

## Family, self-expression and defense of the faith

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It can often prove instructive to consider diverse historiographical approaches to similar topics, material, or themes. National historiographies, too, can look somewhat different just by asking new questions or addressing neglected issues. Sometimes this is a matter of subject area; at a conference dedicated to taking a comparative approach to the French Wars of Religion and the Dutch Revolt, for instance, it soon emerged just how differently historians of the French, Dutch and German Reformations might view what, to them, were the most topical themes and apt approaches.[1] Sometimes it is a matter of linguistic or cultural difference, as is the focus in this collection and its counterpart in *Histoire, économie, et société*, with a consideration of Francophone and Anglophone approaches to research on early modern France. In that earlier volume, Michael Breen provided an insightful historical overview of Franco-American scholarly relations over the course of the twentieth century to the present.[2] Even within the Anglophone world there can be subtle differences in emphasis between British, North American and, indeed, Australasian scholarship, although convergence is more often characteristic.[3] It is fair to say, as suited to the far more globalized world in which we now interact, that nowadays the various historiographical traditions nurture collaboration, allowing for permeation and overlap on a scale that has not always been the case. Yet it is also evident that there is much that we can still learn from one another, and, in this light, it is interesting to reflect on the content, contribution, and approach of these five carefully-researched essays by rising stars in the French academic firmament.[4] Furthermore, in doing so, we are able to use the same tools of linguistic and cultural interpretation that the historian's *métier* employs when in engagement and dialogue with the past. Such an approach to primary sources is exemplified by the contributions here, with their sometimes-acknowledged, sometimes-unwitting debt to the trends of earlier scholarship.

As part of a dedicated forum in *French Historical Studies* (henceforth *FHS*), the essays are somewhat shorter than a standard article and, therefore, represent a tantalizing taster of more fully developed research projects to come. Three of them are concerned with that most fundamental of economic, social, and emotional building blocks of early modern or, indeed, any society: the family. In particular, they focus on issues of inheritance and heredity, the importance of marriage and associated relationships, especially between the sexes and, in particular, with mothers and wives. Without referring to it directly, they build on a longstanding tradition in Francophone scholarship, including the classic works by Flandrin, Ariès and Le Roy Ladurie among others, which first established our understanding of the organization of, and affective relationships within, premodern families.[5] Many of these works formed part of an *Annaliste* strain that focused on demography, household structure, and *mentalités*. The echoes of these concerns are still present here, but reformulated and nuanced in accordance with later trends and building on more recent studies on kinship or *parenté*, as detailed in the footnotes. They are preoccupied with the attitudes and responses of their subjects to the everyday familial realities that confronted them and what these can tell us about their engagement with other family members, wider society and, above all, with themselves. As such, they stand as correctives to more generalized approaches.

First, Isabelle Luciani analyses for us a familiar and peculiar early modern source, the *livres de raison*. Surviving in manuscript and reproduced in print in locally-based historical journals, these accounts have long served as important insights into the daily lives, concerns, and preoccupations of early modern people, particularly in the urban context. Historians have often used them to acquire a grasp on local issues as seen through the eyes of those who experienced them, as well as how national events were interpreted from afar. It is rare, however, for them to be collectively considered and meticulously dissected in the way that Luciani does here. Her study contributes to what is, as her footnotes clearly attest, a burgeoning field devoted to the examination of private papers (or so-called “ego documents,” p. 529). Primarily, she addresses the *livre de raison* not only as a means by which the historian can engage with individuals in the past, but also as a vehicle for an author’s self-exploration. Her analysis is based on the examination of an impressive eighty-seven examples surviving from Provence alone, thirty-eight by women (although not much consideration is given to this striking fact), mainly written in the seventeenth century. At a time of increasing literacy, these accounts are able to reflect the thoughts and concerns of those further down the social scale than were often recorded hitherto. Luciani highlights the dynastic continuity of many of the *livres*, which were passed down through the generations, as well as the prioritizing of financial accounts alongside the usual familial episodes of baptisms and marriages. Above all, though, she is interested in what such sources reveal about their authors, reflecting a degree of self-ordering and self-reflection, of self-governing and self-awareness (and, no doubt, to some extent of self-fashioning). She demonstrates that these are central but often overlooked facets of the *livres*, which function more like journals or account books than diaries but at the same time allow for self-narration and the development of the writer as an autonomous agent. Thus, Luciani shifts the focus from the *livres’* contents to the choices made of what to include, whether consciously or unconsciously, by their keepers. She succeeds in showing what a vital resource they are for exploring the private and the personal and how the very process of writing allowed for an unprecedented opportunity for self-expression. Her close scrutiny of the texts is enhanced and brought to life by reproductions of selected pages from the original manuscripts.

By contrast, while also concerned with the self, Claire Chatelain reflects on the family from the perspective of a single individual, the seventeenth-century author and playwright Tristan L’Hermite, through the medium of some of his principal works. Recognizing rather than eschewing the contributions of demography and prosopography, the anthropology of family structures and relationships, and the role of the “Family-State compact,” she emphasizes the need for historians to gain access to the reality of the constraints imposed upon families and how they dealt with such pressures. She demonstrates one way in which this can be done through a peculiar type of source: the literary testimony of an autobiographical novel and two plays. Through Chatelain’s close reading of these texts, supplemented by notarial documents, she reconstructs the unmarried Tristan’s complex relations with his parents, the impact of marital alliances on his family, and the role of financial concerns and legal conflicts in deciding the fate of its members. Thus, no less than through the *livres de raison*, we are able to better understand the challenges, and sometimes disappointments, of early modern individuals faced by the social and personal hand dealt to them. Again, this approach draws on a long-established emphasis in French historiography on the rise of the individual and sense of self, stretching well back into the Middle Ages and given renewed emphasis in the early modern period, to which Luciani’s essay also speaks.[6] Yet it is the relationship of the individual to their context with which Chatelain concludes, referring to the “social and political consequences” of the familial experience (p. 565). Thus, she broadens our

perspective from the particularities of Tristan's situation to the "communal dimension" of his relationships with others and, in turn, its expression through his literary output.

Continuing this theme of the family's shaping of the individual experience, Elie Haddad fully embraces an anthropological approach in his analysis of the activities and strategies of the members of the noble house of Vassé in their local stronghold of Maine as well as at court. The study of noble families and noble culture, enabled by the excellent survival of relevant sources including family papers, has a virtually uninterrupted and distinguished pedigree in both Francophone and Anglophone historiography.[7] The social, economic and cultural aspects of noble existence have all been subject to extensive scrutiny, including the importance of the role of kinship, which forms much of Haddad's focus. Clearly central, too, is the prosopographical approach long championed by Robert Descimon, whose influence is evident and freely acknowledged here (as it is also, to a lesser extent, in Chatelain's essay). Haddad's primary aim is to establish the continuing importance of women to kinship and heredity within noble families in the eighteenth century, despite the increasing emphasis on the patriline in the seventeenth. This dominant patrilineal ideology was reflected in naming and other practices, but Haddad argues that this conceals that "lived kinship practice" was essentially cognatic (p. 581). He asserts that historians have to decouple their perceptions from the distraction of genealogical practice. He points, in particular, to the developing solidarities with other families, reflected in both the choice of sites of residence and financial dealings. We see, in echoes from Luciani and Chatelain's essays, the fundamental importance of marriage alliances, social conditions, and practices in determining family strategies and fortunes. For Haddad, key here is the transmission of property by women, but not simply as a regression to a former, or continuation of an existing, practice. In a carefully nuanced final section, he concludes that this reflected changing responses by the noble families themselves, emphasizing the importance of blood over goods through the alliances and forms of exchange established "with other families engaged in a similar process" (p. 590). It would be interesting to know what role, if any, Haddad sees for the "Family-State Compact" in relation to these changes and whether the state's position was affected by them.[8]

In the late sixteenth century, the state had far more to be concerned about than the changing nature of familial relationships. The final two essays in the forum focus on the French religious wars which, for this reader at least, is more familiar territory. Hugues Daussy has done more than anyone in recent years to add depth and nuance to our understanding of the Huguenot cause, demonstrating that other more general studies of the movement have barely skimmed the surface of its many contours.[9] His latest contribution is a detailed examination of the financing of the Huguenot war effort during the early years of the conflict. Recognizing what a challenge this is, in terms of the disparate sources available, is reinforced by considering James' Wood's study of the royal army, which covered a similar period and equally found that funding was key, and Mark Greengrass's formative essay encompassing the whole of the wars.[10] Daussy distinguishes seven principal sources of revenue: voluntary contributions from Protestant communities; the seizure of Catholic wealth; loans; taxes; confiscation; ransoming; and requests for funding from abroad. Much of this involved the diverting of existing royal and other official revenues, met much resistance, and could be curtailed by events. Daussy asserts that, despite its more systematic collection by the political assemblies after the renewed outbreak of war in 1567 (not to mention the substantial profits from naval raids), the resulting income was insufficient for the Huguenot movement's needs. As a result, it ended up incurring huge foreign debts, mainly from the Protestant princes of the Empire. Based on local studies, as well as a diverse range of manuscript sources, Daussy's detailed reconstruction of Huguenot income and expenditure is impressive. It is

tempting to wonder how much more there might be to discover in the provincial archives to more fully round out this picture and to take it beyond 1570. What is clear is that “economic realities severely limited Huguenot power,” whatever the ideological commitment to the cause (p. 609). Thus, Daussy’s study contributes further to the well-established historiographical trend which has demonstrated that practical considerations during the wars were a decisive factor in determining their course and prolongation, as well as the relative balance between the faiths.[11]

Thierry Amalou turns our attention from the Huguenot war effort to some of its most virulent opponents, the Catholic preachers of Paris. Situating them in relation to the recent historiography of Catholic militancy during the wars, which has been extensively examined, he focuses on the role of prophetism, which took on a renewed significance with the advent of confessional conflict. His subjects are eight high-profile figures, including notorious firebrands such as Simon Vigor and controversial thinkers such as René Benoist, who were all invited to preach at Notre Dame during Lent between 1559 and 1568. While pointing out the contrasts in their approach to preaching, Amalou explores the preachers’ universal preoccupation with opposing peace with the Huguenots and, therefore, challenging royal authority, sometimes involving direct confrontation with the crown. They did this through their heavily politicized sermons, developing a right of resistance in the University of Paris in the 1560s. This approach culminated in the 1588 Edict of Union between the Catholic League and the monarch, which succeeded, finally, in abolishing the peace edicts and achieving the preachers’ aim. But Amalou is keen to point out that this political stance was heavily imbued with biblical imagery and that these figures consistently presented and justified their actions (including the Edict) in these prophetic terms, thereby expressing “a particular theocratic ideal” (p. 631). There is much here that is consistent with and consciously builds upon the work of Denis Crouzet and Benoist Pierre, among others, but the particular emphasis on the preachers’ identification with prophetism is original and persuasive in its approach. Returning to an earlier theme, it was key to their self-awareness and self-governance and to their collective self-expression through preaching. Here, then, religion continues to play an inspirational role beyond the simple allocation of individuals to either side of the confessional divide.

It is impossible in a short review essay to do justice to the richness of these articles, in particular to the detailed archival and analytical work that they contain. As we have seen, they form two distinct areas of interest and diverge in their approaches to them, as well as the types of sources they examine, though there are clear points of convergence and consistency within the two clusters themselves. These contributions are able, inevitably, to reflect only a small amount of the important work being done by younger French scholars, and their coverage is necessarily limited.[12] How, then, might we see them in relation to the present preoccupations of Anglophone historians of early modern France? All three essays on aspects of the family explore issues concerning gender, but do not give these as much prominence as might be expected by an Anglophone audience. Nor do any of the essays have a global dimension which, as a journal editor, I am well aware dominates much of recent Anglophone historiography. Indeed, they mostly reinforce the continuing strength of French provincial studies and a careful focus on specific sorts of sources. The history of the emotions is also very much in vogue in the Anglophone world, although such an approach has been arguably long-established in other senses in the Francophone tradition of the study of *mentalités*. Preoccupation with the self certainly tends this way, as do the more fraught aspects of familial relationships. Studies of the religious wars have long promoted a fruitful dialogue between Anglophone and Francophone scholarship, as can be seen in the continuing mileage

in discussions of the role of religious violence, as well as the recent focus on royal peace-making.[13] Such collaboration and exchange could be more prominently reflected in all the essays, but their very inclusion in this forum indicates their authors' active willingness to engage in the wider and more inclusive debates with scholars world-wide which the H-France platform provides.

#### Notes

[1] As explored in Nicolette Mout, "Reformation, Revolt and Civil Wars: the Historiographic Traditions of France and the Netherlands," in Philip Benedict, Guido Marnef, Henk van Nierop and Marc Venard, eds., *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands, 1555-1585* (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1999), pp. 23-34.

[2] Michael P. Breen, "Vu d'Amérique: les historien(ne)s et l'histoire de la France moderne en Amérique du nord," *Histoire, économie, et société* 30, no. 2 (2011): 3-13.

[3] The most notable points of Anglophone convergence are the emphasis on gender history and, more recently, global history and the history of the emotions, as discussed in the conclusion.

[4] On the need for more engagement, see the review essay by François-Joseph Ruggiu of Leslie Tuttle, *Conceiving the Old Regime: Pronatalism and the Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), in *H-France Forum*, vol. 6 (Spring 2011), no. 2: 30-33, accessed October 17, 2015, <http://www.h-france.net/forum/h-franceforumvol6.html>.

[5] Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Familles, parenté, maison, sexualité dans l'ancienne société* (Paris: Hachette, 1976) (translated as *Families in Former Times*); Philippe Ariès, *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Éditions Plon, 1960) (translated as *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*); Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, "Système de la coutume. Structures familiales et coutumes d'héritage en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Annales: E.S.C.* 27 (1972): 825-846 (later published as "Family Structures and Inheritance Customs in Sixteenth-Century France," in Jack Goody, Joan Thirsk and E.P. Thompson eds., *Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe, 1200-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976)). See also André Burguière, Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, Martine Segalen, and Françoise Zonabend, eds., *Histoire de la famille* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1986).

[6] It is perhaps unsurprising that French scholarship situated the rise of the individual in the Paris-based twelfth-century Renaissance rather than in fifteenth-century Italy; it was a stance both widely embraced and debated by medievalists. Georges Duby was the most prolific and influential of the Francophone scholars studying twelfth-century *mentalités*.

[7] Among the huge number of studies that could be cited here, to name just a few of the more recent: Ariane Boltanski, *Les Ducs de Nevers et l'état royal. Genèse d'un compromis (ca 1550-ca 1600)* (Geneva: Droz, 2006); Jonathan Spangler, *The Society of Princes: the Lorraine-Guise and the Conservation of Power and Wealth in Seventeenth-Century France* (Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2009); Brian Sandberg, *Warrior Pursuits: Noble Culture and Civil Conflict in Early Modern France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Jérôme Loiseau, "Elle fera ce que voudra". *La noblesse aux états de Bourgogne et la monarchie*

*d'Henri IV à Louis XIV (1602-1715)* (Besançon: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2014).

[8] Sarah Hanley, “Engendering the State: Family Formation and State Building in Early Modern France,” *French Historical Studies* 16:1 (Spring 1989): 4-27.

[9] See in particular, Hugues Daussy, *Le Parti Huguenot. Chronique d'une désillusion (1557-1572)* (Geneva: Droz, 2014).

[10] 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); Mark Greengrass, “Financing the Cause: Protestant Mobilization and Accountability in France (1562-1598),” in Benedict et al. eds., *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War*, pp. 233-54.

[11] On this theme, among many others, see Wood, *The King's Army*, and the works on peace-making in footnote 13 below.

[12] Among the most obvious trends in Francophone scholarship on the early modern period has been the focus on high political culture (as opposed to high politics), including the studies by Fanny Cosandey, *La Reine de France. Symbole et pouvoir, XVe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000) ; Nicolas Le Roux, *La Faveur du roi. Mignons et courtisans au temps des derniers Valois (vers 1547-vers 1589)* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 2001) ; and Xavier Le Person, “Pratiques” et “practiqueurs”. *La vie politique à la fin du règne de Henri III (1584-1589)* (Geneva: Droz, 2002). On institutions, including the parlements, see Sylvie Daubresse, *Le Parlement de Paris ou la voix de la raison (1559-1589)* (Geneva: Droz, 2005) ; and Grégory Champeaud, *Le Parlement de Bordeaux et les paix de religion (1563-1600)* (Nérac: Éditions d'Albret, 2008). By contrast, a panel at the July 2015 conference of the U.K. Society for the Study of French History, “France and the Wider World, c.1700-1860,” showcased young French scholars now working on global topics: accessed October 17, 2015, <http://cfhc.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/files/2015/03/2015-SSFH-Conf-programme.pdf>.

[13] On violence: Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Past and Present* 59 (1973): 51-91 (also in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1975), chap. 6); Denis Crouzet, *Les Guerriers de Dieu: la violence au temps des troubles de religion (vers 1525-vers 1610)*, 2 vols., Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1990); Graeme Murdock, Penny Roberts and Andrew Spicer eds., *Ritual and Violence: Natalie Zemon Davis and Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). On peace-making: Jérémie Foa, *Le tombeau de la paix. Une histoire des édits de pacification (1560-1572)* (Limoges: Presses Universitaires de Limoges, 2015); Penny Roberts, *Peace and Authority during the French Religious Wars, c. 1560-1600* (Basingstoke, UK : Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Mark Greengrass, *Governing Passions: Peace and Reform in the French Kingdom (1576-1585)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); and Michel De Waele, *Réconcilier les Français: la fin des guerres de religion 1589-1598* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2010).

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