the "Gentlemen of the Robe as well as of the Sword . . . the same priviledges [sic], advantages and Innumiments without distinction."¹⁷ In this matter, Clare was in agreement with his French counterparts: stability in social matters would also ensure the stability of the state.

¹⁶See, for example: Philippe de Bethune, "De la diversité que se recontre entre les subjects [sic] d'un Estat," Chapter 12, *Le Conseiller d'estat: ou Recueil Des plus Generales considerations servant au maniment des Affaires publiques* (Paris: 1641), 38-39.

¹⁷Clare also observed that while the "Sword men however have still attributed something of preeminancy [sic] to themselves," members of the Robe "have wisely taken the Superiority on their part, of which they do not vaunt, though in effect they dispose absolutely of the Estates, Lines and Honour of the others by an Authority of the Crown." Henry Clare, "Of the Court in General, the Louvre, and the Prec[eice]ncies of the Princes," Chap [sic] 9, *Galliae Speculum or a New Survey of the French Court and Camp* (London: W. Downing for F. Eglesfield at the Marygold in St. Pauls-Church-Yard, 1673), 60.

However, while a rudimentary professional division of the *noblesse* may have proved more socially realistic than an idea of nobility based solely on birth, it simplified the existence of numerous, subtle distinctions within these two general categories of *noblesse*. For example, although Florentin de Thierriat's *Trois Traictez [sic]* . . . (1606) opens with the statement that there are two sorts of nobility – that of “race” (birth) and that “acquise du Prince” (ennobled)¹⁸ – he also recognized the existence of the subtle and often highly subjective hierarchy of degrees and ranks of preference which existed among the *noblesse* as a whole. Some individuals, he notes,

son [sic] superieurs, les autres inferieurs: les uns de toutes parts Nobles, les autres d'une part seulement, ou de quelques pars & non de toutes. Les uns ont des dignitez anciennes, les autres n'en ont point. Les uns son [sic] Chevaliers, les autres Écuyers. Les autres son [sic] Comtes, Marquis, Viscomtes, Barons, & en tout cela y a differente Noblesse, accroissement ou diminution, selon que la dignité & qualité de ce qui y est adiousté [sic], est inégalle, par-ce que la duplicité de dignité emporte la dignité simple.¹⁹

Thierriat envisions these subjective factors as existing within a clearly defined and natural hierarchy constituted by the *noblesse de race* (those individuals descended from noble families and who lived off their landed possessions) and “la noblesse aquire du Prince” (those who were ennobled for service in the royal household or bureaucracy).²⁰ He states that the former form of *noblesse* took precedence over the latter due to its origins; for Thierriat, as

¹⁸Thierriat, “Premiere Partie: De la Noblesse de Race,” *Trois Traictez [sic]* . . . , 4-5. See also: *Ibid.*, “Seconde Partie: De la Noblesse civile,” 10.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, “Premiere Partie: De la Noblesse de Race,” 10.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 4-5. See also: Thierriat, “Seconde Partie: De la Noblesse civile,” *Trois Traictez [sic]*. . . , 142.

for other writers of the period, nobility acquired through blood and birth was preferable to that acquired through ennoblement, regardless of the reasons for that ennoblement.²¹

Within these two general categories existed what Thierriat identifies as four different types or levels of *noblesse*. The first of these four encompassed those *seigneurs* and *gentilshommes* who “sont honnorez des dignitez Ecclesiastiques.” The second group consisted of a nobility based in service to the state – those who held high offices in royal councils, royal courts or the royal household such as *chanceliers*, *présidents* and *conseillers de la cour* in the *maison du Roi*. Individuals who held similar administrative or household offices in the court of another sovereign prince fell into a third group, which took in a wider spectrum of individuals and also included those whose profession was arms, *lettres* or the law. Within this third group, those involved in the military profession were given precedence “parce que les Royaumes & les Empires ont été acquis par les Armes, & conserves [sic] par la science & que la charge de l’homme d’Armes proffite à plus de personnes, que celle du

²¹Thierriat writes: “Toutesfois la Noblesse de Race, en ce qu’elle est Noblesse de Race, & sans autre consideration des accidens, est tousjours préférée [sic] à la Noblesse Civile, parce qu’elle a procedé de ceux qui on [sic] merité ceste dignité par les armes, & don’t les actions surpassant le commun les ont faict honnorer par les peuples commes les enfans des Dieux, a lieu que la Noblesse acquise, procede la pluspart de la finance payée, pour le rescript de l’Annoblissement [sic], qui est dautant plus foile, qu’il est plus nouveau.” *Ibid.*, “Second Partie: De la Noblesse civile,” *Trois Traictez [sic]*. . . , 259.

Iuge [sic].”²² The fourth group was composed of those who could lay claim only to the title of *gentilhomme* or “homme Noble” and possessed neither estate nor office.²³

Other writers expressed different opinions as to the nature and number of these additional distinctions.²⁴ For example, in his *Traité des Ordres et Simples Dignitez*, Charles Loyseau identifies three main types of *noblesse* – “la simple Noblesse, la haute Noblesse & les Princes.” Each of these three types was possessed of differing qualities and degrees of *dignité*; Loyseau’s attempt to enumerate them all takes several hundred pages but provides an overall argument that is similar to Thierriat’s.²⁵ Loyseau is most concerned with those whose nobility came through legal and professional means. In fact, he identifies so many different ranks of nobility within this group that the entire text of his *Cinq Livres du Droit des Offices*

²²*Ibid.*, 260-261.

²³Thierriat also includes in this fourth group those “qui ont le degré de Docteur, & ont leur publiquement vingt ans.” *Ibid.*, 261.

²⁴For a short but by no means comprehensive overview of the writings of early modern theorists on the nature of nobility, see: La Roque, “Preface,” *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse* . . . , unpaginated.

²⁵He argued that those who possessed “simple noblesse” were usually of *roturier* (commoner) origins and generally owed their social standing to their participation in royal courts and government bureaucracy. Loyseau, *Traité des Ordres et Simples Dignitez* in *Les Oeuvres de Maistre Charles Loyseau* . . . , 2 (paragraph 9), 3-5 (paragraphs 34-37), 26 (paragraph 45).

focuses on the problems entailed in differentiating between the degrees of *noblesse* that existed within *la noblesse des offices*.²⁶

Gilles André de La Roque's description of the types and degrees of preference that existed among the *noblesse* of France, while not as lengthy as Loyseau's, is equally precise. Like other writers, La Roque does not identify birth *per se* as the only true means of acquiring nobility. However, what is particularly interesting about La Roque's discussion is that his ideas on the hierarchy and nature of nobility were informed by discussion with Jean du Fay, Comte de Maulevrier and *bailli* of Rouen regarding the types of *noblesse* encountered while compiling the *recherche de la noblesse* for Rouen in 1666. Using this information, La Roque identifies seven different avenues by which an individual could be ennobled: the first two – ennoblement by fief and “noblesse de Chevalerie” – both involve direct participation in the defence of the state in time of war.²⁷ So many are the types of *noblesse* presented by La Roque that, in the preface to his *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse* (1678), he lists some twenty

²⁶Many other writers of this period as well as modern historians have referred to this group as *la noblesse de robe*. For Loyseau's definition of *noblesse*, see: Loyseau, *Cinq Livres du Droit des Offices* in *Les Oeuvres de Maistre Charles Loyseau* . . ., 227-239.

²⁷These seven different means of ennoblement are: “la Noblesse Feodale” (which La Roque notes is the oldest); “Noblesse de Chevalerie” (which ennoble the individual “par l'accollade” of actions in battle); service in municipal offices such as *maire*; “l'Avoüée” (the type of nobility that is given to illegitimate sons in recognition of the service of their natural fathers); that which comes from holding the office of *secrétaire du Roi*; a type which La Roque categorizes as “accidentelle qui provient des Charges & emplois”; and that which stems from the issuance of “lettres particulieres” such as edicts, declarations and charters. La Roque, “De l'Anobly,” Chapter 21, *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse* . . ., 64.

different kinds. They range from nobility based on the possession of a fief (“noblesse immémoriale”) to that which is acquired when an individual in the employ of a member of *les grandes* is ennobled for civil or household service (“noblesse officieuse”). In between these two extremes lies a range of *noblesse* based on many different factors, including choice of profession, education, possession of land, marriage, birth and legal standing.²⁸

Involvement in military affairs provides a basis for two of these twenty identified types of *noblesse*. “La noblesse militaire” (the second listed by La Roque) is the recompense due “à la valeur des Braves, pour s’être signalez dans les armées.” “La noblesse Archere,” which is thirteenth on his list, is that claimed by individuals “qu’on pretend descendre des Francs-Archers.”²⁹

As La Roque’s list suggests, many writers and intellectuals did believe that war had a part to play in the definition of nobility. However, this is not to say that they favoured a definition of nobility which emphasized exclusive military service. The need for justice in an ordered society and the need to provide it through a well organized and system of courts, staffed by those who were most suited to the activity of dispensing justice, assured that connections would also be made in these works between the traditional roles of nobles as

²⁸For a complete list and description of La Roque’s list of the twenty different types of *noblesse*, see Appendix II.

²⁹La Roque, “Preface,” *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse . . .*, unpaginated.

advisors and councillors and the social legitimacy of the new juridical bureaucracy.³⁰ Indeed, this interpretation helped to assure that the dispensation of justice through the conduct of war also continued to be considered in defining *noblesse*. Consequently, participation in war and war-related activity could not be wholly diminished in creating a working concept of *noblesse* which rested, in part, on professional activity as long as an emphasis on good order and government prevailed.

Thus, it is not surprising that some writers characterized the relationship between *noblesse* and war as merely a part of the nature of power and hierarchy in France. The military force of the monarch was an extension of his political force within the established order.³¹ This link between the crown and the conduct of war was stressed by Simon d'Olive, who argued in his 1647 treatise that war was one of the main and most important functions of the state. It was for this reason that the ability to initiate and to make war had to remain solely with the crown in order to preserve good government and peace.³² D'Olive extended

³⁰See, for example, Philippe de Renusson, *Oeuvres de Me de Renusson, Avocat au Parlement* (Paris: Chez les Libraires Associés, 1780), 236. Renusson lived from 1632 to 1699.

³¹See, for example: Bethune, "De l'establissement de la force d'un Estat," Chapter 35, *Le Conseiller d'estat*, 184-188.

³²The state's ability to make war was, in d'Olive's opinion, "l'un des plus riches, & plus precieuse fleurons de la Couronne." Simon d'Olive, "Action Onzieme: Sur les Lettres Patents [sic] du Roy, du 28 jour de Juin 1623, portant defenses à tous ses Subjects de faire levve [sic] de gens de guerre," *Les Oeuvres de Me Simon d'Olive* (Lyon: Simon Rigaud, 1649), 2: 40-42.

this idea to include the crown's power over all types of combat, including duelling.³³

However, he acknowledges that while the power of war rested with the crown, he stresses the idea that its conduct was the purview of the nobility, in respect of their duty to the King as his advisors and purveyors of justice.

In terms of defining *noblesse*, therefore, war and, consequently, military activity was a natural extension of royal power which was deferred to individuals who were accustomed to wielding power, if only on a much more limited scale. Little concern was expressed by early modern writers about the ability of the nobility to exercise their power of war wisely and judiciously. Florentin de Thierriat noted that the natural authority that rested within the character of the true nobleman would provide him not just with the ability and intellect needed in war but also with the moral capacity need to use violence in the service of the state properly and wisely.³⁴ This was echoed by Philippe de Bethune, who wrote that a *seigneur* had the right to make war and not just the power of lordship over land and goods.³⁵ He also noted in *Le Conseiller d'estat* (1641) that individuals who were to be given commands in the

³³Although d'Olive acknowledged the inclination towards duelling would come naturally to any French nobleman, he reasoned that the crown was obliged to eradicate the practice, although such a policy may have gone against the allegedly innate noble desire to obtain glory through combat. *Ibid.*, "Action Trezieme [sic]: Sur l'Edict du Roy contre les Duels, du mois de Fevrier, 1626," 2: 48.

³⁴Thierriat, "Premiere Partie: De la Noblesse de Race," *Trois Traictez [sic]* . . . , 66. See also: *Ibid.*, 5-13, 33-40, 51.

³⁵Bethune, *Le Conseiller d'estat*, 4.

royal armies should be people of ability and *qualité* in order to ensure their moral as well as military capability.³⁶ Florentin de Thierriat, when providing examples of what he held to be noteworthy noble behaviour, cites what can only be described as a chronology of *gesta* (deeds of great military prowess).³⁷ For the Chevalier La Chetardie, a career military man and author of a seventeenth-century guide to conduct for young noblemen, *noblesse* and war were intimately connected. He argued that not only did participation in war fulfil the nobleman's obligation to uphold justice, war provided an excellent forum for him to display his innate valour, discipline and sound judgement.³⁸

For those who were not born noble and wished to serve in a military capacity, early modern writers provided some respite.³⁹ Thierriat noted that ennoblement for valorous

³⁶*Ibid.*, "De la forme de faire levee [sic] de gens de guerre," Chapter 29, 203-5.

³⁷Thierriat, *Trois Traictez [sic]* . . . , 272-3.

³⁸Troitti de La Chetardie, *Instructions for a young nobleman, or, The idea of a person of honour done out of French [Pour un jeune seigneur]*, trans. into English by Ferrand Spence (London: R. Bentley & S. Magnus, 1683), 2-10.

³⁹For example, La Roque points to the exemption from the *taille* given to those individuals serving in the *ordonnance* of Henry IV during their term of service and the extension of this privilege to any veteran of twenty years active service or more. While he adds that, in these particular types of cases, nobility is personal and not transmissible to future generations, La Roque recognizes that it was common practice for such individuals to be ennobled through *lettres d'anoblissement* as early as 1478, thus turning their *noblesse* into one which could be passed down to their posterity. The *ordonnance* cited in the text is one passed by Henry IV in 1600 and given as "article 58." La Roque, "De la Noblesse des Gens-d'armes [sic] & autres Compagnies Royales de la Maison du Roy," Chapter 54, *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse* . . . , 224-226.

service was possible and even somewhat desirable as this legally confirmed what the individual had expressed through his own deeds – namely, his true nobility of character. He added that those *capitaines* and *gendarmes* of non-noble status who served in the King's army (or in a retinue of the *haute noblesse*) would often be ennobled for their service as “la profession es [sic] armes soit sur tout autre recommandable.”⁴⁰ He concluded that, despite the possibility of an individual being ennobled for non-military service, participation in the army and in war was “des propres moyens d'acquérir la Noblesse.” Thus, for many writers, ennoblement for military service was acceptable, if not inevitable, for any virtuous French man who displayed his military ability and character in battle.⁴¹

It would appear that, while heralded by some authors as natural, the role of nobles – whether born or ennobled – as exclusive purveyors of war did raise some concerns. For the most part, however, these concerns were procedural. For example, Jean Papon provided his readers with precise instructions as to the proper legal process for ransoming noble prisoners of war.⁴² At times, these legal issues were more ideologically complex than the etiquette of

⁴⁰Thierriat, *Trois Traictez [sic]* . . . , 143-157.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 157, 219-20.

La Roque agrees, arguing that regardless of whether or not ennoblement for military service was held in high regard by some segments of society, serving in the army or retinue of a prince was one of the most worthy types of service an individual could render. Consequently, such service could ennoble the individual. La Roque, “De la Noblesse par Chevalerie,” Chapter 22, *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse* . . . , 80-86.

⁴²Papon, “De prisonniers et droicts de guerre,” Livre quatrisesme [sic], Titre VI,
(continued...)

ransom. In the mid-seventeenth century, the *parlement* of Paris heard a case concerned with whether or not nobles who had served in an army of an enemy of France had the right to return to their native land without punishment after the battle or campaign in question had ended. The case in question was that of Philippe de La Rue who fought for the Spanish in the battle for the city of Arras. At issue was the fact that he had attempted to return to France well after the period stipulated in the treaty for such acts of repatriation. While the practical question of the personal safety of nobles returning under such circumstances was clearly integral to the case, minutes of this hearing do not record any discussion of that particular aspect of the case. At the centre of this case was an ideological issue: could those who had fought for an enemy – and, in so doing, had shown themselves to be less than honourable – return to French society and be accepted as truly noble? In its ruling, the *parlement* allowed La Rue to return to France, but required him first to obtain costly *lettres de réhabilitation* which would uphold his noble standing.⁴³

The concerns over the moral implications of the connection between *noblesse* and war are perhaps best exemplified in François de La Noue's *Discours Politiques et Militaires*,

⁴²(...continued)

Recueil d'arrests notables des cours souveraines de France, 249-250.

⁴³Jean du Fresne, "Si celui qui a abandonné son Pay [sic] en temps de Guerre & s'est retiré en pays de contribution, n'étant point retourné dans le temps porté par la Capitulation, doit être [sic] privé de la grace du Prince," (1647), Chapter 530, Book 1, Supplement, *Journal des principales audiences du parlement [de Paris]* . . ., Tome 7, *Depuis l'année 1718, jusqu'en 1722, et un supplément au même Journal, qui remontre [sic] jusqu'en 1623*, 106.

published in 1587. Written in the wake of prolonged civil war, the *Discours Politiques et Militaires* addresses in some detail the question of whether continued participation in military activity corrupted the natural inclination of nobles towards justice and fostered the less noble traits of greed and vainglory. In the course of the essays contained in this work, he argues that personal ambition and blood-lust had corrupted France's nobility to the point that it could not even conceive of living in a world not constantly awash in actual combat. It is the idea that war now served the nobility's baser instincts rather than the needs of the state which preoccupies La Noue. His response is to encourage France's *noblesse* not to abuse their natural vocation but to return to those virtues of valour and good judgement that, he alleges, will provide them with the stability and respectability needed to maintain their position and power in society. Thus, for La Noue, the material poverty brought on by constant involvement in war will continue to precipitate moral bankruptcy unless French nobles begin to acknowledge and understand the true purpose of their involvement in war. To ensure that this occurs, he stresses the need to instruct noble youth in these virtues and in the proper application of these virtues to the profession of arms.⁴⁴

⁴⁴François de La Noue, "Que la pauvreté de la Noblesse de France n'est point tant procedee [sic] des guerres, qui ont quasi été continueles, depuis trente & cinq ans, que des erreurs qu'elle a commis [sic] en la dispensation de ses biens," and "Que ceste grande affection que les François ont d'aller chercher les guerres étrangers, leur est maintenant plus nuisible, que profitable," *Discours Politiques et Militaires du Seigneur de La Nouë* (Basel: François Forêt, 1587), 157-73, 209-228.

Despite railing against the perceived moral damage done by participation in war to the nobility of France, it is important to note that La Noue never urges the nobility to abandon war as a profession. Indeed, his work is focussed on correcting the wrongs he believes exist in the relationship between *noblesse* as a social and cultural construct and the conduct of war and not on enticing nobles to give up the profession of arms. Indeed, like Thierriat, Loyseau and Papon, La Noue does not challenge the idea that it is the nobles of France who are best suited, by character and nature, to conduct war. La Noue's criticisms, while perhaps demonstrating the moral pitfalls of constant exposure to war, still draw on an ideology which sees participation in war as an integral, if not essential part, of noble identity.

B. *Noblesse* and the history of social memory and identity

It was likely difficult for any member of the nobility wishing to establish a sense of self and/or identity to do so without first understanding the many complexities of this social construct. This situation was further complicated by the fact that the creation of a noble identity was not simply something that affected the individual alone: it also affected his (or her) family and lineage. In many ways, the construction of noble sense of self and/or identity was a collective exercise involving the convergence of individual identity and collective memory. This was due to the fact that *noblesse* existed on several temporal planes at once. In theory, the world of France's nobility existed in the present, in the lives of ancestors long dead and in the potential glory of those not yet born. As La Roque suggested, *noblesse* was a

state of being which combined the virtue of ancestors with the conduct of those in the present to provide an example from which future nobles could take inspiration and guidance.⁴⁵ In this way, the individual nobleman or noblewoman was one link in a great chain and his or her importance in that chain was established not simply by their physical being but also by the part he or she played in ensuring the biological continuity of the lineage and its monetary, social and political enrichment. Clearly, defining *noblesse* on a personal level involved acquiring an understanding of how the individual as well as his or her family fit into the collective memory of the elite and the identity of the nobility as a whole.

The intersection of individual and collective identity is at the core of the *recherches de la noblesse*. It was through this process that the social characteristics associated with nobility were communicated by the individual and his/her family to the state through a very public means of commemoration, namely the acceptance of the claim and the subsequent publication of the *intendant*'s adjudications. In this sense, the submissions made to those in charge of the *recherches de la noblesse* may be considered an exercise in the construction of identity and collective social memory, and not just a strictly bureaucratic exercise. Even if (as some historians have noted)⁴⁶ some of the submitted evidence may have been partially or even fully falsified, the submissions made by individuals and families reflected those ideas,

⁴⁵La Roque, "Preface," *Traite [sic] de la noblesse* . . ., unpaginated.

⁴⁶For a discussion of the possible falsification of submitted evidence, see Chapter Two.

activities and events which held value for the individual, the community and the state regarding the nature of *noblesse*. The *recherches de la noblesse* forced France's nobles, and those who aspired to be noble, to confront their own conception of what being noble meant and determine how best to convey this belief to their community at large, even if this meant that the evidence had to be modified, tampered with or falsified. The social and cultural references used in the genealogies and documentary evidence in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) – or any *recherche de la noblesse* – represent individual and/or corporate perceptions of a given social reality during a specific period of time.

Understanding the nature and significance of differing perceptions of reality that may exist within the membership of a society is the focus of the history of memory and the history of identity. Both deal with something fundamental to history as an academic discipline: the process by which humans shape their communal and personal histories.⁴⁷ This process is, as Patrick Hutton has noted, dominated by recollection of the past and the creation of an intellectual and/or cultural synthesis of that past that can be understood in the present.⁴⁸ It is

⁴⁷For a general discussion of the relationship between history, memory and identity see: Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1994); Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, trans. Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); David Lowenthal, "Fabricating Heritage," *History & Memory: Studies in the Representation of the Past*, 10 (1998): 5-24; and Pierre Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, 3 vols (Paris: Galimard, 1989).

⁴⁸Patrick Hutton contends that "history is an art of memory because it mediates the
(continued...)

this synthesis of memory and history that creates identity by helping individuals to find answers to questions about their place in a given community and the place of his or her community in the wider world.⁴⁹

Indeed, if the individual is to play an acknowledged role within a society, he or she must not only understand commonly held ideas about the nature of that role, but be seen to understand them. The work of scholars of the history of memory and identity provides useful guidelines for uncovering and understanding these ideas.⁵⁰ While the complexities of *noblesse* as a social construct may have facilitated conflict within some aspects of French society, M. L. Bush suggests there was likely some degree of ideological unity among those who saw themselves as noble in early modern France. She notes that this unity comprised a set of shared attitudes towards the construction of kin networks, suitable professional interests and ways to maintain the image of nobility as an important aspect of French society. While acknowledging the potential for regional and national differences in these attitudes, Bush maintains that merely the existence of even a general belief that it was even possible to

⁴⁸(...continued)

encounter between two moments of memory: repetition (which concerns the presence of the past) and recollection.” Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, xxi.

⁴⁹See: Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 10-12.

⁵⁰Bo Stråth, “Introduction,” in *Myth and Memory in the Construction of Community: Historical Patterns in Europe and Beyond*, ed. Bo Stråth, 20-36 (New York: P.I.E. - Peter Lang, 2000).

establish a widely understood concept of nobility would still help to impart a sense of unity and uniformity to those who claimed noble status.⁵¹

Of course, the way in which memory and identity are created by a society or an individual is not by nature objective or even, at times, logical and the historian must be aware of this.⁵² At times, it is a process that is spurred on by outside forces beyond the control of the society or individual and, thus, can be characterized as a reactive as much as a pro-active process. It cannot and should not be characterized as a natural and/or spontaneous event. Regardless of the impetus for creation of memory and identity, both involve a highly selective and subjective process in which choices to include and to exclude ideas and events, to incorporate and to transform them as a means of constructing the content and the form of memory are made.⁵³ From a range of evidence representing factors as diverse as previous

⁵¹M. L. Bush, *Rich Noble, Poor Noble*, The European Nobility Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 2:1.

⁵²Henry Rousso notes that “[t]he ‘history of historians’ is an epistemological approach. It results from a desire for knowledge and obeys certain postulates and protocols. It is grounded in procedures for establishing verifiable and thus eventually refutable evidence. In its project of reconstructing meaningful temporal periods, history divides up the past according to rational or ideological criteria which have to be very different from those of the contemporary agents themselves. Similarly, events deemed ‘memorable’ or ‘historic’ in their time can be seen very differently by historians.” He concludes that while the history of memory and identity cannot represent what historians might call reality, neither can be summarily dismissed as both are “part of our existential experience.” Henry Rousso, *The Haunting Past: History, Memory and Justice in Contemporary France*, trans. Ralph Schoolcraft (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 7, 8-16.

⁵³Lowenthal, “Fabricating Heritage,” 7.

oral and written historical accounts, established ideology and social and cultural traditions, those examples which are deemed the most memorable (*memoranda*) are preserved and presented in a manner which best suits the ideological and psychological needs of the society in question.⁵⁴ In accepting some factors and rejecting others, the creation of memory and identity legitimizes the value placed by members of the society on specific characteristics or ideals. This creates the context in which a community defines what is right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable, and the like. To this end, memory and identity have as much to do with the present circumstances of the individual and/or the society as much as with their past.⁵⁵

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 7-17. See also: Str  th, "Introduction," 34.

⁵⁵The ways and means by which an individual's understanding of his or her personal memory and identity is communicated to his or her society change not only as the collective memory changes, but also as the ways and modes of communication evolve through the stages of literacy and technology. This process of communication creates an arrangement of historical and social data which is plausible and links the private and public memory to the greater social context which is known to and understood by members of the community. The process of communication creates an interaction between what Kaschuba calls "private and public memory structures" such as the production of public monuments or icons, biographies and family stories. This, in turn, allows the creation of memory and the creation of identity to become a shared "practice of a socialised remembering . . . in public spaces and private contexts alike." Wolfgang Kaschuba, "Myth and Memory in the Construction of Community," in *Myth and Memory in the Construction of Community: Historical Patterns in Europe and Beyond*, ed. Bo Str  th, 217-244 (New York: P.I.E. - Peter Lang, 2000).

Within the memories and identities constructed by any community, traditional or established models of thought and action can be influential.⁵⁶ Jacques Le Goff identifies these models of thought; he argues that most societies go so far as to consider the past as a model for the present for everything including social and political institutions, art and literature and forms of personal documentation.⁵⁷ Early modern France was no different. For example, Donald R. Kelley posits that the dominance of humanistic thought and scholarship in sixteenth-century France reflected the nation's need to assess and understand their past during a time of civil unrest. He suggests that the increase in the number of works dealing with the nature of *noblesse* was as much a reflection of the nobility's need to create a sense of identity for themselves as it was of the complex legal realities of their world.⁵⁸ Moreover, in

⁵⁶For example, the Romans drew on classical Greek texts for concepts and images that were used to define their social roles and responsibilities. In early medieval Britain, oral traditions and non-Christian cultural models, as well as Biblical and classical images references and texts were used to shape personal biographies and to help construct perceptions of ethnicity and self-worth, entitlement to office and/or property and gender roles. The desire to convey specific ideas about personal wealth and status merged with a desire to evoke the glory of ancient Rome in the houses and gardens created by Italian nobles in the *campagna* from the Italian Renaissance until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For a more comprehensive discussion, see: William O. Frazer, "Introduction: Identities in Early Medieval Britain," in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, eds. William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrrell, 1-13 (London: Leicester University Press, 2000); and Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium*, 23-81.

⁵⁷Le Goff, *History and Memory*, 9-11.

⁵⁸Kelley suggests that, in their desire to codify the laws, these French authors were expressing an "historical mindedness" which perceived the understanding of the past as a key to healing the present. Donald R. Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law and History in the French Renaissance* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970), 6-14.

History and Memory, Le Goff notes that the increase in the production and publication of aristocratic *mémoires* in the sixteenth century, as well as in commemoration of the dead through statuary throughout the early modern period, shows the direct influence of tradition on the creation of memory and identity.⁵⁹ Indeed, in a society which placed an importance on lineage, the growing desire of aristocratic houses to make public their family heritage in the form of genealogies attests to the fact that it was essential for this display of identity and memory to be made within existing cultural and ideological frameworks. Only in this way could the memory and/or identity created be readily understood by others within the community and by those who helped to arbitrate membership within the community.⁶⁰

Conclusion:

Recherches de la noblesse, nobility and the history of memory and identity

Thus, as well as developing a working knowledge of the characteristics and lifestyle choices that were seen to be indicators of *noblesse*, those who were noble or wished to be noble had to find culturally acceptable means of making their own understanding of these factors public. As this thesis argues, the *recherches de la noblesse* provided those who claimed noble status with the means to make their views and interpretations public. As the definition of *noblesse* became increasingly complicated in the early modern period, it became increasingly important for individuals and families claiming noble status to establish not just

⁵⁹Le Goff, *History and Memory*, 84-87.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 144-149.

the legal validity of their claim but also to demonstrate the moral and cultural soundness of their claim.

As the early modern period wore on, changes in the conduct of politics and royal administration meant that the ways in which *noblesse* had to be defined legally and publicly also had to change or, at least, reflect the new reality. The rise of a bureaucratic nobility could not be ignored and early modern theorists did not shy away from acknowledging the changes which were rapidly occurring in the composition and professional orientation of the second estate. Yet, in the wake of this development, renewed emphasis was placed on military service as a marker of *noblesse* in many published treatises; early modern writers portrayed military service as a vital and much valued aspect of the noble existence.

To assess the influence of war on private and public perceptions of *noblesse*, historians need to understand the collective identity and memory created by the *noblesse* in the same way as those who constructed it understood it. The need to establish a public noble persona – a public identity founded on family memory, individual memory and collective ideas about the value of service – has created a number of historical sources suited to such a study. One which provides insight into how both nobles themselves and the state viewed *noblesse* and the nature of noble identity is the *recherches de la noblesse*. It is with one example of such a source that this thesis is concerned: namely, the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* which was compiled between 1666-1672 and its findings published in 1673.

CHAPTER 2:
The *Recherches de la noblesse*

It is with the value of the *recherches de la noblesse* as sources for the study of the relationship between noble identity and war that this chapter is concerned. It begins with a general discussion regarding the origins of *recherches de la noblesse*; it then outlines the process by which they were executed and compiled. Using selected examples, this chapter then explores how the *recherches de la noblesse* produced for various regions of France have been employed by social historians to assess the demography, social ideology, professional activities and cultural beliefs of the nobility of early modern France. The analytical and interpretive challenges raised by the *recherches de la noblesse* will also be considered. Finally, how the interpretive approach used by scholars of the history of memory and identity can provide a model for using the *recherches de la noblesse* to study the relationship of *noblesse*, war and noble identity will be addressed.

A. The *Recherches de la noblesse*

Instituted as early as the fifteenth century in response to the increasing cost of a growing state bureaucracy and the conduct of war, the *recherches de la noblesse* were state ordered inquests into the usurpation of noble status.¹ Yet, while these inquests were

¹In Lower Normandy, the *recherches de la noblesse* were carried out by royal officials
(continued...)

primarily aimed at enriching state coffers, the French crown's desire to identify and to expunge *faux nobles* also had a social dimension.² Like the *Ordonnance d'Orléans* in 1560 and the *Ordonnance de Blois* in 1579,³ the *recherches de la noblesse* were indications of the crown's desire to "preserve social distinctions in a country that was inordinately sensitive about the need for a clearly defined social hierarchy."⁴

The *recherches de la noblesse* required all who claimed noble status to make public the genealogical, legal and/or professional grounds on which their claims were based. In this

¹(...continued)

in 1523, 1540, 1555, 1576, 1598, 1624, 1634, 1641, 1655, and 1666. Inquests were carried out with similar degrees of frequency in Brittany well into the eighteenth century. For discussions about the *recherches de la noblesse* and the history of nobility in early modern France in general, see: James B. Wood, "La structure sociale de la noblesse dans le bailliage de Caen et ses modifications (1463-1666)," *Chronique des Études normandes, Annales de Normandie*, 22 (1972): 331-335; James B. Wood, *The Nobility of the Élection of Bayeux, 1463-1666: Continuity Through Change*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Jean Meyer, *La noblesse Bretonne aux XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: S.E.V.E.P.N., 1966); Roland Mousnier, *The Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy 1598-1789*, Vol. 1, *Society and the State*, trans. Brian Pearce (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); and Samuel Clark, *State and Status: The Rise of the State and Aristocratic Power in Western Europe* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

²*Faux nobles* were individuals who had usurped noble status and had escaped paying the *taille*.

³In 1560, the *Ordonnance d'Orléans* provided fines for the usurpation of noble status. In 1579, the *Ordonnance de Blois* ensured that while commoners might acquire noble lands (*fiefs*), they could not claim noble status through this purchase alone. See: Clark, *State and Status: The Rise of the State and Aristocratic Power in Western Europe*, 171.

⁴D. J. Sturdy, "Tax Evasion, the *Faux Nobles* and State Fiscalism: The Example of the *Généralité* of Caen, 1634-35," *French Historical Studies*, 9 (1976): 550.

way, the *recherches de la noblesse* became a means by which perceptions as to what it meant to be noble could be brought into the public domain. As anthologies of data submitted by the nobles themselves and appraised by the provincial *intendants*, the *recherches de la noblesse* are texts which are, at once, both personal and public. The genealogical and juridical evidence contained within them chronicles the lives of individuals and lineages and, as Gayle K. Brunelle has suggested, reflects the nobility's attempts to define what constituted *noblesse* on their own terms.⁵ As Chapter One suggested, developing an understanding of what *noblesse* entailed was crucial to the individual's social survival. By the mid 1660s, those who claimed noble status were likely in no doubt as to the consequences of their claim being rejected. More than an individual's tax status rested on acceptance of a claim; failure brought with it the loss of status and social ruin.

The process for conducting a *recherche de la noblesse* was set out in the specific *arrêt* which decreed the investigation. A royal edict would declare the need for the *recherche de la noblesse* and, in response, the *intendant* for a given area would appoint *commissionnaires de la recherche de la noblesse* to assist him in collecting submissions from all those claiming noble status. This evidence was generally submitted by a family's designated head (frequently the eldest living male) who was referred to in the printed family entry as the *produisant*. It seems that the family's information could also be provided by a

⁵Gayle K. Brunelle, "Dangerous Liaisons: Mésalliance and Early Modern French Noblewomen," *French Historical Studies*, 19 (1995): 76, note 5.

female head of a household; in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), where documentation was supplied by women, they are referred to as *produisante(s)*.

The evidence which all *produisant(e)s* were required to submit for themselves and for their family members, both past and present, took two forms. First, a genealogy was required. While it was in the best interests of the *produisant(e)* to supply a genealogy that could show four generations of nobility (preferably through continuous descent of the male line), it appears that submission of a genealogy of fewer generations did not necessarily result in automatic disqualification. While the ability to document four generations of nobility did not legally constitute the attainment of *noblesse* in early modern France, Roland Mousnier notes that “publicly known possession of this status for a century or more was sufficient for presumption of its validity.”⁶ This sentiment was supported by early modern theorists such as Gilles André de La Roque who remarked that “parmy [sic] les Nobles les quatre lignes sont des symboles d’une Noblesse excellente.”⁷ Consequently, it is not surprising that although claimants were not required to provide genealogical evidence of noble status for more than

⁶Mousnier, *Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy 1598-1789*, Vol 1, Society and the State, 135. See also: James B. Wood, “Endogamy and *Mésalliance*, the Marriage Patterns of the Nobility of the *Élection* of Bayeux, 1430-1669,” *French Historical Studies*, 10 (1978): 378.

⁷Gilles André de La Roque, “Du Gentilhomme de quatre linges,” Chapter 10, *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse, De ses différentes especes, De son Origine, du Gentilhomme de Nom & d’Armes, des Bannerets, des Bacheliers, des Écuyers, & de leurs différences. Avec plusieurs Questions & Maximes qui concernent la Noblesse* (Paris: Étienne Michallet, 1678), 29.

four generations, those who could, often did so as it increased the chances of being deemed *noblesse de race*.⁸

Claimants were also required to substantiate all claims made in the genealogy with notarial or other documents. Copies of these documents were acceptable but the official preference was for originals, particularly “an original record of a legally recognized transaction or agreement in which an individual was clearly identified as an *écuyer* or *noble homme*.”⁹ As well as corroborating claims made in the genealogy, the documentary evidence had to demonstrate that the family’s status had not been sullied in any way over the generations, particularly through participation in activities seen as unfitting for nobles (derogation).¹⁰ If the family or individual was ennobled (*anoblis*), the documentary proofs

⁸Wood, *The Nobility of the Élection of Bayeux, 1463-1666: Continuity Through Change*, 29.

⁹*Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁰The idea that certain activities or professions were unbecoming to someone of noble status had long existed in France. This concept – called *dérogance* – argued that engaging in activities such as farming, holding general clerical positions and engaging in certain types of manufacturing and trade lowered the holder of noble status to the position of a menial and, thus, were incompatible with the individual’s elevated social status. If caught derogating their status, an individual would be returned to the rolls of the *taille* and would be considered a commoner.

Laws dealing with derogation had been in existence in France since the late thirteenth century and began to be enforced with greater diligence with advent of the growth of trade and overseas markets, and as well as the growth of the royal bureaucracy beginning in the early sixteenth century. While other European nations also had laws against derogation of noble status, they were not as complex or as well enforced as those in early modern France. For a more general discussion of *dérogance* in early modern France, see: M. L. Bush, *Rich* (continued...)

needed to show that the status had been achieved through proper legal and/or official channels, that the letters of ennoblement had been registered in all appropriate royal courts and that members of the family had not derogated their new social standing. Not surprisingly, both recent and long-established *anoblis* families substantiated their claims by including *lettres d'anoblissement* and certificates of registration of *lettres d'anoblissement* with the various provincial *parlements* and the *parlement* of Paris, the *Cour des Aides* and the *Chambre des Comptes*.

Numerous other types of documentary evidence could also be submitted to bolster the validity of a claim, as any document which could clearly outline the claim to nobility and would be, in the eyes of adjudicators, proof of status was considered suitable. In *Trois Traictiez [sic]* . . . (1606), Florentin de Thierriat observed that many different types of documents would suffice to verify a claim to *noblesse*, including baptismal records, marriage contracts, extracts of prior positive judgements regarding noble status rendered in various royal courts and even “les inscriptions des Temples & lieux publiqs [sic]” such as grave

¹⁰(...continued)

Noble, Poor Noble, Vol. 2, The European Nobility Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 34, 76-77, 83-87, 119; Laurent Bourquin, *La noblesse dans la France moderne (XVI^e - XVIII^e siècles)* (Paris: Éditions Belin, 2002), 15-18, 86; Ellery Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree: Ideas of Nobility in France in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 147-148, 157-159; and Gayle K. Brunelle, “Narrowing Horizons: Commerce and Derogation in Normandy,” in *Society and Institutions in Early Modern France*, ed. Mack P. Holt, 63-79 (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1991).

markers and funeral statuary.¹¹ It was not unusual for field commissions and command orders, *lettres de provision* of administrative, financial and/or juridical office, prior positive rulings of provincial and local inquests into noble status, documents recording the rendering of homage, contracts of sale and marriage contracts to be included in the documentary evidence submitted. D. J. Sturdy notes that during the *recherche de la noblesse* conducted in Caen for 1634-1635, the *produisant(e)s* submitted “a bewildering variant of papers intended to impress the commissioners” including marriage contracts, documents and correspondence which clearly bore the recipient’s legal and noble title.¹²

In addition to the evidence submitted by claimants, the provincial *intendant* and/or his *commissionnaire(s) de la recherche de la noblesse* would be given access to local church, notarial and fiscal records. The evidence compiled by past *recherches de la noblesse* would also be consulted to ensure that individuals whose noble status had been revoked had, indeed, been returned to the tax rolls. Oral evidence as to any fiscal impropriety or under-assessment of local families could also be presented to those conducting the investigations and

¹¹Florentin de Thierriat, “Premiere Partie: De la Noblesse de Race,” *Trois Traictiez sçavoir, 1. De la Noblesse de Race, 2. De la Noblesse Civile, 3. Des Immunitiez des Ignobles. Esquels toutes les questions touchant les exemptions, Immunitiez & autres Droicts des Nobles & Ignobles son redigée en un bel ordre & decidées par la Conference du Droict Civil, Romain, des Saints Canons, Ordonnances Royaux, Arrêts des Cours Souveraines, Coûtumes particulieres des Provinces de France, selon les opinions des Iurisconsultes, tant anciens que modernes* (Paris: Lucas Brunrau, 1606), 11-16.

¹²Although he does not define the terms, Sturdy adds that “unorthodox” and even “nondocumentary” evidence were included in the 1634-35 *recherche de la noblesse* for Caen. Sturdy, “Tax Evasion, the *Faux Nobles* and State Fiscalism,” 561-562.

assessments by local clergy, administrators or members of the crown's own financial bureaucracy.

All evidence would be scrutinized for authenticity and accuracy. This process included cross referencing the information provided by *produisant(e)s* with that submitted by other local families or even with that provided by families in other areas of the *élection*, province or country. Those whose evidence was found to be inadequate or otherwise suspect – or simply those who may have experienced difficulty in acquiring acceptable documentation – were given the opportunity to attain additional or different documentation. The amount of time given appears to have varied. For example, D. J. Sturdy notes that during the investigations of 1634-1635, *produisant(e)s* in Caen would often be given an extension of a month in which to acquire the necessary evidence, but adds that occasionally they could be given “less or more.”¹³ In Bayeux, James B. Wood notes that extensions as short as one month or as long as three months could be granted.¹⁴

The ultimate adjudication and acceptance of all submissions was the purview of the provincial *intendant*. It was his decision as to whether or not the evidence provided by an individual and/or family was unverifiable or fraudulent and whether or not this would result

¹³*Ibid.*, 565.

¹⁴Wood, *The Nobility of the Élection of Bayeux, 1463-1666: Continuity Through Change*, 34-35.

in the individual or family being returned to the tax rolls. To add insult to injury, those who were “condemned” and returned to the tax rolls also found themselves subjected to a fine, ostensibly levied in lieu of back taxes owed. Sturdy has noted that in Caen in 1634-1635, the rate of the fine assessed was generally not fixed; a value was arrived at only after consulting with five local residents, including a priest, as to the holdings and means of the individual or family in question.¹⁵

In terms of the creation of a public identity, the final stages of the investigation were the most crucial. If a positive ruling was made on the claim to nobility, the genealogy and documentary evidence submitted by each individual and/or family was included in a volume published by the King’s printer. This final act of publication created a public record of the results of the specific *recherche de la noblesse* and signaled the state’s acceptance of the claimants’ *noblesse*. The published volume was, literally, the final word on *noblesse* in a particular area or region as it functioned as a reference tool – a catalogue of nobility – that would be consulted by the state in future investigations. Being recorded within its pages publicly proclaimed the validity of the family’s or individual’s *noblesse* – at least until the next *recherche de la noblesse*, when the process would begin again.

¹⁵Samuel Clark adds that the shortfall in any penalty assigned to a *faux noble* had to be made up by other nobles within the same parish. Consequently, in areas where *faux nobles* might outnumber “true” nobles – who likely had greater financial resources – the crown might not be able to acquire the desired levels of revenue. Clark, *State and Status: The Rise of the State and Aristocratic Power in Western Europe*, 172. See also: Sturdy, “Tax Evasion, the *Faux Nobles* and State Fiscalism,” 553.

B. The *Recherches de la noblesse* and the historiography of nobility in early modern France

Given the diverse evidence they contain, it should not be surprising that the *recherches de la noblesse* have been employed by many historians to address questions about the origins, social structure, political influence and cultural practices of France's *noblesse*. The work of Jean Meyer, D. J. Sturdy, Samuel Clark, Gayle K. Brunelle and James B. Wood (among others) has shown that by using the *recherches de la noblesse* historians can understand how, in a society that became increasingly obsessed with social value and legitimacy, *noblesse* could be more objectively defined.¹⁶

Jean Meyer's *Noblesse Bretonne au XVIIIe siècle* utilizes *recherches de la noblesse* that were carried out between 1668 and 1672 (as part of Colbert's economic and social policy) to examine how the crown attempted to reform the nobility of Brittany in the late seventeenth century.¹⁷ In the process of analyzing this particular *recherche de la noblesse*, Meyer uncovered a process by which Brittany's *noblesse* changed from a group dominated by

¹⁶Although not all have been expressly undertaken for this purpose, the works discussed in this chapter have helped to address questions raised by Marc Bloch, a founder of the *Annales* school, concerning the need to analyse those factors which shaped *noblesse* as a social construct. Bloch argued that while addressing how *noblesse* was defined in juridical terms was important, it was also important to understand its more existential aspects as a way of understanding early modern society as a whole. Marc Bloch, "Sur le passé de la noblesse française: quelques jalons de recherche," *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, 8 (1936): 366-378.

¹⁷Meyer, *La noblesse Bretonne au XVIIIe siècle*, 29-61.

established families to one which was increasingly dominated by *anoblis*.¹⁸ Over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Brittany, the increasing political importance of the royal courts and financial administration (and even the increase in governmental interest in the expansion of shipping and commerce which developed under Cardinal Richelieu) resulted in the rapid growth of a group which Meyer calls *la noblesse nouvelle*. This group comprised those who had purchased ennobling offices and those who had obtained *lettres de noblesse* in the early to mid-seventeenth century. The existence of a *parlement*, *Chambre de Comptes*, and *Chancellerie* in Brittany only facilitated the rapid expansion of a nobility based in jurisprudence and finance; the extent of this growth, Meyer suggests, was limited only by the absence of a *Cour des Aides* in the region.¹⁹ As a result, Meyer estimates that between 25,000 and 30,000 persons could be counted among the *noblesse* in Brittany by 1668.

Despite the rapid growth in Brittany's *anoblis*, the *recherches de la noblesse* for 1668-1672 show that this group accounted for only 17% of the total noble population during this period. Slightly larger at 28%, was that portion of Brittany's noble families which Meyer identifies as *la noblesse ancienne*, a group whose origins could be legitimately traced to a period prior to the mid-fifteenth century. The majority of Brittany's nobles (55%) were

¹⁸Meyer notes that while finding sources which could provide adequate information as to the *noblesse* in all of Brittany's 1,600 parishes, 2,500 administrative divisions and 17,000 *fiefs* (or other types of landholding) would be difficult, it is not impossible and cites the *recherches de la noblesse* carried out for 1668-1672 as a possible source. *Ibid.*, 18-22, 46-56.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 29-38, 55-67, 97-151.

écuyers d'extraction, whose nobility dated from the end of the fifteenth century or first half of the sixteenth century.²⁰

What Meyer found was that the crown's attempts to reform the *noblesse* affected more than just the demographics of Brittany's noble population. He argues that it created a desire among all three categories of Brittany's nobility to find ways in which its collective identity could be expressed so as to consolidate the social position and importance of the group as a whole.²¹ As a result, socially mobile *bourgeois*, who had seen their aspirations easily achieved prior to 1668, were effectively barred from the upper reaches of society after 1668 as members of *la noblesse nouvelle* began increasingly to define their social identity through the same cultural and social avenues as did those whose *noblesse* was well established.²²

²⁰*Ibid.*, 38-39, 57-59, 64.

²¹He notes that while the reformation of the nobility was undertaken from 1668 to 1672, the period 1672-1675 saw the government's attempt at the reformation of the justice system. As the *noblesse* of many of Brittany's *anoblis* originated in the royal courts, they would be directly affected by this second wave of activity as well. *Ibid.*, 133-150.

²²The records show that the members of *la noblesse nouvelle* took up a number of time-honoured and socially respected noble pursuits: they commissioned family genealogies to establish the legitimacy and longevity of the line, they acquired both formal and honorific titles to reinforce social reputations; they bought large country houses and other conspicuous material goods; they participated in traditional noble social rituals such as the hunt; and they constructed family and kin alliances with established noble households through marriage to families of similar or, preferably, higher social standing. *Ibid.*, 295-330.

Meyer's analysis shows that the rise of an identifiable group of new nobles did not create a reactionary panic among established families. Rather, it was the newcomers who felt the need to redefine their identity. Thus, *la noblesse nouvelle* responded to the social obstacles placed in their path by embracing those activities which reflected more traditional ideas about noble identity. Meyer suggests that the significance of such a development lies in the fact that while the political power of the established noble households in Brittany appears to have declined after 1700, the traditional social ideals on which their predominance had been based found new life and purpose in the lives of *la noblesse nouvelle*. Simply put, the new nobility turned to an old model of *noblesse* and noble identity as a way to secure their social status.²³

The *recherches de la noblesse* have also been used to study the ways in which the French crown attempted to centralize power in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. D. J. Sturdy's analysis of the *recherches de la noblesse* conducted in Caen between 1634 and 1635 focuses primarily on the role they played in the economic and political policy of Cardinal Richelieu, Louis XIII's First Minister. Although Richelieu's intent was to wring much needed extra revenue directly from *faux nobles* (as well as indirectly from legitimate members of the second estate through the imposition of administrative fees), Sturdy concludes that the economic success of this particular *recherche de la noblesse* was limited. He notes that, while many *faux nobles* were likely identified by this *recherche de la noblesse*,

²³*Ibid.*, 343-355.

it was unlikely that the crown could recoup the cost of the exercise by restoring impoverished usurpers to the *taille*.²⁴ Similar observations as to the mixed financial success of *recherches de la noblesse* have been made by Samuel Clark. He stresses that although the crown may have derived some revenue from levying fines and collecting new and back taxes, those individuals and families who were fined were also likely to be among the poorest of a given region, thus ensuring that a severely limited amount of revenue would be generated through this exercise.²⁵

However, while both Sturdy and Clark focus a great deal of attention on the economic impact of the *recherches de la noblesse*, neither ignores their social function. For example, while Sturdy maintains that Richelieu's purpose for conducting the 1634-35 *recherches de la noblesse* was fiscal, he adds that the Cardinal also believed that "[i]nsofar as . . . [the *recherches de la noblesse*] helped to purge the nobility, well and good."²⁶ Clark is more direct in his assessment of their social impact, stating that the *recherches de la noblesse* were one aspect in the on-going struggle to define aristocratic status in early modern France, a struggle in which "the state typically sought to undermine the ability of people to increase

²⁴Sturdy, "Tax Evasion, the *Faux Nobles* and State Fiscalism," 568-572.

²⁵Clark, *State and Status: The Rise of the State and Aristocratic Power in Western Europe*, 172-4.

²⁶However, Sturdy maintains that the social function of this particular *recherche de la noblesse* "was far less important than the fiscal." Sturdy, "Tax Evasion, the *Faux Nobles* and State Fiscalism," 551.

their status on their own or to control the criteria by which status was accorded.”²⁷ And even though some *faux nobles* may have escaped scrutiny or some “true” nobles may not have been able to supply acceptable evidence to support their claim, Clark suggests that the *recherches de la noblesse* were, on the whole, successful exercises in political and social control. In particular, he notes that individuals who had been rejected by investigators were often put in a position where they had little alternative but to purchase either offices in the bureaucracy or commissions in the army, bringing not only a financial windfall to the state but forcibly creating a political and social allegiance between the individual seeking noble status and the crown.²⁸

Gayle K. Brunelle has used *recherches de la noblesse* to explore the plight of noble widows who, as a result of their marriage to a *roturier* (commoner), appear to have become a specific target of these investigations. In “Dangerous Liaisons: Mésalliance and Early Modern Noblewomen,” she notes that marriage between French noblewomen and commoners was a frequent occurrence throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.²⁹ In part, the frequency of such marriages and their general, albeit grudging, acceptance in noble social circles was a reflection of the creeping impoverishment of many

²⁷Clark, *State and Status: The Rise of the State and Aristocratic Power in Western Europe*, 174.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 172, 179.

²⁹Brunelle, “Dangerous Liaisons: Mésalliance and Early Modern French Noblewomen,” 77.

noble families. The financial necessity of finding a suitably wealthy groom to rejuvenate family fortunes appears to have outweighed concerns regarding the established legal custom, which held that noble women risked forfeiting their social status by contracting such a marriage.³⁰ By the 1560s and 1570s, concerns over the perceived ease by which *noblesse* could be attained through ennoblement and marriage resulted in a more rigorous attitude towards the enforcement of *dérogeance* (derogation).³¹ This development ensured that the legal process by which *roturier* widows were reinstated into the ranks of the nobility was applied in a more exacting manner. Many of the women in Brunelle's study appear to have had greater difficulty in reacquiring their noble status – or, at least, in keeping themselves

³⁰Meyer notes: "Comme toute la noblesse française, la mésalliance est honnie, mais fort pratiquée." Meyer, *La noblesse Bretonne au XVIIIe siècle*, 297.

A number of early modern theorists found it necessary to outline the social perils faced by any noblewoman who married a *roturier* in their treatises on the nature of nobility and its importance to society. See, for example: Florentin de Thierriat, "Premiere Partie: De la Noblesse de Race," *Trois Traictez [sic]* . . . , 20-25; and Charles du Moulin, "Coustumes de Chaalons et ressort du siege dudit lieu, en ce qui est de [sic] bailliage de Vermandois: de personnes nobles," *Les Coustumes Generales et particuliers [sic] de France et des Gaulles, corrigees et annotees de plusieurs Decisions, Arrests, & autres choses notables* (Paris: Chez la veuve Marc Ory, 1615), 1: 490, 506.

³¹Brunelle writes that "usurpation of nobility and derogation, or non-noble activities entailing the loss of noble status, were mutually exclusive offenses. A usurper, one who is not and never has been noble, cannot forfeit his nobility through improper, ignoble behaviour. Thus nobles denounced for derogation were not being accused of usurpation, and vice-versa. Derogation was, however, a handy charge to level at targeted nobles if the allegation of usurpation could not be substantiated, because most people whose nobility was questioned in *recherches* were also more likely, for economic reasons, to have lapsed from acceptable, noble professions, even if they were born legitimate nobles." Brunelle, "Dangerous Liaisons: Mésalliance and Early Modern French Noblewomen," 77.

from being placed on the tax rolls. Consequently, they found themselves facing the prospect of a life of poverty and social insignificance.

As with Meyer's study of Brittany, Brunelle uses *recherches de la noblesse* to show that both the state and noble society itself possessed ideas as to what constituted the proper means by which *noblesse* could be acquired and maintained and, moreover, that these ideas found expression in the *recherches de la noblesse*. Brunelle notes that the compilation of *recherches de la noblesse* and the desire to establish new and more restrictive ideas of what constituted *noblesse* both targeted minor rural nobles and *anoblis* as the most likely sources for usurpation and/or *dérogeance*. As it was among these lesser nobles that *roturier* widows were largely represented, this new desire to see social expectations enforced in a more rigid manner struck particularly hard at this group of socially vulnerable women. Brunelle concludes that noble efforts "to assuage their own insecurity about the meaning of nobility in the changing and less feudal society of early modern France" allowed the state to enhance its power "to control the behaviour of the rest of society even on the level of family and personal decisions about marriage" through the *recherches de la noblesse*.³²

James B. Wood's analysis of the various *recherches de la noblesse* conducted between 1463 and 1666 for the *élection* (tax district) of Bayeux in lower Normandy also demonstrates the usefulness of such sources in discerning how nobles themselves defined

³²*Ibid.*, 76, 78.

noblesse. Wood used these *recherches de la noblesse* to examine the creation of kin networks and how the structure of noble society adapted to the demographic pressures of the early modern period.³³ However, it is when considering the influence war had on *noblesse* that Wood's analysis becomes particularly relevant to this thesis. Undertaken, in part, as a re-evaluation of how social, economic and professional factors shaped the lives of France's nobility in the early modern period,³⁴ Wood's analysis provides new insights into the changing size and structure of Bayeux's nobility, that nobility's economic base, its methods of constructing kin networks and the professional activity of its members, including military service.³⁵

Wood pays a great deal of attention to those individuals who used administrative service as an avenue to ennoblement; however, he emphasizes that the military ethos which lay at the heart of traditional definitions of nobility had a great influence on the ways Bayeux's nobles expressed their understanding of the responsibilities and duties associated with their social preeminence. Through an analysis of the types of military commissions and

³³See: Wood, "Endogamy and *Mésalliance*, the Marriage Patterns of the Nobility of the *Élection* of Bayeux, 1430-1669," 375-392; and James B. Wood, "Demographic Pressure and Social Mobility among the Nobility of Early Modern France," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 8 (1977): 3-16.

³⁴Wood, "La structure sociale de la noblesse dans le baillage de Caen et ses modifications (1463-1666)," 331-333.

³⁵Wood, *The Nobility of the Élection of Bayeux, 1463-1666: Continuity Through Change*, 71-99.

offices held by nobles in Bayeux, as well as the extent and duration of military service recorded in the *recherches de la noblesse* conducted between 1456 and 1666, Wood found he could determine “how quickly and completely new nobles took on the military aspects of the older nobility, thereby lessening their social visibility as recent nonnobles [sic] and making it easier for them to be assimilated.”³⁶

He discovered that military service was not only a means for established families to enhance their noble status but that it also served as a means through which new nobles could assimilate and later generations could consolidate *noblesse* that had been achieved through ennoblement in previous generations. While more than half of Bayeux’s nobles “never performed any military service at all” and that “even within the militarily active portion of the class, only a very small portion followed what could be called regular or lengthy military careers,” by 1666, about 44% of all nobles in the *élection* had participated in some form of military activity.³⁷ Wood is quick to add that the total numbers of nobles active in military service in any given year cannot, by itself, reflect the intentions and actions of those who desired to serve but were not chosen during military levies.³⁸ He concludes that there is

³⁶*Ibid.*, 71-72.

³⁷This figure is only slightly lower than the 49% he estimates for the period 1552-1562, which coincides with the advent of the Wars of Religion. See: *Ibid.*, Table III.4, “Active Military Service, 1552-1639,” 83.

³⁸Wood defines “minimal service” as volunteering for active service in the various *ban et arrière ban* but not being chosen to serve for reasons of age, money or equipment.
(continued...)

ample evidence to support the contention that “much more than one-fifth” of Bayeux’s nobility could be categorized as “genuine *noblesse d’épée*” and that many more desired to be perceived as such.³⁹

Wood’s analysis revealed particular service patterns among those individuals or families that did participate in military service. He notes that posts such as lieutenant general, commander, *maître* and *aide de camp* were dominated in Bayeux by well-established and financially stable families; he adds, however, that these families constituted the minority of those involved in military service. The *recherches de la noblesse* for Bayeux clearly show that the region’s *anoblis* were well represented within the military hierarchy and were more likely to have more extensive field experience than members of the established nobility.⁴⁰ And, although not all new nobles in Bayeux appear to have exchanged the robe for the sword as soon as was possible,⁴¹ Wood acknowledges that a significant number of those who used

³⁸(...continued)
Ibid., 81, 88-90.

³⁹Wood includes “nobles who performed occasional military service when it was required, or [those who] pursued regular and extended military careers” within his definition of *noblesse d’épée*. In this instance, Wood focuses particularly on that evidence provided by documents pertaining to the *ban* musters of 1552, 1562, 1597, 1639 and 1666. *Ibid.*, 81, 85-86.

⁴⁰He notes that, on average, *anoblis* warriors had an experience of five or more campaigns. *Ibid.*, 93-94.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, Table III.3, “Generations of Nobility of Office holding and Professional *Anoblis*,” 80.

administrative service as a path to ennoblement were likely to abandon office holding for military service within a few generations of being ennobled.⁴²

As these selected examples suggest, the *recherches de la noblesse* provide valuable information about noble demography, life styles and professional choices, social perceptions and how the individual navigated his or her way through the process of attaining and maintaining *noblesse*. As Brunelle and Wood clearly show, the *recherches de la noblesse* reflect attitudes held by those of noble status pertaining to those qualities, personal characteristics and professional activities which they considered to be key to maintaining *noblesse*. In the case of Bayeux, it is also clear that while noble status could be attained through administrative service, a significant number of nobles in this region chose to preserve and enhance their status and familial reputation through war, thus establishing a connection between war and their social and personal identities. As Wood states, the evidence recorded in the *recherches de la noblesse* for early modern Bayeux shows that “the place of military

⁴²As an example of this trend, Wood cites the case of Lucas Archer (an administrator in the barony of Neuilly for the bishop of Bayeux) and his family. Lucas was awarded his *lettres d’anoblissement* in 1523, twenty years after beginning his service to the bishop. At the time of the family’s elevation, Lucas’ eldest son, Guillaume, was an *élu*; however, by 1552, the same Guillaume was a “man at arms in the service of the king.” Guillaume’s younger brother served, in 1562, as captain of the *château de Nevilly*. He also notes that while new nobles may not have managed to climb to the top of the military hierarchy in Bayeux, they did serve “in numbers that equaled and even exceeded their numerical importance among all nobles.” *Ibid.*, 93-94.

service in the life of the nobility was more complex than has been commonly acknowledged.”⁴³

C. The *recherches de la noblesse* as historical sources

Although a useful source for the study of *noblesse*, the *recherches de la noblesse* raise a few methodological challenges of which the historian should be aware. Central to these is the validity of the nature and veracity of the evidence recorded within them. It has been suggested that, as the thrust of the *recherches de la noblesse* was to prove one’s noble and tax-exempt status, some of the requisite genealogical and documentary evidence may have been falsified to support a *produisant(e)*’s case. Given the social and economic value of noble status in early modern France, that some members of its elite may have succumbed to the temptation to aggrandize or embellish or even create aspects of their personal or family history should not come as a surprise to any scholar who studies the period.

However, this argument has an added dimension. Its proponents suggest that as questionable evidence may have been included in the published *recherches de la noblesse*, it means that the acts of inspection and authentication carried out by those in charge were inherently deficient or was, in some way, biased. As Edmond Esmonin has noted, while provincial *intendants* and their assistants may have been diligent in assessing the

⁴³*Ibid.*, 72.

documentation presented to them, they were frequently strangers to some, if not all, of the areas to which they were assigned. As a consequence, Esmonin suggests that they were forced to rely on local assistance in assessing the evidence brought before them. He concludes that this reliance may have allowed local biases as to a family's social standing to influence the adjudication, resulting in the acceptance of questionable evidence.⁴⁴ Samuel Clark has raised similar concerns and has suggested that the *recherches de la noblesse* actually "contributed to perceived abuse [of noble status] as much as to its elimination" by favouring the claims of influential and wealthy families.⁴⁵

Do such concerns render the *recherches de la noblesse* unsuitable for use in studying how individuals perceived their own nobility? Scholars including Meyer and Wood acknowledge that while historians should be aware of the possible disadvantages in using the *recherches de la noblesse*, the documentation left behind by the *intendants* shows them to have been as diligent as possible in uncovering falsified records and adamant in returning usurpers of *noblesse* to the *taille*.⁴⁶ Yet, the question remains: if, despite the best efforts of those who oversaw the *recherches de la noblesse*, some false evidence has been included in

⁴⁴Edmund Esmonin, *La taille en Normandie au temps de Colbert (1661-1683)* (Paris: Press universitaires de France, 1913), 44.

⁴⁵Clark, *State and Status: The Rise of the State and Aristocratic Power in Western Europe*, 179.

⁴⁶Meyer, *La noblesse Bretonne au XVIIIe siècle*, 46-53; and Wood, *The Nobility of the Élection of Bayeux, 1463-1666: Continuity Through Change*, 41-42.

the published findings, how might this affect the historian's endeavours? Historians must address two related issues before passing judgement as to the potential usefulness of this historical source. First, how can allegedly questionable evidence be detected and proven to be false? A comparative evaluation of the genealogies and documentary evidence with other archival sources may go some way to answering this question, but would likely not provide a definitive answer.

This leads to the second issue: to what degree might the alleged falsification appear to be for a particular purpose and how might this purpose be related to the construction of the sense of self which is the focus of this thesis? As Arthur L. Herman Jr. has suggested for the study of fidelity in early modern France, historians who must rely on allegedly questionable evidence must ask how the evidence records the actions taken by the individual(s) in their desire to uphold particular social conventions and also whether the ideas expressed in the evidence appear to reflect a belief as to the rationality and the necessity of the activities chronicled within a very specific historical, social and/or moral context.⁴⁷ This approach is well suited for historians using the *recherches de la noblesse*. Rather than focus on the potential falseness of collected documentation, historians should be concerned with how the evidence within the *recherches de la noblesse* reflected and served to legitimate the beliefs of nobles as to their individual and collective social identity.

⁴⁷Arthur L. Herman, Jr., "The Language of Fidelity in Early Modern France," *The Journal of Modern History*, 67 (1995): 8-13.

Consequently, the question becomes this: what value did the *recherches de la noblesse* hold for the nobility of France that might entice a family or an individual to risk falsifying evidence? During the late seventeenth century, the need to be seen to be noble – to act nobly and to undertake a profession worthy of one’s social status – may have taken on an added importance for those engaged in war as personal virtue and professional utility became of even greater importance in the quest for elite status. As this thesis shows, the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) provided the nobility of this frontier province with a way in which to craft a social, professional and/or familial identity in a period when debates over the nature and meaning of *noblesse* preoccupied many intellectuals and nobles alike.

Conclusion:

Recherches de la noblesse, nobility and the history of memory and identity

Given its centrality to human history, historians must attempt to understand memory and identity in the same way as those who constructed it understood it. To do so, historians must recognize the ability of formal documentation and personal texts produced by a society (or a portion of it) to convey both implicit and explicit cultural ideals and “to explain the world in terms and through ideas of its own making.”⁴⁸ This is exactly what the *recherches de la noblesse* allow the historian of the nobility of early modern France to do. As this chapter has argued, the nature of *recherches de la noblesse* created an opportunity for

⁴⁸For greater discussion on the nature of discourse theory in history, see: Tina Loo, *Making Law, Order, and Authority in British Columbia 1821-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 6-7.

individuals and families claiming noble status to define themselves as part of the elite and to show publicly, through the submission of personalized materials, how this noble identity and memory both drew from a collective past and ideology.

While some scholars express concern over the reliability of the evidence in *recherches de la noblesse*, the work of Meyer, Sturdy, Brunelle and Wood are testament to the fact that these records are of value when deconstructing the complex social and ideological world of the nobility in early modern France. Moreover, given their diversity of evidence, the *recherches de la noblesse* allow for a greater understanding of *noblesse* in terms of its relationship to war. As Wood has suggested, muster lists and other state military records cannot reveal the intent of those who wished to participate or the reasons of those who did or could not. Nor can such records alone reveal the degree to which war permeated the social ideology of a given society. It is precisely the wide-ranging nature of the evidence contained in *recherches de la noblesse* that can offer a highly workable solution to this problem. As the French crown made few stipulations as to what types of documentary evidence could be provided to the intendant and/or his assistants, the *recherches de la noblesse* are replete with data on all aspects of noble life including those which relate, directly and indirectly, to the pervasiveness of military service and related ideology in noble life.

As the remaining chapters of this thesis show, the evidence contained in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (published 1673) suggests that the provincial *intendant*'s assessment of claims to *noblesse* facilitated a process through which noble identity could be created and communicated to society at large. The documents central to this assessment record how the noble families and individuals of Champagne perceived themselves and, by extension, how they wished to be perceived by the state. By analyzing the ways in which participation in war and military-related service and activity was presented in the genealogical and documentary evidence in the published findings of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), it is possible to gauge how participation in war shaped the demography of Champagne's nobility, the role played by war in the claims made to noble status in this frontier province, as well as the identities and histories these individuals and families wished to create for their lineage, for themselves and for their posterity.

Dale - Chapter 3

Caumartin and the *Recherche de la Noblesse de Champagne* (1673)

CHAPTER 3

Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin and the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673)

As Chapter Two noted, the wide variety of multi-generational evidence found in the *recherches de la noblesse* can provide a means by which to assess the part war, its conduct and its culture played in defining noble status and identity in early modern France.

However, undertaking a study of this type by consulting all extant manuscript records and published *recherches de la noblesse* would be difficult, if not impossible, for any historian.

Consequently, as this thesis is concerned with how individuals crafted identities that would gain them public recognition and social stability within a community, the remaining chapters of this thesis focus not on manuscript records but on the published text of the *recherche de la noblesse* for Champagne which was conducted and compiled between January 1667 and 1672 by Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin, the *intendant* of Champagne.¹ This published

¹For an estimate as to the dates of this particular *recherche de la noblesse*, see Laurent Bourquin, "La Noblesse de Champagne dans son espace régional vers le milieu du XVIIe siècle," in *Sociétés et Idéologies des Temps Modernes*, recueillis par J. Fouilleron, G. Le Thiec, H. Michel, Centre d'histoire moderne et contemporaine de l'Europe méditerranéenne et de ses périphéries, 59-77 (Montpellier: Université de Montpellier III, Centre d'histoire moderne et contemporaine de l'Europe méditerranéenne et de ses périphéries, 1996).

Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin's full title [as given in the *procès verbal* which was not reproduced in its entirety in the published *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673)] was "Chevalier, seigneur de Caumartin, de Boissy, d'Argouges, &c. Conseiller du Roy en ses Conseils, Maistre des Requestes ordinaires de son Hôtel, Intendant de la Justice, Police, Finances & Armées de sa Majesté en la Province de Champagne & Brye [sic], Commissaire départy pour l'exécution de ses Ordres dans lesdites Provinces." Assisting
(continued...)

Caumartin and the *Recherche de la Noblesse de Champagne* (1673)

volume made public the genealogical and documentary evidence provided by all *produisant(e)s* whose claim to nobility had been approved by Caumartin. In short, it made public the identities created by Champagne's nobles.²

The *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) was undertaken in response to an *arrêt* (dated 22 March 1666) which decreed the need for a *recherche des usurpateurs du titres de noblesse*. As Chapter Two discussed, these hunts for *faux nobles* were ostensibly a means by which the crown hoped to increase its diminishing revenues and were conceived primarily as part of the crown's regulation of taxes. However, the *recherches de la noblesse* also served the crown as a way to demonstrate its concern for the nature and respectability of the second estate and to act decisively upon that concern. The public manifestation of that concern would be the publication of Caumartin's findings in what the *intendant* himself characterized as "un Catalogue des veritables Gentilshommes." This catalogue was to include their names and surnames, their coats of arms as well as genealogical and documentary evidence which would demonstrate the genuineness of the claims to *noblesse*

¹(...continued)

Caumartin in this endeavour was his *commissaire de la recherche de la noblesse* Lallemand de Lestrée, who was also *procureur du roi*. Louis-François le Fevre de Caumartin, *Procez [sic] verbal de la recherche de la noblesse de Champagne, fait par Monsieur de Caumartin . . . in Procez [sic] verbal de la recherche de la noblesse de Champagne suivi des notes secrètes sur ladite recherche*, ed. Pierre-Marie Dioudonnat, 21-129 (Paris: Sedopolis, 1982). This facsimile edition of the *procès verbal* is based on a 1673 edition of Caumartin's original work which was printed by the King's printer, Jacques Seneuze.

²The findings of Caumartin's *recherche de la noblesse* were published by Jacques Seneuze in 1673 and are discussed in greater detail in Chapters Four to Seven of this thesis.

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recorded within it. After publication, this catalogue would be published and, in theory, would be presented to the King himself; it was more likely that Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV's *contrôleur général des finances* and First Minister, would be the recipient as it was he who oversaw the collection of taxes and the fiscal machinery of the state. The published volume would act as a type of social archive, which could be consulted by the King, his officers and bureaucrats whenever intelligence about members of France's nobility was needed.³

The collection and adjudication of material was a long-term and complex process,⁴ and the 1666 *arrêt* provides detailed instructions which reflect this reality. Given the purpose of the exercise, it is not surprising that the *arrêt* instructed the *intendant* and others carrying out this *recherche de la noblesse* to be scrupulous in their collection and assessment of submissions. In the case of questionable or fraudulent evidence, for example, it stipulated that the documentation in question was to be sent, along with a report on the grounds for suspicion, to the King's *greffier des commissions extraordinaires* for closer examination. The *arrêt* also provided for additional scrutiny of successful claims. It stated that submissions that had been verified and approved (including those which may have been sent for further adjudication, returned to the *intendant* and ultimately approved), were to be

³Caumartin, *Procez [sic] verbal de la recherche de la noblesse de Champagne, fait par Monsieur de Caumartin . . .* in *Procez [sic] verbal de la recherche de la noblesse de Champagne suivi des notes secrètes sur ladite recherche*, 21-23.

⁴For a more detailed discussion of this process, see Chapter Two.

collected and sent, along with the *intendant*'s notes (the *procès verbal* which listed all successful *produisant(e)s* and his personal *notes secrètes*), to the *Conseil d'État du Roi* for final consideration by the King and his advisors.⁵ While time consuming, it was believed that this process would guarantee that no false evidence and/or claims to nobility were overlooked or inadvertently accepted by an *intendant* and, conversely, that no submission was rejected without cause.

If, after being scrutinized by the King and his advisors, the submissions were found to be acceptable, the claimant(s) were deemed noble and their evidence was included in a published volume which reproduced the genealogies and documentary evidence provided by each successful claimant and/or family. As the final product of years of investigation, the published volume signalled the completion of a *recherche de la noblesse* and represented a definitive list of all those within a particular area who conformed to an ideal of *noblesse* that was perpetuated, if not exploited, by the state and those among the nobility of a particular region. In this way, the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* published in 1673 provides

⁵As Chapter One discussed, this final phase of the adjudication process paid homage to the theory that the provision and recognition of all social distinctions ultimately fell within the King's purview; thus, it was he and his council that should have the final say in any decisions as to who was and was not noble. There is little indication in either the published *procès verbal*, Caumartin's own *notes secrètes* or even the *épître* to the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) itself that the King and his council disagreed with or overturned any of Caumartin's decisions. There is, however, some evidence to suggest that Caumartin did at times question decisions made by the council. Caumartin, *Procez [sic] verbal de la recherche de la noblesse de Champagne, fait par Monsieur de Caumartin . . . in Procez [sic] verbal de la recherche de la noblesse de Champagne suivi des notes secrètes sur ladite recherche*, 24-29.

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a valuable tool in studying how nobility was defined within this frontier region and how those who claimed noble status sought to establish their identity before the state and the members of their own community.

Before undertaking a detailed analysis of the content of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), however, it is necessary to consider the impact Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin had on shaping the content and form of this published volume. Through his role as adjudicator, Caumartin helped to define the ideological, social and professional parameters within which *noblesse* would be understood in Champagne. Consequently, the contents of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) can be taken as indicators of the nature of the public discourse on the meaning of *noblesse* and the nature of noble identity in this region.

By considering the social background of the man and the contents of the adjudication notes he generated, this chapter examines the ideological factors which appear to have influenced Caumartin's adjudication of claims to nobility in Champagne. It begins with a brief consideration of the *intendant* himself, in order to discern whether his personal background may have disposed him towards a particular view of *noblesse*. The primary focus of this chapter is a consideration of Caumartin's adjudication notes referred to as *notes secrètes*. The *notes secrètes* contain short and, at times, pointed commentary as to Caumartin's opinions regarding the worthiness of a claim. These notes were not published

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within the text of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673). The *notes secrètes* exist in manuscript and are on deposit at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* in Paris; they also exist in a single volume facsimile edition of the manuscript which was first published in 1883 and was reprinted in the 1980s. This reprinted facsimile edition includes a copy of the manuscript text of Caumartin's *procès verbal* (a list of the names of those families included in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne*).⁶ It is the published facsimile edition of the *notes secrètes* and the *procès verbal* which was used as the source for the analysis in this chapter.

A. Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin (1624-1687)

Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin came from a long line of distinguished royal administrators. Like many noble families in early modern France, their status as members of the *noblesse* was derived from this service and was, by early modern standards, rather recent. The family appears to have originated in Ponthieu where, according to the *Dictionnaire de la noblesse*, patriarch Huart Le Fevre acquired *la terre de Caumartin* and his *lettres d'anoblissement* at the beginning of the fifteenth century.⁷ Not surprisingly, the *Dictionnaire de la noblesse* entry notes that details of the Le Fevre de Caumartin family history are sketchy for the period between 1400, the official date provided for Huart's acquisition of his *lettres*

⁶Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin, *Procez [sic] verbal de la recherche de la noblesse de Champagne suivi des notes secrètes sur ladite recherche*, ed. Pierre-Marie Dioudonnat (Paris: Sedopolis, 1982).

⁷Whether or not Huart was ennobled in recognition of service was not recorded in the *Dictionnaire de la noblesse*.

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d'anoblissement, and 1560, the marriage of Aubert Le Fevre de Caumartin. The latter is the date at which the family entry in the *Dictionnaire de la noblesse* begins in any detail.⁸

The family genealogy provided in the *Dictionnaire de la noblesse* records that the Le Fevre de Caumartins began their service in primarily non-military offices in earnest in the mid-sixteenth century. Louis-François' great grandfather, Jean II (d. 1579), became *général des finances* for Picardie in 1563; he was confirmed in the office in February 1564.⁹ Jean's son, Louis I (1552-1623), held a greater and more impressive array of offices than did his father. By 1607, Louis I could lay claim to being *conseiller au parlement de Paris* (1579),¹⁰ *maître des requêtes* (1585) *président au Grand Conseil* (1587), *intendant* of Poitou (1588) and of Picardie (1590), *conseiller d'État* (1594), *ambassadeur en Suisse* (1605) and *président honoraire au Grand Conseil* (1607). In 1608, Louis I purchased the *seigneurie* of Boissy-le-Châtel in Brie. By the time of Louis I's death in 1623, he had added the distinction of holding the office of *garde des sceaux de France* (1622) to his honours.¹¹ Clearly, by 1623,

⁸For Caumartin's family genealogy, see François Alexandre Aubert de La Chesnay-Desbois, *Dictionnaire de la noblesse contenant les généalogies, l'histoire & la chronologie des familles nobles de la France*, 3rd edition, Vol.7 (Paris: Schlesinger frères, 1863-76), s.v., "Fevre-de-Caumartin [sic]."

⁹*Ibid.*, s.v. "Jean Le Fevre II, Seigneur de Caumartin."

¹⁰Although not stated explicitly in the family genealogy, it is likely that he acquired this office on the death of his father in the same year.

¹¹La Chesnay-Desbois, *Dictionnaire de la noblesse contenant les généalogies, l'histoire & la chronologie des familles nobles de France*, s.v. "Fevre-de-Caumartin [sic], Louis Le Fevre, Chevalier, Seigneur de Caumartin & de Boissy-le Châtel en Brie."

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the family of the future *intendant* of Champagne was following a path very much typical of the new *noblesse de robe* that was gaining power and influence in government and society in early modern France.

Louis II (1586-1624), father of Louis-François, also served in a variety of administrative and judicial offices. He received his first office, that of *conseiller au Grand Conseil*, in 1608, eight years after becoming *abbé* of Saint-Quentin-de l'Île. Louis II became *maître des requêtes* in April 1614 and, by his death a decade later, had acquired an impressive number of additional offices and distinctions including that of *intendant* of Picardie and ambassador to Venice, where he died in 1624.¹² That his only son, Louis-François, should carry on the family tradition of service in non-military offices should not be surprising. Yet, the family genealogy provided in the *Dictionnaire de la noblesse* provides some interesting detail, not just about the offices and activities undertaken by Louis-François, but also those of his male children. While Louis-François dedicated himself to administrative service, the professional interests of his surviving sons were mixed, with his younger sons favouring military service exclusively.

Louis-François acquired his first office, that of *conseiller au parlement de Paris*, at the age of 20 in 1644. Like his father and grandfather before him, he became *maître des requêtes* (1653) and, with the advent of the 1666 *recherches de la noblesse*, *intendant* for

¹²*Ibid.*, s.v. "Louis Le Fevre II, Chevalier, Seigneur de Caumartin & de Boissy."

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Champagne (January 1667).¹³ That he became *conseiller d'État* in March 1672 suggests the crown was well pleased with his efforts in executing the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne*.¹⁴ Louis-François also held the office of “commissaire aux États de Bretagne” in 1682 and 1683.¹⁵

It is interesting to note that, while Louis-François' two oldest sons, Louis-Urbain (1653-1720) and Louis-François II (1666-1708) followed their father into administrative posts, his three younger sons did not.¹⁶ The eldest of these three remaining sons, Jean-

¹³The beginning of Caumartin's term as *intendant* for Champagne appears to coincide with the start of the 1666 *recherche de la noblesse*.

¹⁴Praise for Caumartin's administrative skills and support for the authority of his adjudications comes from others living within the seventeenth century itself. Writing in 1678, five years after the publication of the findings of Caumartin's *recherche de la noblesse*, Gilles André de La Roque cites Caumartin's work as an example of how, in a region where custom maintained that nobility could be transmitted through the maternal line, it was necessary to define “avec autant d'exactitude & de penetration” nobles from non-nobles. At the end of a chapter dedicated to the discussion of “la Noblesse des femmes libres de Champagne,” La Roque credits Caumartin's work as being an example of how best to correlate the necessary public proofs of nobility. La Roque declares Caumartin's work to be “un Ouvrage où l'on remarque clairement la difference qui doit être entre les Nobles de cette Province, & ceux qui aspiraient à leurs privileges, en vertu de l'usage local de la Coûtume.” Gilles André de La Roque, “De la Noblesse des femmes libres de Champagne,” Chapter 40, *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse, De ses differentes especes, De son Origine, du Gentilhomme de Nom & d'Armes, des Bannerets, des Bacheliers, des Écuyers, & de leurs differences. Avec plusieurs Questions & Maximes qui concernent la Noblesse*, (Paris: Étienne Michallet, 1678), 157-168.

¹⁵La Chesnay-Desbois, *Dictionnaire de la noblesse contenant les généalogies, l'histoire & la chronologie des familles nobles de France*, s.v. “Fevre-de-Caumartin [sic], Louis-François Le Fevre, Seigneur de Caumartin.”

¹⁶According to the *Dictionnaire de la noblesse*, Louis-François had a total of ten
(continued...)

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François-Paul, joined the church, ultimately becoming Bishop of Vannes in 1710 and of Blois in 1720. The remaining two sons, Felix and Paul-Victor-August, were sent into the navy and the military, respectively. Felix became an *enseigne* on an unspecified vessel in 1692; by the time of his death at age 25, he had risen to be *capitaine* of a *frégate légère*. Paul, who became a *Chevalier de Malte* in 1695, served as a commander during the French campaigns in Italy at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Thus, Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin, the *intendant* for Champagne who carried out the *recherche de la noblesse* for 1666, was clearly a member of the *noblesse de robe* and of a family whose noble status rested on continuous dedication to the King's administration. However, the participation of two of his own sons in armed service suggests that Caumartin did not harbour any negative opinion of military service as a component of *noblesse*. Such a supposition may be supported by the fact that, in the *épître* to his *procès verbal*, Caumartin characterized the relationship between noble identity and war in Champagne as an identifiable component in the *raison d'être* of this region's *noblesse*:

Aux premiers bruits de guerre toute la Champagne est en armes; les Gentils-hommes y sont tous aguerris. On diroit qu'ils ne sont nais sur cette frontiere que parce qu'ils ont plus de courage pour la deffendre, et qu'ils ne sont en veuë des ennemis, que parce qu'ils sont tousjours prest [sic] à donner ou à soutenir [sic] les premiers assauts. On peut ajouter que comme il n'y a point de Noblesse qui se soit renduë plus illustre, il n'y en aurait point aussi de plus

¹⁶(...continued)
children (five sons and five daughters).

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nombreuse ny de plus florissante, si plusieurs Maisons considerables n'y eussent pery dans les guerres.¹⁷

As Chapters Four through Seven demonstrate, the evidence in this particular *recherche de la noblesse* illustrates that Caumartin's characterization of Champagne's nobility as one dedicated to war was well founded and that it was an image which members of the region's *noblesse* sought to perpetuate.

B. Caumartin and the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673)

As his comments in the *procès verbal* suggest, examining the documentary evidence Caumartin generated while conducting the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) can provide insight into the *intendant*'s views on the nature of *noblesse*. For example, his belief in the ability of the *recherches de la noblesse* to define the parameters of *noblesse* in an ideological and practical way is made clear in the preface that was published with the main text of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673). As did many writers and intellectuals of the time, Caumartin argues that as *noblesse* not only reflected the power and grandeur of the monarchy but also acted as a first principle of social order it was paramount that society and the state guard against usurpation of it:

Cette gloire que tant d'excellens hommes on [sic] acquise à leur posterité au prix de leur sang, de leur repos, & même de leur vie, ne devoit elle coûter [sic] à d'autres que de la fraude & de la temerité? N'étoit-il pas juste que ceuz qui s'étoient élevez à une condition qu'ils navoient pas meritée, retombassent dans l'obscurité de leur naissance, . . . ils ne pûissent [sic] non plus que luy

¹⁷Caumartin, "Épistre," *Procez [sic] verbal de la recherche de la noblesse de Champagne, fait par Monsieur de Caumartin . . .* in *Procez [sic] verbal de la recherche de la noblesse de Champagne suivi des notes secrètes sur ladite recherche*, 16-17.

jouir du fruit de leur larcin? S'il leur eut être permis de s'ennoblir de la sorte, chacun eut esté l'Artisan de la Noblesse, le mensonge eut esté confondu avec la verité. Les Roys auroient perdu le plus beau Fleuron de leur Couronne, & le peuple sur qui seroit tombé tout le poids des charges publiques auroit en vain murmuré contre ces faux Nobles, & contre leurs immunités prétendues.¹⁸

Indeed, the contents of Caumartin's *notes secrètes* show that he did take his responsibilities as the adjudicator of claims to *noblesse* seriously. Moreover, they demonstrate that confirmation of nobility was by no means automatic. The case of the Moreaus, whose nobility was "refusé,"¹⁹ shows the lengths to which Caumartin went to adjudicate a submission:

Il a fait rapporter la minute de la transaction de 1603 par Chantereau, tabellion de Jaugé: comme la fausseté me parut tout visible, je le fis arrêter et interroger. Il dit que la grosse lui [sic] avait été donnée par Hugot, héritier du notaire; sur quoy ayant fait représenter Hugot et Chantereau, ils lui ont dit que cette pièce avoit été près de six semaines entre les mains de Moreau: ajournement personnel contre Moreau: rapport d'experts jugeant les pièces fausses. Moreau condamné à 300 livres d'amende: sera plus amplement informé contre Chantereau: Hugot absent.²⁰

¹⁸Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin, "Épistre," *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (Châlons: Jacques Seneuze, Imprimeur & libraire ordinaire du Roi, 1673), unpaginated.

¹⁹Meaning that the submission was denied and the individual and/or family returned to the rolls of the *taille*.

²⁰Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin, Entry for Moreau, "Notes secrètes de Louis-François de Caumartin," *Notes de Monsieur de Caumartin sur la recherche des nobles de la province de Champagne en 1673 d'après la Manuscrit inédit de la Bibliothèque nationale in Procez [sic] verbal de la recherche de la noblesse de Champagne suivi des notes secrètes sur ladite recherche*, ed. Pierre-Marie Dioudonnat, 21-129 (Paris: Sedopolis, 1982). In this edition of the *notes secrètes*, the section is numbered independently from other parts of the same edition, beginning at page 1.

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As Chapter Two discussed, the verification and adjudication of claims involved a complex process. It is important to remember, however, that while this process involved inspection of written submissions for falsification, it also involved the personal judgement of the *intendant*. Consequently, his opinion would be an inescapable factor in determining the final results of this process. It was he who would decide which submissions needed further or more detailed evaluation, he who would grant extensions as to the submission of documentation and he would ultimately be responsible for compiling the records which would be made public. It is for these reasons that the evidence of his opinions and inclinations as recorded in the *notes secrètes* are of such importance to this study.

In the published facsimile edition used for this thesis, the *notes secrètes* comprise about 80 pages and contain 552 entries which provide some indication as to the status of the submitted claims.²¹ While the entries were not grouped in any specific manner (such as all whose claims had been refused together), identifying those cases where a decision had been reached was facilitated by the fact that beside the majority of names was recorded either an “r” (for “refusé”) or an “m” (for “maintenu”). For 315 of these 552 total entries (just over 60%), no information beyond whether the family was maintained in its nobility or whether the submission was rejected was provided. For the almost 40% of entries that did provide

²¹As noted in the Introduction to this thesis, an analysis of these three lists can account for the reduction in total number of families in the published *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne*. While it appears that 552 families initially had their claims to nobility upheld, by 1672, 45 of these claims had been rejected or further deferred, leaving a total of 507 families. See: “Introduction,” 45-46.

some detail about the claim, the information was printed below the family name and it explained, although often briefly or in a rather cryptic manner, the reason(s) for the decision.

The *notes secrètes* also contain a further two distinct lists which appear to be related to keeping track of claims that had been questionable, had been rejected or were awaiting further clarification and/or documentation. The first of these two lists records the names of those whom Caumartin concluded were usurpers and had been “condemned” some time between 1667 and 1668. This list contains very little detail or explanatory information and provides only the names of 325 individuals, many of whom held offices in local and royal administration and in the judiciary. Among those whose claims had been rejected by Caumartin between 1667 and 1668 were the “président du grenier à sel de Châlons,” the “lieutenant-criminel à Vitry” and the “président du présidial, à Chaumont.”²²

The second of these lists included in the *notes secrètes* was compiled *after* 1668 and provides a much shorter list of “[l']état des Gens condamnés par Monseigneur [Caumartin].” It records the names of only 32 individuals and the amount of the fine levied against them, but provides no other significant explanation or information as to the reason for the fine or the status of the claim. For example, this list records that a fine of 200 *livres* was levied

²²Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin, “Extrait des condamnations rendues en 1667 et 1668, contre les ursupateurs des Titres de noblesse et d’escuyer, par Messire Louis-François Le Febvre de Caumartin, intendant de justice, au profit de Maistre Jacques Duvet, commis par Sa Majesté pour la recherche desdits usurpateurs,” in *Procez [sic] verbal de la recherche de la noblesse de Champagne suivi des notes secrètes sur ladite recherche*, ed. Pierre-Marie Dioudonnat, 77-91 (Paris: Sedopolis, 1982).

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against a M. Jothier of Vitry; the single word “Misérable” follows the amount of the fine in the text and the judgment is not explained further. It is interesting to note that in nine other similar instances recorded on this second list, it would appear that although fined, the particular claim to nobility was eventually upheld.²³ While these lists clearly show that Caumartin was not predisposed to accept and approve submissions from all levels of noble society without question, these two lists contain very little substantive information for this study.

However, by examining the limited commentary provided for some of the main 552 entries that are the heart of the *notes secrètes* it is possible to discern what the *intendant*’s own ideas regarding the nature of *noblesse* may have been. The identifying “r”s and “m”s provided in the text allow these entries in the *notes secrètes* to be divided into three major categories:

- *noblesse* “maintenu” [*sic*]: entries which noted that the claim to nobility had been upheld (“maintained”)(364 entries)
- *noblesse* “refusé” [*sic*]: entries which noted that the claim to nobility was rejected (105 entries); and
- entries where no indication as to the outcome and/or final decision regarding the claim was given (83 entries).

It is on these three particular types of entries that the remaining analysis in the chapter focuses.

²³*Ibid.*, 97-98.

Noblesse “maintenu” [sic]

The *notes secrètes* record that the majority of those who submitted evidence to Caumartin had their claims to *noblesse* upheld. However, it would appear as if, for some of these individuals and/or families, this was not a foregone conclusion. For the Boulaie family, it would appear that a combination of questionable documentary evidence and the ability to provide a genealogy limited to merely three documented generations made their claim to noble status tenuous.²⁴ Even in cases where adequate and acceptable documentation appears to have been submitted, a positive ruling on the claim was not guaranteed. For example, the documentation provided by the Noyers family appears, on its face, to have met the requirements of the *recherche de la noblesse*, yet Caumartin still found it necessary to comment that the documentary evidence provided was of “little consequence.”²⁵

As the Noyers example suggests, for some *produisant(e)s*, particularly those in the lower and thus likely poorer ranks of Champagne’s *noblesse*, it would seem as if Caumartin upheld their claims reluctantly and at times with an air of obligation. For instance, his entry for the Motte à Aunay family reads: “Gens très-pauvres et qui mériteraient d’être oubliés.”²⁶ In spite of this opinion, the Motte à Aunay family were included in the *Recherche de la*

²⁴Caumartin, Entry for la Boulaie, “Notes secrètes de Louis-François de Caumartin,” *Notes de Monsieur de Caumartin sur la recherche des nobles de la province de Champagne en 1673 d’après la Manuscrit inédit de la Bibliothèque nationale in Procez [sic] verbal de la recherche de la noblesse de Champagne suivi des notes secrètes sur ladite recherche*, 29.

²⁵*Ibid.*, Entry for des Noyers, 60.

²⁶*Ibid.*, Entry for la Motte à Aunay, 56.

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noblesse de Champagne (1673). Caumartin made similar comments regarding the claims of other families of lesser economic status, such as the Belins, the Versines and the Verneuil, where his only comment regarding each claim is “Très-pauvre.”²⁷

However, the *notes secrètes* also show that Caumartin could be more tolerant of some whose claims to *noblesse* may have encountered initial administrative difficulties. In some cases, the commentary shows that a decision to reverse a prior negative adjudication was eventually reached even after an administrative oversight on the part of the *produisant(e)*, usually the failure to register *lettres d’anoblissement* with the required courts, had been identified by Caumartin. Such was the case with the Braux’s submission.²⁸ However, it would appear that the *produisant(e)*’s claim could be upheld if the administrative oversight was rectified. That the Braux family is numbered among the nobles recorded in the published text of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), is likely testimony to the fact that such omissions alone were not grounds for rejection of a claim.²⁹

The *notes secrètes* also record that although some *produisant(e)s* had their noble status denied by previous *recherches de la noblesse*, Caumartin reinstated them often based

²⁷*Ibid.*, Entry for Belin, 29; *Ibid.*, Entry for Verneuil, 73; and *Ibid.*, Entry for Versine, 75.

²⁸In this case, the entry reads: “Annobli [sic] en 1366, mais ces lettres ne sont registrées dans aucune Cour.” *Ibid.*, Entry for Braux, 29.

²⁹*Ibid.*

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on a judicial order from a royal court or other government office. Also of interest is the fact that the commentary provided for the Ramerus' submission shows that Caumartin was, by reinstating the family in its *noblesse*, overturning his own previous judgement on the basis of a more detailed *procès verbal*.³⁰ Moreover, despite the protocols outlined in the 1666 *arrêt*, the *notes secrètes* bear witness to the fact that Caumartin did, on occasion, appear to over ride decisions made by the higher crown courts and councils. For example, he reinstated the nobility of the Brodard family "[a]près condamnation par arrêt du Conseil," even after the family's *produisant* had included at least one piece of falsified evidence in his submission.³¹ Indeed, that questionable or false documentation was submitted by *produisant(e)s* appears to have been a common occurrence as Caumartin's *notes secrètes* demonstrate that he was not adverse to giving those who submitted such evidence the opportunity to rectify the situation. The *notes secrètes* record that 40 of the 364 families whose nobility was upheld (almost 11%) were maintained in their *noblesse* even after having submitted some sort of false or unverifiable evidence. The entry provided for the La Folie family is particularly interesting in that it records the family's nobility was maintained even after *all* the evidence provided in their initial submission was proven to be false.³²

³⁰*Ibid.*, Entry for Rameru, 68.

³¹Caumartin's entry for this family states: "J'ai vu l'hommage de 1542 faux, et avec cette vilaine pièce il y avait la vraie." *Ibid.*, Entry for Brodard, 29.

³²*Ibid.*, Entry for La Folie, 44.

Also worthy of note is the possible connection between Caumartin's inclination to show those who submitted unreliable evidence some administrative leniency and the military service of these particular *produisant(e)s*. For example, in the entry made regarding the Butor family submission Caumartin noted that not only did he give this particular *produisant* one month to replace evidence that was suspect but also that the family could provide verifiable evidence of "quelques service militaires."³³ Similarly, Caumartin noted that while the evidence provided by the Causa family was largely questionable, he commented on the fact that the father and uncle of the *produisant* had been killed while in military service.³⁴ In both of these cases, it would seem that Caumartin's decision in favour of the claim may have rested, in part, on the fact that both families could readily provide verifiable evidence of active military service and/or of deaths in battle.

At times, the link between the maintenance of nobility and the military involvement of the *produisant* and/or his family is made quite clear in the *notes secrètes*. The entry made for the La Grange family submission are typical of these types of entries as it dutifully records the connection of that family to the *maréchal* de Martigny, an important military figure in the history of France.³⁵ While the Gumery family could not boast such a high

³³*Ibid.*, Entry for Butor, 26.

³⁴*Ibid.*, Entry for Causa, 39.

³⁵*Ibid.*, Entry for La Grange, 49.

ranking military connection, the notes made by Caumartin for both branches of this family record that the father and uncle had served in the *gardes du corps du Roi*.³⁶

Noblesse “refusé” [sic]

Although not as numerous as those whose nobility had been maintained, 105 entries in Caumartin’s *notes secrètes* record the rejection of claims to nobility and, on occasion, the reason for this rejection. For example, in 39 of these 105 entries (just over 37%), the claim to *noblesse* was refused due to the submission of falsified documents, perhaps the most logical grounds for a unfavourable decision.³⁷ Few details as to the nature of the falsified documents were given in these types of entries and often Caumartin wrote only two words to explain his decision: “preuves fausses.” Why these particular *produisant(e)s* were condemned to the tax rolls while others were given an opportunity to rectify the situation is not explained by Caumartin in any of these instances or in any other place within the *intendant*’s own notes or the text of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673).

Those whose claims had been rejected due to the use of falsified or unverifiable documentation were also often subjected to a fine which could range anywhere from a few hundred *livres* to a few thousand. Thus, while the Le Clercs, the Drés and the Macarts were

³⁶*Ibid.*, Entry for Gumery, 48.

³⁷See for example: *Ibid.*, Entry for Brossard, 33; *Ibid.*, Entry for Clivier, 34; *Ibid.* Entry for Cagnolles, 37; *Ibid.*, Entry for Feloix, 45; and *Ibid.*, Entry for Mauclerc, 57.

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each fined 200 *livres* for including falsified documents in their rejected claims to *noblesse*,³⁸ others could be and were fined much more for the same transgression. For example, the Baraillons and the Cagnolles were each fined 1,500 *livres*; while no specifics are provided by Caumartin, these larger fines suggest that these *produisants* may have had greater financial resources or perhaps been of greater standing within the community, leaving the *intendant* to feel the need to punish them more severely than other failed claimants.³⁹ No indication is provided in the *notes secrètes* that the fines levied in any of these instances were paid. What is clear, however, is that all but one of the above families managed to have the decision to deny their claim overturned in the end: only the Baraillons are not included in the published text of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673).

While it is clear that Caumartin gave some *produisants* the opportunity to provide new, verifiable documentation, what the *notes secrètes* also make clear is that he was not willing to wait for an indefinite period of time before taking action, even if that action was the rejection of the claim. Inability to provide additional and/or corrected documentation within specified time limits was cited as the specific cause for rejection of 12 of the 105 refusals recorded in the *notes secrètes* (just over 11%). For example, the nobility of the Boulognes was refused “[p]our ne pas avoir fourni ses pièces après délai accordé.”⁴⁰

³⁸*Ibid.*, Entry for Le Clerc, 36; *Ibid.*, Entry for Dré, 40; and *Ibid.*, Entry for Macart, 55.

³⁹*Ibid.*, Entry for Baraillon, 28; and *Ibid.*, Entry for Cagnolles, 37.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, Entry for Boulogne, 32.

Caumartin cited similar reasons for rejecting the Cantres' submission. The entry in this case reads simply: "A dit ses titres chez un ami en Poitou: délai de cinq mois pendant lesquels il n'a rien produit."⁴¹

Not surprisingly, *dérogeance* (participating in some form of trade or other activity deemed unsuitable for members of the *noblesse*) was also cited by Caumartin as grounds for refusing claims to nobility. In the case of the Du Bois, the extent of the improper activity appears to have been great. The entry for this family reads: "Dérogeans sur dérogeance."⁴² More detail as to the nature of the derogation which resulted in the rejection of the claim was provided for the Canteleu family. Caumartin notes he rejected their claim to *noblesse* on the grounds of "avoir tenu cabaret et vendu du vin à pot de son cru et d'autre." For their trouble, the Canteleu were levied a small fine of 50 *livres*, suggesting that the family's venture into inn-keeping was not as profitable as might have been hoped.⁴³

The *notes secrètes* also suggest that those making submissions to Caumartin were well aware of the impact *dérogeance* could have on their social status. It would seem that some claimants endeavoured to hide such activity from Caumartin, but were unsuccessful. For example, the claims of the Blanchart and the Bauvières were refused "[p]our n'avoir

⁴¹*Ibid.*, Entry for de Cantre, 35.

⁴²*Ibid.*, Entry for Du Bois, 30.

⁴³*Ibid.*, Entry for Canteleu, 35.

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rapporté les minutes des actes incriminés,⁴⁴ suggesting that the *intendant* had acquired some knowledge of the activity in question through alternate, perhaps even unofficial, channels.

The reasons given for the rejection of the d'Antoinnes' submission show that, despite the best of intentions, failure to partake in some acceptable form of noble service placed a family's *noblesse* into jeopardy:

Actes de 1572, 1575 falsifiés. Nuls partages ni aveux pour deux des degrés intermédiaires: aucun service d'épée ni autres de charges nobles que des prévôts de Voilcomte et des procureurs fiscaux de village.⁴⁵

While it might be argued that the d'Antoinnes had made an attempt to engage in a form of service that befitted members of the *noblesse* – local administration and finance – the lowliness of their offices, paired with their use of some falsified documentation was clearly unacceptable to Caumartin. In this way, derogation could possibly take on another perhaps more subjective dimension to become service that seemed, in the eyes of the *intendant*, unfitting for an individual or family wishing to call itself noble.

No indication of decision recorded

The third type of entry in Caumartin's *notes secrètes* was that in which no definitive indication as to the success or failure of the claim was provided. Although they do not provide information on the final adjudication made on some 83 claims, it is still possible to use these entries to glean some limited insight into Caumartin's own views on the nature of

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, Entry for Blancart, 30.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, Entry for d'Antoine, 23.

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nobility through the few comments contained within them. For example, a common concern expressed in these 83 entries was whether or not the *produisant(e)* should be designated *roturier* (commoner); related to this concern was or whether or not any member of the family in question had derogated their noble status as such an act would, by default, demote the individual and/or family to *roturier* status.⁴⁶ In seven of these 83 cases (just over 8%), it was noted that the claimant was a *roturier* and that the documents that had been presented to support the claim had not proven the legitimacy of it to Caumartin's satisfaction. Typical of these seven entries is that relating to the Du Bois submission; Caumartin notes: "Roturier – Contract [sic] de 1511 fort suspect et apparemment pièces [sic] fausses depuis 1567."⁴⁷

A further four of these 83 entries deal with what is a common theme in the *notes secrètes*, namely the issue of derogation. The entry provided for the Antigny submission is a particularly interesting example. It demonstrates clearly how the community perceived an individual's or a family's identity to be, in fact, integral to its ability to sustain a claim to noble status. While the notes for this case make it clear that Caumartin feels he cannot overlook the unspecified *dérogeance* of which the family and/or the *produisant* has been accused, he expresses a hope that a favourable decision will be reached in this instance:

⁴⁶See, for example: *Ibid.*, Entry for de Bar, 27.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, Entry for Du Bois, 28.

“Attendra que le Roi l’ait relevé de sa dérogeance mais c’est une bonne maison de nom et d’armes près de Joinville.”⁴⁸

What is equally interesting is that, despite his family’s own origin in administrative and judicial offices, the most common observation recorded for cases listed within this undecided category pertained to the fact that the individual and/or the family claiming noble status were *anoblis*. Nineteen of the 83 entries in this category (almost 23%) indicated that Caumartin had great concern about the professional and moral suitability of these *produisants* as members of Champagne’s *noblesse* precisely because they were *anoblis*. His entry for the d’Arbauds is intriguing in that he uses what could be described as a derisory phrase to describe them – “sort de la robe” – and after declaring their documentary proofs to be inadequate, states, rather cryptically: “Il en est parlé dans Nostradamus.”⁴⁹ Others of these 19 instances are far more blunt and the related entry simply reads: “Anoblis.” Of course, as the purpose of the *recherche de la noblesse* was precisely to weed out any whose claims to *noblesse* were questionable, Caumartin would likely pay greater attention to scrutinizing the claims of those who had been ennobled. However, as no clear indication of acceptance or rejection of the claim is provided in these particular 19 instances, it is to the published *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) that the historian must turn to see what, if any, decision was made on these cases. A survey of the recorded family entries in the

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, Entry for d’Antigny, 23.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, Entry for d’Arbaud, 26.

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published text reveals a rather interesting trend. It shows that nine of the 19 claims which Caumartin designated as “anobli” were ultimately included in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673). Also of interest is the fact that five of these nine *anoblis* had well-documented and well established military connections.⁵⁰ The ten remaining *anobli* who were not included in the published text appear to have acquired their *noblesse* through the very same means used by Caumartin’s own family: offices in the administration of finance, the royal courts or in the government bureaucracy.

Conclusion

While limited, the comments recorded in the *notes secrètes*, as well as in the *procès verbal* and other documentation generated by Caumartin during his investigations suggest that the *intendant* held particular beliefs about the nature and function of *noblesse* and that these may have guided or influenced his work. Foremost among these appears to be a desire to guard against the usurpation of noble status by those who did not deserve it, either in an economic or professional sense. But who or what did Caumartin believe was “deserving”? The comments made by Caumartin in the introduction to his *procès verbal* – no less than the way in which he noted, at times derisively, the poverty of some whose nobility was maintained – show Caumartin to be staunchly, perhaps even militantly, dedicated to defending *noblesse* against those of a lesser economic status or those whose professional

⁵⁰Included in this small group was the claim of Jean d’Auger who had been ennobled for military service in March 1658 and that of that of Jean-Ernest de Teruelles who served as a *maréchal de logis* in the King’s army. For discussion of these two claims to *noblesse*, see Chapters 5 and 7.

inclinations he did not consider to be fitting for a member of the *noblesse*. His refusal of over 100 claims to *noblesse* demonstrates that he was diligent in his duty and that he was not willing to approve any and all claims submitted to him. Moreover, his *notes secrètes* document the lengths to which he went to evaluate and scrutinize the accuracy and validity of the evidence submitted in addition to the perceived social worthiness of the claimant.

While the *notes secrètes* suggest that Caumartin may have had a personal bias against poorer nobles and recent *anoblis*, they also show that Caumartin did not seem to harbour any particular bias against military service and activity as part of noble life. Indeed, his own comments in the *épistre* to his *procès verbal* as to the military enthusiasm of Champagne's nobles suggests Caumartin was well aware of the role played by military activity in the life of this provincial nobility. The fact that two of his own sons were the first in a long family line to break with the family's professional traditions and to take part in military or armed service would suggest that he was more kindly disposed to perceiving military service as a part of *noblesse* than were his forefathers. This inclination, coupled with his documented concerns about certain *anoblis* suggest that, although of a robe family, Caumartin had himself begun to favour a more traditional approach to the definition and creation of noble identity, one in which military activity and service had a rightful place.

However, as *intendant*, Caumartin had appreciable but limited power to shape the content and the presentation of the final text of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne*

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(1673). He could not, save for introductory notes and a few addenda, be said to have created its contents alone. Such a suggestion places a greater degree of importance on the actions of a single bureaucrat than, and discounts the contributions of, those who submitted the genealogies and documentary evidence that would form the essential text of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673). Moreover, focussing on the role of the *intendant* alone underestimates the role played by the claimants in formulating and expressing concepts on the nature of nobility and noble identity through the evidence they submitted. Caumartin's opinions and decisions shaped the final stages of the process of identity creation and validation in late-seventeenth century Champagne, they were not the origins of it.

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Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne (1673):
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CHAPTER 4

The *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673): an overview of the evidence

As Chapter Three demonstrated, as provincial *intendant*, Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin played an important role in shaping the contents of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673). However, the part played by those who claimed noble status (the *produisant(e)s*) in ensuring that the contents of this particular *recherche de la noblesse* reflected and reinforced the ideas held within this community about the nature of *noblesse* should not be underestimated. The act of submitting documentation to support a claim to *noblesse* was not a passive act and it directly involved the claimant in the creation of his own noble status and identity.

The *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) provided a very public opportunity for individuals and families to create an identity that would be understood by the community. *Produisant(e)s* compiled and submitted genealogical, juridical and notarial evidence, the traditional means which nobles had used for centuries to create and justify their social identity and status. By relying on the information contained within these types of evidence, the *recherches de la noblesse* provided France's nobles with an invaluable opportunity to have their identity and status officially sanctioned and recognized in a way that was comprehensible to them and reflected communal social values. And, as this thesis argues, it was an opportunity that the nobility of Champagne readily embraced.

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In order to understand the means by which the nobility of Champagne wished to establish and commemorate their social identity, this chapter provides a general qualitative and quantitative overview of the types of evidence presented by *produisant(e)s*, on behalf of themselves and their families, to Caumartin for evaluation. It shows that the genealogies and documentary evidence alike provide direct and indirect evidence of an almost overwhelming predisposition among Champagne's nobles towards active service in the armies of the state and retinues of the *haute noblesse*. By highlighting such activities and service in their submissions, it suggests that they activities were perceived as central to the creation and maintenance of *noblesse* as both a social status and as a social identity among this regional elite.

For the purposes of this chapter and for the analysis which follows, the term "direct proofs of military service and activity" is broadly defined. It includes explicit references to military service in specific campaigns and military levies and references to military activity found in genealogies. It also includes documents issued by field commanders and members of the royal army's military and administrative hierarchy, as well as military commissions, certificates of service in specific units and regiments and command orders. Pensions granted in recognition of long military service and documents relating to the economics of military activity – including the expense of equipment and of ransom – are also included in this category. *Lettres d'anoblissement* and other juridical documents outlining the connection

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between social advancement and war are also considered to be direct proof of military service and activity for the purposes of this analysis.

Those references which are categorized as “indirect proofs of military service and activity” include any document or genealogy not directly related to war or military service in which secondary reference(s) were made. This includes secondary references made in marriage contracts, contracts of sale and in other juridical documents. These types of indirect references include mention of commissions held, pensions accorded for field service or field service rendered in specific battles and/or campaigns, as well as battle accounts and eyewitness testimony of commanders or comrades. The uncredited commentaries or preambles that were inserted prior to some family entries are also placed in this second category. The term “indirect proof of military service and activity” also encompasses secondary references made to war found in supplementary references to the social and/or political position of kin and members of a family network and commemorative epitaphs submitted as evidence of *noblesse*.

A. The evidence

As Caumartin notes in his *épître* to the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), the purpose of the genealogical and documentary evidence collected was to outline “l'origine des Maisons, leur antiquité, leurs alliances, les dignitez qu'elles ont possédées, le

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lustre qu'elles ont acquis, les service qu'elles ont rendus.”¹ Perhaps to make comprehension of the evidence easier, a standardized format was used to present each family's submitted genealogy and documentary evidence. As the family entries reproduced in Appendix III illustrate, this standardized format places the full family name, the family's rank (if any), any seigneuries held and the lineage's place of origin (usually given as a province or country) at the head of the page. In the majority of entries, a date consisting of a month and year was also recorded below the family's name; whether this date is that on which the claim to nobility was submitted or is that on which the final adjudication of the claim was made is not specified in this *recherche de la noblesse*, in any of the written material appended by Caumartin to the published edition or in his *notes secrètes*. Below this general information at the head of a family entry lies the genealogical and documentary evidence, with the genealogy presented in a column on the right side of the page and the documentary evidence, recorded in order of generation, in a column on the left. The most common length of a family entry was one single-sided page, although as the *Genealogie de la maison de France* (Appendix III) shows, the information submitted by some families could require two or more double-sided pages. This right and left separation of the genealogy and documentary evidence continued if the family's entry required more than one page.

¹Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin, “Épistre,” *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne*, comp. Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin, (Châlons: Jacques Seneuze, Imprimeur & libraire ordinaire du Roi, 1673), unpaginated (hereafter cited as *RNC*).

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The genealogies

As traditional methods of documenting and commemorating family history and identity, the genealogies recorded within the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) provide reliable demographic information. In this particular *recherche de la noblesse*, the total number of generations cited in any one family genealogy range from one generation to over twenty. In the Richelet genealogy, a lone individual is recorded.² Far from being simple outlines of descent and parentage, however, the genealogies in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* contain valuable information pertaining to

- an individual's personal history, including birth and death dates;
- the means by which an individual acquired his or her *noblesse* and whether this status had, in any way, been derogated;
- dates of marriage, number of marriage partners and number of offspring;
- the social, professional, and political status of individuals (including the type of office held, or service(s) rendered, if any);
- the social, professional and/or political status of marriage partners and, at times, blood relatives and kin by marriage;
- for whom, with whom or where an individual, either male or female, may have served and in what capacity; and
- if an individual died in battle or during military service.

Although the *produisant(e)s* were responsible for collecting and submitting their evidence, it is not surprising that some appear to have hired what might be characterized as a

²See: "Genealogie de la famille de Richelet," *RNC*, unpaginated in Appendix III.

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professional genealogist to document the family history. In the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) one genealogist is noted as directly contributing to 34 of the 507 family entries. These 34 genealogies are accredited within the text itself to Charles-René d'Hozier, then *généalogiste de la maison du Roi* and, after 1696, *Garde de l'armorial général de France*.³ These 34 families were clearly well established; only one of these 34 genealogies recorded fewer than five generations and most contained between five and nine documented generations.⁴ As Appendix I shows, the data provided in these 34 genealogies support the idea that Hozier's expertise was likely not available to any family that may have wished it, with 18 of these 34 families (almost 53% of this group) being well established and able to trace their origins back to the fifteenth century.

What is equally interesting about the genealogies credited to d'Hozier is their common emphasis on the military activity of the family in question.⁵ While twenty of these 34 genealogies chronicled an involvement in both military and administrative, financial and/or judicial service, more detailed commentary was provided only for the military service

³For a detailed list of these 34 families, see Appendix I.

⁴The breakdown of these families is as follows: one genealogy comprising three generations; five genealogies tracing five generations; nine genealogies which outlined a lineage of six generations; five genealogies which showed a lineage of seven generations; seven genealogies comprising eight generations and a further five genealogies in which nine generations were recorded. One lone genealogy, that of the d'Estaing, recorded 16 documented generations.

⁵In only two of the genealogies prepared by d'Hozier was there no indication of any type of service rendered by the members of the family in question.

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recorded within these genealogies. This suggests that even among well-established families there may have been a need to use the genealogies to establish an identity that was firmly rooted in the traditional military definition of *noblesse*. As it is not made clear whether the family or the genealogist chose to place such an emphasis on military service within the genealogies, what this emphasis may also suggest is that d'Hozier's own ideas as to what constituted true *noblesse* may have led him to highlight military activity over administrative activity in those family histories for which he was responsible.⁶

As the point of the *recherches de la noblesse* was to establish as lengthy a claim to noble status as possible, it is not surprising that many families sought to establish a definitive year of origin for their lineage. This is reflected in the submissions of 145 of the 507 families recorded in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673). These particular 145 submissions – approximately 27% of the total – include a date from which the origin of the family can allegedly be derived. Frequently, this date corresponds with the date of the first reference made to the family patriarch in a verifiable document, often a legal decision. More frequently, however, this date corresponds to the date of the first proof of nobility offered in the family submission.⁷

⁶Charles-René d'Hozier, "Genealogie de la maison de Longueau," *RNC*, unpaginated; and , "Genealogie de Vieilmaisons," unpaginated.

⁷On rare occasions, the date given corresponded to a significant event in the life of the matriarch of the family.

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The earliest genealogical date recorded in any family submission in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) is 842. This reference is found in the entry for the Baleine family. The family genealogy claims that the family patriarch, Claude, was ennobled for his military service in this year, specifically for saving the life of Charles le Chauve (the Bald) and three of his sons “en le tirant de la presse des enemis.”⁸ While such claims may be presented with the intention of being perceived as verified fact, and without any conscious intent to falsify, it is highly unlikely that this particular claim could be supported by impeccable or even merely adequate documentation more than 800 years after the fact. Indeed, the Baleine family’s documentary evidence does not include any attempt to support this account of Claude’s heroism or the act of ennoblement itself. Nevertheless, including such a reference in the family’s genealogy suggests the way in which the individual making the submission wished to have his patriarch characterized: as a valiant and courageous warrior whose actions allegedly helped to preserve the monarch and his family in the face of imminent danger.

The Baleines were not alone in their desire to use their genealogy to draw attention to the achievements of their ancestors; similar commentary can be found in a number of other family genealogies. Most often, these references take the form of a descriptive and narrative commentary which extolls the *ancienneté* of the lineage. These comments were most often

⁸“Genealogie de la maison de Baleine,” preamble to the genealogy and proofs of nobility, *RNC*, unpaginated.

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found inserted at the top of the right hand column, immediately prior to a family's genealogy, almost as a preface to it.⁹ Although there is no indication anywhere in the published findings as to whether such commentary was made at the behest of the *produisant(e)* and/or family making the submission or whether Caumartin took it upon himself to include it, the content and existence of these commentaries emphasize outstanding noble service and provide a means to place individual achievement within the greater context of the character, valour and honour of the family and the noble community as a whole. In doing so, they serve to enhance the function of the genealogies as a means to commemorate those activities and modes of behaviour that were considered to be synonymous with noble identity in Champagne. For example, the commentary which serves to preface the Denis family genealogy explains how the nobility of the family stemmed from Pierre, the patriarch, who served several terms as *maire de Troyes* and was ennobled as a result. The insertion of this particular commentary may be explained, in part, by the family's own professional connection with Caumartin: the genealogy also records that Claude de Denise, son of Pierre and the *produisant*, served as "subdelegué de Monseig[neur] de Caumartin, Intendant" in an unspecified capacity.¹⁰

⁹These descriptive commentaries could also appear at the end of the section of documentary evidence, although this happened less frequently.

¹⁰The preamble notes that "Les plus belles marques de Noblesse se tirent ordinairement des actions illustres, & se sont voir par les Services conserables que l on [sic] à son Prince, c'est là que les Denise [sic] ont tiré cette glorieuse qualité . . . [Pierre] ayante esté élu & continué par quatre fois Maire de Troyes, il s'en est si dignement acquité, & dans les fonctions rendu des Services considerables, & si agreables à Sa Majesté, qu'il a montré d'en estre recompensé par le titre de Noble & de Gentilhomme . . ." "Genealogie de Denise [sic]," preamble to genealogy, *RNC*, unpaginated.

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More frequently, however, these commentaries highlight an illustrious record of military activity as a means of linking the particular individual's own exemplary act or service with his own noble identity and with that of his lineage, both past and present. Many of these commentaries directly connect acts of military valour and the origin of the family's *noblesse*, such as in the commentary inserted prior to the Salses' genealogy:

Les Produisans ne represent [sic] autres Titres iustificatifs des services de leurs Ancestres; mais les histoires ne les ont pas oubliés. Un Sanche de Salse, qui commandoit en chef des Troupes de Geoffroy le Velu, Comte de Barcelonne, se trouva en la Bataille qui fût donné aux Normans, par un de nos Roys & y fit tels exploits que ledit Seigneur Roy couronna de gueule de Lyon de ses armes, . . . qu'il a fait des faites heroïques de la maison d'Arragon & d'aucunes maisons les plus Illustres de Catalogne; depuis lequel temps ceste maison, ayant toujourns esté fortement attachée au service de la France, aucuns d'eux entre les quels les Ancestres des produisans s'y son venus habither & ont continué de faire paroître leur affection pour les interests de cette Couronne en tous les siecles. Le sieur de Hauterive leur Oncle a paru pendant les derniers [sic] Guerres Civiles dans l'employ [sic] de Mareschal de Camp. Le Sieur de la Roque aussie leur Oncle pendant trent [sic] années, a servy en Brave dans les Armées du Roy . . .¹¹

After recounting the family's long and glorious military tradition, this commentary concludes by drawing the reader's attention to the fact that one of the two *produisants* had, for the past eight years, been *capitaine de Chevaux légers* and that the other had served as "Lieutenant dans le mesme Regiment, à parèil [sic] âge, on peut croire qu'il ny sont montés que par une valeur extraordinaire."¹²

¹¹"Genealogie de Salse," final documentary proof of nobility offered, *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹²*Ibid.*

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The documentary evidence

Although each family was required to supply documentary proofs which would substantiate all claims made for each generation in the genealogy, there appears to have been no required minimum or maximum number of documents required for each submission. Consequently, the number of supporting documents submitted by each family could and did vary dramatically, ranging from a lone document, to 100 pieces or more in any given submission.

While the number and types of documentary proofs varied, they can be grouped into several broad categories:

- evidence which outlines the social and/or juridical status of the *produisant(e)s*, including *lettres d'anoblissement*, *lettres patentes*, *arrêts* (and proof of registration of them with the appropriate royal court), *enquêtes*, and *lettres de cachet*;
- evidence which outlines the possession of military commissions and/or civil office, which may also include notice of ennoblement for service;
- indicators of economic activity such as contracts of sale and/or purchase (including offices and *rentes*);
- evidence of the maintenance and enlargement of family and kin networks including *dénombrements* (estate inventories submitted as part of the process of *foi et hommage*), marriage contracts, baptismal/birth records; and
- that evidence for which the document type or contents are not specified.

The full or partial date on which the document was created and the place or jurisdiction of issue was also provided for each piece. Invariably, the issuing official or institution was also

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named. A brief statement as to the contents of the document was also provided for the vast majority of proofs recorded. While not always presented in chronological order within a particular generation, the documentary evidence was catalogued so as to correspond to the overall genealogical order. For this reason, the evidence provided for each recorded generation corresponded to a specific individual named within the genealogy, usually the patriarch or the eldest male of a generation. However, it was not uncommon in a submission to find proofs relating to younger males, to some females and even, on occasion, to relatives, in-laws and allied households, particularly where these individuals held a significant social rank, military commission or civil office.

Evidence of social and juridical status

Given the underlying purpose of the *recherches de la noblesse*, it should not be surprising that the most commonly presented type of proof directly addressed how the individual and/or family had acquired and maintained their *noblesse*. Indeed, it would appear as if the need to defend their nobility was faced by just about every individual and family recorded in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) at some time prior to the 1666-1672 investigations.¹³ This situation may help to explain why documents such as

¹³Many of these documents had been issued by those bureaucrats who had conducted previous *recherches de la noblesse* in Champagne and other regions. See: "Genealogie des Divory [sic]," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Christophe), *sentence* (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Gaallon," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Nicholas), *jugement* (19 December 1585), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de la famille de Vitel," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation, *registement* (30 January (continued...))

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previous positive adjudications of claims to noble status, excerpts from previous *procès verbal*, *arrêts*, *jugements* and other *actes judiciaires* accounted for 197 (about 39%) of the first proofs of nobility offered by all families, arguably the most important piece of documentation in establishing a claim to *noblesse*. This type of documentary proof also constituted a significant proportion of the evidence many families provided to uphold the nobility of the remaining generations.¹⁴ For example, although the nobility of Gabriel de Damoiseau was upheld in a judgement rendered in March 1639 by the *parlement de Bourgogne*, his son, Simon, found it necessary to defend the origins of the family's nobility. Simon was successful and an *arrêt* issued by the Cour des Aydes on 11 May 1665 dealing with this matter is included in the family submission.¹⁵ Even the son of Pierre de Denise, the much lauded *maire* of Troyes in the mid-seventeenth century, found it necessary to produce sufficient documentation as to the origin of his father's *noblesse* in addition to his own *lettres d'anoblissement* in order to defend his claim to nobility.¹⁶

¹³(...continued)
1664), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹⁴See also: "Genealogie de Le Cerf (Gerard)," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Nicolas), *arrêt* [*Cour de Parlement de Paris*] (1 April 1575); and *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Jean), *jugement* (25 March 1641), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹⁵"Genealogie de Damoiseau," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Gabriel), *jugement* (23 March 1639); and , proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Simon), *arrêt* [*Cour des Aydes*] (11 May 1665), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹⁶"Genealogie de Denise," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Pierre) (various dates), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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A unique example of this type of evidence was found among the documents submitted by Jean de La Riviere. His submission included an *arrêt* which outlined the criminal proceedings that had been brought against him in the matter of the alleged murder of Jacques de Marteau, with which La Riviere had been charged. While La Riviere was ultimately pardoned by the King, the final proof appended to the Riviere family genealogy suggests that not even the suspicion of murder could stand in the way of a fully documented and verifiable claim to nobility in Champagne being successful:

Depuis la Production dudit Jean de la Riviere à Cour , Me. Iacques Duret, prepose à la recherche, luy ayant par ses contredits opposé un Jugement du Lieutenant Criminel de robbe Courte à Rethel, par lequel il a pretendu qu'il avoit esté condamné a mort par contumance (in absentia) au sujet de l'homicide arrivé en la personne de Iacques Marteau demeurant à Thin le Montier, ledit de la Riviere pour s'en justifier, & montre que ledit jugement ne peut donner atteinte [sic] affect à sa Noblesse a produit les pieces qui suivent.¹⁷

Of course, not all evidence in this category deals with events as sinister as those involving Jean de La Riviere. The contents of majority of the *procès verbaux*, *arrêts*, *jugements* and other *actes judiciaires* offered by the *produisant(e)s* are general, in that they are presented as declarations of the continued noble status of the individual or family in question, or an adjudication by a royal or local official declaring that the individual is of noble "race" or has lived nobly and is, therefore, entitled to the honours and privileges that attend *noblesse*.¹⁸

¹⁷"Genealogie de La Riviere," commentary, *RNC*, unpaginated. See also: *Ibid.*, appended proofs of nobility, *arrêt* [*Cour de parlement à Paris*] (not dated); and *Ibid.*, *lettres de sa Majesté* (July 1669).

¹⁸See: "Genealogie de La Barge," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation,
(continued...)

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These proofs of social and juridical status could also take the form of notarized and/or documented oral testimony from neighbours, members of the individual's kin network or his/her parish or administrative district. At times, it would seem that the use of such testimony was dictated by unforeseen circumstances. For example, Claude Louis de Niger included several pieces of documented oral testimony in his submission, including notarized certificates from "tous les Nobles de Chilly pays Natal," from the "grand Vicaire general de l'Evesque & Prince de Geneve" and "Un Acte des Habitans de Sept-Sarges" (where he resided), all attesting to his noble status and lineage.¹⁹

¹⁸(...continued)

three *jugements* (14 April 1635, 30 May and 14 October 1640), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de La Berquerie," proofs of nobility offered for third generation, *jugement* (13 May 1641), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de La Cerf (Nicolas)," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Claude), "pluseurs [sic] certificate" and "actes judiciaires" (4 May 1552, 19 May 1554, 7 December 1573, 4 May 1574, 18 October 1575 and 1 May 1577), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Cochet," proofs of nobility offered for second generation, *jugement* (15 May 1599), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Gumery," proofs of nobility offered for first generation, *arrêt [Cour des Aydes]* (11 February 1623), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Floriner," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Estienne), *sentence* (26 September 1661), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Guy," proofs of nobility offered for first generation, "un employ [sic] d'un autre Certificate [sic]" signed by the Duc de Longueville (25 October 1648), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Picart," proofs of nobility offered for first generation, *procez [sic] verbal* (12 October 1594), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Verrine," proofs of nobility offered for third generation, *sentence* (16 April 1641), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de la famille de Vitel," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Jean II), *ordonnance* (17 June 1634); and , proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Jean III), *jugement de Commissaires de la Chambre Sourveraine* (23 March 1661), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹⁹"Genealogie de la famille de Niger," proofs of nobility for seventh generation (Claude Louis), certificate (not dated) and *acte* (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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Regardless of the form such evidence took, the role of the individual in war was a significant and recurring theme within the evidence included in this category. The *arrêt de la Cour des Aydes* submitted by Jacques de Sanglier (dated 13 December 1575) draws this link between war and a previous favourable adjudication of noble status clearly. In upholding Sanglier's noble status, the *arrêt* states that

. . . ayant respect à l'âge, aux fatigues de guerres, & aux blessures de Jacques Sanglier . . . & considerant les services qu'il avoit rendus dès l'âge de 15. ans aux deffunts Roys & à sa Majesté lors regnante; . . . au siege de Vi[v]eton, auquel il fut blessé combattant à la bresche, en qualité d'Archer de la Compagnie du sieur de la Roche du Maine . . . avec laquelle il s'estoit trouvé aux prises de Mariembourg, d'Yuoy . . . [as *Capitaine* of an unspecified *compagnie* and as *homme d'armes* for the Marquis d'Elbeuf] . . . confirme la sentence renduë en sa faveur, par les Esleus de Braufort, & le conserve en sa Noblesse come Gentilhomme . . .²⁰

The first proof of nobility offered for Jean de Bridot, patriarch of the Bridot family, makes a similar connection between war, the maintenance of noble status and noble identity. This "Enquete & Acte de Notorieté" (dated 7 June 1486) declares that many of the clergy, municipal and royal officials in Vassy knew Jean de Bridot well and had no doubt of his noble status as he was known to

jouir du privilege de Noblesse, vivre Noblement & etre réputé Gentilhomme par tout le pays, portant les Armes en toutes occasion, s'estant trouvé aux Assemblées de Noblesse, toutefois & quantes elle a esté convoque pour le ban & Arriereban [sic] en habillement d'homme d'Armes, avec trois & quatre chevaux d'equipage.²¹

²⁰"Genealogie de Sanglier," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jacques), *arrêt* [*Cour des Aydes*] (13 December 1575), *RNC*, unpaginated

²¹"Genealogie de Bridot," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean) (first (continued...))

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Jean's great-grandson, Hector, was also forced to use oral testimony to support his claim; a house fire, set by "l'Armeè de Galas, ayant campè pendant plus de six semaines aux environs de Fonvent," had destroyed his documentation in 1636.²² The *enquête* that Hector submitted in place of this documentation comprised statements from 11 witnesses, including the Marquis de Lancques, René Saladin d'Anglure (Marquis de Comblanc), the Baron de Saint Loup and various local clergy, all of whom declared their acquaintance with Hector, their knowledge of his marriage to Margaritte and the legitimacy of his children as well as his position as "Lieutenant d'une Compagnie de Chevaux Legers [sic] du sieur Baron de Lancques."²³

The *enquêtes* included in Isaye de La Mire's claim to *noblesse* also emphasizes the role military service played in creating and sustaining his family's noble status. It first establishes the nobility of Claude, Isaye's father, citing Claude's service in the King's army as "Mareschal [sic] des Logis de soixante Lances des Ordonnances du Roy, sous la charge de l'Admiral de Chastillon, apres avoir servy longtemps en qualité d'homme d'armes sous ladite

²¹(...continued)
proof recorded), *Enqueste & Acte de Notoriété* (7 June 1486), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²²*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Hector), *enquête* (19 October 1622), unpaginated.

²³*Ibid.*

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charge” as the basis for the positive adjudication.²⁴ Among the documents presented for Isaye’s eldest son, Lupin, is another *enquête* which was conducted under the authority of the *Cour des Aydes* in 1634. As in the case of his grandfather, in 1634 Lupin’s nobility was upheld on the basis of his military service as *homme d’armes* in the royal *compagnie d’ordonnance*. The document further notes that Lupin was, at the time of Caumartin’s *recherche de la noblesse*, serving as a *gendarme* in the company of the Duc de Guise.²⁵

As perhaps the most explicit proof of *noblesse* that could be offered in support of a claim, *lettres d’anoblissement* which had been granted by both the crown and/or the *haute noblesse* were included in many submissions. Often documentation which proved that these *lettres d’anoblissement* had been approved by and registered with the appropriate royal court was also included in the submission. In a few cases, the reason for ennoblement was not specified within the *lettre d’anoblissement*.²⁶ Those included in Daniel de Guillaume’s claim, for example, simply state that “[i]l a cet avantage que sa Noblesse procedde [sic] de sa

²⁴“Genealogie de La Mire,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Isaye), *enquête* (1 March 1599), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁵*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Lupin), *enquête* [*Cour des Aydes*] (27 April 1634), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁶See, for example: “Genealogie d’Humbelot,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Nicolas), *lettres patentes* (23 February 1564), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Gorron,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Barthelemy), *lettres d’anoblissement* (December 1593), *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie de Huot,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean) *lettres patentes d’anoblissement* (14 March 1487), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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vertu, & des services qu'il a rendus à sa Majesté."²⁷ More frequently, *lettres d'anoblissement* were far more specific when outlining the reasons for the individual's ennoblement. The most common reason cited was as a reward for meritorious service either as a member of the personal retinue or in the household of the crown or a member of the *haute noblesse*. For example, Humbert de Quanteal was ennobled in 1549 by the Comte de Bourgogne for his service as "son premier Medecin."²⁸ Both Hierosme de Truc and Jacques de Veyne were ennobled for their diplomatic service, the former in January 1574 and the latter in June 1643 for his many years of service in Germany, Holland and Flanders.²⁹

The *lettres de cachet* and *lettres d'anoblissement* provided by Étienne de La Blanc detail the relationship between his service to the state and his nobility. It is interesting to note, however, that while the La Blanc's genealogy records that Étienne was *conseiller du Roi en ses Conseil d'État & Privé* and as well as *président* and *lieutenant général au*

²⁷"Genealogie de Guillaume," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (first proof of nobility), *lettres patentes d'anoblissement* (March 1647), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁸"Genealogie de Quanteal," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Humbert), *lettres patentes* (6 May 1549), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁹"Genealogie de Truc," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Hierosme), *lettres patentes d'anoblissement* (26 January 1574), *RNC*, unpaginated.

The documentary evidence for Jacques de Veyne reveals that an examination of his *lettres d'anoblissement* was carried out some time after he received them in 1643, but that his nobility was upheld. It also records that Jacques "auoit gratifié desdites Lettres apres [sic] un service de plusieurs années & des negotiations importantes des Païs d'Allemagne, Hollande & Flandres, don't le succez auroit fair voir le zeile, & la capacite dudit Deffendeur." "Genealogie de Veyne," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jacques), *lettres d'anoblissement* (June 1643), and *information* (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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bailliage et siège présidial de Vitry le François, the documents detailing his ennoblement emphasize his role in the administration of the garrisons of Luxembourg and Montmedy and praise his “tres-considerables services à l’Estat, en maintenant l’autorité de sa Majesté.”³⁰

Indeed, as Chapter Five discusses in more detail, a dominant theme in the *lettres d’anoblissement* presented within the family submissions was that the nobility of the individual or family in question had been rightfully earned through dutiful service, most frequently on the battlefield or in some other aspect of war.³¹

Contracts

Contracts attesting to the sale and/or purchase of property, leases, *partages* and *donations*, the legality of wills and details of marriage negotiations were among the most common documents included in the family submissions. Documents of this type accounted for 141 of the first proofs of nobility offered (about 28%), suggesting that, while not as important as *lettres d’anoblissement*, contracts were useful as signifiers of the noble status of the claimant and/or his family. For example, in addition to verifying the propriety of the documented transactions or agreements, the contracts provided by Françoise de Roussel, widow of Roger de Prospe, establish Roger’s professional pursuits as well as his noble

³⁰“Genealogie de Le Blanc,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Estienne [sic]), *lettres de cachet de sa Majesté* (14 December 1649); and “autres lettres de cachet” (23 Dec 1650), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³¹See, for example: “Genealogie de Tristan,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean), *lettres patentes [sic] d’anoblissement* (Sept 1651), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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connections. One of the contracts records that Roger served as *capitaine* of the *château d'Antigny*, a commission bestowed upon him by the Dame d'Antigny and de Ruffey, Comtesse de Commarin. This commission was likely related to his service as *homme d'armes* in the company of the Comte de Commarin.³² The final contract presented, the *testament* of Françoise (dated 4 December 1622) designates her son by Roger as her lawful heir, but also notes that her second husband, Claude de Cheviere, served as "homme d'armes des Ordonnances du Roy sous la charge de Duc de Bellegarde."³³ Other documents reveal that Roger's son, Guy, followed in the family's professional tradition and even married into a family dedicated to military service. In Guy's case, the connections were advantageous; his bride's relatives included "Messire Charles de Colligny, Chevalier des deux Ordres, Mareschal [sic] des Camps & Armées du Roy, & Lieutenant general au Gouvernement de Champagne," among other notables.³⁴

As the example of Guy de Prospe suggests, marriage contracts are particularly useful in understanding how the nobility of Champagne wished to establish their claim to *noblesse* and, by extension, their social identity. Marriage contracts attest for 97 of the first proofs of

³²"Genealogie de Prospe," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Roger), provisions of charge (17 July 1590) and "deux contracts" (25 May 1592 and 6 August 1595), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³³*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Roger), *testament* (4 December 1622), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³⁴*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Guy), marriage contract (22 November 1624), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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nobility offered (just over 19% of the total). Families often provided one or more marriage contract(s) for each generation recorded in the submission. The marriage contract recorded for Rene Coburn³⁵ and Henriette de Broüillart suggests that, for families who were not of French origin,³⁶ this type of documentation offered a highly public means through which to establish and verify their status and acceptance into the community.³⁷

In some marriage contracts, the social standing of either the groom and/or his kin or, less frequently, the bride and/or her kin was established by way of a brief, added commentary. For instance, the marriage contract between Laurent Henderson³⁸ and Anne de Coppin notes that the groom was an archer in the *Garde Écossoise du Roi* and, more

³⁵Although listed in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) as “Cockbourne,” this thesis will use the English spelling of Coburn when referring to this particular family, unless quoting directly from the genealogy or documentary evidence. See: George F. Black, *The Surnames of Scotland: Their Origin, Meaning and History* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd., 1999).

³⁶The patriarch of the Coburn family was Scottish born and, according to the submitted genealogy, a member of the Scottish nobility in his own right as the Baron of Langton.

³⁷This marriage contract states: “il se peut induire que ledit Daniel [the father of Rene] . . . estoit d’une Noblesse tres bien reconnuë, puis qu’il estoit receu dans les alliances des premieres familles du pays.” “Genealogie de Cockborne,” proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Daniel), marriage contract (1 May 1624), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³⁸In his *The Surnames of Scotland*, George Black notes that the name Henderson became “d’Handresson” among those who settled in France. Consequently, while listed in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) as Handresson, this thesis will use the English spelling of Henderson when referring to members of this family, unless quoting directly from the genealogy or documentary evidence. Black, *The Surnames of Scotland: Their Origin, Meaning and History*, 353.

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importantly, that the bride was Dame de Breneur and, thus, an heiress in her own right.³⁹

The primary function of this extra information and/or commentary provided in marriage contracts appears to have been to record the landed titles and professional offices and/or commissions held by the individual and/or their significant kin. The marriage contract of Guyaldon d'Auger reveals that his bride, Marie de Vidal, was the daughter of "Noble-homme Jacques de Vidal, vivant Conseiller du Roy, Controlleur general des Gabelles en Languedoc."⁴⁰

More often, however, this added information emphasized the military commissions held by an individual or any military related connections or alliances the prospective kin may have had.⁴¹ In a number of cases, such information demonstrated the connection between the

³⁹"Genealogie d'Handresson," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Laurent), marriage contract (13 November 1502), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴⁰"Genealogie d'Auger," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Guyaldon), marriage contract (22 August 1663), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴¹See, for example: "Genealogie de Baleine," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Charles), marriage contract (28 January 1593), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Bataille," proofs of nobility offered for third generation, marriage contract (15 November 1627), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Brune," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Claude II), marriage contract (15 June 1607), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie des de Chartongne," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation, marriage contract (23 August 1630), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de le Cerf," proofs of nobility offered for sixth generation (Nicolas), marriage contract (1 February 1660), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Denise," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Germain), marriage contract (13 September 1639), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Larcher," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Michel), marriage contract (25 August 1630), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Morillon," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Jean), marriage
(continued...)

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profession or offices held by a father, a male relative or the male kin of the bride and the professional activities of the prospective groom, particularly if those activities were war related. The marriage contract of Jacques d'Ivory and Benigne de Vernier records Benigne's status as the daughter of the *gouverneur de la ville de Vitry*; interestingly, it also records that Jacques served as "Capitaine d'une Compagnie des gens de pied entretenuë en la ville de Vitry," suggesting a possible connection between Jacques' choice of marriage partner and his chosen profession.⁴²

Some marriage contracts, such as those in the d'Origny's submission, can provide a multi-generational record of the connection between the professional activities of prospective kin and the noble identity of the family in question. The first marriage contract offered in this particular family's submission deals with the marriage between Pierre d'Origny and

⁴¹(...continued)

contract (6 October 1636), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de la Perry," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Antoine), marriage contract (12 July 1633), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie des de Pinguenets," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Michel), marriage contract (6 June 1627), unpaginated; *ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Jean), marriage contract (7 June 1657), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de la famille de Vitel," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Charles), marriage contract (31 January 1523), unpaginated; , proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Jean I), marriage contract (21 December 1595), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Veillart," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Jacques, "ainé"), marriage contract (January 1626), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴²"Genealogie des D'Ivory," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Jacques), marriage contract (20 April 1591), *RNC*, unpaginated. For a similar case, see: "Genealogie de la famille de Niger," proofs of nobility offered for sixth generation (Antoine), marriage contract (15 December 1606), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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Marguerite de Le Goix. The content of the contract suggests that Pierre chose a bride with connections that would enhance his social and professional position. The marriage contract, dated 29 July 1560, notes that Marguerite's father, Nicolle,⁴³ was "Enquesteur pour le Roy à Chaalons" and that her uncle, a witness to the contract, served as *procureur du Roi* in the same *élection*. Five years after his marriage, Pierre was named in an *ascensivement* as "receveur pour le Roi à Chaalons [sic]."⁴⁴

What is interesting in the d'Origny's case, however, is that the marriage contracts presented for Pierre and Marguerite's children and grandchildren show that they chose to forge marital alliances with individuals with military connections, suggesting a change of professional interest within the family from the robe to the sword. Pierre and Marguerite's son Claude, named in a military certificate of 1595 as *homme d'armes* in the *compagnie d'ordonnance* of the Duc de Rethelois,⁴⁵ contracted to marry Margueritte de Colignon on 13 July of the same year. This agreement was witnessed by the bride's uncle Goan de Berbier, *lieutenant général au comté de Vertus* and that it bore the seal of the "haut & puissant Prince, M^{re} Charles de Bretagne, Chevalier des Ordres du Roy, Capitaine de cinquante hommes

⁴³Marguerite's father's name is given this spelling in the family's published entry.

⁴⁴"Genealogie d'Origny," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Pierre), *ascensivement* (14 February 1565), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Claude), military certificate (1 July 1595), *RNC*, unpaginated..

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d'armes des anciennes Ordonnances de sa Majesté & Comte de Vertus.”⁴⁶ Claude and Marguerite's son, Christophe, was also in military service and his marriage contract reveals that he also chose a bride with notable military connections. The contract of Christophe and Anne d'Orothée was witnessed by one of the bride's male relatives who was “Baron des quatre lieux,” a counsellor to both the Holy Roman Emperor and Archduke Leopold of Austria, was “Chambellan Colonel de mil hommes à pied, grand Veneur du Royaume de Bohême” and *gouverneur* of the city and fortress of Bouteuis and Wittingaer respectively.⁴⁷

As in the case of Christophe d'Origny and Anne d'Orothée, the marriage contract between Hiersome du Pin and Marie de l'Hoste shows a shared affinity for military service between the supporters of the proposed bride and groom. The contract notes that the groom was assisted in arranging the marriage by his brother Gabriel and “Isaac Arnaud Chevalier Seig [sic] de Corbeville, Mestre de Camp general des Carabins de France.” For her part, the bride had as witness to the contract her aunt and, more importantly, her brother Nicolas who was “Escuyer, Sieur de Soudey, & Lieutenant de la Compagnie de Chevaux Legers du Sieur de Bourlemont.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Claude), marriage contract (13 July 1595), not paginated.

⁴⁷In what is an intriguing omission, the name of the individual in question is not specified in this marriage contract. *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Christophe), marriage contract (9 May 1622), not paginated.

⁴⁸“Genealogie du Pin,” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Hierosme),
(continued...)

*Evidence of offices and commissions*⁴⁹

Other types of evidence provided by the *produisant(e)s*, particularly the direct proofs of military service and/or the possession of a bureaucratic, financial and/or judicial office, draw a more explicit connection between the nobility of the *produisant(e)s* and their choice of profession. This type of evidence accounts for about 4% of the total number of first proofs of nobility offered in the 507 family submissions.⁵⁰ Although the *acte de nomination* provided by the Brune family shows that a few of Champagne's nobles had the right and the resources to bestow minor administrative offices,⁵¹ this type of evidence was more likely to deal with acquisition of commissions and offices by the members of Champagne's nobility rather than with the distribution of such positions by them. Those offered for Guillaume de La Bruiere, for example, show that his "office de Gruyer en la Souveraineté de Rancourt" was granted by the Duchesse Dame Souveraine de Rancourt herself.⁵²

⁴⁸(...continued)
marriage contract (15 February 1640), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴⁹For a more detailed discussion of the types and length of service rendered by Champagne's nobility, see Chapters Five and Six.

⁵⁰See, for example: "Genealogie de Pasquier," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Florent), letter of provision of office of "Secrétaire [sic] du Roy, Maison & Couronne de France & de ses Finances" (9 September 1597), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵¹It is recorded that as Seigneur de Dimon and de Bourdillion, Gregoire de Brune (patriarch of the family) nominated "Charles de Tournebranle à l'office d'Administrateur de la Maladerie de Dimon." See: "Genealogie de Brune," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Gregoire), *acte de nomination* (10 December 1542), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵²"Genealogie de la famille de La Bruiere," proofs of nobility offered for first
(continued...)

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The *lettres de provision* included as proof of Jacques d'Oudan's nobility is typical of those recorded within many of the family submissions as a first proof of nobility in that it links his noble status to the act of service:

Lettres de provisions de l'Estat & Office de Conseiller, Secretaire [sic] du Roy, du College ancien, Maison & Couronne de France & de ses Finances, accordées par sa Majesté à Jacques Oudan, Escuyer, au bas des quelles est la quittance de six cens livres par luy payée [sic] pour le droit de Mare-d'Or, du 22 juillet suivant, & sa reconnoissance d'avoir transcript lesdites Lettres de sa main & ne vouloir se servir d'autre seing.⁵³

Yet, as with other types of evidence included in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), direct proof of military commissions and other forms of military involvement (such as participation in the *ban et arrière ban*)⁵⁴ were more likely to be provided than direct evidence of non-military office holding.⁵⁵ When military evidence was used as the initial proof of nobility, it was generally in the same vein as that offered by Jean de Boy: a field commission. In Jean's case, the commission was one of *capitaine de chevaux légers*,

⁵²(...continued)
generation (Guillaume), letters of provision of office (21 September 1559), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵³"Genealogie des Oudan," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jacques), *lettres* regarding provision of office (date illegible), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵⁴The *ban et arrière ban* were the traditional feudal levies of vassals (*ban*) and sub-vassals (*arrière ban*). This type of service is discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

⁵⁵See, for example: "Genealogie d'Ancienville," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Robinet), military commission (25 February 1442), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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awarded after thirty years of service in the King's army.⁵⁶ As the commissions submitted by Martin d'Aguerre and Jean Ernest de Tervuelles as their first proofs of nobility suggest, it was not just through the information contained within the commission but also through the documents' pride of place in the family submissions that they helped to define an identity as well as defend an individual's or family's claim to *noblesse*.⁵⁷

While only 33 of the 507 families listed in this *recherche de la noblesse* (almost 7%) offered direct proof of military service as their first proof of nobility, this should not be taken as an indication that military commissions and other war related proofs were not valued as direct evidence of *noblesse* by the *produisant(e)s*. As the remaining chapters of this thesis suggest, the majority of families listed in Caumartin's *recherche de la noblesse* used one or more military proofs to document and solidify their claims to *noblesse*. In fact, the extensive use of military commissions as evidence of nobility is perhaps one of the clearest indications of the connection the *produisant(e)s* themselves made between the abstract ideals of *noblesse*

⁵⁶“Genealogie de Boy,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean), military commission (24 March 1658), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵⁷The commission provided for Martin d'Aguerre documents his appointment to the captaincy of Beaulieu “en Argonne, données par Robert de Leononcourt, Evesque & Comte de Chaalons, Pair de France.” See: “Genealogie d'Aguerre,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Martin), provision of office (22 February 1539), *RNC*, unpaginated.

Jean Ernest de Tervuelles' commission was for the rank of “Capitaine d'Infanterie au Regiment de Thurenne” and was awarded “en consideration des services qu'il . . . auroit rendu depuis ses ieunes années.” See: “Genealogie de la maison de Tervuelles,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean Ernest), military commission (15 April 1640), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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and the ways in which they sought to uphold those ideas. The dedication to military service is analyzed in greater depth in Chapter Six.

It should also be noted that while some war related evidence was presented as independent documents within a given family submission, others were presented in what can best be described as bundles. Indeed, the 13 pieces of war related evidence provided as proof of nobility for Barthelemy de Bridot are noted as being “en une laisse.”⁵⁸ It is not clear whether this method of presentation, either in this particular case or in the other similar instances found in the published findings, was chosen by Caumartin or whether these particular pieces of evidence were submitted in this fashion by the individual(s) or family in question. Typical of this form of presentation is the bundle included in the La Foyle family’s submission. Here, the reference reads simply: “Plusieurs actes concernans les Services militaires rendus au Roy par Angrand de La Foyle, Escuyer, Sieur du Charms.”⁵⁹ These bundles of war related evidence were frequently made up of three or more pieces. In some cases the specific types of documents were identified; in others, such as the La Foyle’s

⁵⁸“Genealogie de Bridot,” proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Barthelemy), 13 military certificates and pieces “en une laisse” (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵⁹“Genealogie de La Foyle,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Angrand), “plusieurs actes”(not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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example, the contents of the bundle were identified as being “plusieurs pièces” or “plusieurs certificats.”⁶⁰

The degree of detail given regarding the contents of these bundled documents varied from submission to submission; it could also vary from bundle to bundle within a particular family’s submission. On occasion, some brief commentary as to the type of commission or service record was included.⁶¹ The bundle of military-related evidence included in the claim of Jean, Antoine and Étienne d’Argilliere records “Quatre Commissions en forme de Lettres Patents [sic],” all four bestowing the rank of captain in the *chevaux légers* and infantry upon the three brothers in 1661.⁶² The 11 pieces of war related evidence presented for Gaspard and

⁶⁰See, for example: “Genealogie de Gumery,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Joachim), “Plusieurs Actes & Certificats des Services” (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie des de Pinguenets,” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Michel), “plusieurs Actes, Commissions & Certificats” (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶¹For example: “Genealogie des l’Anglois,” proofs of nobility offered for seventh generation (Claude III), eight various military certificates (7 August 1617; 13 June 1619; 20 November 1620; 22 January 1632; 15 May 1636; 29 July 1647; and 29 May 1653), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Bauda,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Estras), various military commissions (8 August 1641; 5 December 1651; and 18 March 1650), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie du Monceau,” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Soumestrain), four military certificates (“different dates”); and , proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Jean), “neuf pieces” (various dates), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶²Also included in this bundle are “plusieurs Lettres de cachet & Mandemens des Commandans & Generaux [sic] de l’Armée du Roy . . . pour l’exécution des Ordres de sa Majesté.” “Genealogie d’Argilliere,” proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Jean, Antoine and Estienne [sic]), various military commissions and certificates (dated 1661), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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Jacques d'Avrillot included certificates of service and safe conduct, as well as command orders given to them by the Duc d'Enguien "& plusieurs Mareschaux de France & Generaux d'armées, Commandans les Troupes de sa Majesté."⁶³ The nine bundled military *certificats* that outline the service of Daniel de Gumery include six that chronicle his service as "Chevau-Leger [sic] que de Mareschal des Logis, de la Compagnie du Sieur de Bourderenaut; Marquis de Quaslin," as well as a certificate of service signed by the Sieur de Marcin. The two final certificates in this bundle attest to Daniel's service as "Gendarme de la Compagnie de Monsieur le Prince de Condé" in 1647 and 1648.⁶⁴

The inventory-like commentary which accompanies these bundles appears to function as a testament to the valour and bravery of the individual or individuals concerned – to their ability to provide professional service that is both physically and morally suitable to their position as members of the *noblesse*⁶⁵ – rather than as an attempt at a detailed exposition of the contents of any given piece of evidence within the bundle. Typical of this is the

⁶³"Genealogie des Avrillot," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Gaspard and Jacques), various military certificates and documents (1619-1646), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶⁴"Genealogie de Gumery," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Daniel), nine various military certificates (1640, 1641, 1642, 1643, 1644, 1645, 1646, 1647, and 1648), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶⁵The bundle of ten pieces of war related evidence included in the Mires' submission records the service of three of its generations, from 1585 to 1643, in the service of the Dukes of Mayenne and of Guise. "Genealogie de La Mire," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Louis), "dix pieces" (1585-1643), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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commentary appended to the bundle of twenty pieces of military-related evidence provided as proof of the nobility of Daniel de Butor:

Vingt pièces qui sont Lettres de Cachet, Ordres de generaux d'armées, Certificats & autres, qui iustificient plus amplement les longs, fidels [sic] & assidus services de Daniel . . . pendant plus de vingt Campagnes, en qualité de Lieutenant & Capitaine de Chevaux Legers, Conseiller du Roy en son Conseil de guerre & augres emplois des plus consderables de la milice.⁶⁶

Similar sentiments are expressed in the commentary appended to the bundle of four military certificates recorded as proof of nobility for Charles de Collignon and those submitted as proof of nobility of Urcart d'Auger.⁶⁷ In the case of the bundle contained in the proofs for Claude de Floriner II, the additional commentary highlights his death "dans le service Lieutenant de Sieur de Raulet, Capitaine au Regiment de Nettancourt."⁶⁸

⁶⁶"Genealogie de Butor," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Daniel), twenty various military certificates, (not dated, presented as a bundle), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶⁷The commentary accompanying the Collignons' submission simply states that the certificates "iustificians comme ledit Charles . . . a toujours porté les Armes en qualité d'Archer des Ordonnances de sa Majesté, en laquelle l'on ne recevoit pour lors des Gentilshommes." "Genealogie de Collignon," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Charles), various military certificates (20 June 1581; 30 October 1584; 9 July 1585; and "dernier" [28] Feb 1597), *RNC*, unpaginated.

See also: "Genealogie d'Auger," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Urcart), four military certificates (2 dated 4 April 1658 and 2 dated 10 April 1658), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶⁸"Genealogie de Floriner," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Claude II), three military certificates (24 August 1633; 29 July 1635; and 2 November 1640), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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It must be noted that while a similar method of presentation was used to record “Plusieurs Bulles expédiées par la grand Prieur de France [Order of St. John of Jerusalem]” in the proofs offered for Louis d’Argilliere,⁶⁹ this bundled method of presentation and/or description was not used for non-military proofs of nobility. This situation suggests that there may have existed a perception among both those claiming noble status and those adjudicating the claims that military service or other participation in war provided a type of *noblesse* that was, perhaps, beyond reproach. In any case, it would appear that, even if presented together in bundles where the specifics given as to the content of the evidence was extremely brief, evidence of war related activity and/or military service was considered valuable proof of nobility by both the families claiming noble status and those who compiled the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne*.

Cultural and commemorative evidence

As historians of memory and identity have shown, the various types of art, literature and even the methods of social and personal commemoration used by an individual and/or a community can readily convey how members of a community understood its dominant social and cultural ideas. Although used less frequently than more traditional forms of documentary evidence, some families employed what can be classified as commemorative

⁶⁹“Genealogie d’Argilliere,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Louis), “plusieurs bulles” (1585, 1586, and 1587), *RNC*, unpaginated.

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evidence; this evidence most often took the form of notarized accounts of personal and professional information taken from effigies or epitaphs.

An interesting example of this type of evidence was offered by Nicolas de Fillet, Seigneur de Ludes. To prove his own father's nobility – and, by extension, his own – Nicolas included a notarized act (dated 1 June 1634), which contained the testimony of the Curé de Lude regarding the family tomb. The *curé* reported that in his church was a black marble tomb on which the name of his father (Jean), his father's social status and date of death were inscribed. The *curé*'s testimony further noted that also contained within the church was “un [sic] effigie d'un homme armé, representant Nicolas Fillette [father of Jean and grandfather of Nicolas].” It is curious that while the younger Nicolas could himself supply two army commissions (each for the captaincy of *cent hommes de pied*), as well as a *passport* given to him by the Emperor Ferdinand for service as a Cornette in the Emperor's troops, he still felt it was beneficial to include a piece of evidence which was militarily symbolic and of a type that could be confirmed by anyone who had set foot in the community church.⁷⁰ Clearly, as with the oral testimony of military comrades, these pieces of commemorative evidence appear to have been considered acceptable proof of noble status, and particularly of military activity, at least when presented in conjunction with other forms of traditional documentary evidence.

⁷⁰“Genealogie de Fillette,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Nicolas), extract (1 June 1634), *RNC*, unpaginated.

Conclusion

The genealogies and documentary evidence contained in the published findings of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) describe a world in which those who desired to be identified as noble sought to acquire and maintain this identity through service to the state and members of the *haute noblesse*, through marriages to suitable noble partners and, most important, through the commemoration of this service and social interaction. Moreover, they sought to document their acts of service, marriage and sacrifice in forms that would convey the validity of their claim to those conducting the *recherche de la noblesse*. Beyond its purely documentary function, however, the genealogical and documentary evidence submitted by all who claimed noble status in Champagne provides the historian with a means to analyze, both qualitatively and quantitatively, trends in the social and professional lives of Champagne's elite.

What an overview of the evidence contained in this *recherche de la noblesse* reveals is that, for this frontier province, war and its conduct touched almost every aspect of noble life in Champagne. The myriad pieces of documentary evidence as well as the multiple-generation genealogies record, both directly and indirectly, how war and participation in all its related aspects, provided not only a professional outlet for many members of this elite but also served as a medium through which they could shape and express their vision of themselves as noble. The centrality of war to defining *noblesse* in Champagne is, in part, demonstrated by the frequency with which direct evidence of participation in war, whether in

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the form of military commissions or in *lettres d'anoblissement* and other juridical documents, are included in the family submissions. Clearly, the claimants appear to have recorded and memorialized their military and war related service in a fashion that would be easily understood by the state's investigators and their peers.

Also, it is important to note that a majority of the families in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) included in their submissions a great many documents which illustrated their willingness to serve, as well as the economic and personal hardships suffered as a result of war. Thus, while participation appears to have held social significance, the consequences of such service also appear to have merited public commemoration or, at least, explanation. These consequences were documented in commissions, certificates of service and even the testimony of commanders or comrades as individual valour on the battlefield. The use of such direct military proofs was particularly noticeable among those families whose *noblesse* was relatively recent, encompassing six or fewer generations, a trend which is explored in greater depth in Chapter Seven.

War served a professional and ideological function in early modern Champagne. As the remaining chapters of this thesis demonstrate, a detailed analysis of all the submitted evidence contained in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) uncovers a world which was infused with a variety of notions as to what constituted acceptable examples of noble activity, duty and culture. By the late seventeenth century in Champagne, military

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service to the crown or to social superiors, as well as the continuation of military related social and cultural rituals appears to have dominated these notions. The overwhelming use of direct and indirect references to war and its related activities and culture in *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) indicates that, for a great many of Champagne's noble families, the profession of arms and its ideological trappings were deep-seated aspects of noble thought, purpose and identity. Moreover, the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) was a means by which the elite of this province could express their individual and collective social identity.

CHAPTER 5

Non-military service and *noblesse* in early modern Champagne

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the needs of the growing central bureaucracy in early modern France provided opportunities for those who wished to acquire or to maintain noble status without the physical hazards of military service. The ever widening scope of the royal bureaucracy meant that the possibility of acquiring offices in the administration of justice, in finance and in governmental administration grew steadily throughout the early modern period, in spite of the ever-increasing cost of purchasing an office of importance or distinction. The state increasingly exploited this desire for social advancement and endeavoured to sell offices in all areas of finance, administration and law, as well as to develop a system to extort yearly payments and death duties from office holders for the right of *survivance*. Some historians have noted that, although the increasingly inflated cost of an office did not always reflect its true economic value, the high cost was often perceived by the purchaser to be a small price to pay for the social status that came with becoming a member of the *noblesse*.¹

¹For a general discussion of the social impact of the development of royal bureaucracy and venal offices, see, among others: J.H.M. Salmon, *Society in Crisis: France in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1975), 70-79, 92-112; and Roland Mousnier, *La vénalité des offices sous Henri IV et Louis XIII* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1971).

While some offices did ennoble the purchaser outright,² others did not and, consequently, acquiring *noblesse* through such means was a complex process that relied on the acceptance of the office holder by noble society at large. That acceptance could come through many means, but central to achieving acceptance was the ability to create an image or lifestyle that befitted a member of the *noblesse*. Thus, the acquisition of an office and the revenue generated by it could provide a professional base on which to build a socially sustainable noble identity. But while an office in the royal bureaucracy, the King's court or the administration of royal finances might provide a starting point for those who wished to be noble, did such offices alone provide any valuable social currency when it came to developing a noble identity? And were the possible social benefits offered by such offices greater or equal to those that could be reaped from military service?

As Chapter One noted, the changing nature of *noblesse* in early modern France resulted in an increased emphasis being placed on the importance of non-military service as a part of noble identity. Yet, in no way did such a change herald the devaluation of military service as an important aspect of noble identity. Rather, what it represented was an attempt to integrate a new type of nobility based in offices into existing, traditional paradigms. This interpretation is supported by the fact that, as this chapter shows, the contents of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) demonstrate that no clear professional or social bias in favour of non-military service appears to have existed in early modern

²For a list of these types of offices, see Chapter 1, note 1.

Champagne. On the contrary, exclusive involvement in non-military service was the exception rather than the rule for this provincial elite. For the purposes of this thesis, non-military service is widely defined and includes offices in the royal courts, administration of finances, court bureaucracy and administrative offices in the household of the King or a member of the *haute noblesse* which did not involve personal participation in war. This definition also includes professions outside of law and finance and participation in representative assemblies such as the Estates General.

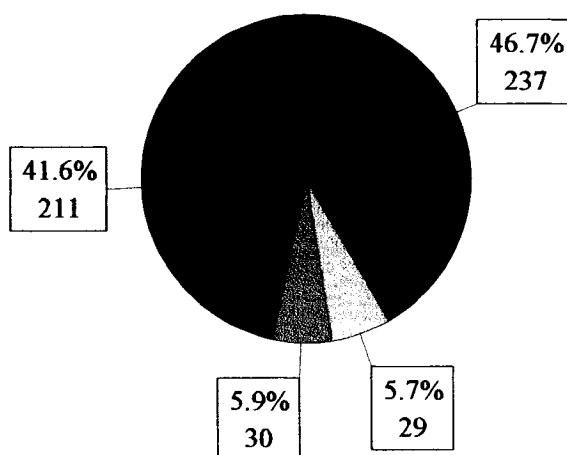
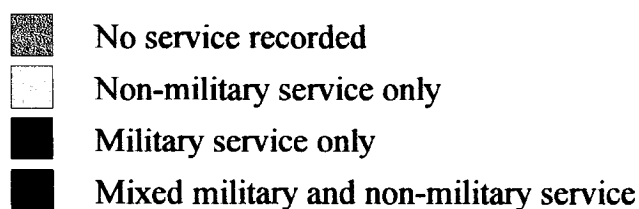
A. Types of office(s) and service

As Figure 5.1 (below) shows, the vast majority of Champagne's noble houses were involved in some form of professional service and they recorded this involvement in the genealogies and documentary evidence submitted for this *recherche de la noblesse*. Only thirty families, just under 6% of the 507 families recorded in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), did not include reference to any type of service or professional activity in their submission. For those who did record some form of service or professional interest, that interest was likely to be military or military related. Chapter Six discusses this trend in greater detail. However, references were also made in the submissions to non-military service and professional activities.

Figure 5.1

Types of service recorded in family submissions

(sorted by type of service and number of families)



A total of 266 of the 507 noble families contained in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) – almost 53% – indicated the possession of or participation in non-military offices or activities in their submissions. Among those posts and offices included in these non-military references were *prévôt*, *bailli*, *procureur général*, *intendant*, *trésorier*, *conseiller de Roi*, *secrétaire d'état*, *contrôleur des Aydes*, *avocat* and *président* in a

provincial and/or the Parisian *parlement* as well as *chambellan*, *maître d'hôtel* and other offices in household administration and diplomatic posts. Yet, it is important that the historian recognize that this number of 266 families in no way suggests that this provincial elite harboured a clear preference for non-military forms of service over military service. A close examination of the data shows that this group of 266 comprises two distinct groups: a small group of 29 families that chose to shun military service in favour of non-military service and a much larger group of 237 families, the professional ambitions of which encompassed *both* non-military and military posts. Thus, the number of families in Champagne that chose to dedicate their human resources exclusively to the pursuit of non-military offices was extremely small.

Exclusive non-military service

The data contained within the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) shows that the 29 families who participated exclusively in non-military forms of service focused on the acquisition of posts related to the royal courts and in finance. These were the areas in which the greatest growth in venal offices occurred in the early modern period. The Larcher family's professional history is typical of this group. Benoît de Larcher, the patriarch, became *conseiller du Roi* "en sa Cour des Generaux [sic] sur le fait de la Iustice des Aydes à Paris" in 1508.³ In 1548, his son, Michel, served "au lieu de son pere" in the same court. In

³The document also notes that Benoît was "licencie es Loix." "Genealogie de Larcher," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Benoît), provision of office (13
(continued...)

1570, Michel acquired his next office, that of “le premier Office de President és Enquestes de la Cour,” in recognition of his services.⁴ Michel’s son, Pierre, continued the family tradition and, in late 1587, became “Conseil & Me Ordinaire en sa Chambre des Comptes à Paris.”⁵ By the early seventeenth century, the family was well enough established in the royal bureaucracy that Michel II, Pierre’s eldest son, became “Advocat en Parlement de Paris & . . . Conseiller & Commissaire en la seconde Chambre des Enquestes” in 1617. Six years later, he added the offices of “Conseiller en la Cour de Parlement de Paris” and “Me. des Requestes ordinaire de son Hostel.” In 1626, he became “President en sa Chambre des Comptes à Paris.”⁶

The office of *conseiller* was also favoured by individuals in those families where professional interests were mixed. For example, at the age of 31, Florent de Pasquier I became *conseiller* and *secrétaire du Roi*, offices he held for 25 years and for which he eventually received “le don & pension de douze cens livres . . . pour recompense des longs &

³(...continued)
October 1508), *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne*, comp. Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin, (Châlons: Jacques Seneuze, Imprimeur & libraire ordinaire du Roi, 1673), unpaginated (hereafter cited as *RNC*).

⁴*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility for second generation (Michel), *acte de reception* (4 January 1548) and “Brevet du Roy” (5 November 1570).

⁵*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility for third generation (Pierre), provisions of office (20 December 1587).

⁶*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Michel II), provisions of office (19 September 1617, 15 July 1623 and 13 May 1626).

agreeables services par luy rendus a l'Estat.”⁷ It would seem, however, that not all experiences were as professionally or financially rewarding as Florent I's. As the example of Jean-Vincent d'Aultry would suggest, the pursuit of such offices was not without its problems. In 1597, Jean-Vincent was given “la charge de conseiller du Roy & Maistre de Requests [sic] ordinaire de son Hostel;” an “acte de Reception” reproduced in the family's submission (dated 4 January 1600) confirms his possession of the office. The specifics of Jean-Vincent's tenure in these posts are not recorded within the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), but it would appear that his claim to the office was questioned in 1620 when, on 6 July, an *arrêt* was issued which accorded him “six mois de temps pour enseigner [sic] ladite charge de Maistre de Requestes.”⁸ It appears that Jean-Vincent rectified his clerical error, although not with any great speed: also included in his submission are *lettres d'honneur* dated nine months later which attest to the resolution of his case.⁹ Jean-Vincent's situation did not hurt his own son's ability to become a member of the Order of St. Michael

⁷“Genealogie des Pasquier,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Florent I), provision of office (9 September 1597); *brevet* (29 December 1595); three separate notarial acts (8 May 1617, 6 May 1621 and 11 February 1628); and “brevet du Roy Louis XIII d'heureuse memoire”(20 November 1613), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁸“Genealogie d'Aultry,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean-Vincent), “Lettres de Provision de la charge de conseiller du Roy & Maistre de Requests ordinaire de son Hostel” (20 November 1597) and *arrêt de Conseil d'État* (6 July 1620), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁹These *lettres d'honneur* in favour of Jean-Vincent were given “en consideration du service rendu à sa Maiesté, en ladic charge de Maistre de Requests pendant vingt & un an, & de plusieurs Commissions par luy exercées, notamment és années 1610 & 1612 dans les Provinces de Provence & Auvergne.” *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean-Vincent), “Lettres d'honneur de Maistre de Requests,” (6 March 1621).

and to become *gentilhomme de la Chambre du Roi*, only two years after the *lettres d'honneur* were issued to his father.¹⁰

Not all non-military service documented in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) was juridical or financial in nature. The members of all five generations of the Quanteal family, for example, practised medicine and served as personal physician to the Duc de Bourgogne. The patriarch of the family was ennobled by the Duke for this service.¹¹ The political activity of Champagne's nobility, as represented in their participation in the numerous Estates General that were held throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, must also be included in this category.¹² Robert du Sart acted as a deputy to the *États Généraux* in Blois in 1588, as did a member of the Conflans family.¹³ In 1614, Jean d'Aulnay was nominated to attend the Estates General called for that year as

¹⁰*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Jean II), "Commission du Roy" (31 November 1623) and "Lettres de Gentilhomme de la Chambre du Roy" (19 December 1623).

¹¹"Genealogie de Quanteal," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Paul), *lettres patentes d'anoblissement* (6 May 1549), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹²See, for example: "Genealogie de Flavigny," proof of nobility for seventh generation (Claude), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Sanglier," proofs of nobility for fourth generation (Ioachim), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹³"Genealogie du Sart," proofs offered for seventh generation (Robert), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Conflans," proofs of nobility offered for fourteenth generation, "Issuë [sic] d'un Cadet des Comtes de Brienne," not dated, *RNC*, unpaginated.

representative of the *bailliage* of Rameru, while Elion d'Avrillot was chosen to attend for the *bailliage* of Chaumont.¹⁴

Moreover, it is important to remember that not all posts that could be categorised as non-military were within the exclusive purview of the state. While members of Champagne's *haute noblesse* required soldiers and commanders, they also required individuals to run their households and to help govern their own spheres of influence. Thus, they too could provide opportunity for professional and social advancement. The Duc de Lorraine, a highly influential political and social force within Champagne during this period, figures prominently in the references to this sort of service provided by many nobles recorded in this particular *recherche de la noblesse*. For example, as well as being honoured with the title of *gentilhomme ordinaire de la chambre*, Pierre d'Artigoity served Charles, the Duc de Lorraine as a *conseiller d'état*. As befitted the wife of one the Duke's *conseillers*, Pierre's wife, Bonaventure, served as governess to the Duke's daughters.¹⁵ The submissions of the Chamissots, Delaistres, Montangons and Harlus families also document their service to the Dukes of Lorraine as, for example, "bailly de l'evesché and Comte [sic] de Verdun" (in the

¹⁴"Genealogie d'Aulnay," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean), *acte de nomination* (24 July 1614), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie des Avrillot," proofs of nobility for fourth generation (Elion) and "Acte de nomination & deputation" (26 June 1614), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹⁵"Genealogie d'Artigoity," proofs of nobility for third generation (Pierre), provision of office (18 June 1599) and three separate certificates (1600, 1602, and 1608), *RNC*, unpaginated.

case of Alexis de Chamissot).¹⁶ The Princes de Condé, another of the crown's rivals for social and political power in this period, also provided opportunities for Champagne's elite. Barthelemy de Gorron's service to the Condé was such that he could include in his submission "Cinq Letters de Madame la Princesse Condé" dated between 1573 and 1575, which attested to "les services considerables qu'il rendoit à ces Princesses, la haute estime qu'elles avoient de son esprit & de sa conduite, qui les grande importance de l'Estat, mesme le Gourvernement de Monseigneur le Prince."¹⁷

Whether rendered to a member of the *haute noblesse* or to the state, the evidence provided by Champagne's noble families shows that this non-military service was likely to be of long duration, at times spanning the life of an individual. Jean de Palluau's career as *secrétaire du Roi* lasted the greater part of his life, from an unspecified date in 1549 until 21 November 1593.¹⁸ For others such as Jean de Morillon, a lengthy career was spent in a number of different offices. His career spanned almost 50 years, starting in mid-1589 when he became "Lieutenant du Bailly [sic] de Vermandois au siege de Chaalons" and "Conseiller

¹⁶"Genealogie de Chamissot," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Alexis), *foy & hommage* (14 March 1509), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de la famille des Delaistre," proofs of nobility offered for first generation, *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Montangon," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation, *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Harlus," proofs of nobility offered for first generation, *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹⁷"Genealogie de Gorron," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Barthelemy), various letters (1573, 1574, 1575, 1582 and 1583)(bundled), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹⁸"Genealogie de Palluau," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean), certificate (30 March 1635), *RNC*, unpaginated.

en la Chambre de son Parlement étably dudit Chaalons.” By 1612, he had received a gift of “400 livres de pension annuelle” for his service. Several years later he acquired an additional post, that of “Conseiller au Conseil d’Etat & privé du Roy.” The 1636 marriage contract of Jean’s eldest son, Jean II, and Antoinette de Rochereau confirmed his father’s standing as *bailli and conseiller*.¹⁹

It was also not uncommon among some families for participation in non-military service to be found throughout the family’s entire lineage, as with the Morillon. Jean de Morillon’s son, Jean II, followed in his father’s footsteps and served as *conseiller* “au Parlement de Metz, en la charge de Conseiller en la Cour, & Commissaire aux Requestes du Palais.”²⁰ While the evidence does not explicitly state that Jean II’s son, Jacques, entered service in the same *parlement*, a contract provided in support of Jacques’ nobility states that he was “licencié és droits,” a clear indication of (at least) an intention to continue the family

¹⁹“Genealogie de Morillon,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Jean), *lettres patentes* (25 July 1589), “Brevet de l’un des trois Offices de Conseiller au Parlement de Chaalons”(20 August 1589), *lettres patentes d’anoblissement* (31 July 1612), “Brevet de retenuë en la charge de Conseiller au Conseil d’Etat & privé du Roy,” (26 May 1633), *RNC*, unpaginated; and *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Jean II), marriage contract (6 October 1636).

²⁰“Genealogie de Morillon,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Jean II), extract of the registers of the *parlement* de Metz (8 October 1633), *RNC*, unpaginated; and *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Jacques), extract of the registers of the *parlement* of Metz (27 May 1667).

tradition.²¹ Similarly, members of each of the five recorded generations of the Sillery branch of the Brularts served the crown. One of the most impressive entries notes that Nicolas de Brulart served as “garde des sceaux de France.”²² Pierre de Brulart, Nicolas’ grandfather and the family’s patriarch, was a *conseiller* in the *parlement* of Paris. Nicolas’ father, Pierre II, served as *avocat* and *conseiller* in the Paris *parlement*, becoming *président* by the 1570s, thus paving the way for Nicolas’ success.²³ In the generations that followed, the family produced several more lawyers, royal councillors and *parlementaires*, as well as one “Ambassadeur extraordinaire en Espagne.”²⁴

However, what the evidence provided by the 507 families also shows is that the social rewards they could reap from non-military offices appears to have been somewhat limited. For example, ennoblement for non-military service was a rare occurrence for the families and individuals recorded in this particular *recherche de la noblesse*. In only two cases, that of the Bohiers and the Denise, did the evidence show that the family’s patriarch had been ennobled in recognition of non-military service. The patriarch of the Bohiers was ennobled in 1490 in

²¹*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Jacques), *contract d’échange* (date illegible).

²²“Genealogie de la famille de Brulart, Branche de Sillery,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Nicolas), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²³*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Pierre II), marriage contract (13 January 1544); and *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Nicolas), marriage contract (12 December 1574).

²⁴*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Pierre III).

recognition of his service to the royal household, while Pierre de Denise, Mayor of Troyes during the Fronde, was ennobled for his role in the maintenance of public order in 1663.²⁵ More common was the gift of a pension, such as that accorded Hugues de Laistre who, in late 1593 was rewarded with “une partie de mil escus, en consideration & pour recompense des bons & loüables Services par luy rendus à l’Estat, en son voyage fait à Rome, par order & pour les propres affaires du Roy.”²⁶ While monetary gifts and pensions could be awarded for diligent and long-term service in non-military offices, the evidence shows that the amounts granted in such pensions were generally small and, moreover, that these pensions were not as frequently granted as were pensions for military service.²⁷

Mixed non-military and military service

As Figure 5.1 illustrates, mixing of non-military and military activities and/or offices was very common within Champagne’s *noblesse*. This mixing of professional interests could occur within the professional career of an individual or over the course of an entire lineage. Moreover, the evidence demonstrates that while the noble families of Champagne were more likely to begin by mixing non-military and military offices and activities, ultimately they

²⁵“Genealogie de Bohier,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation, *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie de Denise,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Pierre), *lettres d’annoblissement* [sic] (February 1663), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁶“Genealogie de la famille des Delaistre,” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Hugues), *lettres patentes* (31 January 1593), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁷For a more detailed discussion of pensions given in recognition of military service, see Chapter Six.

would trade the former for the latter. Often, it would seem as if this mixing and move towards military service came about due to the similarity of the nature of the skills needed for both kinds of service. For example, François de Parchappe first held the office of “Lieutenant Criminel de robe courte & Grenetire au Grenier à Sel d’Espernay” but later served as “Capitaine d’un Compagnie des Carabins.”²⁸ François’ ennoblement in 1592 was, it would seem, a reward for the service he had rendered to the state in *both* his administrative and military capacities. François died while serving in the King’s army.²⁹

Although a change of vocation was more likely to involve the move from non-military to military service, for some individuals, such as Valentin de Sugny, the process was reversed. Valentin’s acquisition of the post of *bailli de Rethelois* came almost a decade after he had begun a career in the military, serving as a captain of an infantry regiment under the command of the Duc de Nevers. Whether this development was due to a change in Valentin’s professional interests or a desire to quit the violence of the battlefield is not noted in the documents.³⁰

²⁸“Genealogie de la famille de Parchappe, Troiesime Branche,” entry for second generation (François), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁹*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for second generation (François), “Deux Arrests du Conseil d’Estat,” (23 February 1623).

³⁰“Genealogie de la famille des de Sugny,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Valentin), “certificat du sieur Comte de Grand Pré,” (16 November 1587) and provisions of office (11 March 1596), *RNC*, unpaginated..

In some cases, it would appear as if the skills used in military service were also of use in non-military service and may have facilitated the change from one type of service to the other. The case of Jean Ernest de Tervuelles provides a useful example. In 1658, Jean Ernest was appointed to carry out collection of the *taille*. While the connection is not made explicitly in the document assigning him this duty, much is made of his military background in the documents which accompany it in the family submission. As a former “Capitaine d’Infanterie” and, by 1658, a “Mareschal general [sic] de la Cavallerie de l’Armee [sic] de Hongrie” responsible for “la discipline, subsistance, logement & payment [sic] des Troupes de Champagne, de l’année 1657,” Jean Ernest appears to have been considered well suited to carrying out his duties as tax collector in the *généralité de Champagne*.³¹

The evidence also shows that the professional interests of entire families could be mixed over the course of the entire lineage.³² For example, while the Beaufort family’s patriarch, Menault, served as *homme d’armes des ordonnances du Roi* under the command of the Duc de Bourbon and later under “Monsieur de la Chapelle des Ursins,” he also served as

³¹“Genealogie de Tervuelles,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean Ernest), military commission (15 April 1640), provision of office (10 April 1658), *arrêt* of the *Conseil d’État* (13 November 1658) and letter signed by le Tellier (20 March 1664), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³²See: “Genealogie de Barbin,” *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Boucherat,” *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Bazin,” *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Fouralut,” *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de des Petit,” *RNC*, unpaginated; Charles-Réné d’Hozier, “Genealogie de Piedefer,” *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Pampelune,” *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie du Val-Dampierre,” *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie de Vinne Girosdot,” *RNC*, unpaginated.

“Me. d’Hostel de Madame la Princesse de Condé.”³³ Menault’s only son, Jean, pursued a decidedly administrative career – serving as “ancien Conseiller au Baillage [sic] & Siege Presidial [sic] de Provins.” He married Simonne de Privé, daughter of the *procurer du Roi au présidial de Provins*.³⁴ The professional interests of Jean’s son, Menault II, were directed towards keeping the public peace. Menault II served as “Conseiller au Presidial de Provins, depuis ancien Conseiller au Presidial de Chaalons;” the genealogy also records that he served as *premiere capitaine* for Châlons. Menault II also was “Subdelegué de Nosseigneurs de la Chambre de Justice” for the *bailliages* of Reims, Châlons, Vitry, Épernay and Ste. Menehould.³⁵ Jean’s second son, Gerard, pursued a military career which ultimately led to his death in battle while an ensign in the Montreau regiment.³⁶

For the Berizaux, this mixing of offices ultimately resulted in a transition of the entire family’s professional interests from non-military to military service. The patriarch, Jean, was *conseiller du Roi* and *lieutenant général au bailliage de Chartres*.³⁷ His son, Robert, followed closely in his father’s footsteps and served as *conseiller du Roi* in the Paris

³³“Genealogie de Beaufort,” entry for first generation (Menault), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³⁴*Ibid.*, entry for second generation (Jean).

³⁵*Ibid.*, entry for third generation (Menault II).

³⁶*Ibid.*, entry for second generation (Jean).

³⁷“Genealogie de la famille des Berziaux,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean), transaction “en parchemin,” (20 September 1510), *RNC*, unpaginated.

parlement. Whether or not Robert's professional position was due in some part to his marriage to Jeanne de Burgensis, daughter of Louis de Burgensis a "Conseiller du Roy, & premier [sic] Medecin des Roys François I & Henry II" is not clear, but the alliance likely did not hinder any professional or social ambitions Robert may have harboured.³⁸ However, Robert's eldest son, Claude, who served as *conseiller du Roi en son Grand Conseil*,³⁹ was the last member of the Berizaux to hold an non-military post.

Claude's sons and grandsons served exclusively in the military. Although he bore the name of the family patriarch, Claude's son Robert chose to take up a career in the infantry, eventually becoming *maître de camp*. Claude's second son, the aptly named Scipion, was commissioned by the Prince de Condé to raise and command four infantry companies under the overall command of the Prince's father, the Marquis de Moulins.⁴⁰ Other documents provided by the family demonstrate that Scipion lived up to his name and, like the famous Roman general, his military vocation was life-long. From December 1635 until June 1651, Scipion served continuously as *aide de camp* and as *sergent de bataille*.⁴¹ Scipion's own

³⁸*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Robert), "employ [sic]," (not dated).

³⁹*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Claude), "arrest de reception" (18 March 1515).

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, entry provided for fourth generation (Robert); and *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Scipion).

⁴¹*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Scipion), "14 pieces qui son des
(continued...)"

devotion to military service was matched by his son and name-sake. Scipion II, also took up the profession of arms and was commissioned *cornette* in the Faber regiment.⁴²

The Marguenat family's professional history is strikingly similar to that of the Berizauxs. Nicolas de Marguenat, a lawyer, became "conservateur des fairs [sic] de Champagne et Brie" in October 1552 and, by 1564, he had added the office of *conseller du roi*.⁴³ Nicolas' son, Philippe continued the family tradition of service in royal administration, albeit in a different way: he focussed on military rather than on civil administration. Philippe served as *controlleur ordinaire des guerres* from 1580 until 1610.⁴⁴ The final steps towards actual field service were taken by Philippe's son, Philippe II, whose military career lasted for at least 16 years, from 1635 to 1651. During this time, Philippe II captained

⁴¹(...continued)
congez, passeports, certificats de generaux [sic] faisant foy des longs services," (1 December 1635 to 2 June 1651).

⁴²*Ibid.*, entry for sixth generation (Scipion II).

⁴³"Genealogie de Marguenat," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Nicolas), military commission (10 October 1552) and "reconnaissance d'une rente fonciere," (10 January 1564), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Philippe), marriage contract (16 January 1580), "acte de foy & hommage" (4 June 1580) and "commission des Requestes du Palais," (9 January 1610), *RNC*, unpaginated..

regiments of *chevaux légers* for the Duc d'Orléans (1635-1641), for the Marquis de La Ferté (1642-1647) and for the Marquis de Genlis (1648-1651).⁴⁵

Conclusion

If social tension did exist between the *noblesse de robe* and the *noblesse d'épée* in early modern Champagne, it did not manifest itself in the preferment of one type of professional activity over another. While there can be little doubt that Champagne's nobles understood that some limited professional and social benefits could be had through exclusive non-military service, the published findings of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) indicates that the vast majority of Champagne's nobles did not seek to establish their *noblesse* or to define their social identity through the pursuit of non-military offices alone. As reflected in the evidence presented in the family submissions, only a handful of families directed their professional activities and interests towards non-military service exclusively.

What the evidence also records is that, whether over the course of an individual's career or the history of a lineage, a greater number of Champagne's noble families chose to mix service in the royal courts, financial administration and household administration of both the crown and the *haute noblesse* with some form of military service. In a number of cases,

⁴⁵“Genealogie de Marguenat,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Philippe II), “cinq certificats des Seigneurs Marquis de la Ferté, Comte de Coligny & Mareschal [sic] de Grammont”(1635 to 1641), “Deux Certificats au Marquis de Maulny” (not dated) and “Deux autres certificats du Sieur de Sansy,”(not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated.

this mixing of service resulted in an evolution in the professional interests of individuals and/or lineages from non-military to military service. Clearly, while non-military service played a role in the lives of the noble families of early modern Champagne, its social value did not seem to outweigh that of military service. In fact, as Chapter Six demonstrates, it would appear that not only were the two forms of service seen as complementary, military service – and public acknowledgement of it – appears to have been more valuable in proving noble status and in providing a basis for a noble identity.

Dale - Chapter 6

Military service and *noblesse* in early modern Champagne

CHAPTER 6 Military service and *noblesse* in early modern Champagne

Contained within the proofs of nobility for Jean Louis de Fresne is a certificate of service which bears witness to his long and illustrious military career. It records he

. . . auroit passé la plus Notable partie de sa vie dans les exercise de Mars, & que par les degrez de la guerre, il seroit par sa valeur & sa conduite parvenue aux charges d'Enseigne, Lieutenant, Capitaine, & Major dans des Regimens entretenus, & mesme qu'il auroit comandé dans la Ville & Chateau de Guise, en l'absence du Gouverneur.¹

Jean Louis' example is by no means unique in early modern Champagne. As Chapter Five noted, while some of Champagne's nobles chose to serve in the judiciary, in finance and/or in administration, a greater number embraced military service, at times in conjunction with non-military service. The published findings of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) chronicles numerous long-term military careers (in which an individual would rise through the ranks), as well as participation in temporary feudal levies such as the *ban et arrière ban* which continued to be called throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As this chapter demonstrates, the dedication to military service displayed by the majority of noble houses in Champagne illustrates the professional value of a career in arms held for this

¹The pieces range in date from 20 August 1625 to 28 May 1646. "Genealogie de la maison de Fresne," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Jean Louis), *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne*, comp. Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin, (Châlons: Jacques Seneuze, Imprimeur & libraire ordinaire du Roi, 1673), unpaginated (hereafter cited as *RNC*).

elite as well as its social and cultural value. Making war, it would appear, continued to be a highly acceptable means of acquiring and maintaining noble status and identity in Champagne well into the late seventeenth century.

That military service was integral to the social identity of Champagne's elite is demonstrated clearly by the fact that the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) is replete with references – both direct and indirect, detailed and general – to military service. Indeed, as Figure 5.1 in Chapter Five showed, direct and indirect proofs of military service were provided for one, several or all generations by 448 of the 507 families recorded in this particular *recherche de la noblesse* (slightly more than 88%).² In these instances, the number of references to military service and activity in family submissions far outweighed references to other, non-military types of service.

These references show that, in most cases, the dedication to military service exhibited by Champagne's nobles encompassed several generations. Some families even traced their military service back several centuries; for example, the d'Estaing claimed to trace their family's military service back to the thirteenth century and the Battle of Bovines.³ Families

²For a discussion of how the terms “direct” and “indirect proofs” are defined and used in this thesis, see Chapter Four.

³Charles-René de Hozier, “Genealogie d'Estaing,” entry for first generation, *RNC*, unpaginated.

that could boast such a long military tradition, however, were in the minority. Most of the references to military service and activity dated from around 1500 until 1669.⁴

These references to military service and activity were found in a wide variety of documentary evidence and they could also be incorporated into the printed genealogies. The types of documentary proofs of military service presented in family submissions included military certificates and commissions, *cong  * and *brevets*, military passports and *lettres de cachet*, as well as references in documents not generated by the military complex – references in marriage contracts, contracts of sale and purchase, oral testimony regarding military participation and inquests into past claims to noble status. In a small percentage of the proofs of military service – about 14% – reference to the specific rank or commission held by the individual in question, as well as the branch of service in which he was involved, was not specified. In these cases, there was no indication as to whether or not this detail had been provided in the initial submission and had been left out of the published findings.⁵ For

⁴This latter date corresponds to the military certificates included in the proofs of nobility submitted by Louis de Denis and Paul de Didier and are the latest dated proofs in this *recherche de la noblesse*. A certificate issued by the sieur de Rozepaire, “Maior   s Arm  es du Roy & Gouverneur d’Audenarde,” testifies that Louis de Denis was in actual service in the garrison at Audengarde, as a captain in the Duras regiment, at the time of his submission, while that given to Paul Didier testifies that he continues to serve “actuellement en ladit Compagnie de la Feuill  e, pendant les six mois precedans.” “Genealogie de Denis,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Louis), military certificate (2 January 1669), *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie de Didier,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Paul), military certificate (15 January 1669), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵See, for example: “Genealogie d’Argilliere,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth
(continued...)

example, the proofs of military service provided for Angrand de La Foyle are presented simply as “Plusieurs actes concernans les Services militaires rendus au Roy” with no additional or specific detail as to the nature of his military service or even the date of issue of any of the documents.⁶ Similarly, the evidence for Philippe de Collignon includes two certificates which simply state that Philippe “à porté les armes pour le service de son Souverain.” While more specific information as to the type and duration of military service is provided for other generations in the Collignon family, no additional information was provided for Philippe.⁷

In exploring the nature and extent of military service recorded in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), this chapter focusses largely on the lives and military activities of the men identified in the family submissions. In outlining the various

⁵(...continued)

generation (Antoine), “Plusieurs Lettres de Passeportes & Certificats de services” (1603, 1610, 1611, and 1612), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie d’Aublin,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation, “Plusieurs Cerfificats,” (21 July and 6 August 1651), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Chartonge,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Thomas), “Deux Commissions & plusiers Actes qui iustiffient les services rendus au Roy,” (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie de la famille de Condé,” proofs of nobility offered for seventh generation, “Deux Commissions en commandement, & austres [sic] actes qui iustifient [sic] les services rendus au Roy,” (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶“Genealogie de La Foyle,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Angrand), “Plusieurs actes concernans les Services militaires rendus au Roy par Angrand de La Foyle, Escuyer, Sieur du Charms,” (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷“Genealogie de Collignon,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Philippe), two military certificates (2 August 1634 and 9 March 1635), *RNC*, unpaginated.

commissions and ranks held by these noblemen, their participation in foreign service and in the *ban et arrière ban*, as well as the length of their military careers, this chapter reveals that war was more than just a professional outlet. It also provided a means by which to acquire and establish the public reputation necessary to acquire and maintain *noblesse* in Champagne. Moreover, that the majority of families in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) provided some type of proof of military service⁸ suggests that these warriors and their families sought to commemorate their skill and have their honour and sacrifice publicly acknowledged.

A. Types of service, ranks and commissions

Most of the military evidence presented by the families in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) provides a great deal of information as to the type of military service rendered by an individual, as well as his particular commission or rank, the length of service and the commander or commanders under which the individual served. What this detail shows is that the types of service, ranks and commissions recorded by Champagne's noble families were as diverse as the population of the nobility itself and included:

- *gendarme* and/or *homme d'armes d'ordonnance* (including service as archer);
- *chevaux légers*;
- *mousquetaire*;
- *porte-cornette* and *cornette*;
- *guidon*, *enseigne*, and *cadet*;

⁸As noted in Chapter Four, 88% of all the families included in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) included one or more references to military service in their family submission.

Military service and *noblesse* in early modern Champagne

- *sergent major*⁹
- *lieutenant*, and the unusual rank of *capitaine-lieutenant*;
- *capitaine*;
- *major*;
- *lieutenant-colonel* and *colonel*;
- *commandant*, *aide de camp*, and *maître de camp*;
- *maréchal*; and
- commissions in the navy.

As this diverse list suggests, many of those involved in military service in Champagne at some time in their careers held a rank or position beyond that of the common *gendarme* or *homme d'armes*. It was not uncommon for an individual to hold several different ranks within the course of his career. The Schulemberg genealogy, for example, chronicles the steady progression of Jean IV, Comte de Motejeu, through the ranks of the King's army.

Jean was

[s]uccessivement Cornette du Prince de Sedan à Verceil en 1614 & Capitaine dans les Troupes envoyées par le Duc de Bouillon . . . en Bohême & à la bataille de Prague en 1620, commandant les Regimens de Vaudemont & de Phaltzbourg, aux guerres de la Religion & Mestre de Camp d'Infanterie pour le service duy Roy en 1632. Gouverneur de Ruë & du Crottoy en 1637 & 42 Mareschal [sic] de Camps & Lieutenant general [sic] en l'Armée de Flandres, en 1650 Gouverneur d'Arras, en 1652 Capitaine d'une Compagnie d'Ordonnances, en 1653, Mareschal [sic] de France en 1658, Lieutenant general [sic] du päis d'Artois en 1661 . . .¹⁰

⁹This rank is equivalent to quartermaster in the English army.

¹⁰The preamble to the genealogy notes that this family name may also be spelled "Chudeberg" and "Schuldeberg." "Genealogie de la maison de Schulemberg," entry for twelfth generation (Jean IV), *RNC*, unpaginated.

References to ranks such as *porte-cornette*,¹¹ *capitaine-lieutenant*,¹² and appeared *sergeant major* were only rarely found in the family submissions.¹³

Gendarme and/or homme d'armes (including archer)

It is necessary to note that a small percentage of the men who participated in military service in Champagne did not hold an official rank or commission during the course of their service. About 13% of the instances of military service recorded in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) were references to service as *gendarme* or *homme d'armes*. Most often, these references were to service in the royal *compagnie d'ordonnance* which had been an important component of the French army since the reforms of Charles VII in the fifteenth century.¹⁴ For individuals such as Claude de Le Cerf II, Jacques de Begat, Roger de

¹¹Jean de Boutillac III served as *porte-cornette* for the Duc de Bouillon in 1588. "Genealogie de Boutillac," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Jean III), letter (21 April 1588), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹²See: "Genealogie d'Alonville," proofs of nobility offered for sixth generation (Edme), military certificates (1642), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹³Regnault d'Artigoity served in this capacity in 1646. "Genealogie d'Artigoity," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Regnault), military commission (1646), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹⁴See, for example: "Genealogie de La Bruiere," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Nicolas), eight contracts *d'acquisition* (9 February 1566; 5 January 1567, 24 August 1570, 4 August 1571, 18 February 1574, 22 December 1584, and 21 August 1585) and proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Étienne), ten various military-related proofs, (21 April, 10 June, 5 July 1600; 17 December 1602; 26 May, 21 June, 6 July 1603; and 6 February 1604), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Damoiseau," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Claude), military certificate (31 August 1597), *RNC*,

(continued...)

Prospe and Michel de Pinguenets, their lengthy military careers began and ended as *gendarme* or *homme d'armes* in one of the various *compagnies d'ordonnance* mustered during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁵ In the history of some families such as the La Mires and the Veillarts, service as *homme d'arme* was a constant throughout the family's history, with the male head of the family serving in such a capacity in each generation.¹⁶

Serving as a *gendarme* or *homme d'armes* does not appear to have carried any professional or social stigma in Champagne, either for the individual or for his family. This suggests that any type of military service – even that which might be considered to be of the lowest possible sort – was valued by the elite of this region. For example, Charles de Baleine

¹⁴(...continued)

unpaginated; *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Simon), military certificates, (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie de Tristan,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation, *lettres patentes d’anoblissement* (September 1651), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹⁵“Genealogie de Le Cerf,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Claude II), military certificate (15 July 1581), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Begat,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Jacques), military certificate (4 July 1589), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Prospe,” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Roger), “Deux contracts,” (25 May 1592 and 6 August 1595), *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie des de Pinguenets,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Michel), marriage contract (6 June 1627), and various military certificates (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹⁶In the case of the La Mire family, such service was exclusively in the companies of the the Duc de Guise. The members of the Veillart served a variety of different commanders. “Genealogie de La Mire,” proofs of nobility offered for each generation, *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie de Veillart,” proofs of nobility offered for each generation, *RNC*, unpaginated.

and his grandson (also named Charles) both served as *homme d'armes*, the elder in the late sixteenth century in the *sieur de Guionelle's compagnie d'ordonnance*, in which his father was *maréchal de logis*. By the mid 1630s, the grandson held what might be considered a more plum assignment as *homme d'armes* in the Queen's bodyguard.¹⁷ The Baleine were not among Champagne's newest noble families and, as noted in Chapter Four, their initial proof of nobility directly linked the family's status to the year 842 and to the alleged valour of the family patriarch.¹⁸ While later members of the family held positions of higher rank in the King's army, the family submission commemorates and celebrates the military activity of both the grandfather and the grandson with as much ardour as it does that of the family members who followed them.

It is likely any possible social stigma which could result from service as a *homme d'armes* was alleviated by the fact that, for a significant number of noblemen named within the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), service as either *gendarme* or *homme d'armes* was the merely first step in a long military career which would see the individual rise

¹⁷"Genealogie de la maison de Baleine," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Charles), marriage contract (28 January 1593), *RNC*, unpaginated; and *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Charles), military certificate (4 December 1639).

¹⁸For a discussion of this family's submission and the actions of its patriarch, see Chapter Four.

in ranks.¹⁹ In 1593, for example, François de Boulleur began his career as a *homme d'armes* under the command of the Baron d'Ambonville. Only a year later, he was ordered by the Baron d'Ormes to raise his own infantry company. By 1616, he was once again commissioned to raise a company of 100 men, this time to serve in the regiment of the *sieur* de Crecia.²⁰ Similarly, while Daniel de Butor began his military career in the early 1620s as a *homme d'armes de la compagnie du Roi*, by the late 1630s he had served in twenty foreign and domestic campaigns in total and had risen through the ranks to become lieutenant and later captain in a company of *chevaux légers*. Daniel was also made a member of the King's *conseil de guerre*, thus enhancing his military and social identities.²¹

¹⁹Jean Miserac was, by 1612, a *gendarme* in the Duc de Bouillon's *compagnie d'ordonnance*. By May of 1634, he held a captain's commission in Turenne's regiment. A similar situation is found in the third generation of the Saint Sauflieu family, where a lieutenant's commission followed a stint as a *homme d'armes* in the *compagnie d'ordonnance* of the *Sieur* d'Haracourt. See: "Genealogie de Miserac," proofs of nobility for third generation (Jean), marriage contract (26 November 1612) and military commission (28 May 1634), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Saint Sauflieu," proofs of nobility offered for third generation, seven various military certificates, *brevets*, etc. (18 July, 7 August 1590; 2 January, 19 February, 12 March, 18 November and 29 December 1592), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁰"Genealogie de Boulleur," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (François), marriage contract (18 February 1593); military order (27 October 1594) and military commission (6 September 1616), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²¹"Genealogie de Butor," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Daniel), *vendition* (10 March 1621), 20 various pieces of evidence, including *lettres de Cachet [sic]*, *Ordres de generaux [sic] d'armées*, certificates of service and other documents, (not dated) and military commission for command of a company of *chevaux légers* (14 January 1637), *RNC*, unpaginated.

Serving as an archer in one of the *compagnies d'ordonnance* or in the various regiments of personal body guards which existed in the royal household and those of the *haute noblesse* must also be considered in this category. Just under 9% of the references to military service found within the family were to service as an archer. Most often these references were to service in the *ordonnances du Roi*, in the retinues of the *haute noblesse*, in the King's Bodyguard (*gardes du corps du Roi*) or in the King's Scottish Guard (*Garde Écossoise du Roi*).²² Indeed, if the *noblesse* of Champagne is to be characterized as a *noblesse seconde*, it seems fitting that some its members participated in a form of military service that required great skill, but was less costly in terms of outfitting and equipment. Both Edme de Gumery and his eldest son, Nicolas, were numbered among the "Archers des Gardes du Corps du Roy," with the father serving in the early seventeenth century under the Sieur de Praslin and the son in 1634 under the command of "Monsieur de Tresmes."²³

It interesting to note, however, that while the Scots were well respected for their excellent archery skills during this period, those noble families of Scottish origin which are

²²See: "Genealogie d'Aumosne," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Baudier," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Bonnille," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Collignon," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Doulcet," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Dainville," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Rimbert," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Rouvoire," *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Rougemont," *RNC*, unpaginated.

²³"Genealogie de Gumery," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Edme), military certificate (16 February 1602) and marriage contract (20 September 1621), *RNC*, unpaginated; and *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Nicolas), "Extrait de l'Estat des Officiers & Gardes au Corps du Roy," (15 May 1634).

included in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) did not serve exclusively as archers in the King's *garde Écossoises* (Scottish Guard). For example, Adam Coburn served in the *gardes Écossoise* but as *maréchal de logis*, a command post of some military and social importance.²⁴ Only in the case of the Henderson family could it be said that service as an *archer de la garde Ecossoise* dominated the family's professional life.²⁵ Thus, while a few members of Champagne's families of Scottish origin did participate in military service as an archer, far more served in mounted cavalry units, as commanders and captains.²⁶

Cornette, guidon, enseigne

Notice of service within the lower ranks, including *cornette*, *guidon* and *enseigne*, accounted for around 3% of the references to military service contained in the family submissions.²⁷ Jean de Graffeul, for example, served as *cornette* in the company of *chevaux*

²⁴“Genealogie de Cockbourne,” entry for fourth generation (Adam), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁵“Genealogie d’Handresson,” entries for first generation (Jean), second generation (Laurent), third generation (Bernard) and sixth generation (Louis); and proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Laurent), marriage contract (13 November 1502); and proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Bernard), *brevet* (16 July 1562), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁶See: “Genealogie de la famille de Cockbourne,” *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Tournebulle,” *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de la famille de Berey,” *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie de la famille des Locart,” *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁷See, for example: “Genealogie des Divory [sic],” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Christophe), *partage* (19 February 1570), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Fresne,” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Hubert), various military commissions, including a *brevet* given to Hubert's father Antoine and to Hubert, (12

(continued...)

légers commanded by his father Pierre, *sieur* de Davette,²⁸ while Adrian de Chartongne served as *guidon* in the *compagnie d'ordonnance* commanded by the Duc d'Usez.²⁹

As with many of those who served as *gendarme* or *homme d'armes*, service in these lower ranks often represented the initial phase of a career which saw the individual acquire other higher ranks and commissions.³⁰ Nicolas de Fillette began his military career as a *cornette* in the army of the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II in 1620, but acquired captains commissions in the French army first in 1622 and then in 1624.³¹ Beginning his career as *cornette* in the Roquelaures regiment, it took Charles de Chartonge only three years before he became "Lieutenant de Cavallerie en la compagnie du Comte de Grandpré." Within a decade he had spent four years in the Duc d'Anguien's regiment and had become "Capitaine de

²⁷(...continued)
September 1596) *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁸"Genealogie des de Graffeul," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Jean), *brevet* (28 August 1660), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁹"Genealogie de Chartongne," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Adrian), military commissions, (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³⁰See, for example: "Genealogie de la famille de Cockbourne," proofs of nobility offered for sixth generation, military certificate (30 December 1647) and military certificate (3 August 1650), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Racine," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Michel), *congé* (4 January 1660) and *congé* (20 April 1668), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Groulart," proofs of nobility offered for sixth generation (Sebastien), military certificate (23 December 1662), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³¹"Genealogie de Fillette," proofs of nobility provided for third generation (Nicolas), *passport* (20 June 1620) and two military commissions (30 July 1622 and 9 September 1624), *RNC*, unpaginated.

Cavallerie & Lieutenant Colonel, commandant le Regiment de Cavallerie de Crequil

Estranger.”³²

However, not all of those whose career began in these lower ranks managed to acquire higher commissions with the apparent ease demonstrated by Nicolas de Fillette and Charles de Chartonge. For example, Hector de La Riviere’s rise from *guidon* to *lieutenant* took about 24 years.³³ The situation for Jean de Nettancourt was similar. He began his career in the early 1570s as “Guidon de la Compagnie du Comte de Briennes” but, despite being “Gentilhomme servant du Duc de Lorraine,” it was not until 1586 that he acquired a higher military rank, being commissioned as *capitaine* of a company of *chevaux légers* in the regiment of the *sieur* de Vaubecourt in that year.³⁴

³²“Genealogie de Chartongne,” proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Claude), document regarding “Les services & emplois de Claude de Chartongne,”(not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³³“Genealogie de La Riviere,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Hector), contract (1 January 1561) and marriage contract (25 May 1585), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³⁴“Genealogie de la famille de Nettancourt,” proofs of nobility offered for sixth generation (Jean), marriage contract (25 November 1573) and military commission (1586), *RNC*, unpaginated.

Lieutenant and capitaine

The two most frequently cited ranks and/or commissions in the published findings of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) were those of lieutenant (11%) and captain (25%). The references made to service as a *lieutenant* focussed on three specific types of lieutenancies: in mounted units (including regiments of *carabins*)³⁵ and infantry and/or artillery units.³⁶ Given the high percentage of recorded references to the rank of *capitaine*, it should not be surprising that many of the recorded lieutenancies were, as in previous instances, simply a stepping stone to higher rank and preferment. Yet for some,

³⁵See: "Genealogie de Palluau," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Pierre), military certificate (1 July 1639), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Groulart de Hazinelle," proofs of nobility offered for sixth generation (Sebastien), marriage contract (13 August 1639), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie d'Humbelot," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Claude), marriage contract (16 May 1656), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Begat," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Charles), marriage contract (16 August 1649), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Bridot," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Hector and Barthelemy), *enquête* (19 October 1622) and various military documents (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated. For references to service as a *carabin*, see: "Genealogie d'Humbelot," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Claude), *lettres patentes* (April 1661), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³⁶See: "Genealogie de Cochet," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Charles), marriage contract (4 February 1636), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de La Barge," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Abraham), two contracts (7 and 28 April 1595), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Le Cerf," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Jean), three *lettres de cachet* (16 March, and 16 May 1665), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Fresne," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Hubert), *brevet* (24 September 1595) and adjudication (5 September and 16 November 1602), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Truc," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Louis), *lettres patentes* (November 1667), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie des de Sugny," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Valentin), provision of office of *bailli* of Rethel, (11 March 1596), *RNC*, unpaginated.

such as Jean de l'Hospital, attaining the rank of lieutenant was the culmination of many years of hard service.³⁷

Indeed, the evidence suggests that Champagne's noblemen did not need to acquire ranks higher than that of *lieutenant* to benefit socially and personally from their military service. Étienne de La Blanc was ennobled in 1652 for his service to Louis XIII and Louis XIV in his capacity as "Lieutenant de la compagnie, Maistre de Camp au Regiment de Cavallerie de Renneville." The *lettres d'anoblissement* provided as proof of his nobility show that Étienne had rightfully earned this reward and they chronicle his participation at the sieges of "Ypres, Graveline, Dunkerque, Pergue, Dixmude, Cambray, és Combats de Bapaume [sic], Arras, Rocroy, ou en attaquant un Bataillon des ennemis à la teste d'un escadron de son Regiment de Cavalerie." It was at this final battle that Étienne was wounded by "un Coup de Picque à l'espaulle, & son Cheval tué sous luy, ne laissa pas de remporter un Drapeau des ennemis." Moreover, at the Battle of Rethel, Étienne "ayant reçu divers blessures, & donné des marques de sa valleur, generosité [sic] & fidelité."³⁸ Clearly, while only a lieutenant, Étienne's service was worthy of recognition and provided a means for his social elevation.

³⁷"Genealogie de l'Hospital," proofs of nobility offered for sixth generation (Jean), military commission (11 March 1659), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³⁸"Genealogie des Le Blanc," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Étienne), *lettres patentes d'anoblissement* (September 1652), *RNC*, unpaginated.

As aforementioned, the most frequently mentioned rank and/or commission in the family submissions was *capitaine*; these references were to service in regular mounted units (including companies of *chevaux légers*, *arquebusiers*³⁹ and *cuirassiers*⁴⁰) and/or infantry units,⁴¹ as well as in units and companies raised for the traditional levies of the *ban et arrière ban*. The details provided in these references reveal that these captaincies were well earned.

³⁹An “Extrait de la Monstre generale [sic] du ban & Arriereban [sic] de l’Evesché de Saint Malo” for 1569 notes that Pierre de Renant was chosen “Capitaine à la conduite au Regiment des Gentilshommes Arquebuziers [sic]d à pied de ce Diocese.” Although Pierre is cited in both the genealogy and documentary evidence as “Pierre de Renant,” the name stated at the head of the family submission is Renault-des Landres. “Genealogie des Renault-des Landes,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Pierre), extract (7 March 1569), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴⁰See, for example: “Genealogie d’Ambly,” proofs of nobility offered for tenth generation (Jean-Louis), military commissions (7 December 1665 and 3 April 1666), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴¹See, for example: “Genealogie d’Ambly,” proofs of nobility offered for ninth generation (François II), military commission (September 1627), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie d’Artigoity,” proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Regnault), military commission (1639), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Malval,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (François), military commission (16 November 1635), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de La Barge,” proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation, military commission (1618), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie d’Humbelot,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Étienne), military commission (10 November 1600), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Baradat,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Jean), *contract de vente* (7 June 1596), *RNC*, unpaginated; *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Guillaume), *brevet* (18 June 1590) and military commission (“premier” [1] February 1596); “Genealogie des de Pinguenets,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Jean), marriage contract (7 June 1657), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie des Renault-des Landes,” proofs of nobility offered for seventh generation (Pierre), marriage contract (1 February 1655), *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie des de la Nouë,” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Nicolas), various military proofs including two commissions, a certificate of service and *lettres patentes d’anoblissement* (24 January 1589, 21 July 1592, and 21 August 1587), *RNC*, unpaginated.

For example, Paul de Didier's captains commission in a company of *chevaux légers* in the regiment of Mondevergue was given "après avoir passé par tous les degrez militaires, & fait connoître son courage & sa conduite." By the end of his thirty year career, he had risen to the rank of *lieutenant-colonel* in Condé's regiment and had been ennobled for his service.⁴²

Others appear to have acquired prestigious assignments with greater ease and speed, as in the case of Charles de Cochet, whose captaincy was of one a company in the historic *regiment de Picardie*. Charles had previously served in this regiment as a lieutenant.⁴³ References to captaincies of *châteaux* and towns (*villes*) were also found in the submissions.⁴⁴

In some cases, individuals held multiple captaincies either in sequence or, as in the case of Claude de L'Anglois III, simultaneously.⁴⁵ Over the course of his 34 year career, Guyaldon d'Auger held three consecutive commissions as captain of a *compagnie de chevaux*

⁴²Paul was awarded another captain's commission in 1663. "Genealogie de Didier," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Paul), military commission (23 November 1650), *lettres d'anoblissement* (February 1657) and military commission (7 December 1663), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴³"Genealogie de Cochet," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Charles), marriage contract (4 February 1636) and military commission (21 October 1639), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴⁴See, for example: "Genealogie de Nettancourt," proofs of nobility offered for seventh generation (Jean), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴⁵"Genealogie des L'Anglois," proofs of nobility offered for seventh generation (Claude III), 8 pieces of militaria, including "des Congez & Certificats donnez par ses Officiers," (7 August 1617; 13 June 1619; 20 November 1620; 22 January 1632; 15 May 1636; 29 July 1647; and 29 May 1653), *RNC*, unpaginated.

légers in the regiments of Comte de Grand-Pré.⁴⁶ Jean Argilliere and his brothers Antoine and Étienne were all commissioned by the same *lettres patentes* in 1661 to captain companies of *chevaux légers* and infantry. The document does not indicate whether each brother held a commission in each type of company or whether the commissions were divided in some way among the siblings.⁴⁷

Only a handful of individuals could lay claim to commissions higher than lieutenant or captain, further supporting Bourquin's characterization of the *noblesse* of Champagne as *noblesse seconde*.⁴⁸ Similarly, only a few references were made to ranks and commissions which involved the supply, logistics and positions which dealt with the administration of the

⁴⁶The commissions contained in the printed d'Auger family submission praise his "valeur, courage & experience dans le fait des armes," and show that his efforts were rewarded with a promotion to "l'Estat & charge de Major" in 1661 and to "mestre de Camp dans le Regiment du Colonel general [sic] & Cavallerie Legers [sic] de France" in 1667. "Genealogie d'Auger," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Guyaldon), military commissions (6 December 1633; 29 December 1651; and 22 August 1664), two military certificates (4 and 10 April 1658), military commission (April 1661) and military commission (18 July 1667), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴⁷"Genealogie d'Argilliere," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Jean, Antoine, Étienne), four military commissions "en forme de Lettres Patents" (1661), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴⁸See, for example: "Genealogie de Didier," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Paul), *lettres d'anoblissement* (February 1657), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de des Noyers," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (François), "Provisions de la charge de Lieutenant Colonel au Regiment de Cavalerie d'Ourche," (9 November 1667), *RNC*, unpaginated.

army, such as *maître de camp* and *maréchal de logis*.⁴⁹ It appears as if these types of commissions and post were often given to the most experienced soldiers and thus were often acquired at the close of an active and successful military career as a reward for service.⁵⁰

B. Size of command

Those who held the rank of lieutenant, captain or higher were most likely in command of a *corps*, regiment or company within the King's army or in the retinue of a member of the *haute noblesse*. And, as with the evidence of an individual's rank, information about the size and location of the command awarded could also be included in both the direct and indirect evidence of military service or in the genealogical entry provided for the individual in question. The size of commands varied and references were made to smaller commands of forty or sixty infantry, such as those given to Antoine de Remont and Robert de La Berquerie,⁵¹ as well as smaller sized commands (which appear to have been more common

⁴⁹See, for example: "Genealogie de La Barge," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Jacob, Henry), *passeporte* (1655), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de La Bruiere," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (François), military certificate (21 April 1667), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie des de La Nouë," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Sebastien), military commissions (6 July, 22 September, 1 and 10 October 1553) and *donation* (March 1555), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵⁰See, for example: "Genealogie d'Aguerre," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Charles), military commission (25 January 1649), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Gumery," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Daniel), military certificates (1640 and 1648), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵¹On 8 November 1629, Antoine de Remont was commissioned to raise a relatively small levy of forty *hommes de guerre*. Several decades earlier, Robert de La Berquerie had
(continued...)

when more costly mounted units were to be levied).⁵² Given that throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the cost of raising any military unit fell largely to the nobleman commissioned to command it, it is possible that the nobles of Champagne welcomed the opportunity to field smaller and thus less costly units.

Despite their potential strain such commands would likely place on noble finances, however, Champagne's nobles did not refuse the opportunity to command larger units. Commands of 100 and 200 *hommes de pied*, *hommes d'armes*, *hommes d'infanterie* and/or of *chevaux légers* were the most common size of command mentioned in the family submissions.⁵³ For example, Pierre Truc was given command of 100 *hommes de pied* in the

⁵¹(...continued)

been commissioned to raise both a company of 200 *hommes de pied* by the Duc d'Anjou (1581) and a company of 60 *chevaux légers* by the king (1592). See: "Genealogie de Remont," proof of nobility given for fourth generation (Antoine), military commission (8 November 1629), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de La Berquerie," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Robert), military commission (12 May 1581) and military commission (27 May 1592), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵²Such was in the case for a member of the Bretel family, who was commissioned to raise a company of 60 *arquebusiers à cheval* in 1589. "Genealogie de Bretel," proofs of nobility offered for second generation, military commission (18 April 1589), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵³See: "Genealogie d'Artigoity," proofs of nobility for third generation (Pierre), military commission (3 November 1557), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie des de Heude," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean I), military commission (22 January 1593), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de la famille de Cockbourne," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Regnam), *lettres patentes* (6 August 1555), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Gaalon," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Nicolas), *vendition* (19 December 1585), *RNC*, unpaginated.

regiment de Rambure, while Henry de La Nouë served as *capitaine* of 100 *hommes de pied* in the garrison at the *château* de Montbrison.⁵⁴ As the latter example suggests, some of these commands were directly linked to the keeping of the public peace. Philippes [sic] d'Ambly was ordered to raise a company of 200 *hommes d'infanterie* by the King in 1587, in order to fulfil his duties as *gouverneur* of Donchery effectively in a time of civil unrest.⁵⁵ In the same year, Adrian de Chartongne was ordered, as part of the *ban et arrière ban*, to raise a company of 200 *hommes de pied* "pour la deffence de la Ville de Rethel."⁵⁶ Clearly, during periods of internal conflict such as the Wars of Religion or the Fronde, such commands – and those who received them – became an important part of the crown's maintenance of political and social stability.

A few, much larger commands were also awarded to individuals, the largest being that given to Mathias de Renart de Fuchsamberg who commanded "trois mils [sic] hommes de pied" in Flanders for the Duc de Bourgogne.⁵⁷ Ode de La Fite-Pelaporc was given the

⁵⁴"Genealogie de Truc," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Pierre), *lettres patentes* (November 1667), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de La Nouë," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Henry), *testament* (27 April 1595), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵⁵"Genealogie d'Ambly," proofs of nobility offered for seventh generation (Philippes), military commission (24 July 1587), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵⁶"Genealogie de Chartongne," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Adrian), *acte de comparution* (1 August 1587), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵⁷"Genealogie de Renart de Fuchsamberg," proofs of nobility for first generation (Mathias), *RNC*, unpaginated.

captaincy of “une bande de mil hommes de la Legion de Languedoc” in 1534,⁵⁸ while, in 1587, the Duc de Lorraine gave Chrétien d’Artigoity a commission “pour lever & commander un Regiment de dix compagnies de deux cens hommes d’Infanterie.”⁵⁹

C. Length of careers

Many of Champagne’s noblemen dedicated their entire lives to military service.⁶⁰

The military career of Hierosme [sic] du Pin, the longest continually serving individual recorded in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), spanned a total of 43 years, lasting from 1625 to 1668.⁶¹ Of course, not all of Champagne’s soldiers could have such lengthy careers; the shortest recorded military career was that of Jean de Saint Saulflieu who served for a mere 18 months between 1590 and 1592.⁶² While evidence chronicling the exact

⁵⁸“Genealogie de La Fite-Pelaporc,” proofs of nobility for seventh generation (Ode), military commission (1534), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵⁹“Genealogie d’Artigoity,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Chrétien), military commission (9 October 1587), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶⁰For example, Charles d’Aguerre appears to have served for anywhere from 25 to 38 to 43 years. His proofs of nobility attest to his involvement in military activity from 1606 to 1625 and again in 1630, 1636, 1637, 1644, 1645, and 1649. If it is assumed that d’Aguerre’s service did not cease during the five years from 1625 to 1630 or between 1630 and 1636, his total years in military service changes considerably. See: “Genealogie d’Aguerre,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Charles), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶¹“Genealogie du Pin,” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Hierosme), *arrêt* of the *Conseil d’État du Roy* (29 May 1668), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶²“Genealogie de Saint Sauflieu,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Jean), various military documents including several *brevets* (18 July and 7 August 1590; 2 (continued...))

duration of a military career was not provided for all who presented evidence of military service, for those individuals where evidence was more detailed, the most common duration of military service reported was between 16 and 30 years. Not surprisingly, the most detailed information as to length and duration of military service could be found for those individuals who served between 1550 and 1650, arguably one of the most violent centuries in France's history.

In a few instances, an explicit statement as to the total duration of the individual's military career was made within the evidence provided. For example, Jean de Le Bel's *lettres d'anoblissement* explicitly state that they were presented in recognition of his 40 years of military service.⁶³ The military certificates presented by Jacques de Veillart note his service as *gendarme* from 1616 until 1642, a total of 26 years.⁶⁴ Similar detail is found in the evidence provided for Étienne de Floriner (who served for 8 years), Jean de l'Hôpital (14 years), Daniel de Sahuguet (20 years), Michel de Pinguenets (20 years), Jean de Riviere (20

⁶²(...continued)

January, 19 February, 12 March, 18 November and 29 December 1592), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶³"Genealogie de Le Bel," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean), *lettres patentes d'anoblissement* (June 1587), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶⁴"Genealogie de Veillart," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Jacques), various military certificates (1616 to 1642), *RNC*, unpaginated.

years), Jean de Pinguenets (25 years), Jean de Boy (30 years), and Bernard Henderson (30 years).⁶⁵

Most statements regarding the duration of an individual's military service were not so explicit, however. In some instances, such as those of Daniel de Gumery and Louis de Denis, the evidence was presented in such a manner as to make the calculation of total years of service straightforward.⁶⁶ In the majority of cases, however, determining the true length of an individual's military service required consulting a number of non-military as well as military documents included within a family's submission and compiling an account of the

⁶⁵"Genealogie de Floriner," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Étienne), military certificate (4 September 1645), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de l'Hôpital," proofs of nobility offered for sixth generation (Jean), military commission (11 March 1659), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie des de Pinguenets," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Michel), various military certificates (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated; *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Jean), various military commissions, (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Riviere," proofs of nobility offered for third generation, various military commissions (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Boy," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean), military commission (24 March 1658), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie d'Handresson," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Bernard), *brevet* (16 July 1652), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶⁶For Daniel, his proofs of military service were presented as a bundle, recorded chronologically; the evidence presented for Louis is recorded in a similar manner, but contains the added information that he discharged his duties between 1644 and 1663 "sans aucune discontinuation." "Genealogie de Gumery," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Daniel), various military certificates (1640-1648), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Denis," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Louis), various military certificates (1644 to 1663); "Diverses Lettres à Cachet, Ordres de sa Majesté & Routes [sic]" (1663 to 1667) and military certificate (2 January 1669), *RNC*, unpaginated.

individual's total years of service from them.⁶⁷ Thus, while one military certificate provided in support of Samuel de Bourgeois' claim to nobility notes his eight years in the Duc d'Angoulême's company of *chevaux légers*, this was not the sum total of his military activity. An additional certificate provided within the family submission attests to his service, for an unspecified period, in the regiment of the Comte de St. Agnan "pendant la Compagnie dernière."⁶⁸ For Paul de Didier, to the thirty years service attested to in his *lettres d'anoblissement* must be added a minimum of six more years as outlined in four additional military orders and certificates included in his submission. If it is assumed that Didier served without a break between 1657 and 1663, the total number of years spent in military service rises from 30 to 42.⁶⁹ And while the various military commissions and certificates provided

⁶⁷See: "Genealogie des l'Anglois," proofs of nobility offered for seventh generation (Claude III), 8 various military documents including "des Congez & Certificats" (7 August 1617; 13 June 1619; 20 November 1620; 22 January 1632; 15 May 1636; 29 July 1647; 29 May 1653), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Cochet," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Charles), marriage contract (4 February 1636), military commission (21 October 1639) and *foy & hommage* (12 December 1644), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Mussan," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Claude), "trois congez" (15 August 1663; 1 January 1666; and 27 January 1667), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de La Bruiere," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Étienne), various pieces (21 April, 10 June, 5 July 1600; 17 December 1602; 26 May, 21 June, 6 July 1603; and 6 February 1604), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Gorron," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Antoine), 4 military certificates (1634-1640), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie des de Graffeul," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation, *brevet* (15 December 1651), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶⁸"Genealogie des de Bourgeois," proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Samuel), military certificate (12 February 1640) and military certificate (1 March 1641), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶⁹"Genealogie de Didier," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Paul), *lettres* (continued...)

for Claude d'Humbelot II would date his military career from 1659, his marriage contract of 1656 provides interesting additional information: at the time of his marriage he was "Lieutenant de Cavalerie au Regiment de Mgr. Le Mareschal [sic] de Turenne."⁷⁰

D. *Ban et arrière ban*

As well as documenting participation in the regular forces of the state and members of the *haute noblesse*, proof of participation in the various *ban et arrière ban* that were called throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was included in almost 15% of the total family submissions. Champagne's nobility embraced the chance to serve in the local levies, particularly during the mid-sixteenth century (during the Wars of Religion) and during the volatile early seventeenth century, where participation in the *ban et arrière ban* appears to have been identified with the proper public conduct of *noblesse*.⁷¹ In the case of Abraham

⁶⁹(...continued)

d'anoblissement (1657), military commission (7 December 1663), military order (9 January 1666), *lettre d'incorporation* for a company in the regiment of the Marquis de Montcavrel (27 March 1666), *ordre du Roi* regarding military service as a *chevaux légers* (6 June 1668) and military certificate (15 January 1669), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷⁰"Genealogie d'Humbelot," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Claude II), marriage contract (16 May 1656), military certificates (26 August 1659 & 8 June 1660) and military commission (18 March 1667), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷¹See, for example: "Genealogie de Floriner," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Claude II), various military certificates, including one "qui iustifient que le dit Claude . . . auroit aussi assiste à l'arriereban [sic]" (29 July 1635), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Guenichon," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Maurice), "acte de presentation" (17 December 1490), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie des de La Nouë," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Salomon), certificate (18 December 1635),
(continued...)

and François du Val, participation in such levies helped to demonstrate and enhance their noble status both practically and symbolically. One document in the submission notes that “lesdites Abraham & François vivoient Noblement, ayans tousjours pris la qualité d'Escuyer & fait service au Roy en toutes occasions qui se son [sic] presentées, mesme durant les troubles derniers arrivées [sic] ont monté à Cheval avec équipage condigne à leur qualité.”⁷²

It would also seem that, while most were willing to participate in the *ban et arrière ban*, some individuals could or would not. A minority of families (about 2% of the total 507) appear to have preferred payment in lieu of service in such levies.⁷³ Pierre de Richebourg, who had followed in the family tradition and taken up a non-military office, was exempted from the levy of 1598.⁷⁴ Others were excused from service for personal or health reasons. For example, in mid-March 1557, Jean d'Aulnay was summoned to participate in the *arrière ban* for the *bailliage* of Vitry, and he was again summoned in early May of the same year. No indication is given as to whether Jean carried out his service in 1557 or chose to make a

⁷¹(...continued)

RNC, unpaginated; and “Genealogie de Rochereau,” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Denis), *acte* (26 July 1536), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷²“Genealogie de la famille des du Val,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Abraham and François), extract (June 1599), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷³See, for example: “Genealogie de Soissons,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (François), *arrêt* of the *Chambre de Comptes* (17 February 1642), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷⁴“Genealogie de Richebourg,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Pierre), *acte* (6 August 1598), *RNC*, unpaginated.

payment in lieu of service. What is clear, however, is that, only a few years later, the decision as to whether or not he would serve was taken out of his hands and was made by the local magistrates. Two *sentences* rendered in the *bailliage* of Chaumont for 1562 and 1568 both record that Jean was excused from service “à cause de sa caducité.”⁷⁵ In other instances, the physical condition of the individual precluded service. A discharge from the *ban et arrière ban* was given to Daniel de Butor in 1639 notes that the former captain of a *compagnie de chevaux légers* was discharged from his obligation as during his many years of service “il auroit este blessé par les ennemis d’un mousquetade [sic] dans les reins, don’t il n’estoits pas encore guery.”⁷⁶

In some cases, the individual in question was released from his obligation as he was, at the time of the muster, actually in military service.⁷⁷ Exemptions were given to Thiery de l’Hospital for twelve consecutive levies between 1540 and 1577, while he served as

⁷⁵“Genealogie d’Aulnay,” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Jean), “acte de comparution,” (15 March 1557), two *sentences* both rendered at the *bailliage de Chaumont* (28 October 1562 and 19 October 1568), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷⁶“Genealogie de Butor,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Daniel), “Descharge du ban & arriereban [sic],” (10 June 1639), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷⁷See, for example: “Genealogie de Butor,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Daniel), “Descharge du ban & arrierban [sic]” (10 June 1639), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie d’Huot,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Fiacre), *lettre de cachet* (27 July 1594), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie d’Origny,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Claude), certificate (27 November 1597), *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie de Sahuguet,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Daniel), extract from register of “Ban & Arriere-Ban [sic]” (13 September 1639), *RNC*, unpaginated.

“Capitaine and Commandant de la Ville de Chaalons.”⁷⁸ His son, Thiery II, was also exempted from participation in the *ban et arrière ban* ten years later in recognition of his ongoing service to the crown.⁷⁹ Such discharges were more likely to be given only once in the lifetime of an individual. A sentence rendered by the *bailli* of Vitry declared that Giles d’Aublin was discharged from his responsibility of serving in the levy of 1551 as he was at the time “Soldat des legions de Champagne & Brye [sic], sous la charge & conduite du Sieur Desroche, Capitaine de cinq cens hommes de guerres Legionnaires.”⁸⁰

E. Financial aspects of military service

The social and military traditions of nobility and of military recruitment ensured that soldiering in early modern France, as in the rest of Europe, was more likely to drain noble coffers rather than fill them. An extract from the accounts of the *receveur général des finance de Bourgogne*, included by Guillaume de Vignier in his submission, testifies to the type of personal expense that could be incurred due to military service. It records that the rather paltry sum of 120 *livres* was paid to Guillaume “pour l’aider à supporter les frais qu’il

⁷⁸“Genealogie de la famille de l’Hospital,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Thiery I), “Douze actes d’exemption de ban & arriereban [sic],”(1540-1577) and provisions of the charge of “Capitaine and Commandant de la Ville de Chaalons [sic],” (1551 and 1574), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Thiery II), “acte d’exemption,” (3 November 1587) and provision of the charge of “Capitaine and Commandant de la Ville de Reims,” (19 and 20 July 1597).

⁸⁰“Genealogie d’Aublin,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Giles), sentence (27 December 1551), *RNC*, unpaginated.

avoit fait en l'armée campée devant la Ville de Bourges, où il avoit toûjours servy en armes à huit Chevaux, sans avoir pris du Roy, ny de mondit sieur le Duc, que les gages de Secretaire [sic].”⁸¹ It is doubtful that such a sum would have covered the cost of such expenses.

Guillaume’s example was not unique. While, in some instances, the state appears to have been aware of the cost borne by Champagne’s nobles in their pursuit of war, the state did little to relieve its commanders of this financial burden. For example, in October 1569, Nicolas d’Avrillot received a certificate which, as captain of the guard of the *château* at Blaise, promised him “la somme de vingt livres par mois” to pay the wages of his guards. No mention is given in the evidence as to whether the sum was sufficient to meet the wages in question or even if the promise was ever honoured.⁸² The strain military financing could place on a nobleman’s finances is best seen in the *arrêt* of the *conseil d’État* included in the proofs of nobility for Thierry de l’Hospital II. It reads:

sur la Requête dudit [Thiery II] . . . pour tirer payment de la somme de dix huit mil deux cens dix sept escus [18,217 *écus*], à luy deuë & aux officiers de son Regiment & commission sur ledit Arrest, par toutes lesquelles pieces appert que ledit sieur du Castel, auroit sacrifié non seulement sa vie, mais encore sa fortune & ses biens pour le service du Roy.⁸³

⁸¹“Genealogie de la maison de Vignier,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Guillaume), “extrait d’un Coupte,” (16 October 1412), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁸²“Genealogie de la famille des Avrillot,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Nicolas), military certificate (10 October 1569), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁸³“Genealogie de l’Hospital,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Thiery II), *arrêt de Conseil d’État* (25 July 1598), *RNC*, unpaginated.

Such an amount would represent several years income for the wealthy among Champagne's elite and would likely have been beyond the reach of most of the region's nobles. As with the case of Nicolas d'Avrillot, no record of this payment actually being made is included in the evidence provided for Thierry. What is recorded, however, is the date of the *arrêt*: it was issued in 1589, two years *after* the initial request for repayment was made.

This is not to suggest, however, that there were no financial rewards for those who took up the profession of arms. Although somewhat limited, these benefits most often took the form of pensions which, like the 6,000 *livres* given to Jean Ernest de Tervuelles, were given as recognition of the contribution made by the individual either to a specific campaign or in recognition of an entire career.⁸⁴ Zacharie de Vassan had been awarded a similar amount some forty years earlier.⁸⁵ Smaller pension amounts were also awarded to individuals of lesser rank. Antoine du Han II, a former captain of the King's cavalry, was provided with a pension of "2000 lives . . . par an" in consideration for his military services "en plusieurs occasions."⁸⁶

⁸⁴Jean Ernest received "six mil livres de pension" for his tenure as *maréchal de logis*. "Genealogie de Tervuelles," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean Ernest), *arrêt de Conseil d'État* (13 November 1658), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁸⁵"Genealogie de Vassan," proofs offered for eighth generation (Zacharie), *brevet* (3 May 1611), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁸⁶"Genealogie du Han," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Antoine II), certificate (29 May 1651), *RNC*, unpaginated.

In a few cases, it would seem as if the pensions granted should be thought of as the equivalent of modern disability pay. Daniel de Sahuguet's 2,000 *livres* pension was awarded after "il auroit servy 20 ans de capitaine d'Infanterie, & 5 de Capitaine de Cavalerie, pendant lesquels il auroit recu [sic] plusieurs blessures, & entr'autres un coup de mousquet dans chaque oeil."⁸⁷ Similarly, Guillaume de Vigner was awarded 1,000 *livres* in December 1419 in consideration of "des grands, notables, agreeables services qu'il luy avoit rendus & luy rendoit chaque jour & à cause de grandes pertes, dommages & dangers qu'il avoit encourus, & pour l'aider encore à l'entretenir aussi honorablement qu'il convenoit à l'estat de son service."⁸⁸

Conclusion

There can be little doubt that the vast majority of families recorded in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) viewed military service as a suitable professional activity for those who claimed nobility. As noted in this chapter, while some of Champagne's nobles were soldiers for the short term, many more (including Jean Louis de Fresne with whom this chapter began) dedicated their entire lives to the profession of arms. Yet, while participation in different forms of military service (both mounted and infantry), in a variety of posts and commissions (ranging from the lowly *homme d'armes* to the higher

⁸⁷"Genealogie de Sahuguet," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Daniel), *brevet* (24 April 1658), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁸⁸"Genealogie de la maison de Vignier," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Guillaume), extract (7 December 1419), *RNC*, unpaginated.

command ranks) allowed Champagne's noble houses to serve both the King and the *haute noblesse* in a manner befitting their elevated status, was there another dimension to this dedication to war?

The answer to this question must be yes. While military service held a professional importance to Champagne's *noblesse*, the evidence also strongly suggests that it held a social and cultural importance. Although it was not without a potential for personal injury and financial hardship, military service – which encompassed the individual's willingness to risk his own life in battle, as much as the physical act of service itself – provided those who served with a common social and cultural lexicon through which to express their own ideas about the nature of *noblesse* and their identity as a member of the second estate. Indeed, the detail with which such military activity was recorded in the documentary and genealogical evidence provided by the *produisant(e)s* of Champagne suggests that the very act of participation in military service – and with it the continuing relevance of duty, honour and military prowess to the definition of *noblesse* – was as important in forming a sense of social identity as was its commemoration. Thus, military service was not just an acceptable profession for Champagne's nobles, it was an important and pro-active public declaration of an individual's and/or lineage's dedication to those traditional ideas of *noblesse* that continued to dominate social thought in early modern Champagne.

Perhaps the most telling example of this desire to make a public connection between military service and noble identity is one of 11 military documents provided to support the nobility of Antoine de Saint Sauflieu. As with the case of Jean Louis de Fresne, the evidence provided for Antoine de Saint Sauflieu outlines his service and his rise through the ranks with great detail. The last of these 11 pieces, however, is a commission of *maréchal de camp* which not only chronicles his service, but also shows how his career choice was important in defining his status within the world of the *noblesse*:

ledit deffunt sieur de S. Sauflieu des ces ieunes années, se seroit jetté dans les Armes, qu'en 1634 sa vertu auroit commence [sic] à luy produire des recompenses, & des Employs [sic] illustres & importants, lesquels l'ayant plus fait connoistre au roy, Il luy auroit confié un place important en un temps où un grand homme y estoit necessaire, aussi l'ayant gardeé & deffenduë contre un puissnt Armée, le roy auroit redoublé son Estime & sa reconnoissance.⁸⁹

This piece suggests that it may not have been the rank or post held by an individual alone that was important, but the willingness with which he entered into the profession of arms. This reasoning may help to explain the various types of military service undertaken by individuals and the longevity of the careers of Champagne's noblemen, a number of whom spent the greater part of their lives rising through the ranks, and/or holding a series of commissions in the retinues of the state, the private household guards of members of the *haute noblesse*, and/or participating in feudal levies.

⁸⁹“Genealogie de Saint Sauflieu,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Antoine), eleventh of 11 military certificates (1 May 1651), *RNC*, unpaginated.

Clearly, this diversity of military posts and the variety of references in the evidence suggests that, whether as a *gendarme* or *homme d'armes* in a *compagnie d'ordonnance* or as a ranking officer commanding a company of *hommes de pied* or of *chevaux légers*, participation in war held significant social and cultural value for Champagne's nobles and provided an outlet for the creation of a social and professional identity.

CHAPTER 7
War, death and continuity: the demography of *noblesse*
in early modern Champagne

The destructive tendencies of war were well known to those who lived in the early modern world. Non-combatants, particularly civilian populations unlucky enough to live in and/or around a zone of combat, habitually experienced hardship. Moreover, members of the lower orders of society often found their way into early modern armies as the much needed by ultimately dispensable foot soldiers; consequently, the demography of this group was also affected by war's potential for human destruction.¹ What cannot be ignored, however, is that the nature of late medieval and early modern military levies ensured that the nobility of Europe provided the majority of commissioned officers and commanders, and even provided these forced with non-ranking combatants. In early modern France, the nobility provided commanders and non-commissioned soldiers well into the seventeenth century. Whether in France or elsewhere on the Continent, the demography of the nobility was likely to be adversely affected by war. As warfare in the early modern period was almost perpetual,² and

¹David Potter, *War and Government in the French Provinces: Picardy 1470-1560* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 200-265; and James B. Wood, *The King's Army: Warfare, soldiers and society during the Wars of Religion in France, 1562-1576* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 113-124.

²J. R. Hale has noted that, between 1500 and 1700, the frequency of international and domestic civil conflicts meant that there was one war nearly every three years in Europe. J. R. Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe, 1450-1620* (London: Fontana, 1985), 20.

the risk of physical injury and the threat to any individual noble and/or lineage was real, participation in war provided the basis for the social and political dominance of much of Europe's nobility as well as a means for its destruction in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The human cost of war was intimately understood by the nobles of early modern Champagne as death in battle had a particular impact on the composition of this elite. As this chapter shows, Champagne's nobility was (as Laurence Bourquin suggests) "née de la guerre et s'en est nourrie jusqu'à l'autodestruction."³ Yet, it would seem that Champagne's nobles anticipated such losses and worked towards off-setting them. As this chapter demonstrates, the evidence collected by Caumartin chronicles the methods used by Champagne's *noblesse* to off set the losses suffered in battle, including inter-marriage between families that shared an interest in military activity and the assimilation into the province's elite of individuals who had proven their worth on the battlefield.

The documentary evidence in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) demonstrates the degree to which endogamy was practiced by families which placed a social and professional value on military service. Such practices had a physical as well as an ideological purpose. In early modern France, as in other areas of Europe, the continuity of a

³Laurence Bourquin, *Noblesse seconde et pouvoir en Champagne aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles*. (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1994), 221.

lineage was key to the maintenance of noble status; a family's economic and social ambitions rested on each generation being dedicated not only to ensuring the physical survival of the family name. However, while the imperative placed on biological reproduction in noble families must not be underrated, equally important was the ability of each generation to add to the family's power, prestige, economic worth and kin and client networks. For a significant number of families in Champagne's *noblesse*, these aspects were enhanced and enriched through personal involvement with war or through alliance with individuals and families who served in the military.

The evidence also strongly supports the argument that one means by which the demography of Champagne's nobility was maintained was through the integration of individuals with extensive battle experience into its ranks. As this chapter argues, the integration of these individuals and their families did more than simply ensure the physical continuity of Champagne's nobility: it provided a means by which to ensure the continued dominance of a particular ideology and identity that linked the possession of noble status with participation in war. As Chapter One noted, numerous French intellectuals expressed concerns that the biological decline of the *noblesse* carried with it social and political repercussions.⁴ They argued that demographic threats were to be partially alleviated by

⁴For a more detailed discussion of the demographic need for social mobility within noble society in France, see: Edouard Perry, "Social Mobility Among the French *Noblesse* in the Later Middle Ages," *Past and Present* 21 (1962): 25-38; Pierre Goubert, *L'ancien régime* (Paris: Colin, 1969); and James B. Wood, "Demographic Pressure and Social Mobility (continued...)"

ensuring the continued cultural dominance of the virtues which they associated with true *noblesse*: namely honour, valour and courage. It was often argued that, as the social superiority of the *noblesse* was based on their martial prowess, their continued dominance required not just the renewal of the noble population in a physical sense, but also the maintenance of those aspects of character that reinforced this traditional, outward social identity of *noblesse*. The published findings of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) strongly suggest that a belief in the continuity of these virtues was just as important in shaping the demography of Champagne's *noblesse* as was the biological need to ensure the survival of the region's lineages.

Consequently, this chapter explores the degree to which war shaped the demography of this regional elite. It begins with a general analysis of the composition of Champagne's noble population, including the length of lineages recorded, the social status and rank of families and their individual members and the geographic origins of the families recorded within the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673). It then addresses the demographic impact war had on the male population and the means which were adopted to off-set this impact. In doing so, it examines the ways in which Champagne's nobility was sustained through the incorporation of foreign-born nobles and through the ennoblement of individuals in recognition of military service.

⁴(...continued)

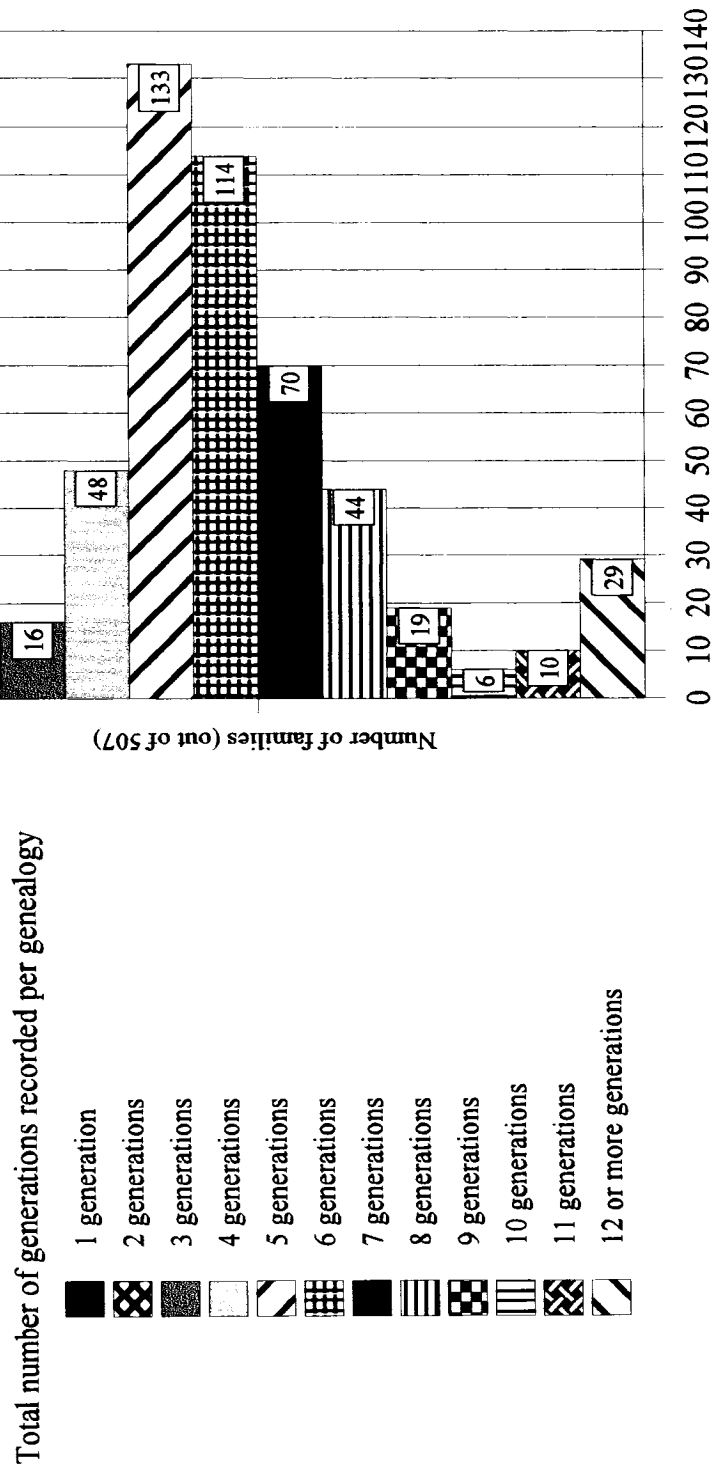
Among the Nobility of Early Modern France," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 8 (1977): 3-16.

A. Length of lineage

The evidence contained in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) reveals that being able to claim a lengthy lineage was not always necessary to acquire and maintain *noblesse* in Champagne. In fact, the genealogical and documentary evidence outline the histories of a few grand families whose origins might legitimately be traced to the Middle Ages as well as those of a large number of recently elevated families and individuals. As Figure 7.1 shows, those families with a lengthy lineage were the exception rather than the rule in Champagne by 1673. While 472 families (93%) could present Caumartin with a genealogy comprising four or more generations to prove their nobility, 35 (7%) could not. The inclusion of these 35 families in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) makes it clear that their acceptance as members of Champagne's elite was not impaired by their lack of *ancienneté*.

As Figure 7.1 shows, only 29 of the 507 families recorded in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) – around 6% – could document lineages of 12 or more generations. The greatest number of families (400 families or 70% of the total) could document a lineage of no more than seven generations. Just over 26% of the total submissions (133 of 507), came from families with lineages of five generations, while families with a lineage of six generations represented 114 submissions, or just over 22% of the total. Together, these last two categories account for 247 (48%) of the total number of families recorded. The relative youth of Champagne's noble houses is underscored by the

Figure 7.1
*Number of total generations recorded
(per submitted family genealogy)*



fact that 19 genealogies chronicle families whose nobility was not more than one or two generations old. In the case of the Richelet submission included in Appendix III, the genealogy records information for a lone individual.

The relative youth of many of Champagne's noble houses provides an important context in which to evaluate the impact war had on the region's elite as the need to augment the diminishing noble population by integrating new blood was, in part, a direct result of the ravages of war. The genealogies and documentary evidence makes it clear that the death of married and/or marriageable noblemen in battle, such as Daniel de Hermant at 34 or Amé de Rabutin at 16, directly shaped noble lineages by reducing, at times drastically, the number of males who could carry on a family line.⁵ For example, the d'Aumosnier's genealogy notes that in the family's third generation, Adrian d'Aumosnier was killed in 1562 while serving as "Capitaine & Commandant [d']une Compagnie de cent Chevaux legers pour le Service de Roy." The genealogy also notes that Adrian's nephew Henry was killed "au premiere Siege de la Mothe."⁶ Both events placed the continuation of the d'Aumosnier line in peril.

⁵"Genealogie de la maison de Rabutin," *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne*, comp. Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin, (Châlons: Jacques Seneuze, Imprimeur & libraire ordinaire du Roi, 1673), unpaginated (hereafter cited as *RNC*). See also: "Genealogie de Hermant," *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶"Genealogie d'Aumosnier," entry for third generation (Adrian), *RNC*, unpaginated; and *Ibid.*, entry for fourth generation (Henry).

By the late seventeenth century, military-related deaths affected over a quarter of Champagne's noble lineages. In all, 139 of the total 507 families (around 27%) cited at least one death in the course of the lineage due to military service. For 24 of these 139 families, losses of greater number occurred in a single generation or over multiple generations that, in some cases, claimed more than half of a family's male population. Such was the case in the Rabutin family which had seven of its males die in battle, including the aforementioned Amé, the only son of Leonor, Baron de Bussy and Marie-Diane de Cugnac. The loss was greater for the France family, as ten of its 21 men who were involved in military service perished. In this family's fifth generation alone, eight of the 13 men recorded died as a result of their military service.⁷

As the majority of these deaths in battle were most often spread out among the various generations in any given family, and as they were likely to claim no more than one or two individuals in a generation, the continuity of most noble lineages in Champagne would not appear to ever have truly been in jeopardy. However, when all deaths in battle occurred in a single generation, serious repercussions for the continuation of the family lineage could ensue. The preamble to the Grand's genealogy, for example, records not just the death in

⁷Two of the five males participating in military service in the family's sixth generation also died in battle, in 1642 and 1652 respectively. "Genealogie de la maison de France," entries for sixth and eighth generations, *RNC*, unpaginated. See also: *Ibid.*, Preamble to genealogy.

battle of both a father and his son, but notes that the surviving branches of the family descend from the second son, the only member of the family to survive the incident:

jusques en 1492 & trois ans apres que Jean le Grand, un des seize Bacheliers de la Compagnie d'Ordonnance du Mareschal de Baudricourt (place & qualité qui ne se donoit en ce temps là qu'aux personnes d'extraction noble) avec Charles & Jean, ses enfans, se trouterent à la bataille de Fornouë où luy & Charles son aîné furent tuez.⁸

Similar patterns are found in other families, such as the Bouzonville and the Genevois Blaigny. The continuity of the Bouzonville was threatened when three of the four males listed in its third generation died in military service;⁹ that of the Genevois Blaigny (Marquis de Blaigny) was likely threatened in the mid-seventeenth century when four deaths in battle happened in its sixth generation (between 1629 and 1648).¹⁰

In addition to reporting the deaths in battle, however, the genealogical and documentary evidence also suggests that families were keenly aware of the possible demographic impact of war and took some precautions to ensure the continuity of their lineage by placing individuals in less dangerous, non-military offices. The existence of such a practice may go some way to explaining the number of noble houses in Champagne which mixed military and non-military service. For example, the Paris family line survived due to

⁸“Genealogie de Grand,” preamble to genealogy, *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁹“Genealogie de Bouzonville,” entry for third generation, *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹⁰The exact dates of death are not given, but they are listed in the family genealogy as occurring in 1629, 1640, 1644 and 1648. “Genealogie de Genevois Blaigny,” entry for sixth generation, *RNC*, unpaginated.

the fact that, after the deaths of older sons (Oudat at Dunkirk and his brother Thomas at Lens), the family line survived through a son whom, the genealogy notes, was *conseiller* in the *parlement de Metz*.¹¹ Similarly, after the deaths in military service of the majority of the males in the Troussel family's third generation, it was through Jacques, the only son not to take up military service and who served instead as *conseiller et secrétaire du Roi*, that the family lineage was continued.¹² Thus, while Champagne's noble families embraced military service, it is also clear that many sought to lessen the risk by providing the lineage with the insurance of sons who served in non-lethal administrative posts.

B. Landed possessions and social rank

Given the impact death in battle had on Champagne's noble families, perhaps it should not be too surprising that relatively few of them possessed great titles. Indeed, as social rank and its collateral power and wealth could take many generations to acquire, it may be possible to explain Lawrence Bourquin's characterization of Champagne's nobility as *une noblesse seconde* partly due to the relative youth of the majority of its families.¹³ Just over 2,083 of the 3,931 males recorded in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) – or

¹¹“Genealogie de la famille de Paris,” *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹²“Genealogie de Troussel,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Jacques), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹³For a general discussion of the term *noblesse seconde*, see the Introduction to this thesis.

53% – provided evidence of possessing *seigneurie(s)*. A significant percentage of this group – just more than 30% (624 individuals) – provided evidence which showed them as holding only one *seigneurie*. A further 270 of this group (about 13%) held two *seigneuries* and 125 (just over 8%) held three or more. Among those who claimed three or more *seigneuries*, the genealogies and documentary evidence shows that these multiple *seigneuries* had been acquired through a process of marriage, purchase and inheritance that had taken many generations.

Titles denoting high noble rank were also sparse among this provincial elite. Within the families in the representative group, even the title of *écuyer* (which was only a slight step on the social ladder above the lowly *seigneur* or *sieur*) could be claimed by only 1,473 individuals, or just over 37% of the males named in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673). Of these 1,473 *écuyer*, 310 (around 21%) cited some form of military service ranging from the lower rank of *enseigne* to the higher military ranks of *commander* and *maréchal des armées*; a few even indicated service in the navy.¹⁴ Of this group of *écuyer*, 128 (around 41%) could lay claim to having held or holding the rank of *capitaine*; lieutenants commissions were held by 56 (around 18%) of this group.¹⁵

¹⁴For example, the Berey genealogy includes a reference to Charles, son of Étienne, who served as “Capitaine d’une Barque en course (dit le Saint Laurent)” and was engaged in the naval war against the Spanish. “Genealogie de la famille de Berey,” entry for sixth generation (Charles), *RNC*, unpaginated.

¹⁵The numbers and types of these commissions break down as follows: 62 of the 310 (continued...)

The evidence provided by 45 of the 507 families (around 9%) recorded a small number of individuals of high social rank within the *noblesse* of Champagne, including various *ducs*, *barons*, *comtes*, *vicomtes* and *marquis*. Not surprisingly, a number of claims to rank were found in those lineages which were well established within the province and generally encompassed between eight to 15 documented generations. For example, the d'Anglures, with a genealogy spanning twenty generations, included six members of significant social rank.¹⁶ Individuals of rank and title could also be found in those families which recorded six or fewer generations, in part a reflection of the dominance of younger lineages in the province. For example, although the Baradats could boast a lineage of only

¹⁵(...continued)

écuyer held commissions of *capitaine de gens de pied*, 50 were *capitaine de chevaux légers* and 16 held captain's commissions but did not specify the type of military service. Lieutenant's commissions were in companies of *chevaux légers* were held by 31 members of this group and 25 were lieutenants in companies of *gens de pied*.

¹⁶Among them was Antoine d'Anglure, Prince d'Ivetot, Comte d'Étoges and Marquis de Bellay. While no other individual in this family, or indeed in this *recherche de la noblesse*, could boast such a title as *prince*, members of d'Antoin's lineage held other, lesser titles. Four generations earlier, François d'Anglure had been Baron de Bourfault and de Givry as well as Vicomte d'Étoges. Both of François' sons, Charles and James, bore the title of Vicomte d'Étoges. Charles, the elder of the two son, died without marrying and without issue in 1554; the title then passed to his younger brother, Jacques. "Genealogie d'Anglure," entry for eleventh generation (François), *RNC*, unpaginated; *Ibid.*, entry for twelfth generation (Charles and Jacques); *Ibid.*, entry for fourteenth generation (Charles Saladin Savigny Anglure, Baron de Rone, Comte de Tancarville, Vicomte d'Étoges); and *Ibid.*, entry for fifteenth generation (Antoine).

six generations, different members of the family's fourth and fifth generations could lay claim to being Baron de Thou, Baron and Vicomte de Verneuil and Comte de Noyon.¹⁷

What is particularly interesting is that the evidence provided for those who claimed a high social rank chronicles dedication to military activities or to military-related duties such as captaincies and governorships of towns and cities. Only in 3 of the family submissions for individuals in this group (about 5%) was evidence of participation in non-military service provided. For example, Henry de Baradat was *prévôt* of Fanières as well as "Comte de Noyon, prieur d'Essarts, Abbé de Clermont and Evesque de Noyon."¹⁸ Few of those men who held high social rank mixed military and civil administrative activities in the course of their career. One example was Pierre Renault-des-Landres who served as *capitaine* of two separate companies of cavalry and *arquebusiers*, as *gouverneur de château* for Tathiou and Binche and *conseil de Roi en son conseils d'état et privé*.¹⁹

The lowest military rank held by an individual among those who held high social rank was *enseigne*, recorded in the evidence for Robert d'Ambly (who served in the *compagnie de*

¹⁷"Genealogie de Baradat," entry for fourth generation (Guillaume, Baron de Thou; Lisander, Baron de Verneuil and Ioachim, Vicomte de Verneuil), *RNC*, unpaginated; and *Ibid.*, entry for fifth generation (Francois, Baron de Thou; and Henry, Comte de Noyon).

¹⁸*Ibid.*, entry for fifth generation (Henry).

¹⁹"Genalogie de Renault-des-Landres," entry for seventh generation (Robert), *RNC*, unpaginated.

noblesse de Rethelois)²⁰ and in that of Antoine d'Averhoul (who served in the *regiment de Bouillon*), among others.²¹ More frequently, as in the case of Jean de Nettancourt IV, the individual in question held a commission as *capitaine*, *colonel*, commander and/or *maître de camp* or held a number of commissions in combination. Commissions in infantry and cavalry companies and regiments were equally represented in this group. For example, as well as being Vicomte de Villette, Charles d'Aguerre was also *capitaine* of a French cavalry regiment, a *colonel* of 300 *chevaux légers* and had been commissioned as a *lieutenant général* in the Swedish cavalry by King Charles X.²² Similarly, Regnault d'Artigoty, the Baron d'Aultry, held commissions as captain of two separate cavalry units, another as sergeant-major and one as *maître de camp* for an infantry regiment.²³

C. Geographic origins

Although their inclusion in the published findings of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) established their membership in this province's elite, not all families

²⁰“Genealogie d'Ambly,” entry for ninth generation (Robert), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²¹“Genealogie d'Averhoul,” entry for ninth generation (Antoine), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²²“Genealogie d'Aguerre,” entry for fourth generation (Charles), *RNC*, unpaginated.

²³In the genealogy, Regnault is also referred to as Arnoult. While the connection between each commission and each regiment is unspecified, it is recorded that Regnault served in the regiments of Servigny, Enoncourt and Bourlemeont. “Genealogie d'Artigoty,” entry for fifth generation (Regnault/Arnoult), *RNC*, unpaginated.

recorded within the text had their origins in Champagne. In fact, the *noblesse* of Champagne was a diverse group and included families that were native to Champagne and others with origins in other regions and cities in France as well as in other European countries. While 236 of the 507 families (47%) were native to Champagne, slightly more – 271 (just over 53%) – traced their origins to outside of the province. The vast majority of families in this latter group were of French origin, with 34 originating in Bourgogne, 29 in Picardie and 17 and 15 families in Lorraine and Brie, respectively. Other areas including Anjou, the Beauvaisis, Guyenne, the Île de France and Provence were also cited as the place of origin of other families.

The evidence clearly shows, however, that not all of Champagne's noble houses were of French origin. Assimilating foreign-born nobles into France's *noblesse* was a well-established practice by the late seventeenth century due, in no small part, to demographic necessity. As Charles Loyseau noted, the prevailing opinion on incorporating foreign-born individuals into France's nobility was that as "la Noblesse est un qualité inherente à la personne, . . . qui partant se porte par tout."²⁴ Consequently, the integration of foreign nobles – even those who had originally acquired their noble status at the hand of a foreign and possibly hostile power – was socially acceptable. In Champagne, where war circumscribed

²⁴Charles Loyseau, "Chapitre V: Des Simples Gentils-hommes," *Les Oeuvres de Maistre Charles Loyseau, Avocat en Parlement. Contenant les Cinq Livres du Droit des Offices, les Traitez des Seigneuries, des Ordres & simples Dignitez, du Déguerpiement & Délaissement par Hypotheque, de la garantie des Rentes, & des Abus de Justices de Village*. (A Lyon: par la Compagnie des Libraires, 1701), 32, paragraph 114.

the ability of the nobility to reproduce itself naturally, the integration of foreign-born individuals into its *noblesse* provided a way of augmenting diminishing noble stock.

Consequently, it should not be surprising that 38 of the 271 families with origins outside of Champagne (just over 14%) traced their origins to places such as Bavaria, Switzerland,²⁵ Italy,²⁶ the kingdom of Naples and, in one case, to Spain, long France's nemeses.²⁷ Germany was cited as the place of origin of six families.²⁸ The close political and diplomatic ties between France and Scotland throughout the late medieval and early modern periods also resulted in the infusion of Scottish families into Champagne's nobility. Many of these Scotsmen were members of the households of the various Scottish brides that were married to members of France's royal family and *haute noblesse*.²⁹ Seven families of

²⁵See: "Genealogie de Bretel," *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Guy," *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁶See: "Genealogie de Bologne," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Nogent," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de la Rouere," *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Trance," *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁷"Genealogie de Bermondes," *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁸The *procès verbal* simply records the place of origin of these families as "Allemagne." See: "Genealogie de Berman," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Gruthus," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Meiel," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Rommécourt," *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Schulamberg," *RNC*, unpaginated.

²⁹For a general discussion of the political and military relations between France and Scotland in the late medieval and early modern periods, see: Julian Goodacre, *State and Society in Early Modern Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Norman Macdougall, *An Antidote to the English: The Auld Alliance, 1295-1560*, Scottish History

(continued...)

Scottish origin are recorded in the published findings of Caumartin's *Recherche de la noblesse*.³⁰

Beyond their foreign origins, however, what this small segment of Champagne's nobility also shared was an involvement in military service. The French crown's use of foreign soldiers was a well established practice by the early modern period. As John A. Lynn notes, since the reign of Louis XI, French armies had been "aggregate in character and built around a corp of troops raised by contract," resulting in a "combination of native French units, foreign mercenary bands, and the private armies of major nobles who offered their services in exchange for money or favor."³¹ By the late seventeenth century, this tradition presented unique social and professional opportunities to those foreign-born nobles who possessed the requisite military skills.

²⁹(...continued)

Matters Series (East Lothian, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 2001); Gordon Donaldson, *La Vieille Alliance: Histoire de L'Amitié Franco-Ecossaise*, trans. Ginette Dalleré and Michel Duchein (Edinburgh: Association Franco-Ecossaise, 1995); and J. Laidlaw, ed., *The Auld Alliance: France and Scotland over 700 years* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1999).

³⁰"Genealogie de la famille de Berey," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de la famille de Cockbourne," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie d'Handresson," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de la famille des Locart," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Montcrif," *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Tournebulle," *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie du Val-Dampierre," *RNC*, unpaginated.

³¹John A. Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle: The French Army, 1610-1715* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 6.

Champagne's families of foreign origin found both professional and social advantage in war. Their integration and acceptance into Champagne's *noblesse* appears to have been successful, if not complete, by the late seventeenth century. The marriage contracts, certificates of service and other juridical documents provided by these particular families attest to the fact that their origins were no barrier to their enjoyment of the social and legal pleasures of nobility: to marrying well, to holding offices within the royal administration and household and to acquiring high ranking military commissions. For example, Jean and Antoine de Berman³² and their progeny were accepted into the upper reaches of French society, ultimately acquiring two *baronnie* (those of Lancques and Uzemain), even though their joint *lettre d'anoblissement* was presented to them in 1544 by Holy Roman Emperor Charles V "pour recompense des bons & notables services par eux rendus dans ses Troupes en diverse occasions importantes."³³ The majority of documentary proofs provided by the Bermans relate directly to the validity of the *lettres d'anoblissement* and the registration of them with the appropriate royal courts, showing that their *noblesse* – or perhaps its source – did not pass without some scrutiny in France.³⁴ Nevertheless, by 1602 the family's status was such that the Duc de Lorraine could testify, in writing, that Hanus, the son of Antoine, "est

³²While the family genealogy and proofs are listed in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) under the name "de Berman," Caumartin's *procès verbal* lists the name as "de Bermand." All references to this family will use the spelling "Berman."

³³"Genealogie de la famille de Berman," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean and Antoine), *lettres d'anoblissement* (21 June 1544), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³⁴*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Hanus), *lettres de naturalité* (May 1597).

Noble, issue de l'ancienne Chevalerie de Lorraine & allié avec les plus Illustres & Nobles familles."³⁵

The seven families of Scottish origin provide a particularly interesting example of the connection between war and the composition of Champagne's *noblesse*. Scottish armed companies had served in French armies since the beginning of the *auld alliance* in the late thirteenth century. By the mid sixteenth century, the increasing hostilities between Protestant and Roman Catholic monarchies spurred on by the Reformation – as well as more localized religious conflict – provided new opportunities for Scottish soldiers in France. By the mid seventeenth century, Scottish commanders such as the Earl of Irvin and John Hepburn were recruiting companies of 2,000 to 9,000 men in Scotland for service in the French army.³⁶ And, as the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) demonstrates, not all Scotsmen who served in France returned to their homeland at the end of their period of service. In the submissions made by the Bereys, the Coburns, the Hendersons, the Montcriefs, the Turnbolls³⁷ and the Val-Dampierres, both the genealogical and the documentary evidence

³⁵*Ibid.*, *lettre* signed by Henry V, the “sieurs d’Hauffonville, Mareschal de Lorraine & de Maëlhamme sur Intendant de l’Evesche de Metz,” (8 May 1602).

³⁶Gordon Donaldson, *Scotland: James V to James VII* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1971), 253-254.

³⁷Although listed in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) as Handresson and Tournebulle, respectively, this thesis will use the English spelling of Henderson and Turnbull when referring to these families, unless quoting directly from the genealogy or documentary evidence. George F. Black, *The Surnames of Scotland: Their*
(continued...)

provided by these families attest to the role military service played in their integration into the ranks of Champagne's nobility and, moreover, in the maintenance of it. Active military service as an archer in the King's *gardes Écoissoises* (Scottish Guard) or as a *homme d'armes* in the *compagnies d'ordonnance* of such high ranking nobles as the Duc de Lorraine and the Duc de Guise³⁸ provided the members of these Scottish families with a professional base from which to be accepted into Champagne's noble society.³⁹

For example, Patrick Henderson came to France with Catherine Stuart when she married the future Louis XI. While Patrick's exact position in Catherine's entourage is not explicitly stated in the family's genealogy, his proofs of nobility suggest that he, like his son

³⁷(...continued)

Origin, Meaning and History (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd., 1999), 353.

³⁸Charles de Berry is unique among these individuals as he appears to have served in the navy, first as "Lieutenant de la Galeme dit la Victoire" in 1666 and subsequently as "Capitaine de la Barque (dit) le S. Laurent" in the war against Spain. "Genealogie de la famille de Berry," proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Charles), "Lettres de provisions de la charge de Lieutenant" (7 April 1666) and "Permisson du Duc de Beaufort," (15 August 1667), *RNC*, unpaginated.

³⁹"Genealogie de la famille de Berry," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Estienne), marriage contract (1 April 1625) and "Cinq Certificats & Congez," (not dated), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de la famille des Locart," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Guillaume), *testament* (25 August 1553), *RNC*, unpaginated; *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Charles), "Cinq Certificats & Passeports," (1638 to 1645); *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Pierre and Charles), "Congé de Mr. Le Marquis de Cerquy," (20 July 1659); "Genealogie de Montcrif," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Anne), *partage* (31 ["dernier"] December 1593), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Tournebulle," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Nicolas), *contracts de vente* (7 January 1562 and 28 July 1566), *RNC*, unpaginated.

and grandsons after him, was a member of the Scottish Guard assigned to her household.⁴⁰

Throughout the history of the Henderson family, its men served as archers in the King's Scottish Guards, save for Louis who, in its sixth generation, held the commission of *lieutenant de chevaux légers au Regiment de Rethel*. This family's nobility was so well established in Champagne by the early sixteenth century that, in 1502, Patrick's grandson Lawrence could make a highly advantageous match with Anne de Coppin, the Dame de Breneur, whose family included a number of persons with high ranking military commands. Lawrence's own sons and grandsons also chose to marry women with connections to Champagne's military hierarchy and who would, no doubt, enhance the family's social status and add to their landed holdings.⁴¹

For the other Scottish families that joined Champagne's *noblesse*, there was also acceptance and advancement, particularly if the family's noble status was already well established in Scotland. A preamble inserted prior to the printed proofs of nobility provided by the Coburns emphasizes this point. In addition to assuring the reader that the genealogy was prepared by "les Heraules & Roy d'armes du Royaume d'Escosse [sic]," the preamble emphasizes the scrutiny claims to nobility must undergo in Scotland, suggesting an

⁴⁰"Genealogie d'Handresson," preamble to genealogy, *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴¹For example, a document of *foy & hommage* included in the family's submission notes that Martin, great-grandson of Laurent, was "seigneur en partie de S. Martin à cause de son mari," Louise Bouvot who was daughter of the *seigneur* de S. Martin. *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for sixth generation (Martin), *foy & hommage* (19 February 1621).

ideological, if not bureaucratic, common ground between the French and the Scottish.⁴² As a branch of the Barons of Langton and descendants of “un Chancelier du Royaume d’Escosse,” it is likely that this particular family’s claim to *noblesse* was never in question.⁴³ However, throughout the family’s submission, attention is drawn directly and repeatedly to the family’s involvement in the King’s Scottish Guards, into which “nul n’est admis au nombre des Gentilshommes des Gardes Escossoisses qu’il ne soit Nobles, & extrait de Noble race.”⁴⁴

The documentary evidence provided for the Coburn family shows clearly that by the mid-sixteenth century, its members were well established and respected members of the King’s army. Regnam, the grandson of the patriarch, served as “Capitaine de cent Chevaux Legers Escossois [sic], charge considerable, qui ne se donnoit qu’à des gens de la premiere qualité.” In recognition for his service, Regnam received two small monetary gifts from the French crown, the first for “cent livres de rent” in 1555 and another unspecified amount in

⁴²The preamble states that in Scotland “personne ne peut porter ècusson ny blason qu’il ne sort Gentilhomme reconnu, à peine d’estre puny par le magistrat, ou la Noblesse de royaume qui ne le souffre à personne s’il n’est d’un sang Noble, comme il peut connoistre par les Histoires d’Escosse.” “Genealogie de Cockborne,” preamble to proofs of nobility, not dated, *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁴³*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for sixth generation (Guillaume), *employ of lettres patents* (not dated).

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Adam), document copy of “l’institution de la garde Escossoise [sic],” (not dated).

1569.⁴⁵ Adam, one of Regnam's sons, also received monetary gifts in recognition of the military service he had rendered to the crown in the company of the *sieur de Fleury*.⁴⁶

Adam's sons and grandsons continued the family's military tradition, serving as *gendarme*, *enseigne* and lieutenant in various regiments, including the *regiment de Bourgogne*, one of the oldest established regiments in the royal army.⁴⁷ Thus, although foreign in origins, by the late seventeenth century, the Coburn were well integrated into the *noblesse* of Champagne, as were their Scottish compatriots.

D. Marriage patterns

War affected the demography of Champagne's noble houses through its potential to kill married and marriageable men in battle. However, war and military service also seem to have played a role in a process which lay at the heart of noble marriage practices in Champagne. For the nobility of early modern Europe, marriage and the formation of new family units was an important weapon in combatting the depletion of its numbers and in

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Regnam), *lettres patentes* (6 August 1555) and *don* (3 April 1569).

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Adam), bundle of military proofs including "deux dons" and "deux passeportes" (7 August 1575, 27 October 1579, 14 July 1585, 24 November 1585) and *sauvegarde* (16 June 1610).

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fifth (Daniel) military certificate (17 May 1606) and military certificate (16 June 1610); and *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for sixth generations (Edme), military certificate (30 December 1647) and military certificate (3 August 1650).

ensuring its continued social and political dominance. Consequently, noble families exerted a great deal of care in weighing the social, political, professional and economic advantages and disadvantages of prospective mates for their children. This concern reflected more than simply a parental desire to ensure a child's well-being. Noble families sought, through the judicious choice of a marriage partner, to create an environment in which not just the couple could prosper, but also one from which their immediate kin-network and lineage could benefit.⁴⁸ It was through the process of marriage – in the choice of husbands with whom they would help swell the numbers of the *noblesse* – that the noblewomen of Champagne could and did play a direct role in shaping the definition and public face of *noblesse*.

It is clear that, for the families included in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), military service and proximity to those involved in it were favoured when considering the merits of a potential marriage partner. This suggests a strong bias towards professional, military endogamy.⁴⁹ It would also appear that military-

⁴⁸See: James B. Wood, "Endogamy and *Mésalliance*, the Marriage Patterns of the Nobility of the *Élection* of Bayeux, 1430-1669," *French Historical Studies*, 10 (1978): 375-377; Kristen B. Neuschel, "Noblewomen and War in Sixteenth-Century France," in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, ed. Michael Wolfe, 124-144 (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997); and Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle: The French Army, 1610-1715*, 343-44.

⁴⁹See, for example: "Genealogie de Bridot," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Françoise, daughter of Jean), marriage contract (29 August 1590), *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Larcher," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Benoît), provision of office (13 October 1508) and marriage contract (12 January 1515), *RNC*, unpaginated; *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Michel), marriage (continued...)

related criteria could be used to evaluate the merits of prospective brides as well as grooms, making war a less gendered factor in the process of choosing a marriage partner in Champagne than might first be expected.⁵⁰

Even when individuals with different professional connections married, the difference between the parties involved could be characterized as one of degree.⁵¹ For example, Hubert de Fresne, a “Lieutenant d’un compagnie d’infanterie au Regiment de Piedmont,” married Marie de l’Isle the daughter of Michel de l’Isle, “Commissaire ordinaire des Guerres,” in 1604.⁵² As a document which testified to the nobility and social worthiness of both parties

⁴⁹(...continued)

contract (25 August 1630); “Genealogie de Guenichon,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Jean), marriage contract (15 April 1570), *RNC*, unpaginated; and *Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fifth generation (Nicolas), marriage contract (10 February 1602).

⁵⁰The marriage contract of Hierosme du Pin, for example, attests to his own extensive associations with the military as well as those of the male kin of his bride, Marie l’Hoste. “Genealogie du Pin,” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Hierôme), marriage contract (15 February 1640), *RNC*, unpaginated. See also: “Genealogie de Niger,” proofs of nobility offered for sixth generation (Antoine), marriage contract (15 December 1606), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵¹See, for example: “Genealogie d’Humbelot,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Estienne), marriage contract (19 December 1652) and *lettres patentes d’anoblissement* (April 1661), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Blondeau,” proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Jean), marriage contract (10 July 1600), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Soissons,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (François), marriage contract (10 April 1624) *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie de Sahuguët,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Denis), marriage contract (8 January 1543), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵²“Genealogie de Fresne,” proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Hubert),
(continued...)

and their families, the marriage contract itself may have encouraged the addition of such detail in order to convey this sense of social worth and identity to a wider audience. Not surprisingly, references to participation in military activity, either as a profession or as a temporary activity, were common in marriage contracts and such references were often more detailed than commentary regarding non-military activity and service.

References to military activity and service appear frequently in the submissions of families that held some significant social rank or title. For example, in the sixth generation of the d'Anciennevilles, Louis' granddaughters Suzanne and Magdelaine both married the Baron de Moulins, with Suzanne doing so after the death of her older sister. The Baron de Moulins was an important military figure in early seventeenth-century France; over the course of his career, he held a number of military posts including *aide de camp des armées du Roi* and *maître de camp d'infanterie*.⁵³ Military activity also seems to have been a factor in determining which women of rank married into Champagne's noble houses. The second wife of Jean d'Aultry was Malain de Lux, daughter of the Baron de Lux; the d'Aultry genealogy notes that the Baron de Lux was, among other things, a *conseiller du Roi, capitaine de 500*

⁵²(...continued)
marriage contract (3 April 1604), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵³Magdelaine married the Baron de Moulins in 1606; Suzanne married him in 1629. "Genealogie d'Ancienneville," entry for fifth generation (Louis), *RNC*, unpaginated; and *Ibid.*, entry for sixth generation (Jean).

hommes d'armes and a *maréchal*.⁵⁴ Similarly, Bonne de Launoy, wife of Aleaume d'Averhoul, was the Dame de Livry; Françoise de Verrieres, who two generations later became the first wife of Jean d'Averhoul in 1543, was the Dame de Brienne. Each of these two marriage contracts contains a long list of male relatives who held military commissions including *colonel* and *maréchal*; moreover, the contracts clearly state that these male kin were either directly involved in the marriage negotiations or were present at the ratification of the contract. In both cases, shortly after their marriages, Bonne de Launoy's husband, like that of Françoise de Verrieres, took up commissions in regiments that were commanded by brothers- or fathers-in-laws, ultimately rising through the ranks to become captains and colonels of groups as large as 1,000 *hommes de pied*.⁵⁵

The d'Orignys are also an excellent example of the professional endogamy typical of military families in early modern Champagne. Pierre d'Origny, son of the family patriarch, contracted his marriage with Marguerite le Goix in July 1560. The contract records that his future father and uncle-in-law were active in the administration of the state, with the former holding the post of "Enquesteur pour le Roy à Chaalons" and the latter acting as *procureur du Roi* for the same locality. Although the precise date of his own acquisition of the office is

⁵⁴"Genealogie d'Aultry," entry for second generation (Jean), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵⁵"Genealogie de la famille d'Avehoul," entries for generations seven, nine and ten, *RNC*, unpaginated.

not made explicit in any of the submitted documents, it is clear that Pierre was “Receveur pour le Roy à Chaalons” by 1565.⁵⁶

In the generations which followed, however, while the practice of marrying individuals with similar professional connections was continued by Pierre’s children and grandchildren and the professional focus changed within the d’Origny family from the bureaucracy to the military. Pierre’s son Claude, who served as *homme d’armes* under the Duc de Rethelois, contracted to marry Margueritte de Colignon in July 1595. The contract was witnessed by Claude’s cousin, Jacques de Raulet, who served as *homme d’armes* in the company of Monsieur d’Inteville and by a number of the bride’s male relatives. It was also witnessed by the “haut & puissant Prince, M^{re} Charles de Bretagne, Chevalier des Ordres du Roy, Capitaine de cinquante hommes d’armes des anciennes Ordonnances de sa Majesté & Comte de Vertus,” a professional associate of the groom and also his cousin.⁵⁷ Similar military connections were noted in the marriage contract of Claude’s own son Christophe to Anne d’Orothée. Among those witnessing the contract for the bride was an unnamed individual who was *baron* of four *lieux*, counsellor to the Archduke Leopold of Austria, “Chambellan Colonel de mill [sic] hommes à pied,” “grand Veneur du Royaume de Bohême”

⁵⁶“Genealogie d’Origny,” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Pierre), marriage contract (29 July 1560) and *ascensivement* (14 February 1565), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Claude), marriage contract (13 July 1595).

and *gouverneur* of the city and fortresses of Bouteuis and Wittingaer.⁵⁸ These professional associations would likely have been of use to Christophe who, other documentary evidence notes, died in 1635 while serving as *capitaine* in a cavalry regiment in the pay of the King of Sweden.⁵⁹

While it is not always possible to discern whether this practice of professional endogamy was an off-shoot of the continued association of like-employed individuals or a conscious means of fulfilling an individual's desire for professional advancement,⁶⁰ in some specific cases it is possible to infer a relation between one or both of these factors and the choice of marriage partner. For example, Antoine de Pithou held the office of *commissionnaire ordinaire des guerres*; he married Jeanne d'Hault, daughter of a *commissionnaire ordinaire des guerres* in February 1584.⁶¹ The marriage contract of the aptly named Anne de Bataille suggests that, as a foot soldier, his choice of Marie de Mauclerc for

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Christophe), marriage contract (9 May 1622).

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, proofs of nobility offered for fourth generation (Christophe), various military certificates (1642 to 1645).

⁶⁰"Genealogie de Gorrion," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Jean), marriage contract (20 September 1625) and various military certificates (1634-1640), *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Perry," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Antoine), marriage contract (12 July 1633), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶¹"Genealogie de Pithou," proofs of nobility offered for third generation (Antoine) marriage contract (12 February 1584), *RNC*, unpaginated.

his wife may have been influenced by her professional connections. The contract notes that Marie's father, Jean, "vivant Controlleur Provincial de l'Artillerie en Champagne."⁶²

Noblewomen who did not have any formal title or social rank appear to have married well – particularly if they possessed some military connection that would advance the career of their potential spouse. For example, the evidence provided by the Niger family reveals that its males were, generation after generation, dedicated to serving as *archers de la garde du Roi* and as commanders in the *regiment des cuirassiez du Roi*. What is also consistent, generation after generation, is their choice of brides. Each generation appears to have married only local noblewomen with military connections, both in army administration and field command. For example, Dorothée du Chesny (who married Pierre de Niger in 1584) was the daughter of a *capitaine* of cavalry "dans les Troupes de son Altesse de Savoye." This marriage appears to have solidified a social and professional alliance between this family and the army which served this commander. In the next generation, Antoine de Niger married Marie de Valde, whose father was also an infantry commander "pour son Altesse." As well as proclaiming Antoine to be "Noble, c'est à dire à nostre usage de Francee [sic], Escuyer, Capitaine de la Cavallerie pour sa Majesté tres-Chrestienne," the marriage contract also records the fact that Marie's father was "Mestre de Camp d'un Regiment d'Infanterie

⁶²"Genealogie de Bataille," proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Anne), marriage contract (15 November 1627), *RNC*, unpaginated.

pour son Altesse,” suggesting that in this instance the choice of vocation and choice of spouse were linked.⁶³

The desire to establish connections with individuals involved in military service or with connections to the military complex also appears in the details given for the second and subsequent marriages contracted by those women who could be counted among the widows of Champagne’s *noblesse*. In the case of Laurent de Rougement, an archer in Jarnac’s company in 1546, the widow in question (Margueritte d’Aloise) was that of his brother, Étienne de Rougement who had also served in the military.⁶⁴ The second marriage of Marie de Romple, widow of the Baron de Moulins, to Daniel Coburn (a mere *sieur*) in 1611 was not likely an indication of social decline on her part.⁶⁵ As a widow of some means would not necessarily have to remarry under duress in early modern France, it is more likely that this marriage was evidence of the social advancement of Daniel who had served the French crown as an *archer de la garde* under the command of the Duc de Nevers. In this case, therefore,

⁶³“Genealogie de la famille de Niger,” genealogical entries and documentary evidence for all generations [particularly generations four, five and six], *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶⁴“Genealogie de Rougemont,” proofs of nobility offered for second generation (Laurent), marriage contract (22 December 1546), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶⁵Daniel is recorded in the genealogy as being “Sieur de Coursenets les Vaulerons & la Villeneuve.” See: “Genealogie de la famille de Cockborne,” *RNC*, unpaginated.

while Daniel's personal nobility would have not have rested solely on that of his new wife, it clearly would have helped to reinforce his own claim to noble status.⁶⁶

E. Military service and ennoblement

What the contents of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) also reveal is that while war brought death to Champagne's noble families, for individuals such as Daniel Coburn, it also brought opportunity for social advancement. Many individuals, both French and foreign born, found that noble status, as well as military glory, could be won on the field of battle – if the victor lived long enough to claim the prize. The ennoblement of those who had provided distinguished military service became one avenue by which the physical continuity of Champagne's nobility was assured.

The patriarchs of 51 of the 507 families in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) – just over 10% – were ennobled for their military service and these cases are particularly interesting in that these particular family submissions frequently presented the *lettres d'anoblissement* given to the patriarch as the first proof of nobility.⁶⁷ *Lettres*

⁶⁶Daniel's ancestor, Guillaume, had established the family's noble claim with *lettres patentes d'anoblissement*, given by the King of Scotland some time in the sixteenth century. See: "Genealogie d'Handresson," *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶⁷See, for example: "Genealogie de le Bel," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean), *lettres patentes d'anoblissement* (June 1587), *RNC*, unpaginated;
(continued...)

d'anoblissement were also frequently used in the submissions of other families in this *recherche de la noblesse*, although they were not used as the initial proof of nobility.⁶⁸ The juridical importance of such documentation in establishing a claim to nobility is clear.

However, as Chapter Four suggested, the social value of *lettres d'anoblissement* goes beyond the mere legality of the instrument. As a public acknowledgment of service and, moreover, as a public recognition of the value placed on that service by the crown and the *haute noblesse*, *lettres d'anoblissement* provided ambitious individuals with written evidence of their status and their perceived public character. Both of these factors – the legality and the moral implications of *noblesse* – are crucial to the establishment of noble identity. And even though the nature of *lettres d'anoblissement* required that the actions of the individual be presented in such a way as to disallow any question as to the merit of the ennoblement, this does not mean that the acts which are described have a lesser social or cultural importance for the individual receiving the *lettres d'anoblissement* or for the individual or institution

⁶⁷(...continued)

“Genealogie de Feugré,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Charles), *lettres patentes d'anoblissement* (1 August 1661), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Gadoüot,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jacques), *lettres patentes d'anoblissement* (January 1650), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Mance,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Claude), *lettres d'anoblissement* (February 1658), *RNC*, unpaginated; “Genealogie de Tristan,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean), *lettres patentes d'anoblissement* (Sept 1651), *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie de Truc,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Hierôme), *lettres patentes d'anoblissement* (26 January 1574), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁶⁸See, for example: “Genealogie de Boy,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean), *RNC*, unpaginated; and “Genealogie de Tervuelles,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean Ernest), “Lettres de Naturalité & Annoblissement [sic]” (August 1661), *RNC*, unpaginated.

granting them. Consequently, the *lettres d'anoblissement* provided by Jean de Richelet, although formulaic in content and tone, clearly link his character to his nobility through his military service:

Il a cet avantage que sa Noblesse procede de sa vertu & des belles actions qu'il a fait, s'estant signalé en plusieurs Sieges de Villes, en consideration dequoy des grands services qu'il a rendu à sa Majesté en ses Armées . . .⁶⁹

The *lettres d'anoblissement* given to Jean d'Auger in March 1658 are similar in that they praise his military service as being a characteristic of those possessing true nobility. The letters state openly that they celebrate and are the result of "les actions illustres du Pere & des Enfants, leurs longs services, & le trespas glorieux de trois d'entr'eux morts dans le lit d'Honneur, en combattant pour le service de leur Souverain . . ."⁷⁰

Such praise was often augmented in the *lettres d'anoblissement* by specific details regarding the career of the individual in question and often provided specific references to battles in which the individual participated. Jean de Le Bel, for example, was ennobled in recognition of forty years of military service and for "toutes les occasions de guerre, ou il avoit pû signaler son courage." His *lettre d'anoblissement* draws particular attention to his role in the defence of Reims in 1567 when, chosen by the local inhabitants to command 300 men, Jean lead this force to victory over the enemy. This document concludes by noting that

⁶⁹"Genealogie de Richelet," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean), *lettres patentes d'anoblissement* (February "mil cens soixante un"), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷⁰"Genealogie de la famille d'Auger," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean), *lettre d'anoblissement* (March 1658), *RNC*, unpaginated.

Jean de Le Bel continued to serve for a further 12 years after this incident as the commander of the local forces.⁷¹ The *lettres d'anoblissement* provided by Estras de Bauda also connect his ennoblement to his military service directly; they cite his participation in the battles of Rocroi, Mariedal and Norlingue as well as in the defense of Corbie "& autres occasions" as reasons for his elevation. During the course of these varied battles he held various commissions including that of captain in the infantry regiments of Vernancourt, Vallemont and Beauveau, a commission of Colonel "d'un Regiment étranger d'Infanterie," one as a *maître de camp*, as well as being governor of Rethel.⁷²

What the detail provided in many of these *lettres d'anoblissement* make clear is that those who were ennobled for military service did, in fact, earn their new social and juridical status with their blood. Moreover, it is clear that they, and the individuals who granted the letters of ennoblement, went to some lengths to make this connection publicly understood.⁷³ Jacques de Gadoüot, a member of the bodyguard of the Dowager Queen Mother was ennobled for his military service in 1650. His *lettres d'anoblissement* note his participation

⁷¹"Genealogie de Le Bel," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean), *lettres patentes en forme de chartres* (June 1587), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷²"Genealogie de Bauda," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Estras), *lettres patentes d'anoblissement* (November 1649), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷³See, for example: "Genealogie de Braux," proofs of nobility offered for first generation, first proof of nobility offered, *RNC*, unpaginated; "Genealogie de Chinoir," proofs of nobility offered for first generation, first proof of nobility offered, *RNC*, unpaginated; and "Genealogie de Didier," first proof of nobility offered, *RNC*, unpaginated.

in a great many skirmishes and the physical pain he suffered as a result. His *lettre d'anoblissement* concludes that, as his many wounds were suffered in the interest of the "l'Estat & de son Prince," it was only fitting that he be rewarded for his actions with ennoblement.⁷⁴ A similar sentiment is expressed in the *lettres d'anoblissement* included in Jean Ernest de Tervuelles' proofs of nobility. Like Gadoüout's ennoblement, Tervuelles' was the result of his "attachement au service de cet Estat" and of "ses blessures qu'il auroit recu, de l'un desquelles il auroit esté estropié, en combattant dans lesdites armées pour son service."⁷⁵

In the case of Charles de Feugré, it would appear as if noble status was indeed well earned. His *lettre d'anoblissement* outlines a long and frequently injurious military career. In an exceptionally long commentary on the contents of the *lettre d'anoblissement*, it is noted that, since 1638, as a lieutenant in a company of *chevaux légers* in the service of the Comte d'Hoquin-Court, Charles had been directly involved in a number of significant military encounters. The document recounts many of these encounters in quite bloody detail. For example, it is noted that he fought in the battles of Sedan and Rocroi where "il auroit contribué au rialliment de la Cavallerie du Corps de reserve auparavant mis en desordre." He was also present at the seiges and battles of (among others) "Gravelines, Bourboug, Bethune,

⁷⁴"Genealogie de Gadoüot," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jacques), *lettres patentes d'anoblissement* (January 1650), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷⁵"Genealogie de Tervuelles," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean Ernest), "Lettres de Naturalité & Anoblissement," (August 1661), *RNC*, unpaginated.

Lilers, S. Venant, la Motte aux bois, Rethel, Mouzon” as well as those which took place at Arras, Valenciennes, la Capelle, Montmidy, Marcik, Dunkirk, Bergues and Ypres. At Ypres, he was wounded by “deux coups de mousquet en poussant un party ennemy prēs [sic] menin; fait & enlevé prisonnier . . ., y detenu pendant cinq mois.” The document also recounts how he was captured with the Baron de Migneux at the siege of Landrecy. The *lettre d’anoblissement* puts great stress on the fact that, in the face of the enemy, Charles’ actions embodied the *noblesse d’épée*’s ideal of military courage. It often records the many times he led his own men into battle against far greater numbers (particularly at Sedan, Rocroi and Ypres), but still managed to vanquish his enemy and to take his own defeat (when it came) with honour.⁷⁶

Conclusion

The nobility of Champagne was a diverse group, encompassing lineages which could be characterized as well established (those of six generations or more) and those *anoblis* whose nobility was relatively new (five generations or fewer). Not surprisingly, individuals and families which held significant social rank were few among this region’s nobility and the evidence is clear that those who did manage to acquire rank and title also were among the most established and most economically and socially important families. The predominance

⁷⁶“Genealogie de Feugré,” proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Charles), *lettres patentes d’anoblissement* (April 1667), *RNC*, unpaginated.

of younger houses in this province suggests that, as Bourquin has argued, the *noblesse* of this province should be characterized as *noblesse seconde*. While this status as *noblesse seconde* limited the direct and individual power of its members, the demographic information contained in the published findings of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) suggests that there was a collective importance and power in this status, particularly when considering the argument that the real influence of any *noblesse seconde* came in its ability to support the crown – and/or the *haute noblesse* – in its endeavors to exert control. In this way, the willingness and ability to provide military support and/or service to either the crown or the *haute noblesse* became not just an avenue for professional activity but also a real and effective means of acquiring and wielding power for members of this elite.

That power, however limited, had a human cost and the demography of this elite reflected its exposure to the hazards of war. Death in battle culled the ranks of Champagne's noblemen and placed some family lines in a degree of peril. The deaths in service of married and/or marriageable noblemen created a void which was filled, in part, by individuals and families who shared similar professional and cultural values. Simply put, ensuring the physical and social continuity of a noble lineage demanded not only that the majority of Champagne's nobles marry, but that they choose partners deemed worthy of joining the province's elite. The marriage patterns of those families recorded in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) suggest that this evaluation of the "worthiness" of a potential spouse was conducted within a context that valued military activity and service as highly as,

if not more highly than, non-military service. Such a finding should not be too surprising as historians of the family have often stressed the importance of professional activity both in the process of defining the pool of possible marriage partners and in assessing the value of that individual. As the Introduction noted, social historians of the nobility of early modern France have also raised the issue of professional activities and interest as a means of defining noble identity and it would seem that these interests played a particularly important role in choosing marriage partners for the majority of Champagne's nobility – particularly when those interests were military.

In addition to augmenting the noble population through traditional means such as marriage and the creation of new households, the military requirements of the crown (as well as those of the *haute noblesse*) ensured a consistent and attainable avenue of social mobility and facilitated the social and professional assimilation that was necessary if the nobility of this region was to survive. From as early as the sixteenth century onwards, for those individuals who embraced military service and survived the rigours of the battlefield, war provided a means by which to join Champagne's *noblesse*. As this chapter has argued, war shaped the physical composition of the nobility of this province but it did so with the cooperation of those whose lives were most directly affected.

In part, the answer as to why individuals such as Charles de Feugré would be prime candidates for ennoblement can be answered by the need to restock Champagne's *noblesse*

with those who had the ability to defend it. Nevertheless, as in the case of Feugré, what the evidence also suggests is that by integrating this particular group of individuals into the *noblesse* of Champagne, the influence of military activity and culture could be sustained within this population. The *lettre d'anoblissement* given to Sebastian de Baillet by Henry, Duc de Lorraine, supports this interpretation. Beyond its recognition of Sebastian's military prowess, the *lettre d'anoblissement* contains an account of his long service and it praises Sebastian for his dedication, both as a soldier and father, to ensuring the continuance of war-related social and cultural values:

. . . avec pouvoir de prendre & recevoir tous Ordres de Chevalerie en consideration des services qu'il avoit rendus depuis 35 ans, au feu Duc de Lorraine, & du soin qu'il prenoit d'élever ses enfans à la profession des Armes, de les fair parvenir à tous les grades & qualitez & de leur donner des Alliance Nobles, afin de les rendre mieux capables de servir par là le public & tous les Princes.⁷⁷

It was this sort of conduct which, as the *maréchal* de Turenne would note in a certificate of service given to Jean Ernest de Tervuelles, showed that such individuals were in no sense "common."⁷⁸ Clearly, demographic needs, ideological purpose and social identity were intimately linked in Champagne.

⁷⁷"Genealogie de Baillet," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Sebastian), *lettres d'anoblissement* (5 January 1616), *RNC*, unpaginated.

⁷⁸"Genealogie de Tervuelles," proofs of nobility offered for first generation (Jean Ernest), certificate of service (1 August 1661), *RNC*, unpaginated.

The examples discussed in this chapter show how the noble families in Champagne themselves helped to shape noble identity in the province as a whole by using war and war-related activity as a means to assess potential partners for their children. In so doing, they shaped not just the immediate lives of their children but of the future of their household. The contents of the marriage contracts and other non-military documentation provided by the families in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) are testimony to their desire to establish and to ensure the continuity of personal, professional and social connections with traditional forms of noble identity – the profession of arms – as much as with those ideas of noble service which developed with the growth of centralized monarchy. It would seem as if the preponderance of references to the military commissions of a potential groom, his kin and associates or to the military connections of a potential bride are provided not simply to establish the legal and financial terms of the new couple's union, but to display in a very public manner the affinity of the new spouse with the professional and social identity of the family or individual in question. Moreover, ennobling warriors for past service served a physical as well as ideological purpose in that it could augment any decline in noble numbers but it also helped to ensure the continuity of a regional *noblesse* whose identity drew heavily on war, an identity firmly rooted in traditional ideas of the character and purpose of *noblesse*. It was an identity in which the public demonstration of the affinity to military values – most often through participation in military service – was not just necessary but was integral to the construction and communication of that identity.

Dale - Conclusion

War, *Noblesse*, and Identity in Early Modern Champagne

CONCLUSION

War, *Noblesse*, and Identity in Early Modern Champagne

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw almost constant international and domestic conflict. For the monarchy of France, as for other European rulers, the conduct of war provided an outlet for the manipulation and enforcement of foreign policy, a stage for the manifestation of the glory and power of the monarchy and, as it had since the Middle Ages, served as a means by which to reinforce the relationship of the crown to its nobility and elites through service. But what of those who participated in war? Did they perceive their role to have any social or cultural value? Indeed, although war was a constant in the early modern world, there is much work still to be done before such questions can be answered fully. As the Introduction to this thesis noted, the need for such studies to focus on early modern France is particularly keen, as the conduct of war was intimately linked with ideas about social order and nobility in this nation. Since the Middle Ages, when feudal ties linked the elites through military service and political allegiance to their social superiors, France's *noblesse* provided military and political support to France's rulers, making them an indispensable means of maintaining the power and grandeur of the state.

Despite the importance of the relationship between war and noble society in early modern France, the work of social and military historians alike has largely underestimated or even ignored it. Consequently, evaluating and understanding how war and participation in it

shaped the identity of those who claimed noble status in early modern France is crucial to understanding the nature of *noblesse* during a particularly turbulent period in France's history. Before the late seventeenth century, when the first measures toward the formation of a standing army were undertaken by the French crown, the constant possibility of war and the constancy of actual conflict required the existence of adequate numbers of officers and soldiers who could be mustered rapidly. In this way, the state depended on the willingness of its subjects to respond to the various levies and, more important, to actually serve in the field. What military and social historians alike have yet to explore in depth is how this situation also required the continued existence of a social ideology which would encourage the continued involvement of an elite which supplied the majority of commanders, and not a few soldiers during this period. Would such involvement have been necessarily guaranteed if the *noblesse* did not themselves find some value (be it social, cultural or professional) in the pursuit of war? Simply put, without the willingness of the elites to serve, it would have been difficult for either the French crown or the *haute noblesse* to raise the number of units, commanders and soldiers needed for any campaign.

Consequently, the social identity which the elites in early modern France crafted for themselves had to be supportive of the need for constant military service for the state to muster and field an army. But what consistently drew France's nobility to the conduct of war, despite its physical perils? The energy of many social historians of the nobility of early modern France has, since the 1950s, been focussed on dispelling the notion that any social

and/or cultural tension existed between the *noblesse de robe* and the *noblesse d'épée*. As a result, they have produced works which have as their focus discussions of how members of the “robe” nobility – often *parlementaires*, members of municipal governments and members of the financial administration of the state – shaped their sense of self. These scholars have paid particular attention to whether these groups may have shared notions in common with other members of noble society as to the types of duty and service expected of those claiming *noblesse*. Given their predisposition towards those involved in non-military service, these works have done little to broaden our understanding of why France’s elites participated in war or even whether or not any social or cultural value continued to be placed on participation in war by the elites at all. And while it might be expected that the work of military historians (particularly those which may be said to be disciples of the “military revolution” school of thought) would help to answer such questions, they too have largely ignored the cultural and intellectual aspects of military service in favour of discussions of the role played by war in state-building and the development of new technologies and field tactics.

There is much more to the relationship between war and *noblesse* than simply enumerating the ways in which armies were levied and the tactics they employed on the battlefield during this period. By analysing the genealogical and documentary evidence contained in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (carried out between 1666 and 1672 and published in 1673), this thesis has sought to provide some very preliminary answers

to what are very complex questions about the role played by war in the definition of *noblesse* in early modern France and, moreover, about the ways that those who participated in military service perceived and communicated their understanding of its social and cultural value(s).

As Chapter One argued, one reason why France's nobles may have continued to value participation in war as a mark of *noblesse* was, ironically, due in no small part to the French crown's desire to centralize power in its own hands. The centralization of government in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provided the main impetus for the increase in numbers and importance of the *noblesse de robe*, a nobility based in the possession of bureaucratic, financial and juridical offices. The growth of the *noblesse de robe* brought with it new concerns about the ways in which *noblesse* could be acquired and maintained and, consequently, new interpretations surfaced as to the means by which those who could rightfully claim noble status could be identified. Treatises on the nature of *noblesse* extolled the importance of service and duty for members of the second estate and, in so doing, sought to reconcile long-standing beliefs about the centrality of military service as a mark of nobility with the new social reality of a nobility that could be based largely in offices.

While the advent of the *noblesse de robe* precipitated discussion about the nature and purpose of nobility, should this discussion be taken as a sign that traditional ideas about the role played by war in the definition of *noblesse* were increasingly derided or ignored by those who called themselves noble? To some extent, as the Introduction to this thesis suggested,

modern social historians of France's nobility have helped to create the illusion that such was the case by framing the historiography of *noblesse* in early modern France in terms of the need to debunk the idea of a "crisis" predicated on tension between the *noblesse de robe* and the *noblesse d'épée*. As Chapter One demonstrated, early modern writers did not generally portray the relationship between the *noblesse d'épée* and the *noblesse de robe* as entirely adversarial; this is clearly demonstrated in the work of many modern social historians of the nobility of early modern France. What these modern historians have neglected to consider, however, is whether or not this less adversarial situation among the *noblesse* affected how members of the *noblesse* perceived the social, cultural and professional value of military service. It is interesting to note that, as Chapter One showed, early modern writers did not ignore this question. Although a great many of these early modern writers did stress the fundamental differences in the origins of each type of *noblesse*, they also emphasized that the greatness of each type of nobility, and thus its social and political power, lay in the ability of those who were noble to provide useful service to their social superior. When discussing the duty of any holder of *noblesse* to serve, early modern writers appear to have considered the conduct of justice, finance and war as equal parts of a greater whole, with all being integral to the functioning of the state and to the social order which supported it. Clearly, the importance of war as a defining factor in *noblesse* did not abate with the advent of the *noblesse de robe*.

But how did ideas about service, particularly military service, manifest themselves in the lives of France's nobles? As Chapter Two argued, one way to examine the relationship between war, *noblesse* and the construction of noble identity is to consider the varied and largely multi-generational evidence contained in the *recherches de la noblesse* as they involved the collection of what was, by its very nature, highly personalized, declaratory genealogical and documentary evidence from individuals and families wishing to maintain their coveted and fiscally advantageous social status.

The *recherches de la noblesse* allowed members of the nobility to define and assert their identity in a public and government sanctioned forum. In an age where defining *noblesse* was becoming increasingly complex, it became necessary for those who claimed noble status to be able to convey an understanding of what was and was not noble to their peers and the world at large. As historians of memory have noted, developing this understanding and communicating it to individuals who shared membership in the elite was crucial for both the individual and the group to which he/she and his/her family belonged, for without a commonly acknowledged history and memory, the individual cannot create an identity which will allow him/her to function within his/her peer group.¹ Thus, it was important for an individual and/or a family to be *seen* to understand the ideas which dominated public discourse on nobility in early modern France. Moreover, it was also .

¹Henry Rousso, *The Haunting Past: History, Memory and Justice in Contemporary France*, trans. Ralph Schoolcraft (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 6.

important for them to actively pursue those types of activities and interests which best embodied these ideas and to do so in such a manner that would be recognized by their peers and, in the case of the *recherches de la noblesse*, by the state.

In order to explore the degree to which the *noblesse* of early modern France may have pursued a military-oriented social identity, this thesis undertook an analysis of how war shaped and influenced the society and identities of the nobility of Champagne. That Champagne was a frontier province during a period of international and domestic conflict makes it an excellent choice for this study; in addition, the existence of several copies of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* carried out by Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin between 1666 and 1672 (as well as his adjudication notes) provide a wealth of information as to what was considered to be noble in this region. This thesis chose to focus on the published findings of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) rather than on archival records as it was the very act of publication – of placing the genealogies and documentary evidence that had been provided by the claimants and vetted by the government investigators into the public sphere – that is of importance when considering the creation and communication of identity.

Using the multi-generational genealogical and documentary evidence contained in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), this thesis has shown that war, and participation in it, directly shaped the lives of Champagne's nobles by providing a

professional and cultural context in which those who claimed noble status could fashion and communicate a sense of identity and purpose. Indeed, noble identity in Champagne appears to have been constructed out of shared ideas about duty and service and that, for this region in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, foremost among these ideas were those connected with military service in all its forms. As Chapter Six noted, participation in war was a long term profession for a number of individuals, at times lasting 15 years or more; for others it was a short-term endeavour, an activity to be undertaken as part of the traditional levies of the *ban* and *arrière ban*. As Chapters Four and Six demonstrated, the family genealogies and documentary evidence – ranging from documents of sale and purchase, to marriage contracts and certificates of baptism, to legal judgements including prior positive adjudications of inquiries into noble status, to field commissions and oral testimony of brothers in arms – as well as the choice of language used within them, point clearly to the importance placed on participation in war as a means of acquiring noble status and maintaining noble identity in Champagne.

In addition, the individual charged with carrying out the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), the provincial *intendant*, Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin, appears to have shared, or at least accepted, some of the more traditional ideas regarding the importance of military activity as an indicator of nobility. As Chapter Three discussed, his own family's roots as bureaucratic *anoblis* did not appear to prejudice him against military service as a defining aspect of nobility in Champagne. His adjudication of the family

submissions reflect an understanding, if not an admiration, of the importance of war to *noblesse* in general and to the shaping of the identity and demography of Champagne's elite.

And it is clear that war did shape the history, memory and the identity of Champagne's nobility, as Chapters Five, Six and Seven clearly illustrate. As Chapter Seven demonstrated, war reduced the number of males of an age for marriage and fatherhood, thus directly influencing the ability of Champagne's *noblesse* to reproduce itself through natural means. Nevertheless, the noble families of Champagne continued to send their men into military service and, in so doing, created social opportunity for others involved in war. For those who served well, and survived the rigours of battle, the possibility of ennoblement for military service allowed Champagne's elite to renew itself through legal, as well as biological, means. The evidence discussed in Chapter Seven also demonstrates that while the majority of those ennobled for military service were of French origin, the continuing need to renew the ranks of the nobility of Champagne also offered opportunities to those from beyond France's borders. Nearly forty of the families whose nobility was confirmed by Caumartin were of foreign origin, from states both allied with France (such as Scotland) and those which were often France's enemy (such as Spain). The evidence provided by these families chronicled their acceptance and assimilation into Champagne's nobility and showed how both processes were facilitated by their involvement in military activity. A shared military identity helped to make the integration of families of foreign origin a socially and ideologically painless process.

The evidence recorded in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) reflects an overwhelming predisposition towards participation in wars, towards service in the armies and retinues of the *haute noblesse* and, of course, the state. Yet, not all of Champagne's nobility participated in war. As Chapter Five showed, that percentage of noble families which dedicated their human resources exclusively to non-military service was minimal. Families which were involved in financial, judicial and other types of bureaucratic offices were also likely to have one or more members of each generation participate in war or in some sort of military service. It was also common for individuals in this province to hold both bureaucratic and military positions over the course of their career; in a few instances, these two different types of offices were held simultaneously. Chapter Five also revealed another interesting trend among families that might have initially been identified as exclusively *noblesse de robe*: over the course of two or more generations, some of these families underwent a transformation, giving up the "robe" for the "sword."

Chapter Six, which detailed the participation of Champagne's nobility in military service, demonstrated how this elites' dedication to war functioned as a professional outlet and as an indicator of social and cultural worth. Almost 90% of the families in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) included some reference to military service and many included one or more references for each generation. This desire to display their dedication to military service and the prowess of their men in the submitted evidence shows that, for the

vast majority of noble houses in Champagne, such activity was central to their conception of *noblesse* and to the act of establishing their social and cultural identity.

The military and military-related evidence provided by the 507 families in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) (which is analysed in Chapter Six) contained a wealth of information about the nature and conduct of war, as well as the often lengthy military careers of Champagne's noblemen. This degree of detail was not provided as frequently in the documents and genealogies for non-military activity. At times, this military and military-related evidence recalled feats of great bravery from centuries past, although references to military service in the period from 1550 to 1650 were more common. The documents and genealogies chronicled the various types of service rendered in both mounted and infantry units and also outlined the types of commissions held and number of years served by an individual. This varied military evidence documented the professional advantages of war, enumerating the steady rise in the ranks of some who served for ten, twenty and even thirty years as well as the small financial advantages that could be had upon retirement. Evidence which outlined such service was often given pride of place in the family submissions. As Chapter Seven noted, *lettres d'anoblissement* granted for military service which often contained a detailed account of the individual's military exploits were, in some submissions, provided as the first proof of nobility, suggesting a strong desire on the part of the *produisant* to cast his submission and his identity in a particular cultural and professional light.

Evidence relating to military service also related the perils of war in great detail, from the possibility of capture and ransom (and its resultant financial hardship), to the examples of those who literally gave their right arm to be noble, acquiring noble status after becoming disfigured in the course of their service. Some military evidence clearly demonstrated the cultural value placed on the commemoration these deeds by this noble community, as well as the value such acts of commemoration had in verifying noble status. This is most clearly demonstrated in the fact that, in a number of cases, families submitted not a direct record of an individual's military service for Caumartin's consideration, but evidence of effigies and other forms of funerary statues which portrayed the individual as a military man in his prime. The social and cultural icon of the warrior appears to have had as much importance as a symbol of nobility as it did as a commemorative symbol for the dead in early modern Champagne.² Ultimately, the consistency and frequency of the use of direct and indirect military evidence in the family submissions, the detail contained within them, as well as their acceptance and publication within the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), is the most clear evidence of the value placed upon war and war-related activity as a signifiers and identifier of *noblesse* in Champagne. Simply put, the military service undertaken by Champagne's nobles was not without its value and purpose and they themselves acknowledged this by providing overwhelming numbers of references to such service in their submissions to Caumartin.

²This possibility is worthy of much greater study but is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this thesis.

While in no way a comprehensive study of the relationship between war, nobility and identity in early modern France, this thesis hopes to stimulate interest in the complex relationship between war and the nature of nobility in early modern France. To this end, its findings raise questions which bear on understanding the degree to which the nobles of other regions of France may also have found participation in war to be an important part of their identity. As Chapter Two noted, James B. Wood's study of the *recherches de la noblesse* for Bayeux revealed that the importance of war to the nobility of this *élection* was more important than been previously believed. The same appears to be true for the nobility of Champagne. But was this the case for other areas of France? Given the degree to which social historians of the nobility have charted the ways in which nobles in non-military service created and defined their social and professional identity, it is crucial that social historians as well as military historians give more attention to how nobles who were not among the judicial, administrative or financial elites of early modern France conceived and expressed their identities. Given the conflict that raged throughout France and on the Continent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the possibility that war may have provided a means for other provincial elites (or, at least, segments of them) to define and defend their place in the social order cannot continue to be ignored.

Second, in a period when foreign and domestic politics were intimately related to the ability to conduct war, did it serve the interests of the state to continue to reward those who were willing to take to the field? Although not its formal purpose, the *recherches de la*

noblesse were geared towards establishing without a doubt that the state was the ultimate arbiter of *noblesse*. This analysis of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) suggests that the state encouraged the continued importance of war to the elites of this region of France. It would be useful to study the degree to which the state may have encouraged its *intendants* and officials involved with the compilation and adjudication of *recherches de la noblesse* conducted throughout France in the early modern period to favour evidence of participation in war as adequate evidence of nobility.

Regardless of the possible influence of state interests, one thing is clear: when asked by the state to justify their claims to *noblesse*, those in Champagne who were successful in doing so chose to present genealogies and documentary evidence replete with highly detailed and vivid recollections of military service and sacrifice. These documents and genealogies show that, In Champagne, war fostered a social environment within which the vast majority of noble individuals and families could craft identities which respected traditional ideas of character, honour and duty and upheld ideas about acceptable forms of service. The *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) provided a very public and, ironically, bureaucratic form through which to express an understanding of the popular conceptions of *noblesse*, including the importance of military service in the acquisition and maintenance of *noblesse*. In this way, the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673) provided an outlet for those claiming noble status to sustain not only their individual identities, but to share in a

collective identity which linked them to those members of the *noblesse* who had come before as well as to those who would follow.

Dale - Appendix I

Families . . . with genealogies credited to Charles-René d'Hozier

APPENDIX I:

**Families listed in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673)
with genealogies credited to Charles-René d'Hozier (1640-1732),
*généalogiste de la maison du Roi*¹**

The families are listed below in the order in which their names appear in the published findings of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673). All information included in this Appendix regarding the number of generations recorded, earliest date recorded for the family and type(s) of service rendered is taken from the family genealogies only.

That the nobility of many of the families listed below appears to have been recent (many dating from only the fifteenth century) suggests that d'Hozier's skills and reputation may have been favoured by those families whose nobility needed to be established with greater accuracy and authenticity. That there is a greater proportion of families involved in both military and civil service in this particular group than in the families listed in the text of the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* as a whole suggests that d'Hozier, himself, may have harboured some preference for providing genealogies for families that did not restrict their professional activities.²

<u>Family Name</u>	<u>Total Generations</u>	<u>Earliest genealogical date</u>	<u>Type(s) of service</u>
BAILLET	4	Not specified	Military only
BALLIDART	7	Not specified	Military only
BOLLONGE	6	15 th century	Military and civil
BESANNES	9	1248	Military only
CULLANT	7	1440	Military and civil
CHANDON	6	Not specified	Military and civil

¹Source: *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne*, compiled by Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin (Châlons: Jacques Seneuze, Imprimeur & libraire ordinaire du Roi, 1673), unpaginated.

²As Figure 5.1 in Chapter Five noted, among the entire number of families recorded in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673), 46.7% of families favoured a mixture of military and civil service in their family history, while 41.6% favoured military service only. Among these 34 families with genealogies credited to d'Hozier, 19 (almost 56%) favoured a mixture of professional service, while 13 (just over 38%) participated exclusively in military service.

<u>Family Name</u>	<u>Total Generations</u>	<u>Earliest genealogical date</u>	<u>Type(s) of service</u>
d'ESTAING	16	1200	Military and civil
d'ESTIVAUX	5	1526	Military and civil
HAMES	9	1487	Military and civil
HARLUS	5	1515	Military and civil
HENNIN LIETART	8	1453	Military only
HARZILLEMONT	6	1454	Military and civil
LANTAGES	6	1486	Military only
LONGUEAU	6	1508	No service indicated
des LAIRES	6	1526	Military only
MOLÉ	8	1440	Military and civil
MAUBEUGE	6	1502	Military only
MIREMONT	8	1482	Military and civil
MARISY	6	1478	Military and civil
MESGRINGY	8	1470	Military and civil
NETTANCOURT	9	1376	Military only
PARVANT	9	1404	Military only
des du PONT	6	1538	Military only
de PONTS	9	1428	Military and civil
PIEDEFOR	8	1410	Military and civil
RAGUIER	7	1476	Military and civil
REMONT	7	1485	Military only
de la RUE	7	1490	Military only
SANGLIER	5	1096	Military and civil
VIEILMAISONS	6	1485	No service indicated
VAUCLEROIS	5	1529	Military and civil
VILLEMOR	5	1546	Military only
VIGNIER	8	1453	Military and civil
VILLEPROUVÉE	8	1356	Military and civil

Dale - Appendix II

Categories of *noblesse* . . . La Roque's *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse*

APPENDIX II: Categories of *noblesse* listed in Gilles André de La Roque's *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse* (1678)¹

In the Preface to his *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse*, Gilles André de La Roque identifies twenty different types of *noblesse*. La Roque notes in this work that all of the types and definitions listed below were arrived at after conducting “discussions and consultations” with Jean du Fay, Comte de Mavlevrier and *bailli* of Roüen regarding the *recherches de la noblesse* for 1666.

<u>Type/category of <i>noblesse</i></u>	<u>La Roque's definition and/or commentary</u>
Noblesse immémoriale	Is feudal in nature and based on the possession of a fief or fiefs.
Noblesse militaire	Characterized by la Roque as the recompense “deuë à la valeur des Braves, pour s'estre signalez dans les armées.”
Noblesse Accidentelle, civile, politique, ou Palatine	A nobility which has its origins in offices.
Noblesse commensale	This type of nobility is the result of “service domestique & des tables des maisons Royales.”

¹Source: Gilles André de La Roque, “Preface,” *Traite [sic] de la Noblesse, De ses différentes especes, De son Origine, du Gentilhomme de Nom & d'Armes, des Bannerets, des Bacheliers, des Ecuyers, & de leurs differences: Du Gentilhomme de quatre Lignes: Du Noble du Race: De la Noblesse paternelle & de la maternelle: De la Noblesse par adoption: De l'origine des Fiefs; Que les premiers Nobles ont esté faits par l'investiture qu'ils en ont receuë: De la Noblesse par Chevalerie: Des Anoblissemens & des Privileges qui anoblissent: Des Derogances [sic] à la Noblesse: Des Rehabilitations: Des Dignités Ecclesiastiques & Seculaires: Des Ordres de Chevalerie: De la Noblesse d'Angleterre, d'Espagne, de Portugal, d'Alemagne, de Hongrie, d'Italie, de Pologne, de Seude, de Danemark, des Païs-bas, &c. Avec plusieurs Questions & Maximes qui concernent la Noblesse, confirmées par grand nombre de Chartres & autres Titres authentiques, & par une infinité d'Arrests intervenues sur cette maitière* (Paris: Étienne Michallet, 1678), unpaginated.

<u>Type/category of noblesse</u>	<u>La Roque's definition and/or commentary</u>
Noblesse liberale	La Roque defines this type of nobility as that which "poussée d'un beau zele, a departy son bien pour la defense de l'Estat & de la Patrie."
Noblesse spirituelle, litteraire & des sçavans	Nobility based on the possession of degrees in Arts and Science and "a esté reconnuë capable des emplois les plus importants."
Noblesse titrée	Held by those who have been ennobled by their position as <i>chevalier</i> .
Noblesse infeodée	Nobility that results from the possession of a fief; can also be called <i>francs-fiefs</i> . ²
Noblesse la privilegée [sic]	Describes the nobility of those who have held the position of town councillor or mayor and/or other "charges Secretaires."
Noblesse uterine ou coûtumiere	Nobility which is passed on through the mother, "en vertu d'un Coustume ou Usage."
Noblesse verriere	This term describes the nobility of those "dont la profession semble mechanique, qui meantmois ne déroge point."
Noblesse archere	This type of nobility is held by those "qu'on pretend descendre des Francs-Archers."
Noblesse venale	Nobility based on "des Edits & des Chartres portant finance."
Noblesse déclaré	This nobility is found "quand de concert entre les Habitans d'un lieu & la partie que se fait inquieter, on obtient un jugement confirmatif d'un Noblesse supposée & mal-fondée."

²It is not explained how this type of *noblesse* differs from that which is listed first.

Type/category of *noblesse***La Roque's definition and/or commentary**

Noblesse débarquée

Also referred to as *noblesse de transmigration*. This term is used to describe the nobility that is acquired at the hand of a foreign power, preferably at the hand of a king or other person of considerable social and political stature.

Noblesse empruntée

Describes nobility acquired "lors qu'un parent anobly preste sa Charte à un autre non-anobly pour mettre toute sa race en honneur & à couvert de la recherche de la taxe des Francs-Fiefs, & de la taille."

Noblesse greffée

The nobility acquired when those with a name similar to a *noblesse de race* family join with that family.

Noblesse protégée

This type of nobility is the result of a marriage alliance contracted between good houses "afin d'acquérir par leur credit un titre que la naissance populaire leur denie."

Noblesse usurpée

This category/type of nobility encompasses those who are named as *noble*, *écuyer*, or *chevalier* in a contract or other legal document.

Noblesse officieuse

Nobility that results from the "passions & inclination des Grands pour élever leurs Domestiques qui leur ont rendu des services."

Dale - Appendix III

Genealogies . . . : format examples

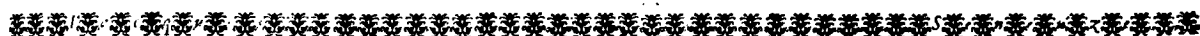
APPENDIX III: Genealogies from the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673): format examples¹

The images provided in this appendix are photographic images taken of the following genealogies included in the *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne* (1673):

- Genealogie de la famille de Richelet (1 page)
- Genealogie de la famille de Collet (1 page)
- Genealogie de la famille des Laires (1 page)
- Genealogie de la maison de France (2 pages)

¹Source: *Recherche de la noblesse de Champagne*, compiled by Louis-François Le Fevre de Caumartin (Châlons: Jacques Seneuze, Imprimeur & libraire ordinaire du Roi, 1673).

GENEALOGIE DE LA FAMILLE DE RICHELET, ORIGINAIRE DE CHAMPAGNE.



I.



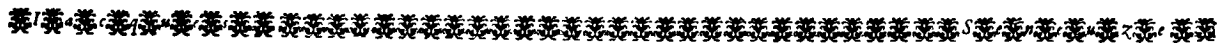
*L*a cet avantage que sa Noblesse procede de sa vertu & des belles actions qu'il a fait, s'estant signalé en plusieurs Sieges de Villes, en consideration dequoy & des grands services qu'il a rendu à sa Maiesté en ses armées, Elle luy a accordé ses Lettres patentes au mois de Fevrier mil six cens soixante un, qui ont esté Registrées en la Cour des Aydes le quatorzième Juin mil six cens soixante deux: Et comme sa Maiesté par sa declaration du mois de Septembre mil six cens soixante quatre, auroit revoqué les Annoblis depuis l'année mil six cens trente quatre, Monsieur le Tellier, Conseiller du Roy en ses Conseils Secrétaire d'Estat & des Commandemens de sa Maiesté, auroit donné son Certificat audit Sieur du Hochet, le dix huitième Juin mil six cens soixante cinq, comme sa Maiesté luy avoit accordé la confirmation desdites Lettres de Noblesse du mois de Fevrier mil six cens soixante un, & luy auroit commandé de le comprendre au rolle des Nobles, nonobstant la rigueur de sa declaration du mois de Septembre mil six cens trente quatre.

I.

JEAN DE RICHELET, Escuyer Sieur du
Hochet, non marié.

Porte d'Armes à trois Barillets d'or, deux de vn.

GENEALOGIE
DE LA FAMILLE DE COLLET
ORIGINAIRE DE CHAMPAGNE,
Produite pardevant Vous Mgt. DECAVMARTIN, Intendant en Champagne, au mois de Decemb. 1667



I.
 **CONTRACT** de Mariage entre Eustache Collet, Escuyer, Sr. de la Havetiere, assisté de Jean Collet Escuyer, sieur de la Havetiere, & du Clos, & de Damoiselle Catherine de Fochers ses Pere & Mere, & Damoiselle Jeanne de Pauru, fille de Louis de Pauru, Escuyer, sieur dudit lieu, & de Damoiselle Jeanne de Marigny, passé pardevant Jacques Bertrand, Tabellion juré, à Ouarque le 12 Octobre 1504.

Acte de foy & hommage pour raison du fief du Clos, rendu pardevant François Dubois, Juge Chastelain de Monseigneur le Duc de Nevers, à cause de la Terre & Chastellenie d'Ouarque, en date du 5 Septembre 1509

II. **Contrat de Mariage** entre Jean Collet, Escuyer, sieur de la Havetiere, & du Clos, homme d'armes des Ordonnances du Roy, sous la charge de Monseigneur le Duc de Bouillon, assisté de Damoiselle Jeanne de Pauru, veuve de feu Eustache Collet, vivant Escuyer, sieur de la Havetiere, & du Clos en partie, ayant la garde-Noble dudit sieur Collet son fils, & Damoiselle Marguerite d'Houarincourt, fille de Nicolas d'Houarincourt Escuyer, sieur de Vucq, & de Damoiselle Françoise de Guy sa femme, passé pardevant Thomas Chavet, Notaire à Ouarque, le 13 May 1540.

Partage entre Jean Collet, Escuyer, sieur de la Havetiere, & du Clos, homme d'armes des Ordonnances du Roy, & Damoiselle Renée Collet sa sœur, des biens & successions de feu Eustache Collet, & Jeanne de Pauru, leur Pere & Mere, & de celle de feu Jacques Collet, vivant Escuyer, sieur du Clos en partie, leur Oncle, passé pardevant ledit Thomas Chavet, Tabellion à Ouarque, le 13. Juin 1548.

III. **Contrat de Mariage** entre Noel Collet, Escuyer sieur du Clos, l'un des Chevaux-legers de la Garde du Roy, fils de Jean Collet, Escuyer, Seigneur de la Havetiere, & de Damoiselle Marguerite d'Houarincourt, & Perrine Barbin, fille de Vincent Barbin, & de Jeanne Crespin, passé pardevant Thomas Gallée, Tabellion à Beyne, le 4. May 1593.

Contrat de vente fait par Jacques le Brun, Marchand demeurant à Beyne, à Noel Collet, Escuyer, sieur du Clos, l'un des Chevaux legers de la Garde du Roy, du lieu des Aubois, passé pardevant ledit Nicolas Gallée, Tabellion audit Beyne, le 12. Avril 1594.

IV. **Partage des biens & successions** de feu Noel Collet, Escuyer, sieur de la Havetiere, & du Clos, entre Vincent Collet, Escuyer, sieur de la Marre, Lieutenant pour le Roy en la ville de Donchery, Noel Collet, Escuyer, sieur de Morinville, & du Ru, Ayde des Camps & Armées de sa Majesté, & Pierre Collet, Escuyer, sieur de Long champ, Capitaine des Portes du Havre de Grace, & Gouverneur pour sa Majesté en la ville de Harfleur, passé pardevant Guillaume Linas, Tabellion juré au Baillage & Chastellenie de Beyne, le premier Decembre 1649.

I.
EUSTACHE COLLET, Escuyer, sieur de la Havetiere & du Clos, A épousé,
Damoiselle Jeanne de Pauru.

II.
JEAN Collet, Escuyer, sieur de la Havetiere, & du Clos, A épousé,
Damoiselle Marguerite d'Houarincourt.

III.
NOEL Collet, Escuyer, sieur de la Havetiere, & du Clos, A épousé,
Damoiselle Perrine Barbin.

IV.
VINCENT Collet, Esc. Sr. de la Marre, Lieutenant pour le Roy en la ville de Donchery.

IV.
NOEL Collet, Escuyer, Sieur de Morinville, & du Ru, Ayde des Camps, & Armées de sa Majesté.

IV.
PIERRE Collet, Escuyer, sieur de Long-champ, Capitaine des portes du Havre de Grace, & Gouverneur pour sa Majesté en la ville de Harfleur.

D'azur à la bande d'argent, chargée de trois Estoilles de gueule.

ORIGINAIRE DE CHAMPAGNE.

Produite par devant Vous Mg^r DECAVMARTIN, Intendant en Champagne, au mois de Septembre 1667

Porte d'azur à l'aigle esployé d'or, à deux Croix d'or aux costez, pour cimier
vn Aigle esployé issant d'or.

GENEALOGIE DE LA MAISON DE FRANCE.

EN CHAMPAGNE, ORIGINAIRE D'ARTOIS.

Produite Pardevant Vous Mgr. DE CAVMARTIN, Intendant en Champagne, au mois de Novembre. 1667.



NE Transféré en forme archiepiscopale, signé en son Copieuse & Bocheron, Notaires le 20. aux
à Esmes, le 12. Janvier 1543. entre Raulon de France, Esuyer sieur de la Motte, soy
portant fort de Messieurs le Reverendissime Cardinal de Lorraine, Evêque & Comte
de Chastellain, Pair de France, Abbé de S. Remy de Reims, d'une part, & les particuliers
de l'autre, d'autre part.

En Transport en parchemin fait pardevant Trouvé & Payen, Notaires Royaux le 21
May 1540. a Raulin de France, Eschevier Secrétaire de la Maistrie, par M^r. Jean Buriau, Prestre Chanoine de
Poissy.

Fus Mafieu du Roy Henry II. fignifié de fa main, & de Monsieur de Lambefpine Secrétaire d'Eftat, le 26. iuin 1556. addreffé à defcendans de Guifi, par laquelle il apporte que ledit fleur de France, qui en eut le premier, avoit esté defpendré en Efcosse, pour des affaires importantes, & qu'il aueroit marié l'effimee de la comtesse de son Roy.

1. *Vu Contrat de Mariage, en forme authentique, passé pardevant A. Argente, et le Procureur, notaires au Châtelet de Paris, le 22 Mars 1788, entre Jacques de La Tour, Esquyer, fils de la Tour, fils de feu Raimond de La Tour, veuve d'Esquyer, et de la Marthe, et Demoiselle Marguerite Beillard, ses Père et Mère, signés de la main de France, au fils Esquyer Jean de Tilly, son frère et cousin, et Demoiselle Marguerite Beillard, fille de feu Jean Jean Barrette, Maréchal des Logis de la Maison de Monseigneur le Cardinal de Lorraine Archevêque de Reims, et de Demoiselle Elisabeth de la Bretèche, ses Père et Mère d'une part, et Jacques de la Bretèche Esquyer, homme d'armes des Ordonnances du Roy, pour le charge de Monsieur de la Tour, et autres ses parents et amis.*

de Mars, & autres ses parents & amis.

Les prisonniers de Captivité de la Terre & Seigneurie de Crony, frères Charles & scellées, & sur le reply
indult, de 10. Jours 1566. que Monsieur le Cardinal de Lorraine avoit accordé à Jacques de France
Duc, Capitan de son Chastellan de Crony,

En 1564, après plusieurs années, Nicolas RYANNE, de Pifines, s'envoie en France, à Daniel et Joëlle, en date du 9. Jan 1564, par lequel Noble homme Simon Fleckenbach, laissi à titre d'échange, en recompense si des choses, convenables à L'esper de France Fleury, frere de la Tour, la Maison, Terre, &c. sui de Montberton ou Montberton, en des lequel Contract est un acte de ratification dudit échange, par Henriette May, femme laic Fleckenbach, tuteur par les meismes Nicolas, en date du 13. May 1566.

La s^{te} de sy & homonyme dedit p^{re} de Montebonon, signé en Charles, de France, & plus bas, par Mon-
sieur de sy & J^{re}id^e, donné à Monsieur le Cardinal de Lorraine, Abbé de Saint Remy de Reims, par
lettres de France Escriver, Sequenr dudit lora, le 10. Aoust 1566

III. F. Comarati de Marigny en forme authentique, signé en luy Saletet & Moret, le date du 10 Janvier 1773, passé pardevant Notaires Royaux au Bailliage de Fermandou, résidents à Tournay, entre Amours de France, Esfayer fleur de Alambert, demeurant à Crany fils de Noble comme Jacques de France, Esfayer fleur de la Tour, & de Mouscron, Capitaine du Château Fort de Sigeurville de Crany, & de défunte Damoiselle Marguerite Saletet fille, & de défunte Louise Lachapelle de France & de Philippe de France fleur de Tilly, & de Gilles de France fleur de Viefort & de Cransy & de Damoiselle Marguerite Labaret, fée de Noble Louis Pierre Adelphe Esfayer fils, & Gentilhomme de la Chambre du Roy.

En Contrain en bonne forme peſſi pardevant la Brayere & Bonde, Notaires Royaux
don il eſt ſigné & ſcellé, en date du 26. Fevrier 1593 qui contient un eſchange fait entre
Jacques de France Eſuyer, Capitaine de la Terre & Seigneurie de Crany d'une part, & Antoine
de France, Eſuyer ſon fils, Capitaine d'une Compagnie de Chevaliers legers demourant à Cour-
ville, d'autre part.

Le poeuvre en papier, des biens delaissez par Jacques de France, vivans Escuyer fieur de la Tour, par pourceurs le Maistre, au Joffice de Crany, le 15. Novembre 1595, entre Antoine de France, fieur de Montchevrein, Comte de la Tour, Capitaine d'une Compagnie de Chevaliers-Leprieux, demourant au Chasteau, Gilles Lejeune, aussi Escuyer, Lieutenant d'une Compagnie au Regement de Picardie, mayeur de la Ville de Paris, et Jacques de France, Comte de France, Escuyer, Capitaine d'une Compagnie de gens de pied au Regement de Champagne, les uns et les autres, de leur legue par le principal d'iceulx, et de Noblesse avoient este conservez audit Antoine de France, comme estant Gentilhomme.

Passé de fey & bannage du seigneur de Montbrun, donné à Monsieur l'Archevesque de Reims, Abbé (suzzeraineté), par personnel Administrateur de l'Abbaye S. Remy de Reims, le 6. N. vobles 1577. Etoyent avec Philippe de Rec, de Franche, & plus bas, de la Paisanterie, & se lie, par Avocat de France, & Escuyer fleur de Montbrun.
Pris pour la charge de Capitaine de la Pannerie de Monsieur de Guise, lors Abbé de S. Remy, accordés audit Antoine de France, & au vu de ses filz, le 27. Juin 1604. signés enfin Louis de Lorraine, & sur la des Michon. avec paraphe.

IV. *Vu Contrat de Mariage en papier, passé pardevant nous le Pour & Chastote, Notaires à Foy en Tardieuville, le 18. Juin 1601. entre Charles de France, Esfigeyr, Seigneur d'armes de la Compagnie de Monsieur de la Vieville, fils d'Antoine de France, Esfigeyr Sieur de Montebancon, & de la Tour, Mre. & Esfigeyr de Montaigne & Illustrissime Cardinal de Guise, Archevesque de Reims, Capitaine du Chastel de Crunay d'une part, & Genevieve Goussin, fille de M. Nicolas de France, Esfigeyr des Baucis & Forests de Foy en Tardieuville, & de Suzanne Dugues, fille Catherine de France, en presence de M. de France, Esfigeyr Sieur de la Montagne Sieur de France, amb. & de M. de France, Esfigeyr Sieur de la Montagne Sieur de France.*

L'acte Contract de Mariage en forme antebaptiste, passé pardevant Mercier, Notaire en la Prestre de Chebasse-Thierry, en presence de temoins, le 21. Aoust 1617 entre Charles de France, Esquyer fleur de Montebout, fils de deffunt Antoine de France, Esquyer fleur dudit Montebout, & de la Tour, Ade. d'Hotel de Monseigneur l'Archevesque de Reims, d'une part, & Vauisselle fleur d'Esnon, en presence d'Adam de France, Esquyer fleur de la Montagne demeurant a la Toummeisou, & Forien de France audit Esquyer demeurant a Brouillet, freres dudit Charles de France, & d'autres neveux de la Compagnie, audit notaire.

[illegible]

1.
RAVLIN de France Escuyer Seigneur de la Mothe. A épousé.
Damoiselle Marguerite Bouillard.
Dont il a eu Jacques de France, & Simon de France.

II.
IACQUES de France Escuyer Seigneur de la Tour. A épousé,
Damoiselle Marguerite Buireux.
Donc il a eu Antoine, Philippe de France, & Liegeon de France, mariée à Gilles Legé Escuyer.

III.
ANTOINE de France, Escuyer, Seigneur de Monbenton, & de la Tour.
A épousé,
Damoiselle Marguerite Iobart.
Dont il a eu Adam, Charles, Pierre, & Jean de France.

IV. ADAM de France, Escuyer, Seigneur de la Montagne, Lieutenant d'une Compagnie de Chevaux legers, premier fils dudit Antoine de France, & de Damoiselle Marguerite Iobart. A épousé,	IV. CHARLES de France, Escuyer, Seigneur de Montbenion, homme d'Armes des Ordonnances du Roy, second fils d'Antoine de France, & Damoiselle Marguerite Iobart. A épousé en premières Noces,
---	--

Damoiselle Jeanne de Vaux.
Dont il a eu Simon de France, Jacques de France
Escuyer, mort au service du Roy de Suede,
& Alexandre de France mort Capitaine au
Regiment de Pagny.

A epouse,
A epouse sa premiere Nopces,
Damoiselle Genevieve Cousin.
Dont il a eu Antoine de France, mort à Dijon,
Lieutenant au Regiment de Phalsbourg,
Charles, mort Enseigne au Regiment de
Nantueil. Et en secondes Nopces,

V.
SIMON de France, Escuyer, Seigneur de la Montagne, homme d'armes, de la Compagnie de Monsieur le Prince de Vaudemon,

Capitaine d'Infanterie au Regiment de Guise & maintenant Lieutenant de la Louveterie de France. A épouſé,
Damoiselle Annoinette Moreau.
Dont il a eu Touſſaint de France, mort au ſiege

de Trian étant Ensigne au Régiment de Van
becourt, en 1643. Alexandre mort en 1652,
à Bordeaux, Chevalier-léger en la Compagnie
de Monsieur de Baradas, Gabriel de France,
Capitaine au Régiment de Navarre, Louis
de France, Lieutenant dans le Régiment du
Plessis-Praslin, et Jacques de France, Page
de Monsieur le Marquis de Charost.

jeur de Calais Lieutenant Général aux
jeunes hommes de la province de
Picardie et du Comté de Montreuil

4. *Un Contrat de Mariage en papier, passé pardevant Poire, Notaire au Vron de Paris, en présence de témoins, le 8 Janvier 1633, entre Simon de France Escuyer, homme d'armes de la Compagnie de Montmorillon, le Baron de France Escuyer, demeurant à la Domesmaison, Esq. d'A. d'Am de France Escuyer, le Baron de France Escuyer, d'une part, et Dameselle Anne Martinet, fille de Me. Pierre Martinet, licencié à Loix, et Dameselle Françoise Martinet, en présence de Charles de France Escuyer, fleur de Montmorillon, et Jean de France, Escuyer frere de la Tante fr. Oncle paternel, Alexandre de France aussi Escuyer, Corriere de la Compagnie de Chevaux de la suite des Robes. Pierre d'Ant Simon,*

*Vu ordre de Monsieur le Marechal d'Estrée du 21. Mars 1651. aux habitants de Vely, d'o-
beir au sieur de France, es choses qui regarderoient le service du Roy pendant les derniers troubles*

Vne Commission de Capitaine d'Infanterie au Regiment de Guise, du 10. Octobre 1651. signée en son Louis, cy plus bas, le Tellier, cy scellée du grand sceau, que le Roy auroit accordée audit Simon de France frere de Brailles, en consideration de ses services.

Sept pieces en papier de différentes dates, depuis le 12. Janvier 1643. jusqu'au 12. Août 1644. qui sont Certificats d'Officier, cy Commandant, qui insistent qu'Alexandre de France frere dudit Simon, l'un des Prédicateurs, auroit mérité une Compagnie au Regiment d'Epagnay, cy que présentement Gabriel, cy Louis de France, ses enfans sont dans le service, l'un en qualité de Capitaine au Regiment de Navarre, l'autre de Lieutenant au Regiment du Fleissu Prasin.

IV. L'Employ de deux contrats de Mariage de Charles de France, Escuyer Seigneur de Montebon, cy dessus mentionné, en date des 28. Juin 1601. cy 21. Août 1627. par lesquels il appert que Charles de France, Escuyer Seigneur de Montebon estoit frere du Mariage d'Antoine de France, Escuyer frere dudit lieu, cy de Damoselle Marguerite Iobart, qu'il prenoit qualité d'Escuyer, cy estoit homme d'armes des Ordonnances du Roy.

Vne Sentence en parchemin du Baillie de Vermandois à Reims, en date du 9. Février 1652. rendue entre Damoselle Jacqueline Maillefer, cy Charles de France, Escuyer frere de Montebon.

Quatre Lettres imprimées des gens du Conseil de la Ville de Reims, de Messieurs de Brionne, cy de S. Sulpice, audit desfrant Charles de France, nommé Gentilhomme du Baillage de Reims, en date des 21. Juillet 1. cy 6. Août 1651. au sujet de la nomination d'un député de la Noblesse pour les Eftats.

V. Vne Sentence en papier, de la Justice de Crussy, du 19. Decembre 1640. signée en son Louis, rendue entre Charles de France, Escuyer Seigneur de Montebon d'une part, Michel, Alexandre cy Louis de France, enfans cy heritiers de defuncte Damoselle Marie Hufon leur mere, au sur de son dedit, femme d'Isidore Charles de France.

Vn partage des biens dudit Charles de France, Escuyer frere de Montebon, fait pardevant Notaire au Baillage de Vermandois résidant à Savigny, le 14. Novembre 1652. entre Michel de France, Escuyer frere de Montebon, Capitaine d'une Compagnie d'Infanterie au Regiment de Monsieur de Guise, Alexandre de France aussi Escuyer, cy Damoselle Louise de France, ses enfans.

Vn Contrat de Mariage en parchemin, passé pardevant Notaire Royal à Provilly, en présence de témoins, le dernier Mars 1653. signé en son Froideur, entre Alexandre de France, Escuyer Seigneur de Montebon, fils de defunct Charles de France, vivans aussi Escuyer Seigneur dudit Montebon, Capitaine d'une Compagnie d'Infanterie au Regiment dudit Seigneur de Guise, assisté de Simon, Gabriel cy Alexandre de France, Escuyers d'une part, cy Damoselle Suzanne d'Anglobermont, fille de defunct Louis d'Anglobermont, vivans aussi Escuyer Seigneur de Montebon cy de Damoselle Elisabeth de Lamoignon, ses pere cy mere, assisté d'Adam de Lamoignon Escuyer, frere de Suzanne, son Oncle, cy d'autres parents Gentilhommes.

Deux Commissions l'une d'une Compagnie d'Infanterie dans le Regiment dudit Seigneur de Guise, l'autre de Cavalier au Regiment de Brillac, avec les provisions de la charge de Major, cy commandant en l'absence du Gouverneur des Villes cy Chastels de Guise, en date des 22. Decembre 1646. 10. Juillet 1651. cy 14. Novembre 1650. accordées aux longz cy fideles services dudit Michel de France, Escuyer Seigneur de Montebon.

Vn Certificat dudit frere de Brillac, Gouverneur de Guise, Lieutenant général de Armées du Roy, en date du 20. Mars 1660. par lequel il appert que ledit Alexandre de France, auroit servi dans le Regiment dudit Seigneur de Guise, en qualité de Lieutenant depuis 1645. jusqu'à 1660. cy d'autre en toutes occasions des marais de son mariage, cy de sa conduite.

Vn autre Certificat de plusieurs particuliers & denoms du village de Crussy du 8. Mars 1667. par lequel ils certifient que defunct Antoine cy Charles de France, freres dudit Michel cy Alexandre de France, seroient morts dans le service en qualité, l'un de Lieutenant d'Infanterie au Regiment de Faldouin, l'autre d'Escuyer au Regiment de Montebon.

IV. Vn Contrat de Mariage en papier, passé pardevant Notaires en la Principauté de Juville le 12. Janvier 1645. entre Pierre de France Escuyer, Gouverneur pour Monsieur de Reims, Abbé de Crussy, au Chastel de Lardou, assisté de Nicolas de Fandeleur, Escuyer frere de l'ile son Oncle Procureur d'Antoine de France, Escuyer frere de Montebon, frere dudit Pierre de France, de Jean de France, aussi Escuyer frere de la Tour, son frere d'une part, cy Damoselle Marie de l'Isle, veuve de defunct Hubert de Frison, vivans aussi Escuyer, frere du Roy de la Tour de Chevillon, Lieutenant d'une Compagnie au Regiment de Piedmont, assisté de plusieurs Gentilhommes, d'autre part.

Vn denombrement en parchemin, de la Terre cy Seigneurie de Chesney, signé en son de France donné à Messieurs les Abbé cy Religieux de Montierender, par Pierre de France, Escuyer frere de Montebon cy du Chesney, le 7. Juillet 1625.

V. Vn partage des biens délaissés par Pierre de France vivans, Escuyer frere du Chesney, cy Damoselle Marie de l'Isle, fait pardevant Mariette cy Henry Notaires à Joinville le 24. Février 1651. entre Charles de France, Escuyer Seigneur du Chesney, cy Maréchal de Bataille d'Armées du Roy, Capitaine au Regiment de Vaubecourt, cy Damoselle Marie de l'Isle, Pierre cy Louis de France aussi Escuyers, Capitaines au mesme Regiment, cy autres leurs coheritiers & d'heres successeurs, dans lequel partage le préciput de Noblesse auroit esté conservé audit Charles de France, comme étant Gentilhomme.

L'original du Contrat de mariage passé pardevant le Clerc Notaire à Saint Dizier, en présence de Témoins le 4. Juin 1651. entre honnoré Seigneur Charles de France Escuyer frere du Chesney, Maréchal de Bataille d'Armées du Roy, fils de defunct honnoré Seigneur Pierre de France, vivans Escuyer Seigneur dudit lieu, cy Dame Marie de l'Isle ses pere cy mere, assisté d'honoré Seigneur Pierre cy Louis de France Escuyers, Capitaines au Regiment d'Alzace ses freres cy Damoselle Marguerite de Comitis fille d'honoré Seigneur Claude de Comitis Escuyer Seigneur de la Mothe, Hambois, cy de sainte Liviere, cy de Dame Antoinette de Haute les pere cy mere dont elle est assistée, cy d'autres parents Gentilhommes d'autre part.

Vn denombrement cy acte de foy cy hommage de la terre du Chesney, donné audit frere Abbé cy Religieux de Montierender le 29. Janvier 1652. par ledit Charles de France sous les qualitez, cy-dessus.

Vn Acte du Baillage de Choumont du 4. Janvier 1662. par lequel la tutelle cy garde Noble des enfans mineurs dudit Charles de France, Escuyer frere du Chesney, cy de Dame Marguerite de Comitis auroit esté dévolue audit Charles de France, par le suffrage de leurs parents Gentilhommes. Huit autres pieces aussi en papier, cy en parchemin de différentes dates de puis le 10. Janvier 1642. jusqu'au 10. Janvier 1650. qui sont Commissions de Capitaine d'Infanterie d'aide de camp, brevet de pension de 1000. livres par an, cy de Sergeant de bataille accordées par sa Majesté audit Charles de France, Escuyer frere du Chesney avec des lettres du Roy, cy de Monsieur de Thourne à luy adressées, qui insistent qu'il auroit acquis la reputation d'un homme de merite, estime de son Prince par des actions de courage & de fidélité, cy par les longs services qu'il luy avoit rendus en ses armées. Neuf pieces tant en papier qu'en parchemin de différentes dates, depuis le 7. May 1645. jusqu'au 10. May 1667. qui sont Lettres du Roy, Commissions de Capitaine d'Infanterie cy Cavalier de Maréchal des Logis des Chevaux legers de Monsieur le Dauphin, avec copie des provisions de la Charge de Lieutenant de Roy à Marsal, dont le Roy auroit voulu reconnaître les services que luy avoit rendu en ses Armées, ledit Pierre de France Escuyer Seigneur de l'Isle, pendant plus de trente années.

Dix-neuf pieces tant en papier qu'en parchemin depuis le 18. Juillet 1655. jusqu'au 12. Mars 1648. qui sont lettres du Roy, cy Commissions de Capitaine d'Infanterie dans le Regiment de Vaubecourt que defunct Joseph cy Bertrand de France, frere dudit Charles de France, auroient mérité par les Services qu'ils auroient rendu au Roy en ses Armées, où ils auroient finy leur vie en combattant pour son service.

IV. PIERRE de France, Escuyer, Seigneur du Chesney, Gouverneur de Lourdou, troisième fils d'Antoine de France, Escuyer, cy Damoselle Marguerite Iobart. A épousé.

Damoselle Marie de l'Isle. Dont il a eu Charles, cy Joseph, mort au Siège de Roze, Capitaine dans le Regiment de Vaubecourt; Charles Mathias mort Enferme dans le mesme Regiment, au siège de Corbie; Bertrand mort Capitaine dans le mesme Regiment, au camp de d'Arles en Flandres; Pierre de France: Louis, Magdalaine de France, mariée à Henry Anne Pot, Chevalier Seigneur Baron d'Aubigny.

V. CHARLES de France, Escuyer Seigneur du Chesney, Capitaine d'Infanterie & Maréchal de Bataille, A épousé Damoselle Marguerite de Comitis. Dont il a Claude âgé de 14. ans: Joseph François âgé de 13. ans: Armand Jean âgé de 10. ans, & Marie Anne âgée de 9. ans. PIERRE de France, Escuyer, Seigneur de l'Isle, cy devant Capitaine d'Infanterie, & de Chevaux Legers, & Maréchal des Logis de la Compagnie de Monsieur le Dauphin, & maintenant Lieutenant de Roy de Marsal, Prédicateur.

LOUIS de France, Lieutenant dans le Regiment de Cavalier de P. Illoy, prouffant.

IV. JEAN de France, Escuyer Seigneur de la Tour, homme d'armes de la Compagnie Monsieur le Duc de Guise, quatrieme d'Antoine de France Escuyer, cy de Damoselle Marguerite Iobart. A épousé.

Damoselle Louise Burrette. Dont il a Antoine, Oudart tui d'ore Canon au Siège de Mardik, Page de Monsieur le Duc de Lorraine: Alas de France, Abbé de Saint Reuve de l'Isle Dien.

V. ANTOINE de France, Escuyer, frere de la Tour, & de Montier, Maréchal Camp, Gouverneur de Ribemont, frere de la grande Escurie du Roy, & Gentilhomme de la Chambre. A épousé.

Damoselle Elisabeth Philipeaux. Dont il a Joseph Louis, âgé de seize ans une fille.

Porte falcet d'argent & d'azur, chargés fleurs de lis, de gueule, trois, deux, & un, sur devise, *Rede cramoisi.*

IV. Vn Contrat de mariage en bonne forme passé pardevant Notaire en la Prévôté de Chastel-Thierry, en présence de témoins le 2. Novembre 1618. entre Jean de France, Escuyer Seigneur de la Tour, homme d'armes de la compagnie de Monsieur de Guise, Commandant Chastel de Crussy, fils de defunct Antoine de France Escuyer Seigneur de Montebon, & de la Tour, cy de Damoselle Marguerite Iobart, cy Damoselle Louise Burrette fille de l'Isle Noble homme: Philippe Burrette licentia en loix, cy de Marie Varel ses pere cy mere, en présence d'Adam de France Escuyer frere de la Montagne, Charles de France Escuyer Seigneur Montebon, Pierre de France Escuyer frere du Chesney, Gouverneur de Lourdou son frere, Estienne Burrette Escuyer homme d'armes des Ordonnances du Roy, frere cy tuteur de ledit Damoselle Burrette.

Vn Contrat en forme authentique passé pardevant L'Esloffe: Notaire Royal à Savigny en présence de témoins le 11. Novembre 1622. signé en son Brisset cy Baillet, qui constatent un condition faire au profit de Damoselle Louise Burrette, femme de Noble homme Jean de France, Escuyer frere de la Tour.

Deux Contrats en parchemin, signés en son le Contrer, en date des 12. Janvier 1625 & 19. Avril 1627. l'un d'acquisition, l'autre d'échange, dans lesquels ledit Jean de France frere de la Tour, auroit pris qualité d'Escuyer.

Vn Certificat de Monsieur le Comte de Saiffon, Gouverneur de Champagne, en date du 15. Octobre 1635. par lequel il atteste que le frere de la Tour de la Province de Champagne, s'est rendu à Chalons, avec armes, cy équipages de guerre, cy auroit servi plusieurs années commandement dudit Seigneur.

Vn acte du Baillage de Vermandois à Reims, en date du 4. Août 1642. qui insistent qu'Jean de France, Escuyer frere de la Tour, auroit esté excusé de se trouver à l'armement, cy avoir esté mandé comme Gentilhomme, au suite d'une sieste contrainte, dont il eust été tenu.

V. Vn Acte du Baillage de Vermandois à Reims, en date du 7. Avril 1657. signé en son Bazin, par lequel la corvée de Damoselle Marie de France, fille de defunct Jean de France, Escuyer frere de la Tour, cy de Damoselle Louise Burrette auroit esté dévolue à Antoine de France, Escuyer frere de la Tour, par les suffrages d'Antoine de France Escuyer frere dudit Gouverneur de Remy, cy Antoine, Maréchal de Bataille, Capitaine d'une Compagnie d'Infanterie aussi frere de ledit Damoselle, Jean Colbert frere de Terrou, Messire Charles Colbert premier Président audit Baillage, cy autres Gentils-hommes ses parents denoms audit Acte.

Vn Contrat de Mariage en forme authentique, passé pardevant Godard, cy Lamoignon au Chastel de Paris, le 6. Octobre 1665. entre Antoine de France, Escuyer, frere de la Tour, Maréchal de Camp & Armées du Roy, Gouverneur des Villes cy Chastels de Ribemont, Escuyer de la grande Escurie d'une part, cy Damoselle Elisabeth Philipeaux, fille de l'Isle ses Consuls, cy de Dame Marie le Frere, en présence de Mademoiselle de Montmorin, la Comtesse de Harcourt, Colbert, Intendant des Finances, Passerat, Colbert Cagnone des Gardes, Desfontaines, de Terrou, de Villars, Louis de France, Escuyer, frere de la Tour, l'abbé de l'Isle, Escuyer, Baillie de S. Germain, cy autres personnes de la premiere qualité.

Dix-neuf pieces de différentes dates, tant en papier qu'en parchemin, depuis le 15. Février 1650. jusqu'au 18. Janvier 1662. qui sont lettres du Roy, Certificats, cy copies de Capains Commandants, cy Generaux, Commissions d'aide de Camp, de Sergeant de bataille, Maréchal de Camp, Capitaine au Regiment de Guise, provisions de Gentilhomme de la Chambre, d'Escoeur de la grande Escurie, cy de Gouverneur de Ribemont, dont le Roy auroit voulu reconnaître le bien, la conduite cy la fidélité dudit Antoine de France, Escuyer, frere de la Tour, pour avoir donné des marques en toutes occasions, ou il auroit esté employé pendant tout ce temps.

Vn Jugement souverain, en date du 20. May 1642. rendu de Messieurs les Commissions de Paris par sa Majesté pour l'exécution de l'Edit du mois de Novembre 1640. signé en son, de Grumouville, cy d'Orgeray, par lequel Charles cy Jean de France, Escuyers, freres de Montebon, freres dudit Antoine de France, auroient esté maintenus au droit cy privilège leur Noblesse, sur la plus part des pieces mentionnées cy-dessus.

Vn Certificat de Monsieur le Tellier, Secrétaire d'Etat, en date du 4. Avril 1661. par lequel il atteste que les freres de France, de Montebon, de l'Isle, du Chesney, Brailles, assistés de Fossigny, cy de Rugny, sont employés pour le service de sa Majesté dans les charges cy emplois qui leur sont cy devant données.

Vn Certificat du frere Comte de Vaubecourt, en date du 20. Juin 1667. par lequel il atteste que les freres Charles de France, Joseph, Bertrand, Pierre, Antoine, le frere de Jean de la Grot, Longy de France, Charles, Mathias, Toussaint, cy Jean de France, denoms cy-dessus ont en les emplois à eux attribués, dans lesquels ils se font conduire en guerres de l'Isle, que ledits Joseph, Bertrand, le Gros, Charles, Mathias, Toussaint cy Jean de France, seroient morts en combattant pour le service du Roy en ses Armées.

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