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Bourgeois Wealth

Daumard & Furet, Structures et Relations Sociale à Paris au milieu du XVIIIe siècle.

Use the marriage contracts of Paris of the year 1749 to gather data on social relations. 71 percent of marriages of that year in Paris; only 3/4 of marriages did have notarial contracts, they estimate, the other 1/4 being too poor to make it worthwhile, leaving settlements to the rules of the coutumier. That all should have been notarized, and not under private seal, was declared by arrêt de Conseil on 13 December 1695, reiterated in 1696, 1698, 1703--but still practiced in 1777 from a remark of Guyot's.

[Guyot, another 18th century writer, and 4 other references to modern works are all the authorities cited in footnotes in this monography, aside from references to their own apparatus. It's is an astounding fact that this kind of research seems possible without any grounding in the history of the period as understood by previous scholars. This accounts for the errors of interpretation in some cases, as on page 72 where the fact that future husbands' status does not differ from their fathers' (as: father bourgeois, son noble) is used to conclude that "le passage de la bourgeoisie à la noblesse était exceptionnel." Except for a case where a young groom-to-be has just got an office and is ennobled for life because of it, or has got letters patent from the king, his status will always be the same as his father's. The father may have been a bourgeois up to the day before, but just ~~xxxxxxxx~~ acquired an office which gives him nobility for life, and the son is adopting the name of his father, in which case they both appear noble. (In fact, in this situation, the son should still list himself as bourgeois, until he succeeds to the office, for it is only his son who will be noble from birth.)]

The most important table made is that which pits socio-professional statut (which seems to mean status in modern sociological usage, and not the statutory classification of the time, which is by métiers and too diverse in number and not grouped enough by common socio-economic traits, according to the authors). They refer on p. 17 to the formula of the I.N.S.E.E. Code des catégories socio-professionnelles 1954. I have marked up the chart (on pp. 18-19 and made some supplementary calculations from them (on p. 41). The great shortcoming of the table, from my point of view, is the failure to detail the proportions of the gross value in terms of land, rentes, offices, etc. On p. 22 they say that this could have been done, but it would have taken too long. For ~~xxx~~ me, there is the chance that their apparatus is available to do this work myself: if it's encoded, I just have to get the cards with any office noted on them, and make my own additions of them and subtract the sum from the stated net worth of the couple. The authors have simply applied the rule of the Denier vingt to a specified revenue in order to estimate the worth of the rente, or whatever, if it is not specified.

Another limitation, which is ~~the~~ greater the higher in the social order one goes, is the expectations of the to-be-weds. Also, presumably, the ultimate profession of the husband is not declarable in many instances, so that placing him in the statut is not precise. What seems clear despite these possible limitations, however, is that the three main groups of workers, middle class and oisif bourgeois-office-noble are rather clearly distinguished by their wealth. (p. 30) The "domestic" category amounts to 16 percent, which the authors remark elsewhere testifies to the sumptuous life of the very rich.

Page 38 some breakdown of the noble class which are not in the chart: of the 58 nobles clearly identifiable and classified, the 13 civil noble officers and the 23 military noble officers are much richer than the remainder

(presumably 21) of the nobles rentiers without office

P. 40 an error in calculating the percentage of rich (50,000 plus) routuriers: it should be 3 percent, not 2.8 (there are 14 professionals and not 9 as they counted). What we have, then, in terms of the very rich are 3 percent nobles (but actually 1/4 of ~~them~~ them fall below the 50,000 level in what their marriage contracts announce) and 3 percent of the routuriers, or ~~6~~ 6 percent of the entire group is very rich. The middling group, represented by the maitres-marchands, is quite well off, however, and if we group them with the bourgeois rentiers, we have over 1/3 of the society in comfortable straits.

I have made my own little chart of how the very rich are separable between routurier and noble, starting at the 50,000 plus level:

	Routurier	Noble
50,000 up	[64] 58 percent	[44] 42 percent
100,000 up	[29] 48 "	[31] 52 "
200,000 up	[12] 33 "	[24] 67 "
300,000 up	[6] 22 "	[21] 78 "
500,000 up	[1] 8 "	[12] 92 "
1,000,000 up		[1] 100 "

Which seems to prove that when one really got ~~xx~~ up there, one had to be a noble. It would ~~xxxx~~ be my thesis that it was impossible for an extremely wealthy family to remain routurier for any length of time.

- In the section on topography of Paris, to locate where classes lived, I have no great interest. Note the reference, however, to a diplôme d'études Supérieures under the direction of Labrousse, by M. ~~JR~~ Roche: Le Marais au XVIIIe siècle, who used the Almanach Royal for "des dé-comptes complets de bien des catégories d'officiers".

In the final section, on the origins of the bo-be-wedded, the problem of showing social mobility is very difficult unless one can get the death inventories, etc., to see what happens over time: "il faut introduire la durée" say the ~~xxxxxx~~ authors (p. 57), and ~~I~~ I couldn't agree more. What comes out that is incontestable, and of very great interest, is the fact that 54 percent give a provincial address, 24 percent Parisian, 22 percent unspecified. That the domestics are largely from the provinces, and to a lesser extent the lower works, gives rise to this interesting speculation: (p. 59) "C'est le trace peut-être de l'opposition de deux mentalités: l'une parisienne, et peut-être urbaine, refusant cette aliénation quasi totale de la liberté qu'impliquait alors le service des particuliers, l'autre, rurale, acceptatnt plus volontiers les liens de dépendance personnelle." The ~~xxxxxx~~ maitres & marchands are quite cohesively Parisian, but the nobles and officers even come from provinces up to 1/2. P. 68 the authors refer to the "Dynasties marchandes et artisanales dans le capitale."

The section on the "choix de la femme" is mediocre except in showing the non-professional nobles marrying 1/3 bourgeois women, of routurier officers, civil & military, marrying chiefly merchants' daughters or those of their own class. Noble officers of both kinds predominately married within their own class.

→ See Periodicals for Provençal antique