

# *Social Status and the Politics of Printers in Eighteenth-Century Bordeaux*

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*This article examines the social position of printers in Bordeaux in the second half of the eighteenth century. Printers' wealth, property and family connections are studied. The argument is that commercial, administrative and demographic expansion, coupled with the reduction in the number of printing licenses, were all behind an improvement in the economic and social position of printers. This permitted printers' children and relatives to enter the elite in Bordeaux. The relatively high social status and local connections provided Bordeaux printers with a considerable degree of immunity from Crown censorship.*

*Le présent article traite du statut social des imprimeurs de Bordeaux dans la seconde moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, notamment de leur richesse, de leurs possessions et de leurs relations familiales. Selon l'auteure, l'extension commerciale et le développement démographique, jumelés à la réduction du nombre des licences d'imprimerie, ont contribué à l'amélioration de la situation économique et sociale des imprimeurs et permis à leurs enfants comme aux membres de leur famille de se joindre à l'élite bordelaise. Grâce à leur rang social relativement élevé et à leurs relations au sein de la société locale, les imprimeurs de Bordeaux ont pu, dans une très large mesure, échapper à la censure royale.*

Censorship in its many forms has long been recognized as an important consideration for the study of books, printing and publishing in eighteenth-century France. By implementing a comprehensive system of controls on what was printed, the Crown exerted influence over ecclesiastical and local authorities as censors of French reading. Down to the end of the *Ancien Régime*, it attempted to shape public opinion by controlling writers, printers and booksellers.<sup>1</sup> Historians generally agree that these efforts failed and that by 1789, the Crown's inadequate grip on French public opinion helped prepare its downfall.<sup>2</sup> They disagree, however, on the role of social and political factors in this development. The Crown's censorship policies and mechanisms merit

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1. For the most recent account, see Daniel Roche, "Censorship and the Publishing Industry" in Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche, eds., *Revolution in Print* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 3-26.

2. William Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution*, 2nd. edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); J.F. Boshier, *The French Revolution* (New York and London: Norton, 1988).

study in this context. Specifically of interest is the relationship between the Crown and about three hundred licensed printers throughout France during the pre-Revolutionary decades. In addition to trying to control books imported from abroad, Crown officials tried to regulate domestic printers in Paris and in the provinces. Social as well as political factors explain why they were not successful in this endeavor.

That there were many different types of printers and booksellers in eighteenth-century France has been brought to light by recent research. The wealthy early press baron, Charles Joseph Panckoucke, is the best known to students of the French Enlightenment, but perhaps more typical of the era was the more cautious and well connected publisher of royal almanacs, André-François Le Breton. Another type of printer, found in all major cities, was the King's printer. Holders of these positions printed legal documents and copies of legislation in large quantities and played a role in the extension of the state's powers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Yet another kind of printer specialized in devotional literature or school texts. A further type worked on foreign soil, usually Switzerland or the Netherlands, where a freer climate permitted the printing of riskier works such as those by the more famous *philosophes*. The list of printers would not be complete without the clearly illegal clandestine printers who printed Protestant, Jesuit or pornographic works, and about whom historians get their information from police records. The men and women who inhabited the printing world of eighteenth-century France were often rather colourful. In an age when few advocated freedom of the press and when the number of printers' positions in France was severely limited, the lives of printers tended to be fraught with difficulties.<sup>3</sup>

Study of printers as professional groups gives rise to two themes in French social history. The first is that provincial printing communities often suffered from the nefarious effects of the extension of the powers of the central state. Sometimes, licensing regulations were responsible for the difficulties. On other occasions, state monopolies were the problem and in yet other

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3. Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 1979); Suzanne Tucoo-Chala, *Charles-Joseph Panckoucke et la librairie française, 1736-1798* (Pau and Paris: Marrimpouey Jeune & Jean Tuzot, 1977); M.A. Merland and Jehanne Reyniers, "La fortune d'André-François Le Breton, libraire et imprimeur de l'*Encyclopédie*", *Revue française d'histoire du livre*, no. 22 (1979), pp. 61-90; Roger Chartier, "L'imprimerie en France à la fin de l'Ancien Régime : l'état général des imprimeurs de 1777", *Revue française d'histoire du livre*, no. 6 (1973), pp. 253-279; Jane McLeod, "A Social Study of Printers and Booksellers in Bordeaux, 1745-1810" (Ph.D. dissertation, York University, 1987).

instances, it was increases in policing that harmed the printing communities.<sup>4</sup> The second theme is that printers, especially in Paris, were haughty, self-absorbed defenders of their privileges. They were ready to fight to maintain their grip on the monopolies and copyrights which made them wealthy. Crown officials attempted to reform this inequitable system in 1777, but Parisian publishers were still resisting such reforms on the eve of the Revolution.<sup>5</sup> Thus, while some printers put themselves at risk in the name of political or religious conviction, many others were self-serving defenders of the *status quo*.

With few exceptions, printers, or groups of printers, were in similar circumstances in relation to official authority. Undoubtedly, any profession comprising about three hundred individuals in the last years of the *Ancien Régime* included a wide range of types. But the restrictions on those lawfully engaged in the printing profession severely limited this range in the eighteenth century. Since Colbert's time, the number of printers' positions was legally fixed and this number was reduced in the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI. No longer did local guilds accept replacements when a vacancy arose; instead, a competition handled by the Chancellor's office in Paris was opened to decide upon the successors. Preference was given to members of the printer's family, but only one son could take the position. Most printers were consequently born into the profession and the vast majority of printers were sons or sons-in-law of printers. Families treated printer positions as minor offices which they owned. The profession was so difficult to enter and the number of positions so limited that it required very special influence and power.

How did royal controls affect provincial printing communities, specifically the relationship between printers and urban elites in the provincial capitals of eighteenth-century France? Some years ago, Jean Quénart gave an account of the suffering of Rouennais printers at the hands of the absolutist state. But in doing so, he also noted the improvement in the fortunes of the printers who survived draconian measures intended to reduce the size of the profession in the early years of the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Did other printing

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4. For some accounts of the difficulties suffered by provincial printing communities, see Jean Quénart, *L'imprimerie et la librairie à Rouen au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1969); Madeleine Ventre, *L'imprimerie et la librairie en Languedoc au dernier siècle de l'Ancien Régime* (Paris and La Haye: Mouton, 1958); Raymond Birn, "The Profits of Ideas: Privileges en librairie in Eighteenth-Century France", *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. IV, no. 2 (1971), pp. 131-168. A study that revealed skillful adaptation to royal restrictions is Roger Chartier, "Livres et espace : circuits commerciaux et géographie culturelle de la librairie lyonnaise au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Revue française d'histoire du livre*, no. 1-2 (1971), pp. 77-108. On privileged Parisian printers, see also Robert Darnton, "Reading, Writing and Publishing in Eighteenth-Century France: a case study in the sociology of literature", *Daedalus*, Vol. C (1971), pp. 214-246.

5. Birn, "The Profits of Ideas"; Robert Darnton, "The High Enlightenment and the Low Life of Literature in Pre-Revolutionary France", *Past and Present*, no. 51 (1971), pp. 81-115.

6. Quénart, *L'imprimerie*.

communities have the same experience? The work of Robert Darnton has certainly shown how close the relations were between Crown officials and Parisian printers and booksellers.<sup>7</sup> When one leaves Paris, however, and looks at provincial capitals and other urban centres, there is more to be said about this subject. Furthermore, it is a more complex subject than Darnton's work on Paris suggests because printing communities had not only to deal with representatives of the Crown, but also with those of the city governments and *parlements* as well.<sup>8</sup>

The Printers and Booksellers' Guild in Bordeaux, on many occasions, presented legal briefs in connection with various petitions and legal suits that involved them during the eighteenth century. These mentioned the members' superiority to other artisans and merchants in the city and, somewhat inconsistently, the poor state of their businesses. Their recurrent pleas of poverty, linked with their careful dissociation from the artisan class, raise a number of questions. How did printers' wealth compare with the wealth of artisans, merchants and men in the legal professions? In what kind of property did printers invest and with what goals in mind? How did their contemporaries rank the social status of printers in Bordeaux society? Into what families could printers marry? What prospects did printers' children have? Were printers or their relatives politically active in Bordeaux? What role did social influence have when dealing with Crown censorship?

The position taken by printers in their legal briefs was their public position. It has been shown that the corporate idiom of guilds was often at variance with the realities of the workplace, disguising, for example, ongoing conflicts and divisions inside the workshops of eighteenth-century master artisans.<sup>9</sup> The corporate idiom with its stress on harmony and unity would undoubtedly be a misleading indicator of relations between masters and artisans in Bordeaux printshops, but it will be argued here that its stress on printers' social superiority to artisans is an accurate presentation of the social position of printers in Bordeaux. By the mid-eighteenth century, printers' social position was above that of artisans, who are thought to be a rather homogenous group situated in the middle of the social hierarchy in early modern France.<sup>10</sup> Because of monopolies, because of commercial and administrative expansion, because of demographic growth of Bordeaux, what might have been a hollow claim to superiority before 1730 was real by the

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7. *The Business* and "The High Enlightenment".

8. For an insightful and sensitive account of how artisans in Dijon in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries rationed out loyalty to municipal and royal authorities, see James R. Farr, *Hands of Honor: Artisans and Their World in Dijon, 1550-1650* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986).

9. Michael Sonenscher, "The Sans-Culottes of the Year II: Rethinking the Language of Labour in Revolutionary France", *Histoire sociale — Social History*, Vol. IX, n° 3 (October, 1984), pp. 301-328; and by the same author, *The Hatters of Eighteenth-Century France* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987).

10. Farr, *Hands of Honor*.

reigns of Louis XV and XVI. This social fact had political consequences; because of their elevated social status, printers enjoyed a significant degree of independence in relation to Crown authorities.

## I

In general, printers in Bordeaux participated in the prosperity of their port during the eighteenth century. The expanding Atlantic trade increased the numbers of both poor and rich in the city, especially after 1750, but printers were among the beneficiaries of colonial trade and administrative growth.<sup>11</sup> The most valuable indications of printers' personal wealth are the sizes of dowries at their marriages, the amount of property left to their heirs when they died, and their activities in the real estate market.<sup>12</sup> The combined effect of this evidence shows that the position of printers in the social hierarchy of Bordeaux improved as the century wore on.

When printers married, almost always in their early thirties, business concerns were uppermost in their marriage contracts. Printers usually constituted their printing equipment as a dowry. If their parents were alive, however, control of the businesses often remained in parental hands: the Widow Chappuis gave only half the printing equipment to her son Jean and brought him into partnership at his marriage, in 1730.<sup>13</sup> And Nicolas Lacourt outlined in some detail in his son Jean's marriage contract the close association that was to continue:

... Delacourt fils continuera à demeurer avec ledit sieur son père à travailler à leur commerce et se communiqueront l'un à l'autre les affaires de l'imprimerie et de la librairie, signeront tous les deux les lettres qu'il sera nécessaire d'écrire ce concernant, que l'argent qui proviendra de l'imprimerie et de la boutique sera mis sous les yeux dudit sieur Delacourt père dans la caisse ordinaire, pour être employé aux dettes du commerce et pour l'entretien et autres besoins de la famille.<sup>14</sup>

Couples generally moved in with the parents of the printer; printers' wives usually provided cash sums which, in some cases, represented their entire inheritance, in others, an advance on their share of their parents' estate. These were usually paid immediately and, at least in part, invested in the

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11. Jean-Pierre Poussou, "L'immigration bordelaise, 1737-1791 : essai sur la mobilité géographique et l'attraction urbaine dans le sud-ouest de la France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle" (doctoral thesis, Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1978). See also *Bordeaux et le sud-ouest au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, croissance économique et attraction urbaine* (Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1983, where part of this thesis is published).

12. This account is based on all the printers that had shops between 1745 and 1789. They were nineteen in total and eight were permitted at any one time.

13. Archives départementales de la Gironde (henceforth A.D.G.), notary Despiet, *Contrat de mariage*, 4 February 1730.

14. A.D.G., notary Roberdeau, *Contrat de mariage*, 4 February 1729.

businesses. If the wives died before bearing children, their families recovered the dowries.

Most of the dowries printers offered at their weddings were at best comparable to those of shopkeepers (*marchands*) and modest wholesale merchants (*négociants*).<sup>15</sup> The size of printers' dowries provides a rough index of wealth because the sums often reflect their fortunes and those of families into which printers were able to marry. Most printers' dowries, the top 55 percent, were in the range of 6,000 to 25,000 livres, a range, we are told by historians of Bordeaux, that included the dowries of many shopkeepers and some of the lower ranks of merchants found in the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>16</sup> The dowries were higher than those constituted by other master artisans in the city. Most master tailors' dowries, for example, fell into the 1,000-4,000 livres range, and ropemakers' dowries were between 4,000 and 8,000 livres.<sup>17</sup> Printers' dowries were comparable to those of some members of the legal professions in other provincial cities; the average dowry of a printer was 7,685 livres, and barristers of Toulouse in the lesser courts received similar sized dowries.<sup>18</sup> As for their counterparts elsewhere in France, Bordeaux printers' dowries tended to be higher than those in Rouen, but more modest than those in Paris.<sup>19</sup>

While some printers gave and received reasonably respectable dowries, many were poorer. This was particularly the case among printers who lived

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15. The following study has been made of eighteen marriage contracts dated between 1714 and 1776. I have not included Pierre Godefroy Calamy's dowry in the calculation because his situation was not at all typical. The five marriage contracts signed by Pierre Séjourné have been averaged together.

16. This calculation is based on the combined dowries of the couple. In 1763-1765, 68 percent of *négociants'* dowries were between 12,800 and 102,400 livres, 41 percent of them between 25,600 and 102,400 livres. Most merchants' dowries were more modest: three quarters were between 800 and 12,500 livres (Paul Butel, *Les négociants bordelais : l'Europe et les Îles au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1974, p. 294). In the 1750s, 17.2 percent of *négociants* and 41.7 percent of the merchants constituted dowries of less than 6,400-25,599 livres; and 29.7 percent of the *négociants* and 15.4 percent of the merchants constituted more; Poussou, "L'immigration bordelaise, 1737-1791", p. 651, *bis*.

17. Jeanne Lacoste-Palusset, "Les tailleurs bordelais dans la seconde moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle" (master's thesis, Université de Bordeaux III, 1973), p. 136; and Nicole Larroze, "Les cordiers bordelais au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle" (master's thesis, Université de Bordeaux III, 1972), p. 111. The wealth of some master artisans in Bordeaux should not be underestimated; see Poussou, "L'immigration".

18. L.R. Berlanstein, *The Barristers of Toulouse in the Eighteenth Century, 1740-1793* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 41. When calculating the average of printers' dowries, I have used only the wives' dowries in order to permit comparison with barristers who, in general, did not specify the groom's portion.

19. In Rouen, most printers' and booksellers' wives constituted dowries of between 2,000 and 3,000 livres, whereas in Bordeaux, most of the brides' dowries range from 3,200 to 25,599 livres. See Quénart, *L'imprimerie*, pp. 233-234. On the dowries of Paris booksellers and printers, see Micheline Zéphir, "Les libraires et imprimeurs parisiens à la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle (1750-1789)" (thesis, École nationale des chartes, 1974), p. 98.

early in the century.<sup>20</sup> When the printer Pierre Calamy married the daughter of a painter in 1729, for example, she brought him 200 livres and he provided printing equipment worth 1,000 livres.<sup>21</sup> This is not at all comparable to Raymond Labottière's wife's dowry, four years earlier, of 24,554 livres.<sup>22</sup> Since printers' weddings in this sample were mostly in the early years of the century, the discrepancies between the smallest and the largest dowries were significant. In the first years of the century, only the richer King's printers, Lacourt and Brun, and the printer Raymond Labottière (who had a bookselling business on the side) received very substantial dowries. Their wealth and style of living differed radically from the other poorer printers who received dowries not much higher than those of tailors and other artisans.

Estimates of overall wealth confirm indications revealed by the dowries and show that the discrepancies between rich and poor printers were reduced in the second half of the century when a number of printers were able to acquire considerable fortunes. There is enough information on thirteen of the nineteen printers who ran businesses in Bordeaux between 1745 and 1789 to assess their wealth. Four printers who made their careers in the first half of the century had strikingly small fortunes. Fronton Séjourné died in 1738, leaving 4,425 livres worth of property which he shared with Nicolas Phillippot, who died in 1758 not much better off, leaving 5,663 livres. Fronton's brother, Pierre, died in 1748 and left 6,581 livres; Pierre Calamy died in 1745, leaving debts worth more than his belongings.<sup>23</sup> Such modest printers' fortunes as these had disappeared by the late eighteenth century when the fortunes of

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20. Fiscal sources attest to the wide range in wealth. In 1750, it appears that only 3 of 25 masters (12 percent) in the Printers' and Booksellers' Guild possessed landed property, but this is valued at 170,000 livres (A.D.G., C1810, *États d'éclaircissement sur la situation des corps d'arts et métiers de Bordeaux*). Although the privilege of the elite of most artisans, other artisans appear to have had a more equal distribution of landed property among their members. For example, 28 master bakers out of 68 possessed landed property worth 399,000 livres; 12 butchers out of 47 possessed property worth 142,000 livres. Tailors were definitely poorer, however: only 26 out of 191 possessed real property worth 137,000 livres. See Lacoste-Pallusset, "Les Tailleurs", p. 141. Discrepancy in wealth is also evident on other occasions in which the Guild assessed the ability of its members to pay taxes or levies; see A.D.G., *États de la répartition*, C 3309, 12 June 1747; C 3308, 11 April 1759; and *Capitation*, C 2792, 18 September 1777. These sources included, however, Guild members who did not have shops.

21. A.D.G., notary Banchereau, *Contrat de mariage*, 29 June 1729.

22. A.D.G., notary Dejeneau, *Contrat de mariage*, 20 December 1725; and A.D.G., notary Rauzan, *Testament*, 16 June 1787.

23. For Fronton Séjourné, see A.D.G., notary Séjourné, *Inventaire après décès*, 31 December 1738. For Nicolas Phillippot, see A.D.G., notary Séjourné, *Inventaire après décès*, 22 November 1758. For Pierre Séjourné, see A.D.G., notary Séjourné, *Inventaire après décès*, 15 November 1748. For Pierre Calamy's wealth at his death, see *Accord* between his second wife and his son from his first marriage, A.D.G., notary Perrens, 3 March 1764.

almost all printers resembled those of the three wealthier early eighteenth-century printers who were worth over 50,000 livres.<sup>24</sup> Three of the six late eighteenth-century printers — Simon Lacourt, Michel Racle and Antoine Labottière — possessed property worth well over 50,000 livres. Two others, Jean-Baptiste Lacornée and Pierre Beaume, were worth close to 50,000 livres, and the Widow Calamy was worth well over 20,000 livres at her death, in 1777.<sup>25</sup> These were wealthy families: the barristers of Toulouse, for example, had fortunes of between 35,000 and 40,000 livres and were, as their historian has shown, very well off in relation to the population of Toulouse as a whole.<sup>26</sup> Such wealth in Bordeaux was less impressive and much less than that of the larger *négociants*, let alone the nobility.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, these sums are respectable and set late eighteenth-century printers' wealth, in general, quite apart from that of their poorer counterparts earlier on.<sup>28</sup>

In the nature of their property, printers were a coherent group, investing their profits either in their businesses or in real estate. What printers did not invest in their firms, they invested in land, and these investments increased in the latter part of the century with the improvement in their wealth. Deeds of purchase and sale of real estate, inventories, wills and other legal documents

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24. Three early eighteenth-century printers were worth at least 50,000 livres. For Jean Lacourt's wealth, see A.D.G., notary Séjourné, *Inventaire après décès*, 28 May 1738. The total value appears to be just over 80,000 livres. The estimate for Pierre Brun is based on 22,000 livres being considered the *légitime* of his sister; see A.D.G., notary Séjourné, *Accord*, 20 April 1756 and *Testament*; A.D.G., notary Séjourné, *Testament*, 6 September 1755. Other signs of wealth are available in purchases of property and elsewhere. For Raymond Labottière, see A.D.G., notary Loche, *Inventaire après décès*, 10 October 1754.

25. For Simon Lacourt, see the inventory made of his sequestered property following his execution during the Terror, A.D.G., Q 923-924, 1 Pluiose Year II. For Racle, see his daughter's marriage contract signed a year after his death, A.D.G., notary Hazera, 23 Ventose Year III. Her portion of her father's estate owed to her by her brother was 54,094 livres. Racle was assessed at 3,833 livres for the forced loan of Year II (A.D.G., 4L 117). For the Labottière brothers' wealth, see J. McLeod, "The Labottière family in Bordeaux" (article in progress). For Lacornée, see A.D.G., notary Baron, *Inventaire après décès*, 13 April 1772. The property is valued at 30,166 livres in the inventory and he had paid at least 4,743 livres of the 15,000 he had given his niece as a dowry; see A.D.G., notary Bouan, *Contrat de mariage*, 17 September, 1749 and A.D.G., notary Bouan, *Quittance*, 28 September 1749. For Beaume, see A.D.G., notary Collignan, *Inventaire après décès*, 26 July 1800. The value of the succession was over 120,000 francs. For Calamy, see A.D.G., QB 206, *Vente*, 29 November 1783, and her daughter's marriage contract, A.D.G., notary Séjourné, 20 April 1758.

26. Berlanstein, *The Barristers*, pp. 47-51.

27. Butel, *Les négociants*, pp. 281-324; Michel Figeac, "La noblesse bordelaise" (master's thesis, Université de Bordeaux III, 1982).

28. Booksellers had also become wealthy in the later eighteenth century. See J. McLeod, "A Social Study of Printers and Booksellers".

reveal that printers were real property owners.<sup>29</sup> Of the nineteen printers, all but four possessed land and houses during their lifetime, and almost all bought property during their career.

Urban property interested the printers. All the printers who owned property owned it in the city centre, where at least five had their principal residence. Owning property in the expensive areas of the city — the rue St. James and the Place du Palais — where the nobility and the richer *négociants* tended to buy property, was an achievement and would have drained considerable revenues. Simon Lacourt was prepared to buy a house on the rue St. James worth 30,000 livres, in 1777. It seems that expensive properties in the city centre were not beyond the means of printers in the pre-Revolutionary decades.

The Labottière brothers were the only printers to buy suburban property. Such properties were an investment that printers generally left to booksellers and other merchants who wanted to participate in the region's wine industry and, yet, continue to live in town and run businesses. The Labottière brothers were not interested in vineyards but rather in prestigious architecture. In 1773, they pulled out the vines on their suburban property in Le Bouscat and began to build one of the most magnificent country houses near Bordeaux. For this, they commissioned the celebrated architect Étienne Laclotte, who worked notably for "la nouvelle classe moyenne".<sup>30</sup> Owning this *château*, which was bought for 450,000 livres at its sale in 1795, probably saved Antoine Labottière from bankruptcy because he was able to borrow against it when the business began to fail, in 1790.<sup>31</sup>

More than suburban property, printers were interested in buying the more prestigious country property outside Bordeaux. Four printers owned country estates outside the city: Jean Lacourt owned an estate in Macau; Simon Lacourt owned properties in Macau and an estate in Pissos; Jean-Baptiste Lacourt owned two country estates, one "en Palus de Queryries, paroisse de Cenon" and the other "en Graves de Bordeaux, paroisse St-Genès de Talence". Pierre Brun owned an estate near Rions in the Dordogne. In buying country estates, the printers were following the example of *parlementaires*, rich *négociants* and the nobility.

The status, security and regular income associated with investment in land appealed to printers who appear to have been speculating not only on the urban but also on the rural property market. Real estate far surpassed any other

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29. The following study was made using as points of departure A.D.G., Serie Q, *Enregistrement : Tables des acquéreurs et des vendeurs, Tables des vendeurs* and *Tables des acquéreurs* for the years 1740 to 1815. Although these tables are not necessarily complete and do not provide information on sales and purchases that could have taken place with notaries in smaller towns in the region, they are sufficiently complete to allow certain generalizations.

30. On Laclotte, see F.G. Pariset, ed., *Bordeaux au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Bordeaux: Fédération historique du Sud-Ouest, 1968), pp. 639-640. For a photo of the house, see p. 656.

31. A.D.G., notary Guy, *Vente*, 29 Prairial Year III (17 June 1795).

form of investment. *Rentes* were almost unknown among the printers. No other activity matched their interest in land and the social respectability and status they gained as estate owners. The potential profits in the booming wine trade were a powerful additional motive to buy rural land.

Printers also invested heavily in their children's futures in the form of dowries and legacies. By studying the wills made out by printers, it is possible to assess the priorities and ambitions that these men had on behalf of their children.<sup>32</sup> One clear tendency in the printers' wills was a concern to protect and favour the son who was to take over, or had taken over, the printing business and obtained the appointment by *arrêt du conseil*. Often, this son received the printing business in addition to an equal share of the inheritance with his brothers and sisters; sometimes, he received extra cash. He was very often the general heir who had the responsibility of paying portions to his brothers and sisters. The degree to which the other heirs shared in the family fortune reflected each family's own strategy for keeping its real property together. The Widow Brun was very generous to the family of her son, who had taken over the printing business, and gave only modest dowries to two daughters, sending three other children off to convents. Great discrepancies such as this were rare, however. Other settlements were more generous to all the children, but yet, generally, one child was given preference: for example, the Widow of Claude Labottière made it clear that her son Raymond was to have, by preference, the house she and her husband had purchased on the Place du Palais.

A second important consideration was to provide dowries for the daughters who were to make respectable marriages. The dowries that printers gave their daughters were high, generally much higher than they themselves had received. These families provided as many sizeable dowries as possible and designated children for respectable marriages or no marriage at all. Nicolas Lacourt gave out five dowries of 10,000 livres or close to that amount, one to each of his five daughters. Only 7,000 of this 50,000 livres had been paid at his death; the rest was to be paid by the general heir, Jean, who took over the business. Similarly, the widow of Simon Lacourt had given property and houses to her sons and daughters at their marriages and instructed her son, heir and successor, to pay additional large portions to these children.

Some children got less and some could not marry. Common practice was to give smaller portions to those sons who did not enter printing or the book trade. While Chappuis gave his daughter 28,000 livres and two of his sons a business estimated at 70,000 livres, he gave the son who left for the West Indies only 15,000 livres. While his brothers and sister all received portions of 6,000 to 7,000 livres, Bonnaventure Lacourt, who was in the army, received only 3,000 livres. Pierre Séjourné's son received only what he was legally

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32. The following analysis is taken from nineteen wills.

owed when he left for the West Indies. There was also a high celibacy rate among printers and a high number of family members went into the Church. The respectable marriages that printers desired for their families were not always affordable. It was out of the question for a printer's child to form an alliance with a shopkeeper or artisan, for example, who might have accepted smaller dowries.

The degree of importance given to equal or preferential treatment appears to be a function not only of family size, but also of the extent to which families were socially mobile.<sup>33</sup> The printers Nicolas Lacourt and Lacornée designated one heir for special treatment, and these heirs placed their progeny in the nobility. It is significant that these families, unlike the others, specified what their heirs would inherit before the heirs' weddings. Nicolas Lacourt attached his and his wife's will to the marriage contract and Lacornée was surely making the inheritance of his niece and ward clear to her noble bridegroom when he made his will in the same month as her wedding.<sup>34</sup> The fathers of the brides at these marriages were substantial men. It was a source of pride to obtain such connections and worth sacrifices. Families less spectacularly on the rise tended to treat their children more equally. Thus, printers did not hesitate to subordinate the interests of some of their children to strategies of social ascension. In this way, they resembled the families of *négociants* and the nobility to a greater degree than men in the legal professions.<sup>35</sup> Particularly among the social elite, the destiny of the family was thought more important than the sum of its members' fates and was worth sacrifices.

Three conclusions can be drawn from this study of printers' wealth and property: (1) Early in the eighteenth century, their wealth varied enormously. Some families possessed property worth almost 100,000 livres and were in a class quite apart from other early eighteenth-century printers whose property totalled only a few thousand livres. (2) Printers' fortunes improved over the century. The modest printing families almost disappeared and printers acquired considerable property in business, cash, furniture or landed property over the course of the century. The automatic decision was to invest in real estate, an investment that far outweighed all other forms. (3) The wealthier families transmitted this property with the clear intention of furthering the family's social advancement, usually favouring the son who was to assume control of the business to ensure him a prestigious marriage.

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33. Robert Forster, *Merchants, Landlords and Magistrates: The Depont Family in Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 55.

34. A.D.G., notary Roberdeau, *Testament and Contrat de mariage*, 4 February 1729; A.D.G., notary Bouan, *Contrat de mariage*, 17 September 1749 and reference to Lacornée's will in A.D.G., notary Baron, *Inventaire après décès*, 13 April 1772.

35. See Berlanstein, *The Barristers*, p. 64. Butel argues that the Journu family, which did not hesitate to disperse the family fortune, was not typical (*Les négociants*, pp. 322-323).

Behind the social advancement were two factors. First, the number of printers' positions was limited and held at a fixed number by the Crown at a time when the demand for print in urban centres across France was increasing and at a time when the population was increasing. Second, both commercial and administrative demands for printing services were multiplying in Bordeaux. The policy of restriction and monopoly was of course one that the favoured printers encouraged and the resulting prosperity in such situations has been noted by historians at different periods in various places. Crown policies were intended to put printing in the hands of prosperous and dependent men with much to lose if they printed subversive works. It will be seen later that they did not achieve dependence and the desired political result, but they did help ensure that printers, as a group, were comfortable, prosperous and prestigious.

## II

Printers lived in a social milieu that was well above that which their wealth alone would merit. It was also one that was above that of artisans and more modest merchants. Even the poorer printers of the early century were set apart from most other artisans by the prestigious nature of the merchandise in an era when books were luxuries and relatively rare. The education required to run a printshop contributed to this enhanced status, as did the prestige of their customers who were among the ecclesiastical, legal and educational authorities.<sup>36</sup> With the fixed number of positions, the expansion of the printing business and the development of the book trade in the eighteenth century, printers improved their wealth and, consequently, their status. The high social standing of printers and its upward progression during the century are illustrated by the following examination of their families.

Bordeaux printers were recruited from the very small group of printers' children.<sup>37</sup> Of the nineteen printers who ran printshops in the city between 1745 and 1789, sixteen were sons and two were sons-in-law of printers; only one, Pierre Beaume from St-Étienne, a *protégé* of Miromesnil, the *garde des sceaux* appointed in 1784, was not. Typical here was the case of Jean Chappuis, a printer who worked from 1726 to 1783, the son of a printer in Bordeaux. With few exceptions like the Lacourt family in Bordeaux, dynasties did not stretch much further back than two generations and here again, Chappuis was typical. His father arrived in Bordeaux in the late seventeenth

36. Quéniart, *L'imprimerie*, pp. 246-247.

37. Recent examination of receptions into artisans' guilds has suggested that historians have exaggerated the significance of being the son of a master in a given corporation; see Edward J. Shephard, "Social and Geographic Mobility of the Eighteenth-Century Guild Artisan: An analysis of Guild Receptions in Dijon, 1700-1790" in Steven L. Kaplan and Cynthia J. Koepp, eds., *Work in France: Representations, Meaning, Organization and Practice* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), pp. 97-130. This, however, does not apply to the recruitment of printers.

century, about the same time as did the first member of another giant in the printing and bookselling trades, the Labottière family.

Printers in Bordeaux did not, however, marry printers' daughters; they enjoyed a social status high enough to attract some established Bordeaux families and married into the city's merchant, professional and legal families. Of the fifteen printers' fathers-in-law identified, seven were merchants (almost all *négociants* or *bourgeois et marchands*) and six were professional men: a surgeon (*chirurgien juré*), a pharmacist, a doctor, an architect, a barrister and a *huissier* in the *Sénéchal* and *Présidial* courts. The final two were a *bourgeois* and a printer. Such alliances show that merchant, professional and legal families considered a printer a sufficiently distinguished match for their daughters. The absence of artisans' daughters among printers' wives is noteworthy, as is the almost total absence of marriages between members of printing families: only one took place in the second half of the eighteenth century. Whereas in other cities, printers tended to intermarry, in Bordeaux, they married outside the profession.<sup>38</sup>

Printers were members of families undergoing significant social advancement, as an analysis of their relatives outside the printing and book-selling trades illustrates. From early in the century, printers' families included many members who were their social superiors. Of twenty-five uncles, ten were merchants, seven were in the Church, four in the legal professions, two in the medical professions (one of whom was the rector of the University of Bordeaux).<sup>39</sup> Related to members of the legal, commercial and ecclesiastical communities from birth, printers' family members of their own generation (brothers and brothers-in-law) further consolidated these links. Of forty, eighteen became merchants (most often *négociants*), ten went into the legal professions, five into the Church and five into the medical professions.<sup>40</sup> At the end of their lives, printers had a number of nephews in the merchant and legal establishments and some could even claim parentage to nobles: of twenty-eight nephews, eleven were merchants (almost all *négociants*), five were in the legal professions, four were nobles and two were *propriétaires*.<sup>41</sup>

These prestigious relatives were not all concentrated in one or two families. Of the nine families, about whose relatives information is available, all but three had at least one *négociant* in the family and these three, along with three others, all had members of their families in the legal professions or nobility. Six of the families had a brother or child in the Church, most often a *docteur en théologie*. Printers, then, through family links which extended well beyond their professional milieu, could claim association with members of the local legal and professional elite in Bordeaux.

38. Quéniart, *L'imprimerie*, p. 230; Zéphir, "Les Libraires", p. 81.

39. The remaining two were a *bourgeois* and a *graveur à la monnaie*.

40. The two others became a *bourgeois* and an *employé dans les finances*.

41. Of the remaining, there was one each in the Church, a *courtier d'assurances*, a professor of mathematics, an army officer, a *doreur sur métaux* and a *bourgeois de Paris*.

The participation of printers in this milieu was in part the result of a shared style of living among the educated. Printers went to school with lawyers, notaries and the better class of merchants, where they enjoyed an education that distinguished them from artisans, shopkeepers and many merchants. Most printers received a formal education at the Jesuit College, one of the two main schools in Bordeaux. Pierre Phillipot was a student there, in 1745, and earlier in the century, Chappuis, the Labottière brothers, Pierre Séjourné, Brun and Lacourt were in attendance, along with the sons of two early eighteenth-century printers. At the Jesuit College, they studied with the sons of notaries, barristers and some of the merchants' sons who later married their sisters and whose children were to marry their own.<sup>42</sup> Printers went to great lengths to stress their education, one that set them apart from the members of the *arts mécaniques*. Their claim to superior standing was not a hollow one.

### III

Printers' standard of living in the late eighteenth century reflects their elevated social status.<sup>43</sup> A study of the inventories of their belongings reveals that the printer who lived in the cramped quarters of rented shops, using his few rooms for sleeping, eating or working, was by far the exception.<sup>44</sup> In fact, printers rented or owned large homes with five to ten rooms. The general layout of the houses was almost always the same: on the ground floor was the *boutique* and behind it the kitchen, which gave onto a courtyard at the back of the house. On the first floor was the master bedroom and, usually, a second bedroom; and on the upper floors were more bedrooms, servants' quarters and storage space. Only two families, however, had the rooms that *négociants* and barristers usually had in order to be able to receive guests<sup>45</sup> — Beaume and Lacourt both had dining rooms and *salons*. Lacourt also had a *cabinet* where he did his paper work and kept his private library.

The homes of printers were well furnished with luxury goods. The kitchens appear to have been well-equipped with large quantities of dishes. Most printers had considerable amounts of earthenware but also much porcelain and crystal. All printers had some silver. Lacornée had, for example, in

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42. See A.D.G., serie H, *Liber Status classium Collegii Burdegalsis societatis Jesu, 1644-1730* and Archives municipales de Bordeaux (henceforth A.M.), *Fonds Ancien*, GG 986, Collège de la Madeleine festival programme, 1745. On these schools in Bordeaux, see William Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux and the End of the Old Regime: 1771-1790* (London: St. Martin, 1974), p. 23. Racle, Lacourt, Phillipot and Étienne Labottière were *maîtres ès arts*: see Archives nationales (henceforth A.N.), V6 1038, 2 April 1770; V6 985, 22 December 1755, and A.D.G., C 3309.

43. These generalizations are drawn from the post-mortem inventories of six established printers.

44. This describes the living quarters of Nicolas Phillipot and Fronton Séjourné, the former, never officially appointed printer, and the latter, a branch of the Séjourné family who could not pass the position on to his son-in-law.

45. Berlanstein, *The Barristers*, p. 58; Butel, *Les négociants*, p. 340.

the category "Argenterie" of his inventory, bowls, a coffee pot, a snuff box and silverware and silver dishes. Lacourt had over twenty sets of silverware and other diverse items. Beaume, Jean-Baptiste Lacourt and Labottière all had substantial amounts of silverware, silver candlesticks or dishes. Printers' homes contained well-furnished rooms decorated with portraits, paintings (often with gilded frames), tapestries, several mirrors, needlework, silk cushions, many armchairs, sometimes a sofa and a *canapé* and, often, a large number of chairs. There was generally a fireplace with a large mirror over it. Furniture was often of the more expensive walnut, mahogany or cherry wood. Other objects found in printers' houses indicate a willingness to spend on luxury items. Such objects as thermometers, barometers, chocolate-makers and quantities of cotton show that printers were up-to-date. And, of course, they had wine cellars with casks of wine, usually just described as a red wine — *vin de Pessac* or *vin vray de Médoc*. Lacornée stocked both white wine and prestigious reds, including "trois tierçons pleins de vin rouge estampés Galineau Haut Brion Méridoc". Printers' homes reflect an interest in consumer goods to a greater extent than legal men such as the barristers of Toulouse, who bought few luxury items and had little silver and porcelain.<sup>46</sup>

Printers' clothing was also more varied than that of barristers. Printers' homes had many chests stuffed with clothing and some of it was expensive and rather flashy. Whereas in general, the barristers wore black wool suits, printers almost all had silk suits, most often black, but not only these elegant but sober garments: velvet suits and coloured silk waistcoats are mentioned as well. Labottière had a velvet suit lined with beaver. Jean-Baptiste Lacourt had "une veste de satin noir" and "une veste d'englacée en argent, fonds violet, doublée de satin blanc". Clothing appears to have been important to printers; among the more modest early eighteenth-century printers, it was the first item they spent money on outside the business. Pierre Calamy and Fronton Séjourné, both poorer, early eighteenth-century printers, bought black silk suits; Séjourné's was worth one-third of the value of his possessions. Being appropriately dressed in order to be invited out by relatives and friends was obviously a high priority. This may have been typical of socially-mobile families. In any event, the printers' education permitted socializing with their social superiors among the barristers, better-off merchants and *négociants*, and suitable clothes were thus necessary. The fact that printers had such clothes and yet, in general, did not have a dining room or a *salle de compagnie* in order to receive in the style of *négociants* and barristers is not out of keeping with their social status generally; they were on the fringes of an elite in which their children and not themselves were to fully participate.

When the daughters of these men married and moved into the homes of *négociants* and barristers, they would have dining rooms and living rooms, more space and homes that were more designed for recreation. The historian of Bordeaux's *négociants* writes: "Le négociant aisé dispose toujours d'une

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46. Berlanstein, *The Barristers*, pp. 55-60.

salle à manger et d'un salon de compagnie où il peut offrir à ses hôtes le plaisir du jeu ou d'une soirée musicale".<sup>47</sup> This was beyond the possibilities of most printers, as was the style of living of Parisian publishers.<sup>48</sup> Surely, another noticeable change for these children would have been the absence of the noisy printing presses and the continual crowd of workers and customers. But although material comforts such as silver, porcelain and fine clothing may have been found in larger quantities in some of these children's new homes, their parents, too, had been accustomed to them and they, too, had servants and even country houses.

#### IV

Printers' improving social status in the eighteenth century can be further examined through a study of the careers and wealth of their children. Printers' children generally enjoyed a social standing superior to that of their parents; most of them joined the ranks of *négociants*, office-holders and barristers. Among the twenty sons and sons-in-law of printers, there were ten merchants, mostly *négociants*, three office-holders (*conseiller du Roi*, *secrétaire du parquet* and *procureur à l'Hôtel de ville et directeur de la régie des biens des religieux fugitifs*), three in the legal professions, two in the Church, an apothecary and an army officer. To obtain these alliances, printers' children commanded and bestowed substantial dowries, sums clearly higher than their parents had exchanged at their own marriages.<sup>49</sup> Social advancement among late eighteenth-century printers, which is reflected in the career choices of the children, in the families with whom they allied themselves, and in their dowries, was clearly the rule rather than the exception.

The example of the Albespy family demonstrates that printers provided an entry for their children into the elites in Bordeaux society.<sup>50</sup> Pierre Albespy,

47. Butel, *Les négociants*, p. 340.

48. For an example of the possessions of a Paris publisher, see Merland and Reyniers, "La fortune d'André-François Le Breton".

49. The average dowry of printers' daughters and daughters-in-law was 24,441 livres, an inflated sum, because it includes three dowries from Years III, VIII and XII, but several sums were only advances on future successions. The figure was obtained by averaging the dowries found in ten marriage contracts. These are the children who did not become printers.

50. On the Albespy family, see A.D.G., notary Brun, *Testament*, 28 October 1730; Archives municipales de Bordeaux (hereafter A.M.), St-André, GG 72, *Mariage*, 31 August 1717; A.M., Ste-Eulalie, GG 364, *Mariage*, 11 March 1706; A.D.G., notary Lacoste, *Contrat de mariage*, 29 April 1744; A.D.G., notary Brun, *Contrat de mariage*, 1 January 1742; A.M., Ste-Eulalie, GG 382, *Mariage*, 23 January 1742; A.D.G., notary Rauzan, *Contrats de mariage*, 19 November 1781 and 10 September 1782; A.D.G., notary Dugarry, *Contrat de mariage*, 26 January 1782; A.D.G., QB 169, 4 January 1765; A.D.G., notary Laspeyres, *Contrat de mariage*, 9 April 1807. Further documents in A.D.G., G 402. For information on the Albespy estate, see *Acquisition*, A.D.G., notary Fatin, 10 May 1782. See also the dossier on Pierre's son, Jean Albespy, when he was arrested in the Terror, A.D.G., 14L 23. Among other things, he claimed that having been born "sans fortune, préféra à la profession de ses pères celle d'homme de loi, qu'on ne sait être peu lucrative, uniquement parce qu'elle était la seule qui convint à un citoyen jaloux de son indépendance et de sa liberté."

a printer, married the daughter of an upwardly-mobile merchant family, Dubrocar. This family had moved quickly from *laboureur* to *menuisier* through marriage and had just arrived at *bourgeois* status in 1705. We find a Jean Dubrocar (presumably related) at the Jesuit College in 1702. The Dubrocar family arranged a marriage, in 1744, between their daughter Jeanne and the printer Pierre Albespy, who had himself married his sister to a barrister two years earlier. Albespy and Dubrocar were able to buy an estate and Pierre became *ouvrier en chef de l'œuvre et fabrique de l'église Ste-Eulalie*. He later became a *receveur des loteries*,<sup>51</sup> his son a barrister and his sons-in-law were *secrétaire du parquet des gens du Roi au bureau des finances* and a *négociant*. The signatures at the marriages of these children include those of notaries, professors and an important Church official. Albespy's son, the barrister, became a member of the municipal government in the Revolution and a local notable.<sup>52</sup>

Other families provide examples of varied degrees of social advancement, but all more or less fit the model of the Albespy family. Three more spectacular cases ensured their heirs' entry into the nobility. Jean Lacourt married the daughter of the *bourgeois et chirurgien* Larré, who passed the printing business on to her nephew Simon in 1755 because, as she declared in a notarial act, her sons had chosen "un autre état". The choice was to enter the nobility. The Widow Lacourt purchased for her son Nicolas the ennobling office of *conseiller du Roi au Parlement de Bordeaux*.<sup>53</sup> Nicolas married Marie Gombault, daughter of Marc-Antoine de Gombault *écuyer, seigneur de Plain Pont et autres lieux*, and his brother was a *lieutenant des dragons au régiment de Guienne*. The social ascension of the Lacourt family was spectacular, but in general, printers were at least two generations away from nobility. The Labottière and Lacornée families had nephews who entered the nobility, making some printers' sons and daughters close relatives of nobles, rarely nobles themselves. In the case of the Labottière family, the printer Claude's son, a *négociant*, married into the wealthy Duport family, permitting his

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51. A.D.G., notary Baron, *Quittance*, 25 May 1778.

52. The family was never very rich; the children's dowries were modest and the family estate was sold to provide them. Pierre's son, Jean, a barrister, declared at his marriage, in 1782, that he had 4,000 livres "en argent et en livres composant sa bibliothèque". This was enough, however, to attract a bride with a dowry worth 37,000 livres. At Pierre's death, in 1813, an inventory was made of his rather small collection of goods valued at 103 francs. Status objects such as the following reflect his style of living: "habit en soie, trois paires d'heures et une semaine sainte, une boîte à poudre en castor, un Christ en os sur velour noir à cadre doré, vestes de couleurs différentes". Albespy's son declared at the time that his father possessed nothing more (A.D.G., notary Brun, *Inventaire après décès*, 4 March, 1814). This was because he had invested the family property in his children's social advancement.

53. A.D.G., *Vente d'office*, 3E 12681, 3 October 1757. Larré later sold this office and Nicolas Lacourt was at a later date *conseiller du Roi, lieutenant général au sénéchal et siège présidial du Bazadois* (A.D.G., notary Duprat, *Contrat de mariage*, 30 January 1760). His son was a *conseiller in the cour des aides de Guienne* (1787-1790). See Denise Bege, "La cour des aides de Guyenne et ses magistrats, 1553-1790" (doctoral thesis, Université de Paris, 1974).

grand-daughters to marry Brunaud, *écuyer, ancien commandeur, chevalier de l'ordre de la Légion d'honneur* and Barthélemy de la Barrière, *ancien capitaine du régiment de la Tour Dupin et chevalier militaire de l'ordre de St-Louis*. Pierre Lacornée's sister married Lamarque, *bourgeois et chirurgien*, and their daughter married the *écuyer* Labadie. And there were other prestigious family alliances made by printers. All these printers' children joined the upper levels of Bordeaux society, or placed their children in it. This elevated social position of printers, apparently an exception in Rouen, was the rule in Bordeaux.<sup>54</sup>

Printers' family connections to the city's elite extended beyond 1789. The early years of the Revolution in Bordeaux saw the merchant and legal oligarchies in the city obtain power, especially as they dominated the powerful municipal government elected in 1790.<sup>55</sup> Bordeaux printers were related to the Revolutionary elite of Bordeaux in these years, as the following chart shows. Printers' relatives confirm what has been said about printers' prestige and upward mobility in the later eighteenth century. It also might explain why printers reacted favourably to the Revolution. They had close relatives who rose to prominence and played important roles in Revolutionary politics.

Printers may have supported the Revolution in its earlier stages because they were influenced by their own printing and the books they sold. Further research may assess the extent to which printers were influenced by works of the Enlightenment, but it is possible that we will never know. Given the documentation available, it appears that the argument that family connections determined political views is the stronger one. There are few signs that printers and booksellers in Bordeaux adopted the more modern secular views associated with the eighteenth century. Two were freemasons,<sup>56</sup> but generally, there is little to indicate that their religious convictions were shaken. Their houses contained religious objects such as crucifixes and most of the paintings were of the Virgin or Christ. Often, at their deaths, they called upon the intervention of the Virgin or left money for masses in their wills, though some left funeral arrangements to their heirs. Several were *ouvriers en chef de l'œuvre et fabrique* of the parish churches, a position that may, however, reflect their social status as much as religious conviction. The books they personally possessed suggest that they were readers of religious books along with other reading. Simon Lacourt's personal library of forty-six titles, which he kept in his office, was heavily religious in character. The books which Jacques Labottière took with him to a rented room after he lost his home and

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54. Quéniart argued that the elevated social position of the Lallement family in Rouen was exceptional (*L'imprimerie*, p. 249).

55. Alan Forrest, *Society and Politics in Revolutionary Bordeaux* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

56. Johel Coutura, *Les francs-maçons de Bordeaux au 18<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Marcillac, Reignac: Éditions du Glorit, 1988), pp. 141, 172-173.

business in the Revolution included brochures, the works of Molière, *Dictionnaire portatif de santé*, *Histoire de la Bible*, *Les martyrologues* and *five livres de piété*.<sup>57</sup>

Printers' Family Ties to the Political Elite in Bordeaux, 1790

Printer	Relationship	Name and position of relative
Simon Lacourt	son-in-law	Pierre Desmirail officier municipal
Pierre Albespy	son	Jean Albespy notable
Michel Racle	brother-in-law	François Seignouret notable
Pierre Phillippot	cousin	Gabriel Séjourné officier municipal
Jean-Baptiste Séjourné	cousin	Gabriel Séjourné officier municipal
Labottière	cousin	Brunaud aîné notable <sup>58</sup>

Nor is there evidence that the Enlightenment had a particularly civilizing effect on the way printers dealt with conflict and disputes. Printers, and bookseller as well, were familiar with violent behaviour, characteristic of the early modern era. They were, no doubt, less brutal than their predecessors, but they were nonetheless men of their age. Incidents of personal assault and duels involving several printers and booksellers and their families show up in court and notarial and other archives. Pierre Godefroy Calamy's difficulties with his family resulted in his striking his half-sister and, then, in his subsequent arrest.

57. *Inventaire après décès*, A.D.G., notary Hazera, 24 Ventose Year VI. The Labottière firm failed in the Revolution because of the collapse of the Paris publishing business and of the West Indian trade. On developments in Paris, see Carla Hesse, "Economic Upheavals in Publishing" in *Revolution in Print*, pp. 69-97. On those in Bordeaux, see Jane McLeod, "A Bookseller in Revolutionary Bordeaux", *French Historical Studies*, Vol. XVI, no. 2 (1989), pp. 262-283.

58. For members of the *municipalité* in 1790, see A.M. K16-17. The family link between the Labottière brothers and Brunaud is somewhat less certain than the others. The Labottière brothers attended the wedding of their second cousin Marie when she married Olivier Jean-Pierre Brunaud, *négociant* and *écuyer* who worked with his brother Élie Jean-Charles, *négociant* (A.D.G., notary Brun, *Contrat de mariage*, 15 April 1772; A.D.G. *Suspects, inculpés, détenus, dossiers individuels, 1792-An III*, 13L 18; A.D.G., notary Faugère, *Inventaire après décès*, 5 June 1818). They operated a sugar refinery. It is assumed that these are the same as the Charles Brunaud, *négociant*, and Brunaud aîné, *négociant*, who both appear on the list of *notables* in 1789, 1790 and 1791.

The bookseller Romain Lemaître and his wife got into a fight with their neighbours in which physical violence was accompanied by verbal abuse (she apparently screamed along with obscenities, “je veux te mettre en morceaux”, and books in bookshops found a second use as weapons). The elderly printer, Lacornée, was attacked one night by his niece and her husband, a noble, after which the couple found themselves, not surprisingly, cut out of his will. Pierre Séjourné’s son-in-law, Galice, sent the notaries who were drawing up Séjourné’s inventory into flight. Antoine Pallandre was involved in a duel; here, a book served not as weapon but as an early form of bullet-proof vest. Racle’s daughter’s amorous adventures were the cause of a series of *coups de canne* and a challenge to a duel.<sup>59</sup>

## V

Let us pause for a moment and consider this small group of men from a distance. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, there were about twelve printers who handled the printing for a city with a population of about 45,000 inhabitants. At the end of the century, there were eight or nine, at any one time, who did the same for a population which had grown to 110,000. Printers were privileged men, arrogant men, and men with powerful relatives, and some had the courage of religious conviction. How did they view Crown censorship? With little fear and little respect. In the latter part of the century, almost all except the King’s Printer engaged in the clandestine trade and few were arrested. Some printed pamphlets that supported the local *parlement* in its conflicts with the Crown, which is not surprising because the legal establishment in the city ordered much of the city’s printing, and printers had many relatives who were legal men. One printed pamphlets that favoured the Jesuits after their abolition. In other instances, printers printed works supporting the cause of the West Indian colonists against the Crown. All were sufficiently well connected to have their protectors see that penalties were reduced or cancelled.

Two examples of opposition printing repay examination in detail because they show just how invulnerable the printers appear to have been. In 1759, Antoine Labottière printed a *mémoire* addressed to governor Beauharnais on behalf of inhabitants of Martinique. The work was clearly political and the Crown systematically denied permission to make such items public. Copies, sent from Martinique to Paris, came to the attention of officials in the capital who ordered the Intendant in Bordeaux to investigate. Labottière’s shop was raided, copies of the *mémoire* were seized and an *arrêt du conseil* ordered him to close down operations. His license to work as a printer was

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59. A.D.G., *Jurats de Bordeaux : Plaintes et informations*, 12B 376, 7 April 1785; 12B 346, 13 and 15 July 1773; 12B 357, 15 July 1777; 12B 342, 10 February 1772. See also Lacornée’s and Séjourné’s post-mortem inventories cited above. Pierre Bernadau, “Tablettes contemporaines historiques et cryptographiques de l’Écouteur bordelais ou Mémoires secrets pour servir à l’histoire générale et anecdotique du temps qui court”, *Bibliothèque municipale de Bordeaux*, MS, 713, 14 January 1790 and 14 June 1788.

revoked and his printing equipment ordered dismantled and sold. Thus, it would seem that royal controls were working as they should; if a printer was not loyal, his license was revoked. However, representations were made immediately to Crown officials on Labottière's behalf and he found himself pardoned within three months. Later, in 1766, another investigation revealed that Antoine and his brother (who had a bookselling business on the side) had bought forty-three copies of a pamphlet written in favour of the cause of the *parlements* entitled *L'esprit des Magistrats philosophes*. This time, they received only a reprimand. Later, they printed *remontrances* of the *Cour des Aides* and were again ordered to close, but again, it was not for long. The Intendant's office in Bordeaux came to their assistance as did the Maréchal de Mouchy, lieutenant-general of the province of Guienne. Protectors could always be found for a family with such extensive and prestigious connections.<sup>60</sup>

A series of events surrounding the publication of pro-parlement literature in the pre-Revolutionary crisis provide another example of the powerlessness of Crown officials when they tried to deal with Bordeaux printers. The exile of the *parlement* in Bordeaux had the whole legal establishment up in arms. The loyalties commanded by the courts were considerable. There was a torrent of publications in favour of the Parlement. Bernadau, the local chronicler, wrote in January 1788 that he was overwhelmed and could not keep up. The local police (the *Jurats*) tried to control the flood of pamphlets but had difficulties. In these conflicts, at least five printers and booksellers in the city sided with the courts. The *parlement's* printer, Pierre Phillipot, published pamphlets "sous le cachet de Londres" and reprinted parts of *L'esprit des Lois* in June 1788. Antoine Labottière, the printer for the *Cour des Aides*, printed that court's *remontrances*, and in March 1788, the court went so far as to send their own escort of *huissiers* to protect him from the police while he printed a protest about the Crown's response to their latest *remontrances*. The lawyer Martignac, who was inspector of the book trade and royal censor, did not use his position to defend the Crown. When the lawyers printed a pamphlet in favour of the recall of the Parlement, in January 1788, he forbade the printers in the city to print anything that would criticize or ridicule the work. A century of nominal control by the Crown over the printing and bookselling community in the city had not broken the enormous hold on it enjoyed by the *parlement*.<sup>61</sup>

The Bordeaux printers were not at the Crown's mercy. Not for them were such fates as banishment, loss of printing privileges or long term imprisonment. This may be an indication of tolerance on the part of the Crown. But much more so, it is an indication of the business and especially family

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60. A.D.G., C 3308; C 3314 and C 3315; *Bibliothèque nationale*, FF 2094, *Libelles diffamatoires et autres livres prohibés, 1759-1762*, 22 August and 13 December, 1759.

61. See the numerous entries in Bernadau, "Tablettes", especially 9 December 1787; 13 and 26 January, 19 February, 2 March, 8 June, 20 and 21 October 1788. On the influence of the parlement in Bordeaux, see Doyle, *The Parlement*.

connections enjoyed by printers who held monopolies on the trade in books and printing in an era when enormous expansion in these businesses provided profits, marriage partners and prestige that reinforced the printing communities independence from the Crown.

Bordeaux printers were a rising group in the city and one whose connections to the elite were close and decisive when printers were asked, as they inevitably were, to take political stands. Because of this, the Bordeaux printing community was virtually invulnerable to Crown censorship. The expanding Atlantic port absorbed these increasingly wealthy and socially prestigious heirs of Gutenberg, making its interest theirs. The printing community was inevitably allied with the opponents of the Crown in the eighteenth century and also, eventually, with the Revolutionaries in Bordeaux; it had never really buckled under to Crown control.

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In the summer of 1763, the Bordeaux city authorities (*Jurats*) ordered four printers into the street to force them to perform night patrol, a duty from which the printers repeatedly claimed exemption because of their association with the University.<sup>62</sup> This was an insult. The full import of the affront cannot be understood without a sense of the social status that printers enjoyed in Bordeaux. The above account has shown that by virtue of their wealth, and most certainly of their education and family connections, these men were not part of the ordinary class of artisans who performed night patrol. As has been suggested, in their perceptions of social position, men paid more attention to their connections with social superiors than with equals or inferiors.<sup>63</sup> The family alliances of Bordeaux printers were not predominantly at the level of “la petite bourgeoisie artisanale et commercante” as they were in Rouen, for example, where the printing community lost independence to the central state.<sup>64</sup> In Bordeaux, these fathers, uncles and cousins of barristers, officeholders, *négociants* (and in some cases nobles) would have thought any attempt to link them with artisans who performed manual labour preposterous. Because the issue of their superior status was at stake, they resisted the attempts by the *Jurats* to deny their exemptions from duties such as night patrol and were willing to spend fortunes in legal costs to do so. Printers did not have the status or wealth enjoyed by many publishers in Paris, but they

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62. *Récit de ce qui s'est passé à l'égard de la communauté de libraires et imprimeurs jurés de l'Université de Bordeaux, véritables membres et support d'icelle, au sujet de la patrouille...* in Charrier ou recueil par ordre chronologique de divers titres, pièces concernant les libraires et les imprimeurs jurés de l'Université de Bordeaux, B.M., vol. II.

63. See Colin Lucas, “Nobles, Bourgeois and the Origins of the French Revolution” in Douglas Johnson, ed., *French Society and the Revolution* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 88-131 and Berlanstein, *The Barristers*, pp. 46-47.

64. Quéniart, *L'imprimerie*, p. 233.

enjoyed prestige derived from family and profession, and wealth, and they both knew and were related to the merchant and legal oligarchies that ran the city.

These relationships were, to some extent, to determine their political views, in 1789, when they allied with the local municipality on the side of the Revolutionary government in Paris and later, in 1793, when both the printers and the local government turned against the central government. That these printers, at least initially, went along with the Revolution in Bordeaux is not very surprising. Neither is it surprising that they would turn against it when the city government did, in 1793. The alliance between printers and local authorities was intact as late as 1793 because it had never been broken by a century of Crown efforts to control printing communities by granting monopolies, licences and restricting the number of printers.

The Crown's censorship methods failed because they were implemented at a time when the demand for print in all forms increased considerably, and the effect was to make the favoured printers who obtained monopolies on printing in such crucial years richer than ever before. This wealth along with other factors permitted their families to develop marriage alliances with the city's elite and to strengthen their local influence. The increased licensing and controls of printers in the years of absolute monarchy had not severed the local loyalties of the Bordeaux printing community, but had reinforced them.

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