

Dispute and Interpersonal Violence in Languedoc, 1680-1720:
Identity, Community, and Authority

Sian Hibbert

PhD

University of York

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Abstract

This thesis examines the social landscape of early modern Languedoc through the lens of interpersonal violence. This period has been central to ideas of decreasing interpersonal violence in France, in tandem with the expansion of Louis XIV's state. This study contributes to the dismantling of such determinist theories of modernity through its examination of the records of the *parlement* of Toulouse, Languedoc's highest appellate court. The *parlement's* criminal dossiers, the *sacs à procès*, exhibit a significant increase in rates of physical interpersonal violence between 1680 and 1720. This study examines a sample of two hundred of these cases, and in doing so reveals the diverse ways in which the monarchy's fiscal and political policies in the final decades of Louis XIV's reign disrupted social cohesion in communities throughout the province.

Crucially, this study approaches such incidents from the perspective of the disputants. Where state and institutional histories of early modern France underscore the punitive nature of the law, this thesis builds on developments in the fields of legal anthropology and sociology to ask how recourse to the law featured alongside the use of violence in Languedocians' disputing strategies. In its assessment of the roles of women, the clergy, the petty nobility and the notability in incidents of violence, the chapters in this thesis grapple with themes of authority, identity, and community. They assess the ways in which individuals managed anxieties and tensions concerning their position and their influence within their communities. Ultimately, the study evidences the concomitant roles of violence and the laws in disputing strategies. But where scholars have previously argued that these mechanisms of social control were used for the restoration of peaceable relations, this study evidences litigants' use of the courts as a forum for the continuation and escalation, rather than the resolution, of their enmities.

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Author's declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Introduction

Overview and historiography

On 12 July 1682, noble Pierre d'Ibos, sieur of Talazac (Hautes-Pyrénées) arrived in Masseube (Gers) and took a room at the Three Pillars lodging house.¹ D'Ibos was seriously wounded, and when the *consuls* arrived to investigate, d'Ibos explained that he had been shot in the stomach by his friend, the sieur Saint Victor. D'Ibos had dined with Saint Victor at his *château* in nearby Serre the previous night. In the morning, the two men left the *château* together to travel to Masseube. Whilst en-route, d'Ibos realised that some of his belongings were missing and informed his travel companion. Despite the two men being good friends and having had a number of friendly and "civilles" meetings in the past, Saint Victor was angered by the implication that he might have stolen the missing items.² He fired his pistol at d'Ibos, who died of his wounds the following day.

On 17 June 1684, demoiselle Jeanne Marque, a merchant's daughter, was walking in the street in Sommières (Gard).³ As she passed the house of sieur Jean Bousanquet, *avocat*, Bousanquet emerged from the doorway, carrying a sword in his hand, and began insulting Marque. "Tout emeu de collere", Bousanquet beat Marque about the head and face before on-lookers intervened. Marque filed a suit against her attacker. When questioned by the *conseiller du roi*, Bousanquet explained that the two families had a history of hostility; Marque had previously insulted and assaulted his cousin, demoiselle Bousanquet.

On 11 July 1685, Louis Clusel, *bachelier en droit*, was in the square at Saint Sernin (Aveyron).⁴ He heard Pierre Miramet addressing a gathered crowd across the square. As he approached, Clusel realised that Miramet was informing his listeners about a criminal suit between Clusel and Miramet's brother-in-law, Rouquayrol. Miramet denounced Clusel as a liar, disputing the fact that Clusel had obtained an *arrêt* from the *parlement* against Rouquayrol. When Clusel attempted to verbally defend his honour

¹ Archives Départementales de la Haute-Garonne (hereafter A.D H-G), 2B 2367.

² All quotations from documents in the *sacs* are written as they were in the documents. Names and place names have been modernised for ease of reading. All translations are my own.

³ AD. H-G, 2B 2357.

⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 2798.

before the crowd, Miramet hit him twice on the head with his baton and threatened to kill him.

On 21 August 1688, maître Pierre Turbide, *curé* of Roquefort-sur-Garonne (Haute-Garonne) led the Sunday mass before visiting the sick.⁵ As he left the house of his parishioner Marbouteau, Turbide was met by Cecile Saint Salvi, wife of Jean Turbide, *tisserand*. Saint Salvi proffered “mille injures” against the *curé*’s honour and threatened to kill him with the two large rocks that she was holding. Two parishioners and Saint Salvi’s husband intervened to stop the attack. When questioned by officials, Saint Salvi claimed that Turbide had been using his position to further his own financial interests, to the detriment of his parishioners. She defended her actions by stating that the *curé* was corrupt, had paid off magistrates in judicial proceedings brought against him, and was ruining everyone.

These four incidents appear in the criminal dossiers, the *sacs à procès*, of Languedoc’s *parlement* of Toulouse.⁶ They, and the more than 100,000 like them, open a window onto the social landscape of the province during the *ancien régime*.⁷ This thesis examines two hundred such cases, each involving incidents of physical violence, which took place between 1680 and 1720, a period during which rates of violence spiked in Languedoc. These cases tell us about the crimes that were committed in Languedocian communities. But they reveal so much more than this. This is not a study of criminality, or even a study of the state response to criminality. I do not explore the law and its application in matters of social disorder. Legal and institutional histories are already abundant, as are those examining criminality in early modern France.⁸ Instead, this

⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 7350.

⁶ AD. H-G, Series B.

⁷ This number includes both criminal and civil cases. At the time of writing, the archives have catalogued approximately 15% of this number. The remaining cases are at present unavailable to researchers.

⁸ For legal and institutional histories, see for example: Albéric Allard, *Histoire de la justice criminelle au seizième siècle* (H. Hoste, 1868); Jean Baptiste Dubédat, *Histoire du parlement de Toulouse* (Paris: A. Rousseau, 1885); David Parker, ‘Sovereignty, Absolutism and the Function of the Law in Seventeenth-Century France,’ *Past & Present* 122 (1989): 36-74; William Doyle, *Venality: The Sale of Offices in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996); Hervé Piant, *Une justice ordinaire: justice civile et criminelle dans la prévôté royale de Vaucouleurs sous l’ancien régime* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015). For key studies on French criminality, see: Nicole Castan, *Les criminels de Languedoc: les exigences d’ordre et les voies du ressentiment dans une société pré-révolutionnaire, 1750-1790* (Toulouse: Association des publications de l’Université de Toulouse, 1980); Malcolm R. Greenshields, *An Economy of Violence in Early Modern France: Crime and Justice in the Haute Auvergne, 1587-1664* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Iain A. Cameron, *Crime and*

thesis uses the suits to explore Languedoc's potential spike in violence through the accounts of the litigants themselves. The complaints and statements of the plaintiffs, defendants, and witnesses who feature in the cases reveal important insights into everyday life, how and why individuals became enemies, and how adversaries managed their enmities. They shed light on anxieties concerning status, identity, and authority which underpinned tensions within communities, and the ways in which these concerns escalated to violent confrontation. By foregrounding disputants' own accounts of their enmities and confrontations, instead of the state's reaction to the crimes committed, this thesis draws attention to the lived experiences of Languedocians at the turn of the eighteenth century. Moreover, and in contrast to the long-held view that Louis XIV's reign was responsible for a linear reduction in interpersonal violence in France, these cases reveal the ways in which individuals' anxieties were influenced, directly or indirectly, by the political and economic decisions of the monarchy, almost seven hundred kilometers away, in Versailles.

This introduction first situates the study and its principal arguments within two overlapping historiographies, the history of the state and the history of interpersonal violence. These fields are reviewed and the study's contributions to each are underscored. I provide an overview of the geographic focus of the study, the historic province of Languedoc, of the role and remit of the *parlement* of Toulouse, and of the legal process which produced the source base for this study. I introduce the sources, the *sacs à procès*, their physical composition, the challenges they present as an historical source, and the methodologies which shape my approach to them. Lastly, I outline the quantitative data which informed the direction of the thesis's four chapters before providing summaries of each of the chapters' arguments and contributions to several fields of scholarship.

This thesis is a collective case study of the use of violence and the law by different social groups in early modern Languedoc. It argues that the potential upswing in interpersonal violence experienced in Languedoc at the turn of the eighteenth century was a consequence of the interaction between the monarchy's political, economic, and religious policies, and the local socio-political structures which shaped

Repression in the Auvergne and the Guyenne 1720-1790 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Julius R. Ruff, *Crime, Justice and Public Order in Old Regime France: The Sénéchaussées of Libourne and Bazas, 1696-1789* (London: Routledge, 2015).

Languedocian communities. The chapters in this thesis make important contributions to a number of fields of scholarship, including urban and rural studies, gender studies, spatial, and religious histories. These contributions are outlined in the chapter summaries. But the thesis as a whole sits at the intersection of two overlapping fields: that of the state and its development, and of violence and its control. Both of these fields have developed significantly in recent decades but remain shaped by prominent sociological works from the early twentieth century which linked the development of the state to the transformation of behavioural norms from the medieval to the modern era. Norbert Elias' 'Civilizing Process', originally published in 1939, has had a long-lasting impact on our understanding of past societies.⁹ Elias posits that man underwent a psychological and behavioural transformation from the fourteenth century onwards. Building on the works of psychoanalysts and sociologists including Sigmund Freud and Max Weber, Elias evidences this transformation through the internalisation of civilised mores, and the consequential decline of man's violent nature.¹⁰ This transformation was effected by the state, which claimed a monopoly on violence and tamed the warrior elites into civilised courtiers. The French monarchies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and particularly the monarchic absolutism of Louis XIV's reign (1643-1715), were crucial to this transformation.¹¹ The Sun King's 'domestication' of the French nobility took place at court in Versailles, where etiquette and deference to the monarch was performed daily through ritual spectacle and ceremony.¹² The nobility internalised the qualities modelled at court and permeated them throughout society at all levels, curtailing rates of violence across the kingdom.¹³ The theory that Louis XIV brought the

⁹ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

¹⁰ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. David McLintock (London: Penguin, 2002); Max Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation,' trans. Rodney Stone, in *The Vocation Lectures: 'Science as a Vocation'; 'Politics as a Vocation'*, ed. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong (Cambridge, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 2004): 32-94.

¹¹ Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); Manuel Eisner, 'Modernization, Self-Control and Lethal Violence: The Long-term Dynamics of European Homicide Rates in Theoretical Perspective,' *British Journal of Criminology* 41 (2001): 619.

¹² Elias, *The Court Society*, 78-104, 117; Geoffrey Treasure, 'Versailles: The Display of Power,' in *Louis XIV* (London: Routledge, 2001); Giora Sternberg, *Status Interaction During The Reign Of Louis XIV* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹³ On the role of courtesy and the diffusion of manners post-1630, see: Orest Ranum, 'Courtesy, Absolutism, and the Rise of the French State, 1630-1660,' *The Journal of Modern History* 52, no. 3 (1980): 426-451.

warrior elite to heel forms a central point in traditional histories of the absolute monarchy.¹⁴

Anglophone scholars have paved the way in complicating and unpicking such problematic, causational theories.¹⁵ However, despite these developments, Elias' theory remains popular, particularly, though not exclusively, amongst francophone scholars.¹⁶ This study contributes to the dismantling of such determinist theories of modernity. An upswing in rates of interpersonal violence, of the kind that Elias' theory fails to account for, sits at the very centre of this thesis. In order to understand these fluctuations, this study draws on, and contributes to, an expansive field of scholarship on the relationship between the monarch and the provinces.¹⁷ This conversation gained momentum in the 1980s as revisionist scholars sought to reassess the nature of French absolutism and its role in the formulation of the modern state. Most notably, William Beik's research on the Languedocian aristocracy redefined the relationship between Louis XIV and the French nobility as one of collaboration instead of subjugation.¹⁸ In this model, the king "placated formerly rebellious provincial elites" by defending their position in the traditional social hierarchy, and providing them with privileges and opportunities for financial, political, and social advancement.¹⁹ Numerous scholars have since echoed

¹⁴ See for example: John B. Wolf, *Louis XIV* (London: Gollancz, 1968); Roland Mousnier, *La Vénéralité des offices sous Henri IV et Louis XIII* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971); *The Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy, 1598-1789*, trans. Brian Pearce and Arthur Goldhammer, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979-1984).

¹⁵ See, in particular: Gerd Schwerhoff, 'Criminalized violence and the process of civilisation, a reappraisal,' *Crime, Histoire, & Sociétés* 6, no. 2 (2002): 103-126; Stuart Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Stuart Carroll, 'Thinking with Violence,' *History and Theory* 56, no. 4 (2017): 29-31.

¹⁶ Anglophone sociologists, such as Manuel Eisner continue to perpetuate the link between modernity and the decline in violence. 'Long-Term Historical Trends in Violent Crime,' *Crime and Justice*, 30 (2003): 83-142. See also: Pieter Spierenburg, 'Violence and the Civilising Process: Does it work?,' *Crime, Histoire & Société* 5, no. 2 (2001): 87-105. Particularly influential amongst Francophone scholars is Robert Muchembled. See in particular: *A History of Violence: From the End of the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Jean Birrell, (Cambridge: Polity, 2012)

¹⁷ For an overview of these developments see: Julian Swann, 'Coopération, opposition ou autonomie? Le Parlement de Dijon, les états de Bourgogne et Louis XIV,' *Sassier, Chaline* (2004): 117-32; William Beik, 'The Absolutism of Louis XIV as Social Collaboration,' *Past & Present* 188, no. 1 (2005): 195-224.

¹⁸ William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹⁹ Beik, 'The Absolutism of Louis XIV,' 197.

these findings.²⁰ Sharon Kettering's work on patronage and clientage networks, for example, outlines the social and political structures which reinforced traditional hierarchies between elites at court and in the provinces.²¹ Daniel Dessert's study of financiers in the second half of the seventeenth century offers important insights into the negotiations between the king and financial officials, including those in the provinces, that were necessary for the administration of the kingdom.²² Guy Rowland's work on the expansion of the army under Louis XIV underscores the important role that the creation of an officer corp, in which the nobility were able to pursue social advancement, had on realigning the interests of the monarch and the nobility.²³ Revisionist scholarship thus reframed our understanding of Louis XIV's government. As Beik phrases it, the accepted orthodoxy "shifted from a centralizing, modernizing monarch to a king maintaining and defending a traditional society."²⁴

But this thesis takes the assessment of Louis XIV's monarchy further and examines the impact of the monarchy's policies on ordinary people. Instead of focusing on the relationship between the monarch and provinces, through the nobility, this thesis asks how royal initiatives impacted social cohesion within communities across Languedoc, and the extent to which state power benefitted the lives of Languedocians below the aristocracy. Our way into Languedoc's social landscape is through the legal dossiers produced as a result of individuals' use of physical violence in the pursuit of their enmities. That rates of violence might have increased at the turn of the eighteenth century tells us that tensions within communities were being placed under new pressures. Valuable works on critical junctures in history make clear the direct implications of monarchic policies on social cohesion. In the context of the Wars of Religion, for example, Stuart Carroll found that rates of violence increased as a result of

²⁰ See also: Albert N. Hamscher, *The Conseil Privé and the Parlements in the Age of Louis XIV: A Study in French Absolutism* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1987); Roger Mettam, *Power and Faction in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).

²¹ Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); 'Friendship and Clientage in Early Modern France,' *French History* 6, no. 2 (1992): 139-158; 'Patronage in Early Modern France,' *French Historical Studies* 17, no. 4 (1992): 839-862; 'Brokerage at the court of Louis XIV,' *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 1 (1993): 69-87.

²² Daniel Dessert, *Argent, pouvoir et société au Grand Siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1984).

²³ Guy Rowlands, *The Dynastic State and the Army under Louis XIV* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²⁴ Beik, 'The Absolutism of Louis XIV,' 195.

the monarchy's religious and fiscal policies in the closing decades of the sixteenth century.²⁵

The *sacs* allow us to examine the tensions and anxieties which caused disputes in Languedocian communities, and to explore the ways in which these tensions were directly and indirectly exacerbated by the monarchy's policies. Nicole Castan argues that an increase in Languedocians' use of the courts in the late-eighteenth-century was a consequence of the "simultaneous and reciprocal action of changes occurring in society and in the repressive policy of the state."²⁶ But the *sacs* suggest that growing state power did not only increase disputants' access to the courts, but that royal policies may also have made people more ready to use violence in the pursuit of their enmities.

Languedoc, and indeed the rest of France, was subject to political, economic, and religious upheaval during the period 1680-1720. The final decades of Louis XIV's reign saw two periods of warfare: the Nine Years War (1688-1697) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1714). Military engagements often had significant ramifications for everyday life; troops billeted in towns and villages frequently resulted in spikes of criminality and violent behaviour.²⁷ The economic strains placed on communities during wartime were exacerbated by a succession of droughts and famines in the 1680s and 1690s, and the introduction of new and higher taxation to fund the monarchy's military campaigns saw Languedoc's tax burden reach new heights.²⁸ Moreover, in 1685, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes and outlawed Protestantism.²⁹ Tensions reached a crescendo during the Camisard Rebellion (1702-1704), which erupted in the Cévennes mountains, resulting in religious massacres and hundreds of Cévenol villages burned.³⁰ The monarchy's social, economic, and political policies made during the final decades of Louis XIV's reign undermined social cohesion in Languedoc. Significantly, as we will see, the *sacs* do not exhibit an increase in violence between, for

²⁵ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 7.

²⁶ Nicole Castan, 'The Arbitration of Disputes under the 'Ancien Régime'', in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. John Bossy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 222.

²⁷ Julius R. Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 61-63.

²⁸ Emmanuel le Roy Ladurie, *Les Paysans de Languedoc* (Paris: S. E. V. P. E. N., 1966), 97; Beik, *Absolutism and Society*, 40, 144.

²⁹ Janine Garrisson, *L'Édit de Nantes et sa révocation. Histoire d'une intolérance* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1985).

³⁰ Gregory W. Monahan, 'Tyrant of Languedoc? Nicolas de Lamoignon de Basville in Public and Private,' *Western Society for French History*, 37 (2009): 25; *Let God Arise: The War and Rebellion of the Camisards* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2, 156.

example, Protestants and Catholics - the Camisard Rebellion was highly localised - or civilians and soldiers. Rather, they illustrate the ways in which the monarchy's policies placed strains on local social hierarchies, and exacerbated individuals' anxieties relating to status, identity, and authority.

This thesis also makes important contributions to the historiography of social control and the concomitant roles of violence and the law in dispute and the regulation of deviance within communities. Traditional histories of the French state, and indeed European states more broadly, have viewed the law and the role of judicial institutions through the lens of state development.³¹ The expansion of the judicial apparatus into the provinces through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is argued, played a crucial role in the centralisation of the state by replacing mechanisms of popular justice with that of royal justice.³² Moreover, increased rates of litigation in the early modern period has been taken as evidence of the monarchy's efficiency in the repression of criminality, and as a sign of the punitive purpose of the law.³³ Consequently, judicial records have long been the domain of narrow studies into trends of criminality.³⁴ This thesis moves beyond crime history and considers the purpose of the law, and the use of violence, from the perspective of litigants.

The anthropological turn of the twentieth century inspired a reassessment of the role of judicial courts in societies. Scholars began to explore the motivations of the plaintiffs in appealing to judicial courts.³⁵ That the overwhelming majority of suits initiated with the courts were dropped before formal sentencing has been taken as evidence of the mediatory, as opposed to punitive, purpose of the law; the courts and the legal process provided opportunities for reconciliation between disputing parties.³⁶

³¹ Iain A. Cameron, *Crime and Repression in the Auvergne and the Guyenne 1720-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Muchembled, *A History of Violence*.

³² Critiques of this approach are now abundant - see in particular the collection of essays in Benoît Garnot, ed., *L'Infrajudiciaire du moyen age à l'époque contemporaine* (Dijon: Éditions universitaires de Dijon, 1995).

³³ See for example: Cameron, *Crime and Repression*.

³⁴ See for example: Eisner, 'Long-Term Historical Trends.'

³⁵ Yves Castan, *Honnêteté et relations sociales en Languedoc, 1715-1780* (Paris: Plon, 1974), 70.

³⁶ Martin Dinges, 'The Uses of Justice as a Form of Social Control in Early Modern Europe,' in *Social Control in Europe 1500-1800* eds. Herman Roodenburg and Peter Spierenburg (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2004), 159; J. A. Sharpe, 'Such Disagreement betwix Neighbours': Litigation and Human Relations in Early Modern England,' in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. John Bossy (Cambridge, 1983), 167-187; Stuart Carroll, *Enmity and Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 16.

Yves Castan's study on eighteenth-century Languedoc, in particular, shines a light on the diverse formal and informal avenues that were available for dispute resolution.³⁷

These works highlight the ways in which the law sat alongside other means of social control in early modern communities. While scholars in the field of legal anthropology queried how best to understand this 'legal pluralism', historians turned to the field of sociology to explore the various ways in which social order was achieved and maintained within societies from the ground up.³⁸ Honour and reputation regulated societal norms in the early modern period, but as Julian Pitt-Rivers explains, this was not simply "an expression of approval or disapproval", it was a structural system by which individuals could understand and negotiate their position within communities.³⁹ Crucially, honour was a commodity which could be gained or lost and public spaces operated as forums for the constant renegotiation of hierarchies and reputation.⁴⁰ Scholars such as Suzannah Lipscomb and Laura Gowing have demonstrated how insults and gossip served to censure moral deviance and enforce boundaries of acceptability within communities.⁴¹ Moreover, research has reassessed the role of interpersonal violence, including ritual and vindictory practices such as the feud, as a mechanism of social control.⁴² Complicating the long-held view that violence was the domain of uncivilised and impulsive pre-moderns, scholars have shown that the use of violence in early modern communities had a social meaning and can be read as a sign of social

³⁷ Yves Castan, *Honnêteté et relations sociales*, 70. See also Benoît Garnot, 'L'ampleur et les limites de l'infrajudiciaire dans la France d'Ancien Régime (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles),' in *L'Infrajudiciaire du Moyen Age à l'époque contemporaine* ed. Benoît Garnot (Dijon: EUD, 1996): 69-76.

³⁸ Sally Engle Merry, 'Legal Pluralism,' *Law and Society Review*, no. 5 (1988): 869-96.

³⁹ Julian Pitt-Rivers, 'Honour and Social Status,' in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* ed. John G. Peristiany (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 24; Herman Roodenburg, 'Social Control Viewed From Below: New Perspectives,' in *Social Control in Europe 1500-1800* eds. Herman Roodenburg and Peter Spierenburg (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2004): 145.

⁴⁰ Rafe Blaufarb, 'Conflict and Compromise: Communauté and Seigneurie in Early Modern Provence,' *The Journal of Modern History* 82, no. 3 (2010): 527.

⁴¹ Laura Gowing, 'Gender and the Language of Insult in Early Modern London,' *History Workshop* 35 (1993): 1-21; Suzannah Lipscomb, 'Crossing Boundaries: Women's gossip, insults, and violence in sixteenth-century France,' *French History* 25, no. 4 (2011): 408-426.

⁴² See for example: John Cashmere, 'The Social Uses of Violence in Ritual: Charivari or Religious Persecution,' *European History Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1991): 291-319; Stuart Carroll, 'The Peace in the Feud in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France,' *Past and Present* 178 (2003): 76; Marco Cavarzere, 'At the Crossroads of Feud and Law: Settling Disputes in Early Modern Tuscany,' in *Cultures of Conflict Resolution in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Stephen Cummins and Laura Kounine (London: Routledge, 2016): 51-74.

control, as opposed to disorder and rupture.⁴³ These developments have demonstrated how violence and the law were coordinates in early modern dispute. The boundaries of acceptability lay in contemporary perceptions of legitimate as opposed to excessive violence.⁴⁴

This study makes several important contributions to this conversation. Principally, this thesis challenges the institutional angle of scholars' analysis into early moderns' use of the courts. Much of the scholarship on the law and its uses is presented through the records of the lower criminal courts, civil courts, church courts, confraternities, and guilds.⁴⁵ It is argued that criminal courts were largely avoided by early modern disputants; fearing severe punishments, would-be litigants chose instead to turn to civil courts or informal measures of reconciliation.⁴⁶ Undoubtedly, more disputants turned to the lesser courts, or to extrajudicial alternatives, to settle their contentions than turned to the *parlement*. But the existence of such significant rates of litigation brought before the *parlement* at the turn of the eighteenth century suggests that there was much more variation in how disputants engaged with the courts. Moreover, and as this thesis contends, the potential spike in litigation concerning violence in the final decades of Louis XIV's reign evidences the ways in which royal policies had the potential to disrupt local mechanisms of mediation which had previously maintained social cohesion within communities.

This thesis also complicates our understanding of litigants' intent in turning to the law. Scholars have argued that because cases were frequently dropped before reaching sentencing, disputants turned to law, and to infrajudicial measures, because they were seeking a return to peaceable relations.⁴⁷ How then might we make sense of the apparent spikes in violence and litigation in Languedoc highest appellate court? While Martin Dinges acknowledges that recourse to the law should not always be taken

⁴³ Gerd Schwerhoff, 'Social Control of Violence, Violence As Social Control: The Case of Early Modern Germany,' in *Social Control in Europe 1500-1800* eds. Herman Roodenburg and Peter Spierenburg (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2004): 220-246.

⁴⁴ This boundary is most frequently assessed through the lens of domestic violence. See for example: Dianne Hall and Elizabeth Malcolm, 'Sexual and Family Violence in Europe,' in *The Cambridge World History of Violence*, eds. Robert Antony, Stuart Carroll and Caroline Dodds Pennock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020): 274-291; Schwerhoff, 'Social Control of Violence,' 231.

⁴⁵ Roodenburg, 'Social Control Viewed From Below,' 145.

⁴⁶ Garnot, 'L'ampleur et les limites de l'infrajudiciaire,' 70; Yves Castan, 'Criminalisation et ménagement des règlements brutaux des conflits,' *IAHCCJ* 17 (1992): 54.

⁴⁷ Roodenburg, 'Social Control Viewed From Below,' 145.

as an appeal for peace, and that litigation could intensify conflict between parties, he concludes that disputants eventually overcame their contentions.⁴⁸ The incidents represented in the *sacs* complicate this conclusion. Litigation did not always form the end point in disputes, but that does not necessarily mean that peace was restored through alternative forums. Revenge and enmity are common themes in the criminal dossiers, and the cases evidence the potential for litigation and violence to form concomitant disputing strategies. While acknowledging that most disputants likely sought intervention from the courts to help restore peaceable relations, this study evidences litigants' use of the courts as a forum for the continuation and escalation, rather than the resolution, of their enmities.⁴⁹

Languedoc and the *parlement* of Toulouse

Seventeenth-century Languedoc was the largest of France's historic provinces. It comprised Haut-Languedoc, Bas-Languedoc and the central regions of the Massif Central.⁵⁰ These regions contained multiple key urban centres; chief among these were Toulouse (Haute-Garonne), in Haut-Languedoc, and Montpellier (Hérault), in Bas-Languedoc.⁵¹ Both cities boasted universities and were political and administrative centres in our period; Toulouse was the seat of the *parlement*, whereas Montpellier housed the *cour des aides*.⁵² However, large urban centres were few and far between. As with the rest of France, Languedoc was predominantly rural, and the majority of Languedocians lived in small towns, villages, and scattered rural settlements.

The socio-political contexts of Languedocian communities provide an important backbone to this thesis' analysis of the *parlement's* criminal cases. It is therefore worth expounding some of the province's particular characteristics and the ways in which they shaped the lives of Languedocians at the turn of the eighteenth century. As a *pays*

⁴⁸ Martin Dinges, 'The Uses of Justice as a Form of Social Control in Early Modern Europe,' in *Social Control in Europe*, vol. 1, ed. Herman Roodenburg and Peter Spierenburg (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2004), 171.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁵⁰ Beik, *Absolutism and Society*, 35-42.

⁵¹ Suzannah Lipscomb, *The Voices of Nîmes: Women, Sex, and Marriage in Reformation Languedoc* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 6.

⁵² Frederick M. Irvine, 'From renaissance city to Ancien Régime capital: Montpellier, c. 1500-c. 1600,' in *Cities and Social Change in Early Modern France*, ed. Philip Benedict (London: Routledge, 1989), 108-109; Robert A. Schneider, *Public Life in Toulouse, 1463-1789: From Municipal Republic to Cosmopolitan City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 14-16.

d'états, Languedoc's tax burden was distributed to the communities across the province from the Estates.⁵³ Tax allocations within communities were shaped by the regime of the *taille réelle*, which dictated that the amount of tax owed was predicated on the status of the land as either *roturier* or noble, not on the status of the landowner themselves.⁵⁴ Importantly, noble land could lose its noble exemption if proofs were not provided, an appealing consequence for the remainder of the community as newly taxable land reduced the burden on the rest of the community.⁵⁵ This system placed significant power in the hands of the *consuls* who controlled the community's land register, the *compoix*.⁵⁶ Each urban and rural community in the province elected *consuls* from their midst to maintain the *compoix* and oversee civic duties such as road maintenance and bridge repairs.⁵⁷ The office of *premier consul* was usually reserved for the nobility, however, in smaller communities where there may not have been a resident nobleman, the communities looked to individuals of the Third Estate to fill the positions.⁵⁸ This provided opportunities for individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds to dominate positions of political authority within their community.

The *parlement* of Toulouse was the highest appellate court in Languedoc, with a *ressort* of over 45,000 square miles, making it the second largest after Paris.⁵⁹ It sat at the apex of a complex web of tribunals and jurisdictions, including *sénéchaussées*, *présidiaux*, municipal and seigneurial courts.⁶⁰ Claire Faure's work on Toulouse's patrimonial municipal court, the *capitouls*, illustrates the difficulties which arose from

⁵³ For a detailed description of this process and the institutions and actors involved, see: Arlette Jouanna, Stéphane Durand, and Élie Pélaquier, eds., *Des États dans l'État - les États de Languedoc de la Fronde à la Révolution* (Geneva: Droz, 2014), 219-229.

⁵⁴ Bruno Jaudon & Sylvain Olivier, 'Compoix et aménagement du territoire en Languedoc, XVIe-XVIIIe siècle,' *Annales du Midi: revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale* 122, no. 272 (2010): 522.

⁵⁵ Blaufarb, 'Conflict and Compromise,' 529.

⁵⁶ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 270.

⁵⁷ Georges Fournier, *Démocratie et Vie Municipale en Languedoc du milieu du XVIIIe au début du XIXe siècle*, Tome 1 (Toulouse: Associations Les Amis des Archives de la Haute-Garonne, 1994), 16.

⁵⁸ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 30-33.

⁵⁹ Guillaume Ratel, 'Between Facts and Faith. The Judicial Practices of the Conseillers in the Parlement de Toulouse (1550-1700),' (PhD Thesis, University of Cornell, 2017), 111.

⁶⁰ William Beik, 'Magistrates and Popular Uprisings in France before the Fronde: The Case of Toulouse,' *The Journal of Modern History* 46, no. 4 (1974): 588; Beik, *Absolutism and Society*, 47; For a tabulated overview of the different jurisdictions at play, see Table 3.10. 'Jurisdictions Passing Sentences.' Source: Andre Zysberg, 'Galley Rowers in the Mid-Eighteenth Century,' in *Deviants and the Abandoned in French Society*, eds. Robert Forster and Orest A. Ranum (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 94.

competing jurisdictions; the *capitouls* saw their authority in the administration of civil and criminal justice eroded after the establishment of the *parlement* within the city walls in 1444, and the further establishment of intermediary royal courts, the *viguierie* and the *sénéchaussée* following the Moulins ordinance of 1566.⁶¹

For certain privileged individuals, the *parlement* was a court of first instance.⁶² However, the majority of the cases seen by the tribunal in Toulouse originated in the subordinate courts across its *ressort* and were brought to the *parlement* on appeal. The legal process comprised multiple stages, each of which provided disputants with the opportunity to come to a peaceable resolution.⁶³ As discussed above, mediation between the parties could be pursued alongside official proceedings, and often resulted in court cases being dropped before sentencing. Importantly, the plaintiffs supported the costs of litigation throughout the investigation and trial.⁶⁴ As a result, the trial bags provide valuable insights into the behaviours and transgressions which early modern Languedocians deemed serious enough to warrant the significant financial outlay of going to law.

Languedoc's *sacs à procès* are the civil and criminal dossiers which were compiled by the *parlement* of Toulouse during the *ancien régime*. They are held by the Archives départementales de la Haute-Garonne in Toulouse, in the sub-series 2B.⁶⁵ The *sacs* are thus called because the documents for each suit were bundled together during their production and contained within a hemp bag, many of which are preserved with their documents today. The digital archival catalogue, which is searchable by date, name, location, jurisdiction and crime type, contains summaries for each of the inventoried cases. As I discuss in a later section, the level of detail included in the case summaries varies substantially from case to case. The cases themselves are not digitised, and access to them is only possible on site in Toulouse. The *parlement* of

⁶¹ Claire Faure, *La justice criminelle des capitouls de Toulouse (1566 - 1789)* (Toulouse: Presses de l'Université Toulouse 1 Capitole, 2017), 59-61.

⁶² Beik, *Absolutism and Society*, 79; Nassiet, *La Violence*, 87.

⁶³ Eric Wenzel, 'La paix par la justice. Les modes alternatifs de règlement des conflits dans la France d'Ancien Régime,' in *Stringere la pace: Teorie e pratiche della conciliazione nell'Europa moderna (secoli XV-XVIII)* eds. Paolo Broggio and Maria Pia Paoli, (Rome: Viella, 2011): 509-519.

⁶⁴ The plaintiff could seek financial compensation for the costs of the suit from their adversaries during sentencing.

⁶⁵ AD. H-G, 'Sub-series 2B Inventory,' *Archives Départementales de la Haute-Garonne*, accessed 6 February 2024, <https://archives.haute-garonne.fr/archive/recherche/sacsproces/n:109>.

Toulouse's archive is a particularly exciting collection for researchers. It is the only *parlement* whose *sacs* are preserved in such quantities to the present day. Moreover, the composition of the dossiers provides researchers with the opportunity to utilise their contents for different analytical purposes.⁶⁶ The *sacs* can contain legal proceedings from both subordinate courts and the final appellate court, the *parlement*, bundled together.⁶⁷ Researchers therefore have access to the extant administrative correspondence and legal ephemera from the courts, alongside ego-documents such as plaintiffs' complaints, witness testimonies, and interrogations with defendants. As such, this is an incredibly rich source base with abundant potential for social, political, and legal histories of early modern France.

Sub-series 2B includes both civil and criminal suits. Scholars have lamented researchers' focus on criminal over civil litigation, arguing that the dearth of studies into civil disputes has created a "gaping hole" in our understanding of "the most fundamental aspects of Old Regime social, cultural and political history."⁶⁸ Such claims are a reaction to the dominance of traditional histories of the state at the expense of the experiences and lives of ordinary people.⁶⁹ Hervé Piant argues that civil litigation offers a way into those histories.⁷⁰ This is largely a consequence of the sheer number of civil cases; the majority of cases heard by royal and *seigneurial* courts concerned civil matters.⁷¹ While my thesis looks exclusively at criminal proceedings, there is significant value in considering both civil and criminal dossiers alongside each other. Scholars have shown that litigants' strategies were not always linear; the complexity of early modern legal jurisdictions could benefit a litigant seeking to pursue their claims through multiple official avenues.⁷² A key component of this thesis' argument is that litigants

⁶⁶ Ratel, 'Between Facts and Faith,' 162.

⁶⁷ Tom Hamilton, 'Prosecuting theft in Old Regime France, c. 1540 - c. 1700,' *Continuity and Change*, 38 (2023): 290.

⁶⁸ Michael P. Breen, 'Law, Society and the State in Early Modern France,' *The Journal of Modern History* 83, no. 2 (2011): 354.

⁶⁹ Similar arguments have been made also for English legal history. See, for example, Tim Stretton, *Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 5-7.

⁷⁰ Hervé Piant, *Une Justice Ordinaire: Justice Civile et Criminelle dans la prévôté royale de Vaucouleurs sous l'Ancien Régime* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015), 14-15.

⁷¹ Breen, 'Law, Society and the State,' 354.

⁷² See for example Cordelia Beattie, 'A Piece of the Puzzle: Women and the Law as Viewed from the Late Medieval Court of Chancery,' *Journal of British Studies* 58, no. 4 (2019): 751-767; Mark Greengrass and Tom Hamilton, 'Gaspard de Monconys' Defence against the Charge of Imposture: Criminal Justice, Social

used the courts strategically, often alongside physical violence, to complicate their enmities and vanquish their adversaries. It stands to reason, therefore, that disputants' strategies involved civil as well as criminal litigation. Indeed, such strategies are evident in the *sacs*. Chapter One discusses multiple criminal suits concerning violent confrontations which came about as a result of previous civil suits between adversaries. In the 1685 case between Marie du Prat and Fabien Bernadet, and the 1699 case between demoiselle Louise de Soubies, Jacquette de Gelet and her stepdaughters, Marie and Marguerite Laporte, civil litigation is explicitly stated by the disputants to have played a contributing role in the severity of their enmities.⁷³ Where possible, therefore, I cross-reference the *parlement's* collection of civil cases with the information from the criminal cases to build more detailed pictures of the disputes brought before the appellate court. However, considering the already substantial number of criminal suits reviewed during this thesis, there was not scope to systematically sample the *parlement's* civil suits alongside the criminal dossiers. Future projects might benefit our understanding of early modern dispute strategies by mapping, in more detail, litigants' dual use of civil and criminal litigation.

There are two important caveats which must be discussed regarding the totality of the collection and its access. First, though the collection of *sacs* is extensive - the archive's inventory details that they have preserved over 100,000 trial bags - the extant *sacs* do not represent the entire collection of trial bags created during the court's years of operation. Historic processes, both whilst the *parlement* was an active tribunal and afterwards, influenced the quantity of those preserved in Toulouse today. As Guillaume Ratel describes, the removal of the *parlement's* archive from the *Château Narbonnais* to the Archives départementales de la Haute-Garonne accounted for some losses, but these losses "pale in comparison to the pre-Revolutionary losses and accidental destructions".⁷⁴ During active investigations and trials, the *sacs* were kept in the *greffe* and were overseen by the *greffier* and his clerks. They were moved to the *parlement's* archives at the suit's conclusion. Contemporary accounts describe the *greffe* as overcrowded with papers and trial bags which were hung from hooks on the ceiling and

Hierarchy, and Personal Identity in Early Seventeenth-Century France,' *The Seventeenth Century* 39, no. 4 (2024): 511-537.

⁷³ AD. H-G, 2B 2356; AD. H-G, 2B 6441.

⁷⁴ Ratel, 'Between Facts and Faith,' 441-442.

stacked on the floor and shelving.⁷⁵ The *greffe* was said to be in desperate need of repair by the end of the eighteenth century, and consequently, untold numbers of the dossiers were lost from exposure to the elements, pests, and damage from human traffic.⁷⁶

Second, researchers do not have access to the entirety of the extant *sacs*. As the archive's website explains, of the more than 100,000 dossiers held in the 2B sub-series, approximately fifteen percent have been indexed.⁷⁷ The remaining eighty-five percent have yet to be processed, assigned call-numbers, and inputted into the series' digitised catalogue. The number of accessible *sacs* is slowly, but continually, increasing. In 2020, during data collection for this project, the number of catalogued violent and non-violent criminal cases from the 1680-1720 period stood at 3,666. Today, in 2025, this number stands at 3,963.⁷⁸ As a dataset, the *sacs* are therefore not complete, and are constantly changing. This is, of course, the nature of many historical sources. But it is important to note that while the dossiers present a fruitful opportunity to study the social and judicial histories of early modern Languedoc, the patterns gleaned from this archive may well change as we gain access to more of the *sacs*.

Systematic quantitative analysis of the *sacs* is further hindered by the cataloguing process. Due to the overwhelming abundance of the extant *sacs*, the archives outsourced the cataloguing of the initial 10,000 cases to Masters students from the University of Toulouse. The work undertaken by these students is invaluable to researchers using the *sacs*. Even so, the cataloguing process, which does not appear to have been organised chronologically, geographically, or thematically, has created a number of issues for systematic analysis of the data.⁷⁹ Ratel identifies over-representations of certain periods - particularly 1660-1680 - and an over-emphasis of criminal cases over civil.⁸⁰ However, until the remainder of the *sacs* are catalogued we cannot know the extent of such over-representations. In the meantime, the number of accessible *sacs* is already significant. Researchers should not be put off from drawing on this rich source base. Instead, and as I explain for this project in a later section,

⁷⁵ See extracts of the engineer François Garipuy's report of the parlement's buildings, including the *greffe*, created in 1778, reproduced in Ratel's thesis: 124-5, 164-166.

⁷⁶ Ratel, 'Between Facts and Faith,' 164.

⁷⁷ AD. H-G, 'Sub-series 2B Inventory.'

⁷⁸ All data referred to in this thesis is drawn from the data collected in 2020. None of the cases which the archive catalogued after 2020 have been examined.

⁷⁹ Hamilton, 'Prosecuting theft in Old Regime France,' 290.

⁸⁰ Ratel, 'Between Facts and Faith,' 443.

methodological approaches which are shaped around the specific nature of *sacs* can successfully utilise the trial bags for historical enquiry.

The legal process and the contents of the *sacs à procès*

Before discussing the methodological approaches that I use to interrogate the documents contained within the *sacs*, it is necessary to provide an overview of the legal process, and the various documents that were generated as a result. The legal process can be separated into five stages: the *information*, that is the investigation by a judicial official, the hearing with the accused, the confrontation between witnesses and the accused, the conclusions and sentence of the court, and the appeal.⁸¹ This process was confirmed in the criminal ordinance of August 1670 which aimed at codifying French criminal law.⁸² It is important to note that not every case went through all five stages, and as a result the contents of the *sacs* vary significantly. The first three stages produced the majority of the documents which are analysed throughout this thesis.

Criminal litigation could be instigated by the magistrates themselves, usually in incidents of *grand criminel* which threatened public order, or in cases where the injured party was unable to file a suit themselves.⁸³ We see evidence of this in the *parlement's* trial bags. In the case involving the murder of noble Pierre d'Ibos, outlined in the opening paragraph of this introduction, the investigation was instigated by the *consuls* of Masseube (Gers) who visited d'Ibos on his deathbed, arranged for a surgeon to perform an autopsy, and interviewed witnesses.⁸⁴ However, as Soman explains, the cost of investigations and trials were expensive, and "prosecutions for only the most egregious crimes were financed out of judicial budgets".⁸⁵ The majority of cases were instigated by the plaintiffs registering a denunciation or complaint with their local

⁸¹ Benoît Garnot, 'La violence dans la France modern: une violence apprivoisée?' in *Violence, conciliation et repression: Recherches sur l'histoire du crime, de l'Antiquité au XXIe siècle*, ed. Aude Musin, Xavier Rousseaux and Frédéric Vesentini (Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses universitaires de Louvain, 2013), 290.

⁸² François-André Isambert, M. Jourdan and Athanase-Jean-Léger Decrusy, *Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises, depuis l'an 420 jusqu'à la Révolution de 1789*, vol. 18 (1821-1833), 371-423.

⁸³ Albert N. Hamscher, *The Royal Financial Administration and the prosecution of crime in France, 1670-1789* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2012), 18-27; Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 192.

⁸⁴ A.D H-G, 2B 2367.

⁸⁵ Alfred Soman, 'The Parlement of Paris and the Great Witch Hunt (1565-1640),' *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 9, no. 2 (1978): 42.

court.⁸⁶ This *plainte* would initiate the *information*.⁸⁷ At this stage, the presiding magistrate would examine the scene of the crime and interview witnesses. Witness testimonies were crucial for the establishment of proof in Roman law jurisdictions, and as such were evaluated against a hierarchy of validity and access.⁸⁸ Visual evidence was superior to hearsay, and eyewitnesses who saw the entirety of the crime were preferred to those who had only seen part of, or the aftermath of, the offence.⁸⁹ The courts' reliance on witness testimony for proof is reflected in the often significant numbers of witnesses that were called on to recount what they had seen. The trial bag for the 1681 incident between sieur Jean François Caussidiers and sieur Claude de Bosc, in Montgeard (Haute-Garonne) contains the testimonies of fourteen witnesses.⁹⁰ The investigation into a 1696 dispute between maître Guillaume Fabré, *juge royal*, and noble Jean-André Lamerie de Cazaledes, major in the Rouergue regiment, generated twenty-seven witnesses!⁹¹

If witnesses were not forthcoming, a *monitoire*, which ordered parishioners with knowledge of the incident to recount their testimony under penalty of excommunication, could be published and read out by the parish priest during mass on three consecutive Sundays.⁹² These are relatively common in the *sacs*; of the two hundred cases that this thesis draws on, nineteen (9.5%) include reference to either the publication of a *monitoire*, or include copies of the *cahier des revelations* compiled by the priests. *Monitoires* frequently attracted significant numbers of witnesses; the *cahier des revelations* created during the *information* for a 1697 incident in Tarbes (Hautes-Pyrénées) includes the testimonies of twenty-five witnesses.⁹³ However, as Tom

⁸⁶ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 191.

⁸⁷ Garnot, 'La Violence dans la France moderne,' 290.

⁸⁸ Mirjan R. Damaška, *Evaluation of Evidence: Pre-Modern and Modern Approaches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 66-71; Greengrass and Hamilton, 'Gaspard de Monconys' Defence,' 516.

⁸⁹ Christelle Clément, 'Injures, coups et blessures: le regard des témoins dans les procédures de la justice seigneuriale de Saint-Seine l'Abbaye (1787-1789),' in *Les témoins devant la justice: Une histoire des statuts et des comportements* ed. Benoît Garnot (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015): 353-355; Tom Hamilton, 'The Evidence of Hearsay in Criminal Proceedings from Late Renaissance France,' *Renaissance Studies* 36, no. 3 (2022): 379.

⁹⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 1453.

⁹¹ AD. H-G, 2B 5658.

⁹² Éric Wenzel, 'Forcer les témoignages: le délicat recours au monitoire sous l'Ancien Régime,' in *Les Témoins Devant la Justice: Une Histoire des Statuts et des Comportements*, ed. Benoît Garnot (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2003), 84.

⁹³ AD. H-G, 2B 2291.

Hamilton explains, the value of *monitoires* was limited; the testimonies received by the priests were overwhelmingly based on hearsay rather than direct knowledge of the offences.⁹⁴ Surgeons' reports were also important for establishing proof. The reports are formulaic, detailing the nature in which the surgeon was called to visit the injured party and the state in which they found the victim/s, for example, in their own bed, or in a bed at a lodging house near to the scene of the crime. The reports provide a review of the injuries the victim had received, an account of how they believed the victim had been injured, and a comment on how long recovery might take. If the victim died, as in the above detailed death of noble Pierre d'Ibos, the surgeon might also be requested to perform a postmortem and provide a report of his findings for the magistrates.⁹⁵

Once proof had been established, the magistrates could issue a summons for the accused to appear in court and respond to the accusations made against them.⁹⁶ These hearings allow researchers to gain a more detailed picture of the disputes represented in the *sacs*. Defendants were, however, known to ignore these requests and consequently, many cases end after the *information*.⁹⁷ Defendants' accounts were also recorded in counter-suits, which were often filed on the basis of defamation or calumny. It is important to note that, based on the *sacs* and the archival catalogue, we are not able to ascertain exactly how many defendants filed counter-suits. Some of the *parlement's* trial bags include the plaintiff's complaint and investigation documents, alongside the defendant's counter-suit documents. We see this in the trial bag for the 1682 dispute between maître sieur Etienne Bonnefons, *marguillier*, and maître Jean Vedeille, *curé* of Saint-Beauzile (Tarn) discussed in Chapter Two.⁹⁸ The *sac* contains Bonnefons' complaint and the resultant witness testimonies, alongside a copy of Vedeille's countersuit filed with the *officialité* in Albi, and Bonnefons' appeal to the *parlement*. By contrast, other countersuits are contained within their own *sacs*. Some of these linked cases have been identified by the archives and are detailed in the inventory whereas others I have identified during my analysis of the catalogue and the *sacs*. The existence of linked cases presents something of a challenge for assessing how rates of litigation

⁹⁴ Hamilton, 'The Evidence of Hearsay,' 385.

⁹⁵ A.D H-G, 2B 2367.

⁹⁶ Garnot, 'La Violence,' 290.

⁹⁷ Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France*, 192.

⁹⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 1408.

correspond to rates of violence. Given that only a minority of the cases have thus far been inventoried, and that those that have been inventoried have not necessarily been linked together by the archive, it is impossible to account for the potential of linked cases skewing analysis of data drawn from the archival catalogue. However, I have ensured that each of the two hundred trial bags included in the sample that this thesis analyses refers to independent incidents of violence, and where linked cases have been identified, these are noted in the appendix. For example, the 1680 incident between noble Jean de Viscose de la Cour and maître Pierre Bertellier, lawyer, generated two trial bags, 2B 1232 and 2B 1273.⁹⁹ The first contains the complaint, and the second the countersuit. The first case is included in this thesis' sample, whereas the second is noted in the appendix.

The next stages of the criminal process were the *recollement*, where the witnesses could alter their testimonies for the final time, and the confrontations between the witnesses and the accused.¹⁰⁰ In the *recollements* included in the thesis sample, most witnesses confirmed their previous statements, and replied “ne veulent rien plus augmenter ni diminuer.”¹⁰¹ Where witnesses did amend their previous statements, this was typically to clarify specific details rather than to drastically alter testimonies.¹⁰² Confrontations took the form of a face to face interview between the accused and the witness. The parties were asked if they knew each other before the witness's testimony was read out. The accused was then asked to respond to, or challenge, the testimony. This was an opportunity for the defendant to undermine the credibility of the witness. Following the 1698 attack on the *château* of Saint Orens (Gers), Jean de Miramon, *seigneur* of Aignan, was arrested.¹⁰³ During the confrontations, de Miramon was faced by the sixteen-year-old witness Dominique Barrere. After hearing Barrere's testimony, de Miramon replied that he objected to the testimony, and that Barrere was a “voleur public” who, together with his father, also a witness in the case, stole rabbits from the neighbourhood warrens. He then provided a detailed account of all of the thefts that he knew Barrere's father to have committed. De

⁹⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 1232, 1273.

¹⁰⁰ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 191.

¹⁰¹ See for example AD. H-G 2B 2287.

¹⁰² See for example, AD. H-G. 2B 2275; 5370; 7958.

¹⁰³ AD. H-G, 2B 5370.

Miramon also explained that their testimonies could not be trusted because they were seeking revenge for a complaint that he had filed with the *prévôté* against Barrere's father who, while living with de Miramon in the position of falconer, had stolen wine from his wine cellar and a nightingale from his aviary. Confrontations appear to be relatively rare in the *parlement's* dossiers, but those that do exist are valuable for building a richer picture of the social networks which existed between the witnesses and the disputants.

The confrontation was followed by the judgement of the court, the *sentence définitive*, and finally the appeal documents. The sentence documents are often missing from the *sacs* - this might be because the case was appealed from an earlier stage, as in the 1697 case between noble Louis de Plantier de Montvert and Anne Reyne and her children Marie and Pierre Lavie.¹⁰⁴ After the ordinary court ordered confrontations with witnesses, the defendants appealed to the *sénéchaussée* of Nîmes. Sentences could also have been removed at the litigants' request; litigants who wanted proof of their success at law could reclaim their *productions* for a fee.¹⁰⁵ The sentences that do remain are often very detailed. See, for example, the sentence rendered by the ordinary court of Puisserguier (Hérault) against Marguerite Garriguenque following her attack on sieur Jean Cazalous, *premier consul*, after he ordered her to remove her drying laundry from the tombstones in the graveyard.¹⁰⁶ The court ordered Garriguenque to "faire satisfaction" to sieur Cazalous in the presence of the other *consuls* and the priest of Puisserguier, and in front of two friends chosen by Cazalous. The apology was to take place in Cazalous' house. Garriguenque was also forbidden from repeating the original offence, drying her laundry in the cemetery, was ordered to pay fifty *livres* in fines, and was banished from the jurisdiction of Puisserguier for six months, with the penalty, should she return before that time, set at one hundred *livres*. She was also ordered to pay ten *livres* to the poor, and a further fifty *livres* for damages and interest incurred by Cazalous during the litigation. We cannot know, of course, whether the sentences were carried out.

The plaintiff's or defendant's appeal to the *parlement* usually constitutes the final document in the *sacs*. These comprise the request from the litigant themselves, detailing

¹⁰⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 7635.

¹⁰⁵ Ratel, 'Between Facts and Faith,' 442.

¹⁰⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 7958.

the reasons for the appeal, and the *inventaire*, produced by the litigants' procurator, which listed the various documents contained within the *sac*, often with a short summary of each item.¹⁰⁷ None of the two hundred cases that I examined include a verdict (*arrêt*) from the *parlement*. This is likely the result of various procedural factors. First, disputants may have sought reconciliation outside of the courts, terminating the litigation before the trial reached sentencing.¹⁰⁸ Second, in some cases there may have been an *arrêt* issued, but these are no longer contained within the trial bags examined as part of this thesis. Verdicts rendered by the *parlement* are also held in registers by the Archives départementales de la Haute-Garonne.¹⁰⁹ While examination of the *parlement's* registers of *arrêts* would have provided an important opportunity to record-link the cases with their potential legal conclusion, the *arrêts* number in the tens of thousands and, given the timing of my archival research in between COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, there was not scope to explore these registers.¹¹⁰ Future projects would benefit from doing so, as the information contained within them, including details relating to the parties involved, the offense committed, how the litigation was funded and the sentence pronounced, alongside practical information regarding the process of the trial, would doubtless add to the already rich picture that the *sacs* provide of early modern disputing processes.¹¹¹ Lastly, and as the cases discussed throughout this thesis make clear, cases may have been abandoned before sentencing because recourse to the law did not necessarily signify an intent for reconciliation. The end point of cases at the initial point of appeal may instead signify the pursuit of enmity through alternative channels.

Methodology

As a result of the different stages of the judicial process, the contents of the trial bags vary significantly. Legal and administrative correspondence has proven useful for discerning some of the strategies and processes which shaped the suits. Chapter Three, for instance, discusses the financial costs of litigation and how we might interpret an

¹⁰⁷ Ratel, 'Between Facts and Faith,' 163.

¹⁰⁸ Dinges, 'The Uses of Justice.'

¹⁰⁹ AD. H-G, Series 2B.

¹¹⁰ Ratel, 'Between Facts and Faith,' 355.

¹¹¹ Castan, *Les Criminels de Languedoc*, 333.

individual's willingness to accrue significant costs through various stages of a criminal suit, including the publication of *monitoires* and requesting witnesses from multiple localities to give testimony before sometimes far away courts - these journeys had to be paid for by the plaintiff. This is possible thanks to the preservation of procedural documents created for the function of the court. The summons (*assignations*) presented to witnesses by court bailiffs contained information about where the bailiff travelled from and to in the course of his duty, where the witnesses were located, and where they were expected to present themselves to give testimony. At the end of their statements, witnesses were routinely asked whether they required financial compensation for the time taken to attend court, which was often many miles from their homes and places of work. The witnesses' responses, and the quantity of compensation they received, reveals something of the cumulative costs of litigation.

While valuable, such documents play a supporting role in this project. The importance of the *sacs* lies primarily in the array of ego-documents contained within them; the plaintiffs', defendants', and witnesses' testimonies.¹¹² These documents are rich with human experiences. They shine a light onto quotidian interactions and relationships, and onto the personal and collective concerns of the litigants and witnesses who recounted their stories to the courts. However, accessing these experiences in the face of the constraints of the documents themselves requires an interdisciplinary approach which is mindful of the ways in which both the courts and the deponents shaped the testimonies.

The cultural turn of the late-twentieth century saw a series of microhistories draw attention to the value of judicial records for social and cultural histories.¹¹³ These studies champion 'history from below' and draw on the fields of social anthropology and literary studies to interpret their source materials. Chief among these, Natalie Zemon Davis' *The Return of Martin Guerre* and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou* continue

¹¹² For an overview of the term 'egodocuments' and the inclusion of legal testimonies, see: Michael Mascuch, Rudolf Dekker and Arianne Baggerman, 'Egodocuments and History: A Short Account of the Longue Durée,' *The Historian* 78, no. 1 (2016): 12, 26; Mary Fulbrook and Ulinka Rublack, 'In Relation: The 'Social Self' and Ego-Documents,' *German History* 28, no. 3 (2010): 267.

¹¹³ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village, 1294-1324*, trans. Barbara Bray (London: Scolar Press, 1978); Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (London: Routledge, 1980); Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984); Gene A. Brucker, *Giovanni and Lusanna: love and marriage in Renaissance Florence* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986).

to shape historians' approaches to legal records to this day.¹¹⁴ Ladurie's interrogation of the Bishop of Pamiers' inquisition register reveals a rich and colourful history of the day-to-day lives of Montaillou's residents.¹¹⁵ Reading against the grain of the inquisition register, Ladurie found evidence of cultural norms and social practices which would, without the registers, be otherwise lost to us.¹¹⁶ Davis' investigation into the arrival of an imposter in the home of Bertrande de Rols takes the potential of legal documents further. She questions the interests which motivated Arnaud du Tilh's criminal activity and uses interrogations with de Rols, and hearings with witnesses, to examine the circumstances which led to de Rols welcoming du Tilh into the marital home in lieu of her husband, Martin Guerre.

In their reading of legal sources against the intention for which they were created, Davis and Ladurie demonstrate the potential for court records to provide important insights into the experiences and attitudes of their subjects, and into the societal and cultural norms which informed their subjects' lived realities. These studies have since inspired a wealth of social and cultural histories based on judicial records. But they have also generated a debate on the challenges that such sources pose for historians, and how, or indeed if, we might overcome them.¹¹⁷ There is not space to discuss the entirety of this debate in detail; I will instead outline two of the main challenges that pertain to this project and how I have sought to accommodate these in my approach to the *sacs*.

The first problem is one of presentation, and the question of how, or if, we can access the voice of the litigants in the *parlement's* criminal dossiers. Judicial documents are products of the legal processes for which they were created. The questions which

¹¹⁴ Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*; Ladurie, *Montaillou*.

¹¹⁵ Ladurie, *Montaillou*.

¹¹⁶ See, for example, Le Roy Ladurie's analysis of shepherds' social networks in and around Montaillou. In this he identifies a hierarchy amongst the shepherds; those with land to graze their sheep, and those without. But he also identified cooperatives between shepherds which transgressed social hierarchies. 75-77.

¹¹⁷ For an overview of the key voices in this debate, see: Thomas Kuehn, 'Reading Microhistory: The Example of Giovanni and Lusanna,' *The Journal of Modern History* 61, no. 3 (1989): 517-519; Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Joanna Bailey, 'Voices in court: lawyers' or litigants?,' *Historical Research* 74, no. 186 (2001): 392-408; Tim Stretton, 'Women, Legal Records, and the Problem of the Lawyer's Hand,' *Journal of British Studies* 58, no. 4 (2019): 684-700; Alexandra Shephard, 'Worthless Witnesses? Marginal Voices and Women's Legal Agency in Early Modern England,' *Journal of British Studies* 58, no 4 (2019): 717-734.

were asked of the litigants and the ways in which their responses and experiences were recorded were all pre-determined by the processes of the courts. In addition, the accounts that we read were originally presented to the courts as oral testimonies; they were physically recorded in ink by lawyers and court scribes. We know that the transcriptions did not always represent the exact words given by the deponents. Davis, for example, has shown that scribes had a tendency to moralise the language that they heard.¹¹⁸ In the case of the *sacs*, the effects of scribes' editing and re-shaping was potentially compounded by the transfer of the testimonies through the different stages of the court hierarchy. We do not, for example, have access to the original transcriptions of the testimonies from the courts of first instance, but rather excerpts which were taken from the lesser courts' registers and copied into the records for the *parlement*. The litigants' and witnesses' statements therefore pass through several hands before reaching their final point in the *sacs*.

How then can we know that the accounts we are reading are those of the litigants, and not the words of the scribes? Some scholars conclude that we cannot. Tommaso Astarita, for example, explains that mediation and interpretation always occurs "when villagers' speech is transposed into the documents."¹¹⁹ Laura Gowing argues that "clerks' records of witnesses' answers represent [...] a mediated, rearranged, and possibly rewritten version of the real words they had heard."¹²⁰ Tim Stretton speculates that a more fruitful line of enquiry lies in identifying the processes of collaboration by which litigants' testimonies were created.¹²¹ But, others argue that by paying attention to the process which shaped the production of judicial documents, we can filter through the various voices present in legal testimonies and identify the voice of the litigant. Most notably, Davis' analysis of pardon tales in sixteenth-century France has shown that the process by which remission tales were ratified by the courts preserves "the original voice of the supplicant over that of the scribe."¹²² Joanne Bailey argues that "some sources allow a glimpse past the distorting influence of law to specific

¹¹⁸ Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, 22.

¹¹⁹ Tommaso Astarita, *Village Justice: Community, Family, and Popular Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), xxi.

¹²⁰ Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 47.

¹²¹ Stretton, 'Women, Legal Records, and the Problem of the Lawyer's Hand,' 684-700.

¹²² Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, 21.

clients' voices."¹²³ Each step of the legal process in the church courts that she studies "generated written documents that were given on oath".¹²⁴

Similarly, the production of the *sacs* provides multiple mechanisms by which we might identify the voices of the deponents. Each testimony recorded, whether that of the plaintiff, defendant, or witness, was taken under oath, with each deponent asked to sign their name to their statement after the written statement had been read back to them. This process gave the deponent the opportunity to alter their testimony. Where we are fortunate to have documents from each stage of the judicial process, from the lower courts through to the *parlement*, there are multiple opportunities for re-telling and cross-examination. The appeals process and the extraordinary measures of *recollement* and *confrontation* provided additional opportunities for deponents to change or defend their testimonies under oath. While we cannot know the extent to which scribes altered the phrasing or the structure of the testimonies they recorded, the judicial process which created the *sacs* provides some assurance that the words that we read were approved by the deponents that gave them.

The second problem that we must account for when using legal sources is that of narrative, and litigants' obfuscation of the truth in their testimonies. Legal sources are, by their nature, adversarial. Davis argues that litigants' depositions are fundamentally fictional narratives, so-constructed to appeal to the magistrates judging their cases.¹²⁵ We see evidence of this framing in the *sacs*. As Chapter One discusses, plaintiffs frequently drew attention to, and even overstated, certain details such as their advanced age or the fact that they were pregnant, in order to emphasise the gravity of their adversary's actions. How then might we use judicial sources for evidence of societal and cultural norms?

Crucially, I am not looking to ascertain the truth of any one account. The specific narratives that litigants put to the courts are valuable for what they reveal about the social expectations that early moderns held.¹²⁶ However, it is not possible to tell fact from fiction with any certainty. Rather, I look to the cases for what they tell us about social practice, and the broader contexts of disputants' use of violence and the law in

¹²³ Bailey, 'Voices in court,' 394.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, 35.

¹²⁶ Merridee L. Bailey, "Most Hevynesse and Sorrowe": The Presence of Emotions in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Court of Chancery,' *Law and History Review* 37, no. 1 (2019): 3.

their disputing strategies.¹²⁷ To access this, I draw on methods from social anthropology and literary studies. I adopt Clifford Geertz's 'thick description', to describe and analyse the narratives put forward in the cases.¹²⁸ Such an approach enables me to draw together the testimonies of all those examined in each case, both the litigants and the witnesses, to decode something of the meaning behind the actions and behaviours described in the cases. In this way, I avoid privileging one account over another, and look at all of the information provided as equally valuable for our understanding of the disputants and their lives. In addition, I juxtapose the information in the dossiers against extant sources from parish and notarial records. This was not possible for all of the cases examined; time constraints exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a reliance of digitised parish records. However, where this was possible, additional information from sources besides the *sacs* played important roles in interpreting the tensions which underpinned the use of violence between disputants. It is, for example, in the parish records of Aspet (Haute-Garonne) that we find information of sieur Jean Toussan's social ties, through god-parentage, to other *consuls* in Aspet and the surrounding towns and villages.¹²⁹ The parish records reveal that Toussan's connection with other such notables, and the social advantages that such ties afforded, began and ended in accordance with his time as *premier consul* of Aspet. This context helps to explain why, in 1682, Toussan violently assaulted the bailiff who was tasked with informing him of his removal from office.¹³⁰ By applying these methodological approaches across the sample of two hundred cases that this thesis draws on, we can read individual interactions in relation to the broader sample, and develop a richer understanding of the societal and cultural norms which shaped litigants use of violence and the law.

¹²⁷ The benefits of this approach are addressed in detail in Bronach Kane and Fiona Williamson, 'Introduction,' in *Women, Agency, and the Law, 1300-1700*, eds. Bronach Kane and Fiona Williamson (London: Routledge, 2016): 1-16.

¹²⁸ Clifford Geertz, 'Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture,' in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: Basic Books, 1973): 3-32.

¹²⁹ AD. H-G, 2E 2853, 'Aspet' 1 E 2, *Registres Paroissial* (1681-1699).

¹³⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 1465.

The Data

The aims of this project, to investigate the social landscape of Languedoc through the lens of the *parlement* of Toulouse's criminal dossiers, required a blended methodology. Scholars have demonstrated the limitations of relying on purely statistical methods for studies of past communities. As Claire Dolan explains, statistical analysis does not allow for an appreciation of the complexities of social relationships.¹³¹ This is exhibited in the now commonly refuted *vol-violence* theory which used statistical analysis of criminal records to evidence a shift in mentalities and a corresponding shift in criminality from violence against persons to violence against property.¹³² However, statistical analysis has proven particularly useful during the course of this project for managing the sometimes overwhelming scale of the *parlement's* archives. It is not possible to examine all the cases brought before the *parlement* between 1680 and 1720. As such, I chose to examine a sample of two hundred cases and used quantitative analysis of the *sacs* inventory to guide the sample selection process.¹³³

The catalogue contains all the inventoried civil and criminal cases brought before the *parlement* during the early modern period. My first step was to separate out the incidents of violence from the rest of the criminal cases. The first trawl included all of the cases brought before the *parlement* between 1680 and 1720; a total of 3,666 cases. The second database included only the cases of physical interpersonal violence for the same period; a total of 1,569 cases. Building the second database required defining the types of violence that this project would examine. This is a difficult task, primarily because conceptions of violence are both heavily subjective and historically specific. Contemporary legal interpretations can provide us with a framework of the perceived severity of different crimes, although, as Benoît Garnot explains, we should be mindful of the diverse interpretations of crimes and their requisite punishments, despite the codification efforts of the 1670 *ordonnance criminelle*.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Claire Dolan, 'The artisans of Aix-en-Provence in the sixteenth-century: A micro-analysis of social relationships,' in *Cities and Social Change in Early Modern France* ed. Philip Benedict (London: Routledge, 1992): 175.

¹³² Garnot, 'La violence,' 290.

¹³³ This figure was originally higher, at 300 cases, or roughly 20% of the total number of incidents of violence for the period 1680-1720. However due to the onset of the Covid pandemic six months into the project, I reduced the number as to ensure I was able to spend sufficient time analysing the *sacs* contents.

¹³⁴ Benoît Garnot, *Justice et Société en France aux XVIe, XVIIe, et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Ophrys, 2000), 5.

In narrowing my sample, I chose to exclude all incidents of non-physical violence. As a result, I excluded crimes of verbal violence. Such incidents are common in the cases and are important for what they reveal about the values that individuals and communities more broadly held.¹³⁵ Cases of verbal violence are particularly interesting; as we have seen, honour was a commodity in early modern communities and individuals' use of verbal censure tells us much about boundaries of acceptability and the diverse ways in which societies policed their communities. I excluded such cases from my sample for several reasons. First, studies on verbal violence are already abundant; recent works by Suzannah Lipscomb, Laura Gowing, and Bernard Capp, covering early modern France and England have made significant interventions in the historiography of verbal violence and social control.¹³⁶ Second, the strict time constraints of the project, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, required a narrow approach to the cases. A focus on one primary typology of violence aided this process. Lastly, the majority of the cases pertaining to incidents of physical violence also included accusations of verbal violence. Consequently, while the study explores the use of physical violence in dispute, the cases also reveal much about the breadth of the strategies that early modern disputants employed to vanquish their enemies.

The Samples

Of the 3,666 criminal cases brought before the *parlement* between 1680 and 1720, 1,569 concern incidents of physical violence. Importantly, when plotted onto a graph, we can see that the rates of violence closely correspond with rates of litigation. The data from the cases reviewed from the *parlement's* archive suggests that the increased numbers of cases brought before the tribunal during the period may reflect increased rates of violence (See Figure One).

¹³⁵ Michel Nassiet, *La Violence, Une Histoire Sociale: France XVIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 2011), 90.

¹³⁶ Lipscomb, 'Crossing Boundaries,'; Gowing, 'Gender and the Language of Insult,'; Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

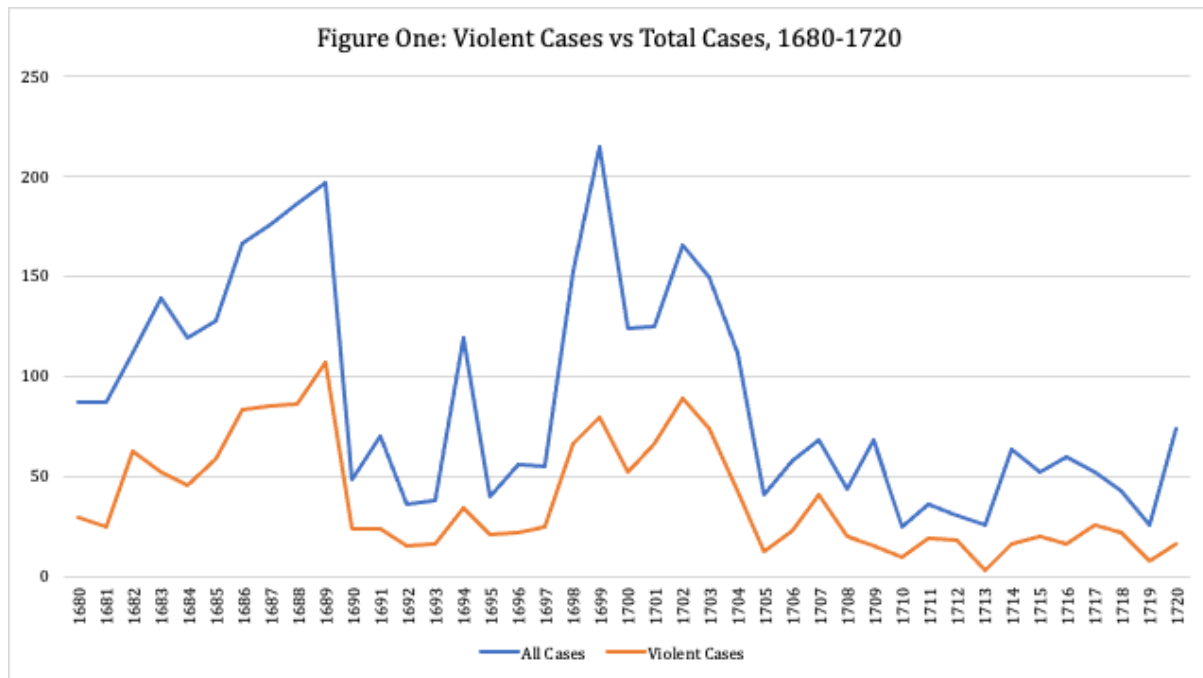


Figure 1: Violent Cases vs Total Cases, 1680-1720

This is significant. Traditional histories of the French state argue that the expansion of the law courts into the provinces through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries played a crucial role in the centralisation of the state. Mechanisms of popular justice were replaced by that of royal justice. The corresponding increase in rates of litigation has consequently been interpreted as evidence of the punitive nature of the law, and the monarchy’s success in repressing criminality throughout the kingdom. Moreover, fluctuations in litigation rates might also indicate an increase in ‘supply-side’ factors owing to royal policy changes. Albert N. Hamscher’s recent work on the royal financial administration of justice illustrates the impact that the Colbertian reforms of the 1670s and 1680s had on the capacity of royal courts across the kingdom to pursue criminals through public prosecution.¹³⁷ Colbert’s reforms were aimed at “eliminating ‘abuses’ in the administration of justice”.¹³⁸ A key focus of this effort was cracking down on the financial mismanagement of the courts. In doing so, Colbert transformed the system of financial support for the payment of *frais de justice*. He introduced annual appropriations which, in theory, covered the fees required by the courts to pursue the

¹³⁷ Albert N. Hamscher, *The Royal Financial Administration and the Prosecution of Crime* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2012).

¹³⁸ Hamscher, *The Royal Financial Administration*, 51.

public prosecution of criminals.¹³⁹ These appropriations were initially given at a fixed annual rate. However, after complaints were received from the judges about the quantity received versus the needs of the courts, Colbert introduced fluctuating appropriations which changed in value from year to year.

Fluctuations in litigation rates therefore may reflect the increased capacity of the courts to pursue public prosecution in certain years. However, it is important to note that such policy changes do not account for the total picture of litigation brought before the courts during our period. Hamscher explains that the monarchy only paid the criminal *frais de justice* in specific instances. Royal funds were only to spent “in the pursuit of serious crimes”, known as *grand criminal*, and only when the prosecutors initiated the suit as the sole plaintiff.¹⁴⁰ My examination of the two hundred cases from the *parlement* makes clear that this category applies to only a minority of the cases. The majority (75.5%) relate to incidents of petty violence, insults and threats. We can therefore infer that, while supply-side factors undoubtedly contributed to the fluctuations in rates of litigation that we can see in Figure One, they do not completely explain them. Rather, it appears that, alongside spikes in rates of litigation, there were also fluctuations in rates of violent disputes.

In order to explore the nature of this violence, I analysed the 1,569 cases for the social groups present. Four social groups feature collectively in 1,113 (72%) of the cases. It is disputes involving these four groups that each of this thesis’ chapters examine. The male notability and nobility, and the clergy dominate the *sacs* between 1680 and 1720. The presence of such quantities of local elites in the cases suggests that there was a firm correlation between rates of violence and interactions within local power structures. These cases thus provide an important opportunity to explore the impact of Louis XIVs religious and fiscal policies on power relations within communities across Languedoc.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 60, 88, 98-100.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 5.

Table 1: Presence of social groups in the criminal dossiers, 1680-1720

Table One: Presence of social groups in the criminal dossiers, 1680-1720 (plaintiffs/victims and defendants)	
Social group	Number of cases
Notability	549
Nobility	176
Clergy	85
Women	601

Crucially, women are present in 38% of the cases. This is an especially significant discovery given that the majority of these cases relate to disputes between neighbours. Scholars frequently claim that women's involvement in violence was as the victims of sexual or domestic violence.¹⁴¹ Importantly, the *sacs* demonstrate that such cases were in the minority. Of the 601 cases involving women, only 124 relate to sexual or domestic violence. These cases provide a unique opportunity to examine the role of women in the disputing process. In order to refine the data sample further, I excluded all cases relating to sexual or domestic violence. This reduced the sample from 1,569 to 1,259. This is the data sample from which I developed my archival sample of two hundred cases.

It is worth discussing the cases which were excluded from the sample. Of the 1,569 cases, 436 (28%) cases were excluded on the basis that they do not include any of the four social groups listed above. In part, these cases contain incidents of violence involving soldiers, peasants, and artisans. Unfortunately, there was not scope to sample cases from these social groups, but, as with the cases of sexual violence excluded from analysis, these cases would undoubtedly provide important insights into the experiences of Languedocians at the turn of the eighteenth century. The majority of the 436 cases excluded however are excluded on the basis that there was not sufficient information in the archival inventory to categorise the cases. Many include little to no information other than the offence and the first or last names of the parties involved. The summary for case 2B 6400, for example, reads "Exces et vol plus cambriolage. 1700.

¹⁴¹ Garnot, *Justice et Société*, 67.

Toulouse. Parties: François / Milou / Bachel.”¹⁴² Similarly, case 2B 15082 reads “Procédure devant la sénéchaussée de Limoux entre Philippe Guivaud et Jean Degleon pour coups et blessures. Limoux, 1684.”¹⁴³ It is likely that many of these cases did involve individuals from the four social groups examined in this thesis but based on the case summaries they have had to be excluded.

The Archives départementales de la Haute-Garonne holds over 100,000 trial bags from the early modern period. The majority (approximately 85%) of these cases are not inventoried, and not accessible to researchers. The cases that are accessible were made so thanks to the efforts of Masters students from the University of Toulouse. The work of these students has proven invaluable for this project. However, there are multiple errors and inconsistencies in the inventory which undoubtedly shaped the sample. Each case listed in the inventory is provided with a summary. Typically, the summaries include the date of the incident, the name of the litigants, the location and jurisdiction in which the incident occurred, the type of crime/s that occurred, and some overview of the primary facts of the case. Take, for example, the case summary for the incident between demoiselle Jeanne Marque and sieur Jean Bousanquet, discussed in the opening paragraphs of this introduction.¹⁴⁴ The summary details that the case took place in 1684, in Sommières (Gard), and was originally investigated by the *viguier* of Sommières. The litigants are detailed as Jeanne Marque and Jean Bousanquet. The crime is listed as *coups et blessure* and the summary reads “Jeanne Marque s’est fait battre à coups de poings devant sa maison par Jean Bouzanquet qui passait par là.” This summary is typical of the quantity of information included in the summaries; a brief note on the contents of the case. It is also typical of the sorts of omissions and inconsistencies that are found throughout the inventory. Marque’s and Bousanquet’s titles are not included, and there are no indicators of their status or the relationship between them. This information is included in the case itself; as we have seen, Marque and Bousanquet’s cousin had a history of hostility. We cannot account for the accuracy of the case summaries; it is only on analysis of the cases themselves that we can reflect on the accuracy of the inventory summary. As a result of such omissions and errors, the

¹⁴² AD. H-G, 2B 6400.

¹⁴³ AD. H-G, 2B 15082.

¹⁴⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 2357.

data analysis should be taken as indicative rather than statistically representative of broader patterns.

The base for each chapter is drawn from a sample of two hundred cases involving the four social groups under examination. These two hundred cases were randomly selected to ensure that the chapters did not privilege one form of dispute over another. However, I guided the sample in two ways to ensure that it was representative of the broader sample from which the cases were selected. First, the percentage of cases involving each of the four social groups (women, clergy, nobility, notability) within the total 1,259 cases corresponds to the percentage of the sample of two hundred cases. For example, where women were involved in 38% of the incidents of violence between 1680 and 1720, 38% of the sample of two hundred cases concern incidents of women’s violence. This means that the sample for Chapter One, which examines women’s involvement of violence, is seventy-five cases. Similarly, where the clergy are present in 7% of the 1,259 cases, the sample for Chapter Two equates to 7% of the two hundred cases, or fourteen cases (see Table Two).

Table 2: Breakdown of the sample by chapter

Table Two: Breakdown of the sample by chapter				
Social group	No. cases in 1,259	%	No. cases in 200	%
Women	477	38	75	38
Clergy	83	7	14	7
Nobility	175	14	27	14
Notability	529	42	84	42

Secondly, the samples for each chapter are representative of the presence of each social group in the sample of 1,259 by decade. For example, where the nobility are present in 14% of the 353 cases which occurred in the 1710s, four cases (14%) of the nobility’s sample of twenty-seven cases are drawn from the 1710s. Similarly, where the notability is present in 42% of the cases which took place in the 1680s, thirty-five cases (42%) of the notability’s sample of eighty-four cases are selected from the 1680s. Dividing the sample in this way provides a way to overcome some of the constraints of

the database discussed above. While the trends discussed throughout the chapter may only be considered indicative of broader trends and experiences, we can consider the samples for each chapter to be representative of the data at the time it was collected.

Before turning to the chapter summaries, it is worth discussing some of the initial statistical observations that were made based on the sample of two hundred cases, and how these guided the direction of the chapters, and the thesis as a whole. The first is the predominance of petty violence present in the cases. Scholars have previously overlooked the records of the *parlement* because they consider the cases brought before the tribunal to be unrepresentative of broader societal norms. Garnot, for example, criticises studies which rely on the records of appellate courts; he argues that the *parlements'* archives produce a completely distorted version of criminality in France since only the minority of cases were appealed from the courts of first instance.¹⁴⁵ This argument is, in part, grounded in the view that, as the monarchy's most powerful symbol of judicial authority in the provinces, the *parlements* were primarily concerned with the most heinous of crimes. Indeed, public prosecution was reserved for the most egregious offences, those which threatened the king's interests, for example.¹⁴⁶ However, while such offences are present in Toulouse's criminal dossiers, the cases reviewed in this thesis make clear that the most serious crimes account for only the minority of the offences brought before the *parlement*. Many of the cases list multiple offences. A 1683 suit from Cahuzac-sur-Vère (Tarn), for example, concerned "violence, coup et blessure, agression préméditée, injure orale, blasphème".¹⁴⁷ Similarly, a 1691 case from Caupenne-d'Armagnac (Gers) concerned "diffamation, faux témoignage, subornation de témoins, violence."¹⁴⁸ However, if we look at just the most serious offence listed for each case, it is clear that the majority of the cases brought before the *parlement* concerned issues of petty violence.¹⁴⁹ In the two hundred cases reviewed for

¹⁴⁵ Garnot, 'La Violence,' 290.

¹⁴⁶ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 192.

¹⁴⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 2120.

¹⁴⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 2225.

¹⁴⁹ These categorisations are not made on the basis of those provided by the archival catalogue, but by the offences listed within the suits themselves. The accuracy of the archival catalogue is inconsistent, and mis-categorisations are common. Case 2B 2781, for example, is listed in the catalogue as concerning coups et blessures. The suit itself reveals that the offences being investigated are far more severe; assassinat and agression préméditée. Similarly, 2B 3101 is also listed as concerning coups et blessures. However, the case actually pertains to assassinat and meurtre.

this project, there are fifteen incidents of murder (7.5%), twenty-nine incidents of *agression préméditée* or *assassinat* (14.5%), and three incidents of duelling (1.5%).

By contrast, one-hundred-and-fifty-one cases (75.5%) relate to offences categorised as *violence*, *excès*, or *coups et blessures*.¹⁵⁰ These were all forms of personal assault, however the offences described vary significantly from case to case.¹⁵¹ Each of the following cases were brought to the courts because of incidents of *excès* or *violence*. The first concerns a gunshot wound to the victim's face, after which he lost the use of one eye.¹⁵² The second details the abusive imprisonment and torture of a royal bailiff's wife.¹⁵³ Another relates to a cleric's attack on a female victim which left her bed bound for two months.¹⁵⁴ A final case refers to a confrontation over the ownership of a field which involved hair pulling and slapping.¹⁵⁵ This sample of cases illustrates the variety of offences which were listed as *excès* or *violence*; *excès* could refer to violence resulting in life-threatening injuries, or petty incidents with little to no physical injury.

The cases that were tried by the *parlement* did not, therefore, only pertain to the most egregious crimes. Rather, the *sacs* concern petty disputes and confrontations resulting from quotidian interactions. Such incidents are important for what they reveal of the tensions which shaped early modern disputes, and the diverse strategies that litigants adopted to navigate their enmities. As Sanne Muurling argues, analysis of petty violence is crucial for understanding "early modern men's and women's perceptions and experiences of violence".¹⁵⁶ Indeed, the fact that such cases were appealed to the *parlement* at significant cost to the litigants, rather than settled by the court of first instance, tells us much about the value of the stakes that disputants sought to defend during their physical confrontations.

The second observation to make concerns the rurality of the communities in which the incidents of violence took place. We know that France was predominantly rural during the seventeenth century, with less than twenty percent of the kingdom's

¹⁵⁰ The remaining two cases in the sample are for abusive imprisonment and arson.

¹⁵¹ Dewald, *Pont St Pierre*, 129.

¹⁵² AD. H-G, 2B 22562.

¹⁵³ AD. H-G, 2B 7982.

¹⁵⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 7016.

¹⁵⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 2037.

¹⁵⁶ Sanne Muurling, *Everyday Crime, Criminal Justice and Gender in Early Modern Bologna* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 122.

inhabitants living in communities with populations over two thousand.¹⁵⁷ Despite this, scholars commonly choose to focus their research on the urban landscape.¹⁵⁸ This tradition is likely a consequence of better access to extant sources in large towns and cities. But it has resulted in an overstated divide between the experiences of those that resided in urban communities and those that did not.

As Tables Three and Four show, of the two hundred cases reviewed in this thesis, only twenty-eight (14%) took place in a community with a population of over 15,000 inhabitants. One hundred and forty-two (71%) took place in communities with less than 5,000 inhabitants, and seventy-three (37%) took place in communities with less than 1,000 inhabitants.¹⁵⁹ This thesis provides an important opportunity to develop our understanding of the experience of dispute in both urban and rural communities in Languedoc.

Table 3: Population

Table Three: Population		
Population Size	Number of Cases	% of 200 Cases
<5,000	142	71
5,000-10,000	15	7.5
10,000-15,000	15	7.5
15,000-20,000	0	0
20,000-25,000	0	0
25,000-30,000	3	1.5
30,000-35,000	6	3
35,000-40,000	0	0
40,000-45,000	3	1.5
45,000-50,000	0	0
50,000-55,000	16	8

¹⁵⁷ Philip Benedict, 'French Cities from the Sixteenth Century to the Revolution: An Overview' in Philip Benedict, ed. *Cities and Social Change in Early Modern France* (Routledge, 1992), 7.

¹⁵⁸ For recent examples, see: Janine M. Lanza, *From Wives to Widows in Early Modern Paris: Gender, Economy, and Law* (London: Routledge, 2016); Lipscomb, *The Voices of Nîmes*; Mathieu Laflamme, 'Entering the Bedroom through the Judicial Archives: Sexual Intimacy in Eighteenth-Century Toulouse,' in *Early Modern Privacy* eds. Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

¹⁵⁹ All population data discussed throughout the thesis, unless otherwise stated, is based on the figures collated from the 1793 *recensement*, collated the Cassini EHSS project website. Cassini EHSS, "Des Villages de Cassini aux communes d'aujourd'hui," accessed September 3, 2021, <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

Table 4: Population <5000

Table Four: Population <5,000		
Population Size	Number of Cases	Percentage of 200 Cases
<1,000	73	36.5
1,000-2,000	35	17.5
2,000-3,000	16	8
3,000-4,000	9	4.5
4,000-5,000	9	4.5

Chapter Summaries

While the thesis explores fluctuations in rates of violence across a forty-year period, it does not seek to draw direct links between specific events and specific increases or decreases in rates of violence. It does not, for example, attribute the increase in violence in the late 1680s directly to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Given the limitations in access to the archival material discussed above, such linear correlations are not possible. Rather, the thesis explores the broader implications of decisions made at the state level for social relations at the local level. A thematic, rather than a chronological, structure best suits these aims. Each chapter takes one social group - women, the clergy, the petty nobility, and the notability - as its focus. The chapters assess what the *parlement's* criminal dossiers tell us about how and why those individuals used violence and the law as parts of their disputing strategies. They unpick the tensions which appear to have underpinned those individuals' enmities, and place them within the broader social, political, and economic contexts which shaped their communities. There are many distinct factors which informed the experiences and expectations of each social group. However, the chapters together highlight a number of shared socio-cultural realities which shaped the use of violence in early modern Languedoc. Crucially, the chapters emphasise the ways in which royal policies placed these social groups under diverse pressures contributing to the rise in incidents of violence at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Chapter One addresses a significant gap in our understanding of early modern enmities; women's dispute strategies. Scholars purport that women's involvement in interpersonal violence was rare; women's presence in criminal cases was usually in relation to "typically feminine offences" such as prostitution and infanticide.¹⁶⁰ Women's use of violence, it is argued, was even rarer, and primarily the result of petty jealousies.¹⁶¹ This chapter refutes these conclusions. It argues that male and female dispute strategies were not as dissimilar as scholars have previously suggested. This is evidenced through an assessment of the types of violence that women engaged in, of the contentions that existed between women and their male and female adversaries, and of the strategies that they deployed in the pursuit of their enmities. The chapter underscores the value of examining incidents of petty violence in our efforts to understand early modern communities. Such offences are revelatory of the ways in which individuals negotiated their anxieties in everyday life.¹⁶² These interactions highlight tensions occurring as a reaction to transgressions of personal and familial boundaries of authority and tell us much about contemporary perceptions of female honour. Where scholars have frequently understood female honour solely in terms of sexual reputation, the cases reveal the complexities of contemporary perceptions of female honour.¹⁶³ Women used violence to defend their sexual reputations, their credibility, and their micropolitical stakes within their communities. Lastly, the chapter draws attention to the legal consciousness that permeated Languedocian communities. This theme is revisited throughout the thesis, but Chapter One makes important contributions to our understanding of women's part in this. The *sacs* demonstrate women's knowledge of the law in the ways that they constructed their testimonies for the magistrates and in the frequency with which they turned to the courts. But significantly, the cases illustrate that women used their knowledge of the law to amplify the hurt done to their adversaries during their confrontations.

Chapter Two explores the impact that the Counter-Reformation had on parochial clergy-laity relations. Scholars overwhelmingly assess the successes of the Catholic reforms through the episcopacy, and through analysis of urban communities where

¹⁶⁰ Garnot, *Justice et Société*, 67.

¹⁶¹ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 85.

¹⁶² Muurling, *Everyday Crime*, 122.

¹⁶³ Gowing, 'Gender and the Language of Insult,' 19.

seminaries and religious orders aided the dissemination of Tridentine values.¹⁶⁴ This chapter offers a different perspective. Seventeenth-century France was overwhelmingly rural, and it was the rural priest, under the oversight of the bishops, who was refashioned as the moral and spiritual authority within the parish, and charged with implementing the Catholic reforms at the parochial level.¹⁶⁵ The reforms, I argue, engendered tensions between the parish clergy and the laity, and thus provide us with an important opportunity to examine how the Counter-Reformation was experienced by both the clerics and their parishioners. The chapter provides two main contributions to the scholarship. First, Tridentine reforms disrupted local socio-political hierarchies. Rural communities were heavily stratified, and competition for influence was fierce. Violent disputes erupted between parish notables and the clergy as claims for clerical and church power ran up against traditional forms of civic authority. Physical and temporal spaces of church authority became public forums for the violent renegotiation of local hierarchies. Second, Tridentine reforms failed to overcome the heterogeneity of the parish clergy. Where scholars have identified the continuation of clerics' immoral behaviour into the eighteenth century in the records of the *officialité*, the *parlement's* criminal dossiers demonstrate that, despite the Catholic reforms, rural clerics used their public authority to pursue their private interests. Significantly, clerics used both violence and the law to overcome resistance from their parishioners and pursue their own socio-economic advancement.

Chapter Three focuses on the petty nobility's involvement in incidents of violence. Too often, scholars' research on the aristocracy is used to explain the experiences of the Second Estate as if it were a homogenous group.¹⁶⁶ This has resulted in a narrow view of the tensions and anxieties which shaped the nobility's experiences at the turn of the eighteenth century. This chapter's focus on the lowest echelons of the provincial nobility thus provides an important addendum to the historiography. Crucially, violence involving Languedoc's petty nobility was not driven by competition from other nobles, as scholarship on the rise of the *robe* nobility emphasises.¹⁶⁷ Rather,

¹⁶⁴ Briggs, *Communities of Belief*, 261

¹⁶⁵ Timothy Tackett, *Priest and Parish in Eighteenth Century France: A Social and Political Study of the Curés in a Diocese of Dauphiné 1750-1791* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

¹⁶⁶ See for example, Beik, *Absolutism and Society*.

¹⁶⁷ Élie Haddad, 'Nobility of the Sword, Nobility of the Robe: Social Spaces and Ideological Borders,' *L'Atelier du Centre de Recherches Historiques* 22 (2021): 1-16; Robert J. Kalas, 'The Selve Family of

the social and political mobility of the Third Estate exacerbated the nobility's anxieties concerning their position and authority within traditional social hierarchies. The chapter explores tensions between the nobility and the Third Estate through their economic, political, and social relationships. Section one draws attention to the ways in which perceptions of identity and honour undermined financial agreements made across socio-economic boundaries. Despite societal interest in the maintenance of trust in financial relationships, the asymmetrical social status of the parties contributed to the breakdown of economic agreements and the escalation of financial disputes to physical violence. Section two assesses the petty nobility's perceptions of their place within the local political landscape. Representative office, which provided opportunities for individuals from the Third Estate to attain political authority within their communities, disrupted traditional social hierarchies, engendering disputes with the petty nobility who sought to reassert their superiority in the community. The final section explores the social authority of the nobility through their quotidian interactions with individuals from the Third Estate. The inherent superiority of the nobility afforded them the paternal authority to mediate in others' disputes, and police the behaviour of their social inferiors. However, contemporary perceptions of noble authority were complex, and the criminal dossiers evidence a shift away from deference to the nobility. This shift is exhibited in litigation brought against the nobility for abuses of power, and in incidents of violence committed against the nobility by members of the Third Estate.

The final chapter explores the impact of the quest for office-holding on the social landscape of Languedocian communities. Scholars often overlook the identities of the individuals who operated within France's institutions in their preference for institutionally-based state histories.¹⁶⁸ This chapter builds on recent historiographical developments which broadens our understanding of the private interests which shaped the attitudes and practices of office-holders.¹⁶⁹ It argues that the local context of office-holding in Languedoc engendered disputes between office-holders as a result of fierce

Limousin: Members of a New Elite in Early Modern France,' *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18, no. 2 (1987): 147-172.

¹⁶⁸ See, for example, John Hurt, *Louis XIV and the Parlements: The Assertion of Royal Authority* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

¹⁶⁹ Giesey, 'State Building in Early Modern France,' Schneider, *The King's Bench*; Julie Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy: Gender and the Politics of Household Authority in Early Modern France* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

competition for limited positions. Notability achieved through office could be permanent or temporary and office-holders used diverse strategies to maintain their positions within local power networks. But they also reveal that violence was legitimised by the potential loss of access to such networks. Office-holding also engendered disputes between officials and individuals from their communities. Scholars have previously demonstrated the frequency with which office-holders were attacked as a result of the function of their office.¹⁷⁰ By contrast, the *sacs* suggest that, in Languedoc, contentions more commonly arose as a result of contemporary perceptions of authority, complicated by the potential that office had to subvert local social hierarchies. Office-holders' public and private identities were closely interlinked in the early modern period, and positions with a public function provided opportunities for the pursuit of private interests. Moreover, this section examines the contribution of office-holding to the stratification of society and resultant 'culture of dissociation' which shaped communities in our period.¹⁷¹ It argues that the precarity of office-holding at the turn of the eighteenth-century amplified this cultural phenomenon; office-holders, keen to defend their often tenuous status within their local communities, used violent means to humiliate their social inferiors.

Individually, these chapters make important contributions to several historiographies. But read together, the chapters advance our knowledge of dispute and the use of violence in early modern France in two key fields. The *sacs à procès* evidence the importance of looking beyond urban spaces in our examination of early modern communities, and particularly of the political structures which shaped individuals' experiences at the turn of the eighteenth century. Scholars' focus on the urban landscape has served to imply a firm divide between the urban and the rural experience in early modern France.¹⁷² By contrast, the Languedocian case study evidences the continuity of experiences and expectations between urban and rural communities. The majority of the incidents of violence brought before the *parlement* took place in rural communities, but there are also many that took place in urban spaces. Read against each other, these cases evidence significant commonalities in how enmities were instigated, negotiated, and escalated. Crucially, the thesis argues that the tensions and anxieties

¹⁷⁰ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 194;

¹⁷¹ Farr, 'The Death of a Judge,' 4.

¹⁷² See for example: Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*; Breen, *Law, City, and King*.

which underpinned many of the incidents of violence represented in the *parlement's* criminal dossiers cannot be understood without first understanding the political structures which existed in both rural and urban communities across the province. The local context of temporary and permanent office-holding, and the associated potential for upward social mobility, features prominently in Chapters Two, Three, and Four. It shaped the ways in which the laity responded to the Counter-Reformation's transformation of the parish priest. It served to amplify the social, political, and economic anxieties experienced by the petty nobility during Louis XIV's reign. It provided access to, and competition for, positions of notability for individuals across the socio-economic spectrum. But it also features under the surface of many of the cases discussed in Chapter One. Women's position in local hierarchies was primarily defined by the social and political standing of their male kin. The cases demonstrate that violence was a common tool in the defence of personal and familial boundaries of authority, for women as well as for men. But most significantly, Languedoc's complex network of municipal, judicial, and administrative offices served to amplify the legal consciousness which permeated both rural and urban communities and shaped individuals' use of violence and the law during the pursuit of their enmities.

Moreover, the chapters demonstrate the often negative impact of royal policies on social cohesion within the provinces. These cases complicate teleological assumptions about the rise of the modern state and the corresponding decline in rates of interpersonal violence. The two hundred cases examined throughout this thesis suggest that rates of violence, linked to individuals' anxieties concerning their place within local social hierarchies, increased in Languedoc at the turn of the eighteenth century as a result of the social, economic, and political pressures that royal policies placed on communities. Chapter One outlines the bilateral impact of state policies; women's enmities were exacerbated by concerns for personal and familial authority and economic security in much the same way as male enmities were. Chapter Two demonstrates how Tridentine reforms brought the clergy and parishioners into contention as the refashioning of the parish priest eroded the authority of lay notables. Chapters Three and Four illustrate the diverse ways in which traditional social hierarchies were strained and subverted as a result of royal policies that raised taxes and sought to lever office-holding financially. Together, these chapters develop a rich picture of the social landscape of Languedoc in the late-seventeenth century and

exemplify the diverse ways in which royal policy directly and indirectly shaped social relations at the local level.

Chapter One. Women and the Procès: Personal Enmities and Dispute Strategies

The history of women in violence in early modern France, and indeed early modern Europe, is, to this day, underdeveloped.¹ Despite significant and compelling scholarship using interpersonal violence as a road map to early modern cultures, women's disputes, and their use of violence, have too often been relegated to the margins. Carroll's studies on violence and enmities in early modern France and Europe make important contributions to our understanding of social relations within sixteenth- and seventeenth-century communities.² He argues that women "played a considerable role in private disputes", and were commonly seen in the background of disputes between men, urging male kin to seek satisfaction against adversaries.³ Despite this, Carroll dedicates only a handful of sentences to the role of women in incidents of interpersonal violence. Similarly, Jonathan Dewald's study of the barony of Pont-St-Pierre (Eure), has done much to illuminate early modern village life.⁴ In a chapter which uses 143 criminal inquests from the seigneurial court (1680-1789) to ask "how the communities of the Andelle Valley functioned", Dewald concludes that "the problem of crime [...] was essentially the problem of violent disorder".⁵ Examples used demonstrate central themes of personal interests and reputations, with most incidents occurring in public spaces between neighbours.⁶ And yet, women are seldom mentioned. Although Dewald acknowledges that 3.5% of the cases were perpetrated by a female aggressor, and 16.8% of the cases featured both male and female aggressors, the only examples given of violence involving women are of a case of infanticide following an incestuous relationship, and an attack on a woman by a *curé* after the *curé's* horse damaged her crops and she asked for reparations.⁷ Gregory Hanlon's assessment of social conflict in

¹ Women's criminality has, in contrast, attracted significantly more attention in recent years, with scholars focusing primarily on women's involvement in sexual offences and petty crimes. See for example: Jeannette Kamp, *Crime, Gender and Social Control in Early Modern Frankfurt am Main* (Leiden: Brill, 2020); Manon van der Heijden, Marion Pluskota and Sanne Muurling, ed., *Women's Criminality in Europe, 1600-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

² Stuart Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); *Enmity and Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

³ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence in Early Modern Europe*, 15, 359.

⁴ Jonathan Dewald, *Pont-St-Pierre, 1398-1789: Lordship, Community, and Capitalism in Early Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

⁵ Dewald, 'Community and Conflict,' in *Pont-St-Pierre*, 129-130.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 138, 136.

the Agenais-Condomois region determines that women fiercely defended property from judicial seizures, even brandishing and threatening with knives and halberds.⁸ Furthermore, mothers commonly used their children to provoke disputes and violent confrontations with neighbours. However he concludes that conflicts involving women, and for this he primarily means between women, arose most often from 'petty jealousies'.⁹ Garnot acknowledges that female criminality is underestimated by the current historiography, and that women were no less bloodthirsty or criminal than their male counterparts, but argues that women were rarely involved in physical interpersonal violence.¹⁰ Women were only present in criminal cases in, what he terms, 'typically feminine offences': infanticide, prostitution, and witchcraft.¹¹ In asking why they are then less represented in levels of criminality, and in prosecutions, Garnot determines that women's value in the home outweighed the value of having them sentenced to banishment or to the galleys. If they were sent away as a result of a crime, who would raise the children left behind?¹² Issues arise when using the outcomes of trials to determine the perceived gravity of the violence or criminality involved. Early modern French criminal law was not, on the whole, based on public prosecution; plaintiffs were required to support the costs of the investigation and any subsequent trial themselves.¹³ Sentences should not, therefore, be used as indicators of levels of criminality, or of the gravity of the offences committed. As Carroll argues "plaintiffs were usually seeking not punishment but restitution for injured honour or damaged property."¹⁴ Consequently, the majority of the cases that were brought before the *parlement* of Toulouse, including those involving disputes and violence between men, did not reach sentencing.

Analysis of the values and motivations driving women's behaviour in incidents of violent confrontation are woefully lacking. This is particularly the case for disputes between men and women. Hanlon claims that when men and women found themselves

⁸ Gregory Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien: Culture et Comportements des Élités Urbaines en Agenais - Condomois au XVIIe siècle* (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 1989), 79.

⁹ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 85.

¹⁰ Benoît Garnot, *Justice et Société en France aux XVIe, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Ophrys Editions, 2002), 69, 42.

¹¹ Garnot, *Justice et Société*, 67.

¹² *Ibid.*, 68.

¹³ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 192.

¹⁴ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 16.

in conflict, women sought safety in groups from where they could provoke male adversaries with obscene faces and gestures.¹⁵ But there is little mention of why men and women might be in dispute in the first place. The language used to discuss these incidents is revealing of much of the historiographical attitude to early modern women's disputes. Women provoked, pulled faces, quarrelled and danced. Although women were, as Beik puts it, "outspoken in objecting to perceived injustice", they "usually had to let their fathers or husbands take the lead when it came to action."¹⁶ Yves Castan has even gone so far as to characterise women's disputes as dominated by 'childish' tactics, with scratching and biting delineating the extremes of their physical violence.¹⁷ It is especially problematic that women's violence has been dismissed as less worthy of study simply because it infrequently resulted in the death of their adversaries.¹⁸ Indeed, Michel Nassiet argues that not only were women less likely to commit murders, they were less likely to spill blood.¹⁹ Even if this were the case, this does not mean that women's disputes and use of violence is in any way less significant or important for our understanding of past communities. As Muurling states, just because women were accountable for only a small proportion of the most extreme levels of violence, including homicides, "should not lead us to the conclusion that women were rarely violent at all".²⁰

In order to better understand early modern violence, its impact on communities, and the state's attempt to control it, scholars have primarily focused on ritualised forms of violence, such as duels, which characterised the early modern period. Duelling arose from contentions linked to the male honour code.²¹ Reputation was a commodity in early modern communities, and strong defence of one's honour was essential for maintaining, or even advancing, one's position in society.²² Women did not traditionally

¹⁵ Ibid., 85.

¹⁶ William Beik, *A Social and Cultural History of Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 269.

¹⁷ Yves Castan, *Honnêteté et relations sociales en Languedoc, 1715-1780* (Paris: Plon, 1974), 171-2.

¹⁸ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 85.

¹⁹ Michel Nassiet, *La Violence, Une Histoire Sociale: France, XVIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2011), 42.

²⁰ Sanne Muurling, *Everyday Crime, Criminal Justice and Gender in Early Modern Bologna* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 122.

²¹ Stuart Carroll, 'The Peace in the Feud in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France,' *Past & Present* 178 (2003): 111, 114.

²² Gregory Hanlon, 'Les Rituels de l'Aggression en Aquitaine au XVIIe siècle,' *Annales* 40, no. 2 (1985): 244.

take part in duelling; female honour was centred around sexual chastity and “amenable manners”, defence of which fell to their male kin and guardians.²³ The focus on ritualised forms of violence assumes, however, that lesser violence reveals less about early modern expectations regarding social interactions and relations. The conclusions drawn by scholars such as Castan and Hanlon have resulted in a partial understanding of women’s interpersonal disputes and use of violence. Importantly, in the wider European context, scholars have begun exploring non-lethal violence. As Muurling argues, “focusing on petty violence helps significantly in arriving at a clearer image of daily tension in early modern communities, as well as early modern men’s and women’s perceptions and experiences of violence.”²⁴

Developments too have been made in our understanding of female honour in the wider European context. Alexandra Shepard explains that, in early modern England, women’s honour was built on broader foundations than concepts of virtue and sexual purity.²⁵ Scott Taylor echoes these findings; honour was multifaceted, and women, like men, were prepared to use violence to defend these commodities.²⁶ This chapter aims to build on these developments, using the overwhelming evidence of the criminal cases brought before the *parlement* of Toulouse to expand our understanding of the motivations and attitudes which drove violence involving women at the turn of the eighteenth century.

The Sample

The *sacs* exemplify the dangers of taking studies, such as those conducted by Hanlon or Garnot, as representative accounts for the whole of France. During data collection for this project, the archival catalogue listed 1,569 incidents of physical, interpersonal violence brought before the *parlement* between 1680-1720. 602 (38%) involved women as plaintiff, defendant, or both. Importantly, only 10% concern sexual or marital violence, leaving us with 472 incidents of non-sexual violence involving women. This

²³ Satu Lidman, ‘Violence or Justice? Gender-Specific Structures and Strategies in Early Modern Europe,’ *The History of the Family* 18, no.3 (2013): 240.

²⁴ Muurling, *Everyday Crime, Criminal Justice and Gender in Early Modern Bologna*, 122.

²⁵ Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 137.

²⁶ Scott Taylor, ‘Credit, Debt, and Honour in Castile, 1600-1650,’ *Journal of Early Modern History* 7, no.1-2 (2003): 10.

amounts to 30% of the catalogued cases. This is significant and stands firmly in contrast to the established narrative of women's disputes in early modern Europe. Not only were women frequently engaging in violent disputes, they were pursuing their disputes through the courts, all the way to the highest appellate court in Languedoc.

An important question to ask in the face of these statistics is 'were women involved in the incidents of violence themselves, or are they listed in the *parlement's* records because they were present, but not active participants, in incidents of male conflict?' If the latter were true, then this would support much of the previously discussed scholarship on women's violence. The archival catalogue is inconsistent in the amount of information provided, and it is therefore possible that errors occurred during the categorisation of the incidents. This chapter uses a sample of seventy-five cases to examine the nature of violence involving women. After analysis of the cases, it is clear that there are incidents where the catalogue has been misleading. For example, the archival catalogue lists an incident of "coups et blessures", "violence", and "injurer orale" between Margueritte Dupuy, and Antoine de Bridiers de Villemor, her son, in 1681.²⁷ Based on this information, the case was included in the database of those involving women in incidents of physical, interpersonal violence. After reading the documents from the trial bag however, including Dupuy's statement, it became evident that no violence occurred involving Dupuy. De Bridiers had been terrorising unnamed inhabitants of La Mothe, Dupuy's dotal land, and restricting Dupuy's access to her rightful inheritance following the death of Dupuy's husband, noble Jacob de Bridiers, *seigneur* of Villemor and Lamothe (Gers). However, though errors of this nature in the database are therefore possible, they are rare. Only three of the seventy-five cases contain comparable miscategorisations. A further two detail women directing or ordering the use of violence, but not committing the violence themselves, as in a case from 1680 which details a protracted enmity between two non-elite families in Salasc (Hérault).²⁸ The conflict culminated in a husband and wife ordering their son to murder the son of their adversaries.

The sample makes clear that physical violence in interpersonal disputes was not solely the domain of male disputants. But what role did women play in the violence, and who were they in dispute with? Garnot argues that the social status of women explains

²⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 2110.

²⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 2436.

much of their underrepresentation in criminal records. Men were responsible for the actions of their dependents, wives included, and when women did engage in disputes, it was overwhelmingly with other women.²⁹ The *sacs* do not support this. Of the seventy-five cases in this chapter's sample, twenty-eight (37%) list female plaintiffs to male defendants, twenty-one (28%) list female defendants to male plaintiffs, and twenty-six (35%) list both female plaintiffs and defendants. Importantly, while some cases list male and female co-plaintiffs, thirty-nine (52%) cases list women who brought cases to the *parlement* without a male co-plaintiff. Women are not only present in the violence recorded in the dossiers, but in the records of the *parlement* themselves. Their male kin did not necessarily pursue disputes for them.³⁰ This is important: women pursued their litigation, and their disputes, without direct male intervention. This will be discussed further in section three. Similarly, there are twenty-two cases (29.3%) which list a female defendant without a male co-defendant. Women were not, therefore, only involved in violence in association with men. Furthermore, the rates of violence between women and men, and between women and women are not heavily weighted in favour of female/female violence, quite the opposite. Collectively, the sample illustrates the diverse nature of interpersonal violence involving women at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Female disputants are particularly difficult to categorise based on status. Male litigants are ordinarily listed alongside their profession, providing insight into their socio-economic position as, for example, artisan or merchant. This is not the case for women, whose status was attached to that of their male guardians. For the majority of women, the only insight provided is the status of their close male guardians; their husbands or fathers. Cecille Souliere, for example, identified herself as the wife of Antoine Aussol, *laboureur* and *metayer* of sieur Rolland, in her suit against Guillaume Bouniel, *forgeron*.³¹ Demoiselle Louise de Soubies identified herself as the daughter of the late maître Bertrand Soubies, notary and lawyer, in her suit against Marie and Marguerite Laporte, the daughters of the late Jean Laporte, baker.³² There are some indicators of self-presentation of status which can help with categorisation. Women

²⁹ Garnot, *Justice et Société*, 68-69.

³⁰ In the sample, there are only two cases where it is stated that a husband brought the case on behalf of their wife. There are a further two cases in which a father brought a case on behalf of his young daughter.

³¹ AD. H-G, 2B 2757.

³² AD. H-G, 2B 6441.

who styled themselves 'demoiselle' or 'dame', similar to men who adopted the title 'sieur', claimed status for themselves. The majority of women using these titles were the wives or daughters of those of middling sort or higher: merchants, municipal or judicial officers, and the nobility. Jeanne Marque, for example, introduced herself in her suit against sieur maître Jean Bousanquet, lawyer, as 'demoiselle', and the daughter of the late Guillaume, merchant.³³ In 1703, demoiselle Jeanne d'Audrey, wife of sieur Pierre Montaigne, a lawyer in the *parlement* of Toulouse, brought a case against Antoine Ricous, *praticien*.³⁴ Similarly, demoiselle Marie de Grimail, wife of sieur Abraam Blaquiere, bourgeois, filed a suit against demoiselle Marquise Bonvilar de Druzac, daughter of the late noble Nicolas de Bonvilar in June 1700.³⁵ Despite varying socio-economically between merchant and nobility, each of these women utilised 'demoiselle' to present themselves with some level of status.

Widows are prominent in the *sacs*. Twenty-six (34.7%) cases involve widows; fourteen (18.7%) cases list a widow as plaintiff, and twelve (16%) list a widow as defendant. Interestingly, there are no cases with a widow as both plaintiff and defendant. Hanlon has argued that widow's "physical and legal inferiority, coupled with widespread illiteracy" left them especially vulnerable.³⁶ Lipscomb has added that, for widows, the defence of their sexual reputation was a particular concern; they "were easy targets for dishonouring slander".³⁷ The data from the sample suggest that such analysis is valid; the significant number of widow plaintiffs especially suggests that defence of their reputation, via litigation, was a central concern, as it was for early modern people in general. But the prevalence of widow defendants is also interesting. If defence of reputation lay at the centre of disputes involving widows, then their prevalence as defendants in incidents of interpersonal violence suggests that widows were willing to use violence in their disputes. This will be explored further in section two.

The social status of widows is particularly difficult to categorise based on the information contained within the *sacs*. Where possible, the status of deceased husbands

³³ AD. H-G, 2B 2357.

³⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 6661.

³⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 7176.

³⁶ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 101.

³⁷ Suzannah Lipscomb, 'Crossing Boundaries: Women's Gossip, Insults and Violence in Sixteenth-Century France,' *French History* 25, no. 4 (2011): 414.

has been used as an indicator. For example, in 1683, merchant Jean Laborie filed a suit against Anne de Bellet, widow of noble Bernard de Gimel.³⁸ Similarly, in 1690, Antoine and Jeanne Tainiers, peasants, brought a case against Anne de Petit, widow of Jean Treisac, merchant.³⁹ Where this information is not included, alternative socio-economic signifiers have been used, including the status of kin or allies mentioned in the dossiers. This is by no means an exact science, but such information is useful for providing some indication of the position of these women. In 1685, Domenge Sagansan, widow of Pierre Estangoy, filed a suit against Catherine Raulin, wife of Antoine Estangoy.⁴⁰ There is no reference to Pierre’s status, however it is mentioned that Antoine was Pierre’s kin. As Antoine is listed in the case as a *tailleur d’habits*, it is likely that Pierre, and therefore Sagansan was of a similar status.

Table 5: Status of women plaintiffs and defendants

Table Five: Status of women plaintiffs and defendants.		
Status	Plaintiff	Defendant
Peasant	8	8
Artisan	9	12
Merchant	11	4
Bourgeois	9	5
Legal/Municipal	5	4
Noble	4	5
Unclear	7	9
Total	53	47

Due to their access to financial means and legal advice, I expected the majority of female litigants to have been the wives, daughters, and widows of the notability, particularly legal and municipal officials, or the nobility. However, as Table One shows, peasants, artisans, and merchants dominated the cases, as both plaintiffs and

³⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 2037.

³⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 5933.

⁴⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 2462.

defendants. This is important. According to Garnot, individuals who were from lower social backgrounds were less likely to utilise the courts as part of their dispute strategies as they were less likely to have the necessary financial resources.⁴¹ The data from Languedoc contradicts this. Female peasants, artisans and merchants were keen consumers of the law. Dinges' 'Uses of Justice Theory' might explain their presence as plaintiffs: individuals began legal proceedings in order to influence informal or extra-judicial negotiations, rather than to reach an in-court decision.⁴² Because litigants were not aiming to pursue their cases through to sentencing, "the price and duration of lawsuits were unlikely to deter people from pursuing one."⁴³ Richard Kagan has identified similar patterns in litigation from early modern Castille; litigants used the courts to force an out-of-court settlement.⁴⁴ However, the *sacs* are from the *parlement* of Toulouse, the highest appellate court in Languedoc, having originated in the many lesser courts from across the region. While undoubtedly litigants utilised the courts to influence out of court relationships, the view that the aim of this was to lead to settlement or reconciliation through informal means is not a sufficient enough explanation to account for the significant numbers of individuals appealing their cases through the court hierarchies. We have already seen that, in cases of *grand criminel*, litigants were able to defray some or all of the cost of going to trial by pursuing their case with the support of a public prosecutor.⁴⁵ However, this does not account for the majority of cases examined throughout this thesis, which concerned minor incidents of insult, *excés* and *coups et blessures*. That litigants, and indeed female litigants, felt it necessary to appeal to higher authorities over such incidents, despite the significant costs of the litigation, suggests that the anxieties and tensions driving disputes were severe enough to legitimise the financial outlay. It seems more likely that litigants were investing in their disputes, rather than seeking peaceable resolutions.

⁴¹ Garnot, *Justice et Société*, 83.

⁴² Martin Dinges, 'The Uses of Justice as a Form of Social Control in Early Modern Europe,' in *Social Control in Europe* eds. Herman Roodenburg and Peter Spierenburg (Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 2004).

⁴³ Griet Vermeesch, 'Reflections on the Relative Accessibility of Law Courts in Early Modern Europe,' *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés* 19, no. 2 (2015): 63.

⁴⁴ Richard Kagan, 'A Golden Age of Litigation: Castile, 1500-1700,' in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. John Bossy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 153.

⁴⁵ Albert N. Hamscher, *The Royal Financial Administration and the prosecution of crime in France, 1670-1789* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2012), 5-10.

The staying power of the interpretations presented by scholars such as Hanlon and Castan has resulted in a narrow view of the complexities of women's use of the law in early modern France which has persisted to the present day. This chapter uses the criminal dossiers to explore the motivations driving women's disputes and their use of both violence and the law. Section one examines the pervasiveness of female litigation in early modern Languedoc, and the consequences this had on women's enmities. It will argue that a legal consciousness was fostered by the heavily litigious and political nature of early modern communities. This legalism was fuelled, particularly in Languedoc, by the complex system of administrative, municipal, religious and judicial jurisdictions.⁴⁶ It will show that women used the tools available to them to pursue enmities with both men and women; female adversaries utilised their knowledge of the courts during disputes, both in the ways they petitioned the courts, and in the ways they approached moments of violent confrontation. This section will show that women's disputing strategies were considered and purposeful.

The second section considers the motivations driving enmities and violence involving women. Scholars have shown that women were prominent in incidents of riot and collective violence throughout the early modern period.⁴⁷ They defended the interests of themselves, their families and of their communities against political and economic threats. The characterisation that this behaviour was specific only to moments of popular violence, and did not shape quotidian interactions, is groundless in the face of the evidence from the *parlement*. Women's honour was complex, and this complexity reifies in their accounts of transgressions against the micropolitical stakes that they held within their communities. Importantly, women were willing to use violence, even lethal violence, in defence of their interests, and that of their families.

The final section explores the tools available to women in the advancement of their disputes. It argues that, like male disputants, women were frequent consumers of

⁴⁶ Jouanna Arlette et al., *Des États dans l'État - les États de Languedoc de la Fronde à la Révolution* (Geneva: Droz, 2014), 26; Georges Fournier, *Démocratie et vie municipale en Languedoc du milieu du XVIIIe au début du XIXe siècle*, Vol 1. (Association Les Amis des Archives de la Haute-Garonne, 1994), 41.

⁴⁷ William Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 117-118; Cynthia A. Bouton, *The Flour War: Gender, Class, and Community in Late Ancien Régime French Society* (Pennsylvania: Penn State Press, 1993); Arlette Farge, *Dire et Mal Dire: L'opinion publique au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1998), 118.

the law, and of violent confrontation.⁴⁸ Incidents of violence were not necessarily exceptional, and neither was women's use of the law. The section demonstrates women's investment in their enmities both financially, by way of the courts, and physically, through violent confrontation. The chapter highlights the prevalence of litigation and violence in women's lives, and the impact of these strategies on women's quotidian relationships. It will show that male and female violence patterns were not as distinct from each other as commonly purported. Honour was a vital concern for women, as it was to male disputants. It argues that women used both violence and the law to pursue their disputes, and that we should be cautious of assuming that recourse to the law was the sign of litigants seeking a solution or close to their enmities.

Legal Knowledge and the Shaping of Women's Enmities

The cases from the *parlement* demonstrate the propensity for Languedocians to utilise the judicial system during their disputes. This was by no means specific to Languedoc. Scholars have identified a "legal revolution" which occurred between the fifteenth - and seventeenth - centuries.⁴⁹ In this period, the number of law courts across France expanded, supported by a boom in legal practitioners who saw an opportunity for social advancement in a legal career.⁵⁰ This expansion resulted in an abundance of legal options for those seeking an intermediary presence between disputing parties.⁵¹ Scholars have argued that, despite these developments, potential litigants were constrained by both physical access to the courts, and the financial means necessary to support the legal process.⁵² Languedoc complicates this interpretation. This chapter's sample shows that women from the lower social orders were using the courts in similar,

⁴⁸ In this I contribute to an important and burgeoning field of scholarship on women's use of litigation in France and further afield. See, for example, Tim Stretton, *Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Zoë A. Schneider, 'Women before the Bench: Female Litigants in Early Modern Normandy,' *French Historical Studies* 23, no. 1 (2000): 1-32; Alexandra Shepard and Tim Stretton, 'Women Negotiating the Boundaries of Justice in Britain, 1300-1700: An Introduction,' *Journal of British Studies* 58, no. 4 (2019): 677-683; Tom Hamilton, *A Widow's Vengeance after the Wars of Religion: Gender and Justice in Renaissance France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024).

⁴⁹ Michael P. Breen, 'Law, Society, and the State in Early Modern France,' *The Journal of Modern History* 83, no. 2 (2011): 347.

⁵⁰ Breen, 'Law, Society, and the State,' 347.

⁵¹ Benoît Garnot, 'L'ampleur et les Limites de l'Infrajudiciaire dans la France d'Ancien Régime (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles),' *L'Infrajudiciaire du Moyen Âge à l'Époque Contemporaine*, ed. Benoît Garnot (Dijon: EUD, 1996), 70.

⁵² Vermeesch, 'Reflections on the Relative Accessibility of Law Courts,' 62.

if not greater, numbers than those from the higher echelons of society. Additionally, litigants, even those with less means, were willing to travel to access the courts if necessary. The *sacs* contain cases initiated by individuals from isolated *métairies* and hamlets whose nearest authorities were located in nearby towns. In 1685, Marie du Prat, wife of maître Germain Bernadet, travelled the five kilometres from Blansac to Saint-Ybars (Ariège) to bring a suit against distant kin Fabien Bernadet, *laboureur*, and his wife Catherine de Balondrade.⁵³ The pair had attacked du Prat with rocks and sticks while she was collecting potatoes. Similarly, in 1682, eighty-eight-year-old Guillaume Sarret and his son Pierre, both “pauvres paisans illiteres”, travelled approximately ten kilometres from Montesquieu to Moissac (Tarn-et-Garonne) to file a suit against Mathieu Poumel and his children.⁵⁴ Sarret claimed that Poumel, who was the *metayer* of demoiselle Marie de Regis, widow of noble Raymond du Gout, had killed one of his mares at the instruction of de Regis. Disputants in Languedoc were therefore not discouraged from accessing the courts by potential travel. This, I argue, speaks to the normalcy of litigation in Languedoc. Embarking on legal procedures was not an exceptional state of affairs for many disputants. Instead, using the courts to seek satisfaction or resolution was a normal part of Languedocian lives, regardless of their gender or socio-economic backgrounds.

Languedocian litigiousness is further demonstrated by individuals’ involvement in multiple disputes and rounds of litigation. In Sommières (Gard), 1684, demoiselle Jeanne Marque, daughter of a merchant, filed a complaint against sieur maître Jean Bousanquet, lawyer, for assault.⁵⁵ Throughout the case documents, it is revealed that Marque was already involved in criminal proceedings; Bousanquet’s cousin, demoiselle Bousanquet, had filed a previous suit against Marque for mistreatment and violence. Similarly, during the 1685 case between Marie du Prat and Fabien Bernadet, du Prat revealed that the violence against her was as a result of civil proceedings that she had filed against Bernadet.⁵⁶ Particularly illustrative of individuals’ frequent use of the courts is the case between demoiselle Louise de Soubies, daughter of a late royal notary,

⁵³ AD. H-G, 2B 2356.

⁵⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 2256.

⁵⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 2357.

⁵⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 2356.

and Marie and Marguerite Laporte, daughters of a late baker.⁵⁷ The incident took place in Bagnères-de-Bigorre (Hautes-Pyrénées) in October 1699. De Soubies explained in her statement that she had visited Jacqueline de Gelet, the widow of Jean Laporte, baker, to collect some money owed to her mother. When she arrived, she found Marie and Marguerite Laporte, de Gelet's step-daughters, beating and mistreating de Gelet. De Soubies intervened, advising the sisters "honestly and charitably" not to treat their step-mother in such a way. The sisters turned on de Soubies, dishevelled her hair and throwing her to the ground. One sister took de Soubies by the throat to strangle her while the other kicked her multiple times, leaving her bloodied and bruised. De Soubies filed her complaint with the mayor and *consuls* of Bagnères-de-Bigorre, and an investigation ensued. The trial bag for this case has two additional cases linked to it. The first contains a suit filed by Jacqueline de Gelet against Marie and Marguerite for the same incident on 26 October.⁵⁸ The second contains a complaint filed by Marie and Marguerite's husbands, Jean Lavigne and Pierre Dancla, on their wives' behalf, against both de Gelet and de Soubies.⁵⁹ This suit was also filed on 26 October, just after Marie and Marguerite had been arrested by the *consuls*.⁶⁰ Through these two additional cases, we learn that the physical violence between the Laporte sisters and de Gelet had come about as a result of yet more litigation, which had concluded ten days prior, on 16 October. This case concerned the living arrangements of the bakery following the passing of their father on 2 October.⁶¹ The sisters, their husbands and their two young children lived at the bakery, in two rooms, as stipulated by their marriage contracts. The courts upheld this arrangement on 16 October. From then, according to Marie and Marguerite, de Gelet had been violent towards the sisters, beating them "atrociously" and causing them a number of injuries.

As this case clearly exhibits, litigation was not an exceptional occurrence for female disputants. The three parties were involved in four different legal procedures, one civil, and three criminal, that we are aware of. It is likely that examination of lesser

⁵⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 6441.

⁵⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 7057.

⁵⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 7242; To add to the incredibly litigious picture of Languedoc, Pierre Dancla appears in an unrelated case of physical violence a few years later in 1696: AD. H-G, 2B 2414.

⁶⁰ It is noted in the preamble for this suit that Marie and Marguerite's husbands filed the complaint because Marie and Marguerite were imprisoned, and unable to file the suit themselves.

⁶¹ AD. Hautes-Pyrénées, *BMS* "Bagnères-de-Bigorre," (1682-1704), 289.

criminal court records and civil cases would reveal further evidence of their litigiousness. Significantly, all of those involved were of lower to middling socio-economic status, and yet the court played an important role in the progression of their dispute. The financial cost of litigation did not therefore seem to dissuade disputants from lower socio-economic backgrounds from seeking legal intervention, far from it.

In his study on Vaucouleurs (Meuse), Piant concludes that litigants who filed suits with the royal court were often satisfied with the justice they received, and rarely appealed to the higher courts.⁶² Why, then, might Languedocians have been so willing to appeal through the court hierarchy to the *parlement*, when in other parts of France, litigants were content with the services of the lesser courts? Carroll explains that in southern France, as in Italy, increased rates of violence were determined by “a common political culture shaped by representative institutions, communal office-holding and ideas of citizenship.”⁶³ I argue that this too contributes to the levels of litigation linked to incidents of violence. The complex map of municipal and judicial jurisdictions in Languedoc was further complicated by representative institutions; each community annually elected *consuls* from the Second and Third Estates to act as municipal officers for their jurisdiction.⁶⁴ In particularly small communities, these positions offered opportunities for individuals from much lower social backgrounds to gain positions of status and influence within their communities. This representative system of civic office contributed to the increasing familiarity that communities had with judicial processes from the onset of what Kagan termed the “legal revolution.”⁶⁵

The cases from the *parlement*, including those involving women, suggest that disputants had more than a cursory understanding of the law, and their rights within it, and that they utilised this knowledge to gain the upperhand in their disputes through their appeals to the courts. This concept is not novel, nor is this behaviour specific to Languedoc.⁶⁶ Moreover, early modern communities were deeply attuned to the legal

⁶² Hervé Piant, *Une Justice Ordinaire: Justice Civile et Criminelle dans la Prévôté royale de Vaucouleurs sous l'Ancien Régime* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015), 277.

⁶³ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 287.

⁶⁴ Jouanna et al., *Des États dans l'État*, 118-119.

⁶⁵ Richard Kagan, *Lawsuits and Litigants in Castile, 1500-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), xxi.

⁶⁶ Liana Vardi, 'Peasants and the Law: A Village Appeals to the French Royal Council, 1768-91,' *Social History* 13, no. 3 (1988): 296; Zoë A. Schneider, *The King's Bench: Bailiwick Magistrates and Local Governance in Normandy, 1670-1740* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 185-186; Tom

goings on in their towns and villages. Christelle Clément explains that the entire population of Saint-Seine l'Abbaye (Côte-d'Or) seemed to be aware when cases were brought before the seigneurial court.⁶⁷ Scholars coined the term 'popular legalism' to depict "the well-developed understanding of civil jurisprudence among lower and middling social groups and their participation in judicial proceedings."⁶⁸ Zoe Schneider argues that most women were involved with the legal system, generally in civil matters, throughout their lives, and from the fifteenth century, contemporaries even advised the development of some legal knowledge for propertied gentlewomen in order to equip them with the means to defend their interests.⁶⁹ Julie Hardwick has demonstrated that middling 'working' women strategically utilised the law to defend their economic interests, particularly from their spouses.⁷⁰ More broadly, Griet Vermeesch argues that "litigants should not be underestimated in terms of their legal knowledge and capacities for negotiating juridical proceedings and juridical fragmentation to their advantage."⁷¹ It is incredibly difficult to determine the extent to which litigants directly shaped the court procedures which followed their complaints. Scholars focus heavily on the problems of using litigation to access social histories; the format of the trial documents was shaped by the institutions they served, and the words spoken by litigants were filtered through the clerks who transcribed them.⁷² However, the cases from the *parlement* hint at the influence of litigants, including female litigants, on the direction of their cases. In the dispute between demoiselle Jeanne de Mallos and Jean François Dides, de Mallos obtained a sentence against Dides from the *viguier*; Dides was ordered to pay the costs of the investigation and to beg forgiveness from de Mallos, publicly recognising her as a "femme de bien".⁷³ Dides appealed the sentence to the *parlement*,

Hamilton, 'The Evidence of Hearsay in Criminal Proceedings from Late Renaissance France,' *Renaissance Studies* 36, no. 3 (2022): 379, 383.

⁶⁷ Christelle Clément, 'Injures, coups, et blessures: le regard des témoins dans les procédures de la justice seigneuriale de Saint-Seine l'Abbaye (1787-1789),' in *Les témoins devant la justice: Une histoire des statuts et des comportements* ed. Benoît Garnot (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015), 356.

⁶⁸ Vermeesch, 'Reflections on the Relative Accessibility of Law Courts,' 65.

⁶⁹ Schneider, 'Women before the Bench,' 1-3.

⁷⁰ Julie Hardwick, *Family Business: Litigation and the Political Economies of Daily Life in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁷¹ Vermeesch, 'Reflections on the Relative Accessibility of Law Courts,' 66.

⁷² Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 21-25.

⁷³ AD. H-G, 2B 6058.

arguing that de Mallos had artificially increased the costs that he was to pay by using too much paper throughout the investigation. Presumably, the impact of this strategy was amplified by the courts' legal obligation to use *papier timbré* following an edict in 1674.⁷⁴

Litigants' legal consciousness is clearest in the narratives that they presented to the magistrates. On 12 October 1681, demoiselle Marie de Besset filed a suit with the ordinary court of Auzielle (Haute-Garonne).⁷⁵ She explained that she had been in her garden with her younger sister, Lizette, when brothers Bernard and Pierre Faure, who had been hunting nearby with rifles, entered the garden. Bernard insulted Lizette, and as Marie defended her sister, both brothers became violent, beating the sisters with the barrels of their rifles, and insulting their honour. Their mother, damoiselle Paule de la Font, widow of merchant Pierre Besset, was also attacked. Pierre Faure hit la Font over the head, knocking her to the ground. In Marie's suit, she detailed the attack against her family, but made sure to emphasise, repeatedly, the advanced age of their mother, "une femme fort vieille".⁷⁶ La Font was allegedly between eighty and ninety years old at the time of the attack, and while both Marie and Lizette were left with injuries from the attack, as confirmed by a surgeon's report, it is the age of la Font which is emphasised throughout the dossier. La Font's age may well have been exaggerated; Marie, the eldest daughter, was twenty years old at the time of the attack, meaning that la Font would have had to have been around seventy years old when she birthed the elder of the two daughters!⁷⁷ Either way, the case demonstrates well how female litigants underscored certain transgressions in order to obtain more favourable sentences from the courts.

Similarly, female plaintiffs frequently drew attention to pregnancy and the impact of an assault on the health of the unborn child in order to underscore the severity of an attack. Hanlon argues that, during disputes, "a woman's best protection was to exaggerate the danger she was running, such as pretending she was pregnant, or making her condition very obvious".⁷⁸ This strategy is apparent in the cases; of the

⁷⁴ John Hurt, *Louis XIV and the Parlements: The Assertion of Royal Authority* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 55.

⁷⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 1461.

⁷⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 1461.

⁷⁷ The language used in the case does not indicate that la Font was any relation other than mother to the Besset girls, though the age difference suggests that she may well have been their grandmother. Access to the parish records would be useful here to clarify births and familial relations where possible.

⁷⁸ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 85.

seventy-five cases in this chapter's sample, nine (12%) cases include pregnant women. In eight of the nine cases, the pregnant woman featured as a victim and plaintiff. That female plaintiffs highlighted the facts of their pregnancies in petitions, and the impact their adversaries may have had on their unborn children, tells us that women were knowledgeable about offences which might be deemed more serious by the courts. But the criminal dossiers suggest that there could have been more to this strategy than simply increasing the perceived severity of the assault. As Muurling argues, "court testimonies were moulded by a combination of the conventions of law and judicial practice as well as by popular discourse and the personal, micro-political interests of the speakers".⁷⁹ Female disputants used their knowledge of the law to influence their conflicts directly, as well as to influence the magistrate's reception of them and their case. This is particularly evident in cases which concern one contention, such as an assault which impacted or ended a pregnancy, but which also reference a secondary issue between the parties. In these cases, we can infer that, while the plaintiff may well have felt that formal satisfaction was required for the offence committed against them, they also hoped to use the litigation to gain the upper hand in their previously existing dispute. This tells us that the legal knowledge used to frame litigants' narratives might also have shaped disputants' use of violence.

On 27 March 1701, Joseph Cauquil, *metayer*, and his wife Marie Crost, filed a suit against Laurens Boussiere, his wife Marie Mecouire, and her brother Jean.⁸⁰ There had already been litigation between the parties concerning the ownership of a field near Saint Pons (Hérault), and claims of defamation. On the morning of 27 March, Cauquil encountered Boussiere in Saint Pons. The two shared a heated discussion, and Cauquil warned Boussiere that he could not prevent him from using the field which he contractually owned. Boussiere threatened, in response, that if Cauquil or his family attempted to access the field they would pay, reiterating his claim to the field. When Marie Crost arrived at the field with her sheep later the same day, siblings Jean and Marie were waiting for her. They attacked with stones, and after having knocked Crost to the ground, Marie knelt on top of her, on her chest and stomach, and threatened to kill her. The attack continued for many minutes before the siblings were chased away. Crost was taken home where neighbours cared for her while her husband hurried to the

⁷⁹ Muurling, *Everyday Crime*, 171.

⁸⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 7089.

nearest town to get a doctor. During the following investigation, the neighbours recounted the significant quantity of blood that Crost lost as a result of the assault, and this is corroborated by a surgeon's report. The suit explains that Crost was two months pregnant at the time of the attack and includes considerable detail about the type of blood she lost after the attack, including "sang caillé". The surgeon, however, determined that Crost had not lost any blood which would indicate that a miscarriage had occurred. Despite this, the question of the pregnancy is central throughout the litigation, including in the witness testimonies and the hearings with the accused. The witnesses and the accused were asked if they were aware that Crost was pregnant. Most denied any knowledge. One witness, Marguerite Coignenque, confirmed that she thought Crost was pregnant because she had seen her at Mass on the morning of the attack, and said that she had been complaining of sickness, and pain in her legs. Regardless of whether or not Crost was pregnant, the legal focus on the pregnancy by Crost and her husband in their suit was evidently intentional. When paired with the broader context of the previous litigation and the property dispute, it seems likely that Crost and her husband were using the potential miscarriage to gain the upper hand in their property dispute with Boussiere.

Two other cases in the sample demonstrate similar strategies. On 3 September 1700, Jaquette de Cuq, wife of François Lespinasse, artisan, filed a suit against sieur Astier, *hôte*, and Rodos, carter, with the *viguier* of Toulouse (Haute-Garonne).⁸¹ De Cuq met Rodos in the street, and requested the repayment of a debt of eighteen *sols*. Rodos denied owing her any money before punching and slapping her. In her complaint, de Cuq highlighted both the debt owed, and the fact that she was four or five months pregnant at the time of the attack. Both points were included to emphasise the severity of Rodos' actions. We cannot know if Rodos or de Cuq were lying about the money owed, but the dual focus on the debt and the pregnancy in de Cuq's suit against Rodos, and Astier who intervened on Rodos' behalf during the confrontation, suggests that de Cuq was attempting to use the assault on her to force a satisfactory resolution on the debt. Similarly, Marie de Rouelle, wife of Jacques Vallette, filed a suit against Antoinette Martel of Villeneuve (Haute-Garonne), in which she explained that Martel and her family had, for more than a year, waged a campaign of insults and threats against her.⁸²

⁸¹ AD. H-G, 2B 12375.

⁸² AD. H-G, 2B 7421.

In September 1706, the enmity escalated to violence; Martel slapped de Rouelle across the face and insulted both her and the legitimacy of her unborn child. On 12 September, Martel once again began insulting de Rouelle in the street. Joined by her father, Martel followed de Rouelle, before attacking her with a stick and a hammer, shouting that they would kill her. De Rouelle was eight months pregnant at the time of the attack, and lost the child as a result.⁸³ The loss of the child was understandably central in the suit that de Rouelle filed, but the broader context of Martel's campaign against de Rouelle, and her reputation in the community, were also key. De Rouelle characterises the enmity as one of frequent quarrels, and Martel as someone of bad nature; she explained that Martel quarrelled daily with her, defaming her in public spaces. It can be inferred from this framing that not only did de Rouelle seek satisfaction for the loss of her child from the courts, but also to influence the ongoing enmity between herself and the Martels.

At the root of these three cases were broader disputes over property rights, debt, and honour. Although the plaintiffs all filed suits centring on the violence that they, and their unborn children, were subjected to, they also drew attention, in their framing, to an established pattern of behaviour, or bad character, that their adversaries had displayed. This might seem an obvious conclusion, but I believe that how litigants used their legal knowledge in their petitions is important for how we understand the incidents of violence themselves. This is particularly the case for women's enmities, which for so long have been thought to have erupted purely out of petty jealousies. These cases suggest that there was more to female litigants' use of certain tropes within their suits when describing attacks against them than gaining a more favourable reception with magistrates; women's enmities were pursued strategically and with consideration of the law, and the social expectations of their communities.

The criminal dossiers also raise questions about the intent that litigants had when appealing to the courts. As discussed previously, scholars have recognised the strategies at play when plaintiffs filed suits with the courts. Dinges highlights the potential for disputants to use the filing of a suit to influence out-of-court settlements.⁸⁴ Capp has shown that women in England appealed strategically to authorities to resolve issues in their lives; the 1633 example of a cooper's wife filing a petition against her husband and his mistress to the mayor of London in the middle of the mayor's

⁸³ This was corroborated by a midwife and multiple individuals present at the early onset labour.

⁸⁴ Dinges, 'The Uses of Justice,' 159-60.

investigation into the husband for aiding and abetting a felon is particularly illustrative.⁸⁵ The two issues together compounded the severity of the cooper's behaviour in the eyes of authorities, and he was quickly arrested. The cooper's wife only requested his release once her husband had acquiesced to living together "lovingly and quietly", and the mistress remained in prison.⁸⁶ By strategically timing her petition to the mayor, the cooper's wife used the situation, and the courts, to her benefit, resolving, however permanently, the issue of her husband's infidelity. But the cases from the *parlement* indicate that settlements and reconciliation may not always have been the litigant's intended outcome. Instead, the cases suggest that disputants used the courts, alongside violence, to complicate their disputes further, rather than seek informal or formal settlements.

On the morning of 1 February 1701, damoiselle Anne de Thomas, the second wife of sieur Jean Maternis, merchant and bourgeois, filed a suit with the *sénéchaussée* of Béziers (Hérault).⁸⁷ In her statement, de Thomas explained that she had been at the market that morning to buy wheat and *touselle*.⁸⁸ De Thomas found what she was looking for, but doubting the quality of the grain, she looked around for someone from whom she could ask advice. De Thomas spotted sieur Jean Trémouille, bourgeois and inhabitant of Béziers, and asked him his opinion of the grain. In response, Trémouille hit de Thomas's hand with all his might, scattering the grain across the floor. He responded "oui, c'est de la touselle, maquarelle". 'Maquarelle' was a common insult in early modern France, a pejorative term meaning pimp.⁸⁹ Hurt by this insult, de Thomas began to cry. Trémouille continued his verbal abuse and asked de Thomas if she denied his claims. Significantly, Trémouille also asked her if she denied that *his* daughter was a whore, and that she and her husband acted as his daughter's "maquereaux".⁹⁰ He repeated these questions several times while they stood in the marketplace. The public nature of this

⁸⁵ Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 102.

⁸⁶ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 102.

⁸⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 6034.

⁸⁸ 'Touselle' was a grain similar to wheat. Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales: Lexicographie, s.v. "touselle," accessed February 1, 2021, <https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/touselle>.

⁸⁹ *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*, ed. Randle Cotgrave (London: Adam Islip, 1611), s. v. "Maquerellage."

⁹⁰ "quoy tu voudrois nier que ma fille ne suit une putain ton mary son maquerau et toi sa maquarelle."

incident is central to the gravity of the attack, and this framing is revealing, particularly when we examine the subtext of the interaction.

There are multiple references to Trémouille's daughter in de Thomas's account of the confrontation and in the ensuing trial documents. One witness, Jeanne Roume, adds that, after Trémouille hit de Thomas's hand, Trémouille retorted: "Insolent! You dare speak to me, you, the pimp of my daughter, and who offers "concubinage" in your house day and night."⁹¹ This suggests that Trémouille's daughter was staying, or had stayed, with de Thomas and Maternis at their house at the time of the confrontation, and establishes an antecedent relationship between the parties which undoubtedly shaped the interaction that took place in the market. An investigation summary from the end of January 1701, one week before the incident in the market, references a suit filed with the *sénéchaussée* of Béziers by Trémouille in November 1700. This suit concerned the kidnapping of Trémouille's daughter, Antoinette de Trémouille, aged less than 25 years old.⁹² There is little information about this incident, though Trémouille had pushed for the case to be pursued more thoroughly to prevent the culprits from covering up their crimes. The summary also references a countersuit brought before the *sénéchaussée* by Antoinette de Trémouille herself. In this she stated that she had been "maltraitée par son père" due to which she had run away, and that she opposed being sent back to her father. She had attempted to organise her stay at the convent of Saint-Esprit in Béziers, using the help of female relatives. This had not been successful and in response to her father's request for her return, she appealed to the *sénéchaussée*, offering to go to any convent within the city that her father chose.⁹³ While this case was pending, the *sénéchaussée* lodged Antoinette de Trémouille at the house of sieur Maternis and damoiselle de Thomas. It is unclear why Maternis and de Thomas were chosen to house Trémouille's daughter, perhaps they were kin, but this decision explains the connection

⁹¹ "Insolante! Tu oses me parler, toi qui es maquerelle de ma fille, et qui s'offre dans ta maison un concubinage avec les gens qui y viennent nuit et jour."

⁹² Age is important here. Although details of the case are not included, the inclusion of Antoinette's youth implies that her father was concerned about 'rapt', or kidnapping and potential marriage with an individual of whom he did not approve; Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 69; James R. Farr, *Authority and Sexuality in Early Modern Burgundy, 1550-1730* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 9-10.

⁹³ The Abbess of the convent had denied Antoinette de Trémouille's request, reasoning that she had only one room in which the nuns at the convent slept, and it was unreasonable for 'un seculaire' to sleep in the same room.

between the two parties and provides background information with which we can interpret the incident in the marketplace.

These factors together suggest that Anne de Thomas might have had a strategy beyond grain purchase when she entered the marketplace. De Thomas's legal strategy also supports this interpretation: in her initial suit on 1 February, de Thomas appealed her suit from the *sénéchaussée* to the *parlement*, where the instance between Trémouille and his daughter was pending. By doing this, de Thomas linked the incident of violence against her in the marketplace directly to the case already in existence at the *parlement*. De Thomas submitted her suit about Trémouille's violent conduct towards her, including the testimony of two witnesses, as part of a broader strategy to counteract the case that Trémouille had against his daughter, rather than to simply gain satisfaction for the violence committed against her. The excerpt of Antoinette de Trémouille's suit detailed that she made use of female networks to help her escape her father and position herself safely at a convent. It is probable therefore that, while lodging at the house of Maternis and de Thomas, she enlisted the help of de Thomas, and that this is how the incident at the marketplace was conceived.

Perhaps this case represents an exceptional situation. None of the other cases in the sample feature such complicated use of networks and litigation to impact otherwise unrelated legal procedures.⁹⁴ But its existence, detailing de Thomas' potential provocation of Trémouille in order to complicate Trémouille's litigation against his daughter, is important to our understanding of how women utilised the various tools available to them during their disputes. When read in relation to the aforementioned cases highlighting background enmities, this case demonstrates that not only did women share in the legal consciousness permeating early modern societies, they used this knowledge to inform their violent confrontations and shape their legal procedures against their adversaries.

Women's Honour and its Defence

The cases from the *parlement* tell us that women frequently used violence in their disputes. Forty-seven (62.7%) of the cases in this chapter's sample list a female

⁹⁴ It is important to remember here that only approximately 15% of the cases from the *parlement* have thus far been catalogued, and of those, this thesis has only examined a little over 200 cases. There is then a distinct possibility that similar cases exist within those cases that are yet to be explored.

defendant, with or without a male co-defendant. Scholars have claimed that women's disputes lacked significance in comparison to disputes between men, primarily because men, who commonly carried weapons like canes, or swords, were more likely to commit severe or lethal violence.⁹⁵ Conversely, it is argued that women were more likely to communicate their disputes through gesture than through physical violence.⁹⁶ The sample suggests that this distinction oversimplifies women's violence, as it does men's. In cases of female violence where the weapon is listed, the most commonly used implements were hands (ten incidents), batons, or wooden sticks (six incidents), and stones (five incidents). However, the range of weapons used by women was extensive, including poison, bladed weapons, hammers and metal bars, batons, and stones. Significantly, male disputants relied on similar weapons. In the sample of eighty-four cases used for Chapter Four, the range of weapons used includes pistols, swords, fire, and whips. However, the most common implements used were batons (twenty-two incidents) and fists/hands (eighteen incidents). The criminal dossiers complicate the distinction that women's violence was limited based on their propensity for using 'to-hand' weapons, whereas male violence was honour driven and capable of escalating to lethal violence. Although men were more likely to use pistols and swords than women, the majority of both male and female disputants relied on batons, sticks, hands, and feet. Furthermore, as the cases attest, women were capable of committing serious levels of violence. In April 1700, sieur Pierre Geste, son of Jean François Geste, bourgeois and *premier consul* of Mauvezin (Gers) filed a suit against Marie Calac, widow, and her niece Marie Olivier.⁹⁷ Geste had been in a copse in gardens belonging to his aunt when he was attacked by Calac; she beat him about the head and shoulders with a baton, and, according to his testimony, she would have killed him if he had not cried out "à mort!" and been saved by the passers-by.⁹⁸ Similarly, in 1707, Anne Feuges, wife of Jean Faubin, *brassier*, was attacked by Françoise Martin, widow, and her daughter Marie Dubarri in Escalavès (Gers).⁹⁹ Martin beat Feuges' head with rocks; the surgeon's report included

⁹⁵ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 57.

⁹⁶ Nassiet, *La Violence*, 46.

⁹⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 2858.

⁹⁸ Of course, this is just one side to the story - Calac countersued, claiming that Geste had attacked her. Geste had filed his suit with the *consuls* of Mauvezin, of whom his father was the *premier*, and accordingly Calac was arrested and ordered to pay 15 *livres* in fines. When she was imprisoned, Calac claimed that Geste's father had designed the whole episode and used his son to have her arrested.

⁹⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 6675.

in the *sac* speculated that it would take Feuges at least fifteen days to recover. In both of these cases, the female adversaries targeted the head of their victim, exemplifying their violent intention. Injuries to the head were the most likely to cause the most damage. But also, the head symbolised the honour of the individual, and so by targeting the head, aggressors were targeting the honour and reputation of their victim.¹⁰⁰

That male and female quotidian violence shared similar traits is not a new development; Muurling has noted that the weapons used by disputants in Bologna were “largely similar across genders”.¹⁰¹ Both men and women used whatever they had to hand; weapons “were no more domestically linked for women than for men.”¹⁰² But it is important to make this point too for Languedocians; disputes involving women were not entirely distinct from those only involving men. This section will explore the tensions and anxieties that led women to commit violence. It will show that, as with levels and types of violence, the reality of female dispute was far more complex than scholars commonly acknowledge. Women’s disputes reveal the multifaceted nature of female honour. Women were willing to use violence to defend their sexual reputation, but also the micro-political stakes that they held in their communities.

When examining women’s criminality, scholars have focused heavily on crimes linked to sexual reputation.¹⁰³ This is, in part, because the crimes associated most with women, infanticide and witchcraft, were punishable by death.¹⁰⁴ Social order was of primary concern following the political and religious devastation of the sixteenth century, and contemporary literature highlights anxieties over the female capacity to undermine social cohesion through their ‘passions’.¹⁰⁵ Control over women, and their sexual behaviour, was key to overcoming the disorders of society and the patriarchal family model was championed.¹⁰⁶ The concept of women’s honour became firmly affixed to their sexual reputation.¹⁰⁷ The disputes from the *parlement*, the majority of which took place in public, well-trafficked locations, including the market and the street,

¹⁰⁰ Hanlon, ‘Les Rituels de l’Agression,’ 246.

¹⁰¹ Muurling, *Everyday Crime*, 145.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 145.

¹⁰³ See in particular: Farr, *Authority and Sexuality*.

¹⁰⁴ Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, 85.

¹⁰⁵ Farr, *Authority and Sexuality*, 20.

¹⁰⁶ Farr, *Authority and Sexuality*, 24; Julie Hardwick, ‘Women “Working” the Law: Gender, Authority, and Legal Process in Early Modern France,’ *Journal of Women’s History* 9, no. 3 (1997): 29.

¹⁰⁷ Lidman, ‘Violence or Justice,’ 240-241.

highlight the importance of reputation and status to early modern Languedocians, and for women, the cases affirm the centrality of sexual purity in maintaining one's social credibility. This is most clearly illustrated through the use of insults which characterised the victim as impure or unfaithful. Ten (13.3%) of the cases in this chapter's sample include "putain" and/or "maquerel/le". Where the insult isn't specified, the gravity of the words are emphasised with phrases such as "injures atroces", "injures contre l'honneur", or "injures infamantes". All centre the adversary's impact on honour and reputation.

Scholars have argued that women's disputes were characterised by insults and gestures.¹⁰⁸ We have established that this was not the case; women were active participants in physical confrontation. However, the cases suggest that the use of such insults might have played a strategic role in the planned escalation of women's enmities. Capp has shown that public insults were not necessarily aimless, they could feature as part of a "calculated attack" with the aim of "triggering damaging gossip".¹⁰⁹ We see this in particular in the aforementioned case between Marie de Rouelle, wife of Jacques Vallette, and Antoinette Martel, daughter of Jean Martel, *cordonnier*, of Villeneuve (Haute-Garonne).¹¹⁰ For over a year, Martel and her family repeatedly defamed de Rouelle's sexual reputation. In early 1706 de Rouelle became pregnant, and the insults continued; Martel called de Rouelle 'putain' and 'maquerelle', and the whore of the soldiers who lodged at her house. Martel also called de Rouelle's husband her pimp.¹¹¹ The incident escalated to violence on 12 September 1706, when de Rouelle was eight months pregnant. Martel and her father violently attacked de Rouelle in the street. The campaign of insults that Martel had waged against de Rouelle had the potential to be especially damaging because de Rouelle miscarried as a result of the attack. Although de Rouelle was married, and there is no evidence to suggest that her baby had been conceived outside of the marital bed, Martel had long sown the seeds of doubt about de Rouelle's sexual reputation, implying the illegitimacy of her unborn child. Women who became pregnant out of wedlock had few options available to them; cases of infanticide

¹⁰⁸ Castan, *Honnêteté et relations sociales en Languedoc, 1715-1780*.

¹⁰⁹ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 200.

¹¹⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 7421.

¹¹¹ "La putain des cavaliers qui logent ches elle, et son mari le maquereau".

frequently followed illegitimate pregnancies.¹¹² Infanticide was a capital crime; in the late-sixteenth century it became a legal requirement for expecting mothers to register their pregnancies with local authorities.¹¹³ Any death of a child following a “concealed pregnancy or clandestine childbirth, and with no formal baptism or burial, was presumed to be homicide and punishable by death.”¹¹⁴ Even though de Rouelle was married, Martel’s campaign against her sexual reputation, followed by the loss of the child before full term, had the potential to severely damage de Rouelle’s standing in her community, and even result in criminal accusations. Insults could be used to “turn local public opinion” against an adversary.¹¹⁵ Evidently, this was a concern for de Rouelle. Throughout her statement, de Rouelle highlighted the public nature of the attack, emphasising the severe impact that Martel and her family had on her standing in the community. Similarly, she paid detailed attention to the facts of the miscarriage that followed the attack. A midwife was present, who had attempted to save the child’s life in the presence of “plusieurs personnes”. The midwife confirmed the state in which she found the child to the magistrates, concluding that the attack brought on de Rouelle’s early labour and contributed to the child’s death.

Despite the gravity of defaming an adversary’s sexual reputation, the cases illustrate the complex nature of women’s disputes, and the various tools available to them in their attempts to gain the upper hand over their adversaries. Insults were often included to increase the public embarrassment an adversary suffered.¹¹⁶ However, sexual defamation constituted just one part of the complicated reality of disputes in early modern France. As Capp argues, “defamation suits reflected a far more complex set of issues. The offensive words had often been hurled in the course of a dispute over a quite different issue.”¹¹⁷ The insults present in the cases rarely represent the totality of the confrontations, and, for the incident between de Rouelle and Martel, doubts about

¹¹² Dianne Hall and Elizabeth Malcolm, ‘Sexual and Family Violence in Europe,’ in *The Cambridge World History of Violence* eds. Robert Antony, Stuart Carroll, and Caroline Dodds Pennock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 287; Julie Hardwick, *Sex in an Old Regime City: Young Workers and Intimacy in France, 1660-1789* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 110-112.

¹¹³ Sarah Hanley, ‘Engendering the State: Family Formation and State Building in Early Modern France,’ *French Historical Studies* 16, no.1 (1989): 11.

¹¹⁴ Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, 86.

¹¹⁵ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 200.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 197.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 186.

de Rouelle's sexual reputation do not explain the Martel family's campaign against her.¹¹⁸ Although the case does not tell us more about the nature of the dispute between the two parties, the year-long campaign against de Rouelle and the eventual killing of her unborn child suggest that the contention between the two women was more complicated than Martel's concerns over de Rouelle's potential promiscuity. Attacking sexual reputation was just one of the methods that the Martel family chose to pursue their enmity with de Rouelle.

Although incidents of sexual violence were excluded from the cases that this thesis analyses, there are a number of instances which nonetheless appear in the sample, either because of miscategorisation based on the archival catalogue, or because the case also relates to other crimes. One such incident, which is included in the sample for Chapter Three, deserves mention here as it highlights particularly well the extremes that individuals were willing, or required, to go to in order to protect their sexual reputation.¹¹⁹ In April 1694, Marie Lapeyre, widow of Isaac Dupuy, *laboureur*, from Illartein (Ariège) met noble Marc Antoine de Que, sieur of Moncaup, in the neighbouring village of Aucazein. Lapeyre explained in her statement that she did not know de Que personally but knew him by sight. De Que stopped Lapeyre on the bridge and told her that if she needed money, he could lend it to her.¹²⁰ She replied that she had a piece of land against which she had borrowed money. If he lent her the money, she could recover the land and pledge it to him.¹²¹ De Que agreed to this arrangement, promising to provide a receipt of the accord. At the end of April, Lapeyre once again encountered de Que and reminded him of the money he had promised her. He replied that he hoped to make the money by the coming holiday, the Feast of the Holy Cross on 3 May.¹²² He told her to come to his house on 3 May to collect the money. Lapeyre arrived at de Que's house in Aucazein at the agreed time, two hours before sunrise. He met her at the door "en chemise" and led her to his room, where he kept his safe. Instead of giving her the

¹¹⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 7421.

¹¹⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 6080; This case was originally included because the archival catalogue lists it as "assassinat de noble Marc Antoine Deque" and lists the parties involved as noble Jean Louis Soulan, sieur d'Agert, and Marie Lapeyre, widow of Izzac Dupuy, inhabitant of Dillartein. There is no further information, and no mention of the cause of the murder.

¹²⁰ "Sy elle a besoin d'argent, il lui en presterait [prêterait]".

¹²¹ "Elle avait une pièce de terre engagée, et que sy elle prenait de l'argent de lui, elle la recouvrait et lui engager a lui meme".

¹²² The feast day on 3 May was known as 'L'invention de la Sainte Croix'.

money, he informed her that he wanted first to enjoy her and pulled her towards his bed.¹²³ He told her that he would give her the money, but only if she would grant him what he asked of her honour. She bit him, taking off the tip of his nose, which she spat at him. Still holding on to her, he opened the safe to get out the money he had promised. She refused the money with the newly attached conditions and tried to get away.¹²⁴ He again pulled her towards the bed, using all his force to make her succumb to his wishes. She took a small knife from her bosom and stabbed him twice in the throat. She held the blade to his throat until he released her. She fled the scene, attempted to wash the blood from her apron and knife in the nearby stream, and returned home.

Lapeyre was quickly arrested by the *consuls* of Aucazein; neighbours had witnessed Lapeyre returning home with blood on her apron. She was taken to the royal prisons in nearby Castillon-en-Couserans (Ariège) where she was interrogated three times between 3 May and 15 May. The magistrates focused on whether or not Lapeyre's actions were premeditated, and if she had help from any additional parties. Throughout the hearings, Lapeyre denied this line of questioning; she reiterated that she had gone to the house to receive the loan. She did not deny killing de Que at any point during the hearings; she even explained that if she found herself in a similar situation again, she would do the same.¹²⁵ Lapeyre was sentenced to death by hanging at the scene of the crime, in front of de Que's house. Lapeyre's actions, and indeed her responses during her interrogations in the face of a death sentence, serve to illustrate the importance of women's honour, and the lengths they were willing to go to in order to protect it.

Violence, even lethal violence, represented a viable option for women in defence of their character and reputation, just as it did for male disputants. However, it is problematic to conclude that women's honour was singularly concerned with their sexual reputation, as scholars have previously determined. Thomas Edward Brennan argues that "women did not have much of a role, except as dependents, in a society of honour".¹²⁶ Gowing has used defamation testimonies from London church courts to

¹²³ "Il lui dit qu'il vouloir avant tout allure jouir d'elle et la print pour la coucher sur son lit".

¹²⁴ "Lequel argent elle refusa aux conditions qu'il vouloir".

¹²⁵ "Sy elle se trouvait en un pareil cas, elle en fairait tout autant".

¹²⁶ Thomas Edward Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 38.

claim that women's honour was "wholly incommensurable" with male honour.¹²⁷ As we have seen, however, the practice of sexualised insult represents just one tool individuals could use to besmirch female reputations. Recent scholarship has begun to broaden our understanding of female honour. Lipscomb argues that disputants fought over "what matters to them, so the catalysts for arguments and fights tell us about women's internal worlds."¹²⁸ In Nîmes, catalysts included "transgressions of boundaries, notions of authority, attacks on reputation, and infringements of privacy and property."¹²⁹ Taylor advances a similar approach. By examining what men and women were willing to fight for, we can identify the features which shaped their understanding of their reputation and self-worth; "credit, debt, and fair price were as much a part of honour in early modern Spain as were sex and vengeance."¹³⁰ Shepard's study into witnesses' self-presentation of worth and status in early modern England shows that the tactics used to discredit witnesses were similar across sexes, suggesting "much broader foundations for female honour."¹³¹ Undoubtedly, sexual reputation, and defence thereof, was integral to female honour in early modern France. But this recent scholarship urges researchers to think more broadly about how early modern women understood their identities. The *sacs* are a valuable source for this venture; the disputes contained within demonstrate the breadth of issues over which women fought and the violent tactics they employed.

Women's concern over their economic authority is evident throughout the cases. In many, they feature solely in the background, shaping our broader understanding of women's conduct during quotidian interactions. In the case between Louise de Soubies and the Laporte sisters, for example, de Soubies explained that she was present at the bakery in order to collect a debt from Jacqueline de Gelet, on behalf of her mother.¹³² Witnesses commonly included details about their spatial position during an event they were recounting; they were "at the window" or "by the front door" when they saw the event unfold. By doing so, they legitimised their authority, as direct or indirect

¹²⁷ Laura Gowing, 'Gender and the Language of Insult in Early Modern London,' *History Workshop* 35 (Spring 1993): 19.

¹²⁸ Suzannah Lipscomb, *The Voices of Nîmes: Women, Sex, and Marriage in Reformation Languedoc* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 167.

¹²⁹ Lipscomb, *The Voices of Nîmes*, 167.

¹³⁰ Taylor, 'Credit, Debt, and Honour,' 10.

¹³¹ Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, 137.

¹³² AD. H-G, 2B 6441.

witnesses, to speak on certain topics to the magistracy during criminal investigations.¹³³ De Soubies likely included this context in her statement to the authorities because the behaviour was within the bounds of normal societal expectations, and therefore authorised her presence at the scene of the incident. However, in twenty-eight (37.3%) of the seventy-five cases, economic tensions were central to the conflicts. Two of the twenty-eight cases concern tax collection. There is already abundant literature on women's often violent defence of their property against tax officials.¹³⁴ Of the remaining twenty-six cases, issues of debt feature nine times, and conflicts over property feature seventeen times. Across the twenty-six cases, women feature as defendants in eighteen (69.2%) of the cases, and as plaintiffs in fifteen (57.7%) of the cases. Anxieties over debts and property ownership were of primary concern for many female disputants. The high number of female defendants in these cases exemplifies their willingness to employ violent tactics in defence of their rights and belongings. The data from the sample is significant; as we have noted, the majority of the cases involving women concern women of middling status, or lower. Undoubtedly then, threats to their material wellbeing would have necessitated severe, even violent responses. Muurling has conceded that women were indeed present in incidents of violence against both male and female adversaries, however she has argued that "women, unlike men, had little honour to gain from it as it was considered 'unladylike' comportment, frowned upon by contemporaries."¹³⁵ Conversely, the cases from the *parlement* suggest that women's identities and self-perception were shaped by ideas of credibility, and women felt required to use force, if necessary, to defend themselves and their reputation.

This is particularly evident in cases concerning creditor/debtor interactions. Credit relationships were founded firmly on trust, and social cohesion required the maintenance of this trust.¹³⁶ Creditors and debtors had the capacity to shape each other's reputations; requests for debt repayment could be especially tense moments in

¹³³ Clément, 'Injures, Coups, et Blessures,' 353-54; Information that witnesses provided during investigations was categorised based on whether the witness saw the events first hand or whether they heard about the events.

¹³⁴ See especially Cynthia Bouton, *The Flour War: Gender, Class, and Community in Late Ancien Régime French Society* (Philadelphia: Penn State Press, 1993); William Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹³⁵ Muurling, *Everyday Crime*, 104.

¹³⁶ Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 129.

these relationships. On 30 May 1685, maître Jean Tauriac, *receveur de la chambre de sel*, went to collect a debt of 67 *livres 4 sols* from Guillaume Massol, lawyer, and his wife Marguerite de Barre, inhabitants of Nailloux (Haute-Garonne).¹³⁷ Tauriac found the debtors in the street, and having asked them for the repayment, he was surprised when they did not “repondre civilement a la demande.” Instead, they became enraged, insulted Tauriac and punched him several times on the head and face. He protested that they would kill him and cried out for help “on m’assassine, on m’assassine!”. De Barre held Tauriac back while Massol fled the scene. Tauriac filed a criminal suit against the couple the same day. The language of this case is indicative of the anxieties over status which shaped the interaction between the parties. Tauriac expected a ‘civil’ response from the couple, implying that his actions were within expected social norms, and their reaction lay outside of them. The couple’s response is revealing however of the belief that it was Tauriac who had behaved maliciously. They insulted Tauriac’s honour, before physically attacking him. This is, of course, a relatively common escalation of events during incidents of interpersonal violence. But within the context of the debt repayment request, it belies contemporary expectations about the conduct of creditor/debtor interactions and concerns over the interaction’s impact on the reputation of the parties. These concerns are evident in de Barre’s testimony; she introduced herself at her hearing as ‘demoiselle’, and explained that she and her husband had agreed to pay back the debt, but that Tauriac had become enraged when they clarified the amount owed.¹³⁸ Massol added, during his hearing, that the couple had asked for patience because they did not have the money to hand, and that this angered Tauriac. Undoubtedly, the couple’s framing of the interaction was part of a campaign to restore their reputation, both in the eyes of the magistrates during the investigation, and in their community more broadly.

Clément has shown that when disputes reached the *seigneurial* court of Saint-Seine l’Abbaye (Côte-d’Or), news of the affair reached the whole of the community.¹³⁹ Taylor has shown that, in early modern Castile, the act of reminding a debtor to pay

¹³⁷ AD. H-G 2B 2779; it is unclear if this debt collection was part of Tauriac’s duty as *receveur*, or if this was a personal loan between the parties.

¹³⁸ Only de Barre uses ‘demoiselle’ during the investigation, and the *évangile* attached to the *sac* does not attribute titles to de Barre or Massol. This was not an issue of space; Tauriac is listed as maître Jean Pierre Tauriac.

¹³⁹ Clément, ‘Injures, Coups, et Blessures,’ 356.

what was owed, rather than waiting for the repayment could signal a breakdown in trust.¹⁴⁰ If this reminder was done publicly, as it was with de Barre and Massol, then it could indicate that the creditor was attempting to add pressure to the debtors by reminding them “that their public reputations rested on their conduct in resolving issues of payment and debt.”¹⁴¹ It is in these moments that we see the intersection of public reputation and credibility most clearly. The request for repayment represented an attack on the perceived trustworthiness of de Barre and Massol. The couple’s violent response, alongside their framing of the interaction to the magistrates, reveals their efforts to restore their reputation in the eyes of the community. The trial documents show that, for de Barre, this was as much her concern as her husband’s; fiscal credibility lay at the core of de Barre’s understanding of her and her husband’s reputation within their community.

This incident is not exceptional and importantly, female creditors also employed such methods in relationship negotiations. As Taylor points out, in a world where women had limited influence, this was a way for women to leverage the reputations of those with whom they conducted their financial dealings.¹⁴² In Toulouse (Haute-Garonne) 1686, Jeanne Barege, wife of Jean Lamothe, requested the repayment of money that she had loaned to her neighbour Antoinette Amiel, wife of François Sevres, *maître forgeron*.¹⁴³ Amiel, along with her son Jean Sevres, and Marie Bosc, wife of Jean Lacroix, *hôte*, embarked on a campaign of insults and abuse following this request. They targeted the honour of Barege’s unmarried daughter, falsely claiming that she was pregnant. These attacks escalated throughout January, and on 26 January, the accused attacked Barege’s daughter, slapping her in the street near her home. Barege ran to defend her, and Jean Sevres took hold of her, kicking and punching Barege, and ripping and removing items of her clothing. The transformation of the relationship between the neighbours is dramatic and the attacks on Barege and her daughter’s honour are important. By requesting repayment, Barege had publicly undermined Amiel’s reputation within their immediate community. Craig Muldrew tells us that “credit was

¹⁴⁰ Taylor, ‘Credit, Debt, and Honour,’ 13.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 13.

¹⁴² Ibid., 22-23.

¹⁴³ AD. H-G, 2B 7499.

an attribute of the household” as well as of the individuals within it.¹⁴⁴ Jean Sevres’s actions echo this; Barege’s request for repayment had placed the reputation of Sevres’ familial household, and by association his own, at risk. His attack on Barege was an attempt to restore the reputation of his family in the eyes of the community.

Widows feature prominently in the cases of the *parlement*. Twenty-six (34.7%) of the cases in this chapter’s sample involve widows; fourteen (18.7%) as plaintiffs, and twelve (16%) as defendants. Widows’ economic activities often expanded as they became heads of households and gained legal rights unattainable as a married woman.¹⁴⁵ Many of these new activities involved property; they could manage their own property, lend money, make leases, and buy and sell land.¹⁴⁶ Barbara Diefendorf argues that, in sixteenth-century Paris, “it was possible - even necessary - for a widow to take an active part in the management of her own and her family’s wealth”.¹⁴⁷ James Collins states that the “most critical role of the woman often came as a widow”, as she became the head of her household.¹⁴⁸ As such, I expected to find that widows were over-represented in the cases concerning debt and property disputes. While they are present (eight cases (28.6%)), they do not dominate the sample. Five of the eight (62.5%) cases involving widows concern property disputes over inheritance or contested land ownership, demonstrating that widows were indeed using the courts and/or violent tactics to defend their material wellbeing. As Lipscomb argues, women in early modern France had limited influence or control in their communities, “the ownership of goods symbolised much, and their loss was a devastating transgression into that sphere.”¹⁴⁹ But the cases concerning debt and property disputes suggest that this was as important for married women and single women as it was for widows. This is an important distinction. Female concepts of honour did not expand only upon entering widowhood. Rather, women’s honour was defined by a complex set of interests throughout the different legal stages of their lives.

¹⁴⁴ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, 4.

¹⁴⁵ Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*, 128-9.

¹⁴⁶ Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*, 129.

¹⁴⁷ Barbara Diefendorf, ‘Widowhood and Remarriage in Sixteenth-Century Paris,’ *Journal of Family History* 7, no. 4 (1982): 389.

¹⁴⁸ James B. Collins, ‘The Economic Role of Women in Seventeenth-Century France,’ *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 2 (1989): 451.

¹⁴⁹ Lipscomb, *The Voices of Nîmes*, 175.

Place and space are central themes in women's disputes, representing physical and symbolic boundaries shaped by the gender-social norms of early modern communities. Scholars often focus on the physical setting of women's lives, the areas within neighbourhoods that women were expected to occupy, and those they were expected to avoid. Capp has shown that, in early modern England, the social life of women revolved around the home and the street.¹⁵⁰ Women's sites of sociability were distinct from male sites. Brennan, for example, argues that incidents of physical violence were the most common forms of criminality in taverns, but because "women did not fit comfortably into the tavern", they did not feature in these incidents.¹⁵¹ Muurling suggests that this focus is due to scholars' reliance on prescriptive literature, common across southern Europe, which saw "an honest woman's proper place" as in the home.¹⁵² Women's lives were, however, multifaceted and scholarship has begun to explore women's roles beyond the domestic setting. Collins argues that women in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France were economically active.¹⁵³ Married women contributed to their household income with income of their own, and many wealthy women purchased royal *rentes* as investments.¹⁵⁴ Hardwick discusses the potential for the wives of notaries to facilitate the purchase and management of their husband's office.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, women became more prominent in guilds throughout the seventeenth century, despite restrictions on voting rights.¹⁵⁶ Janine Lanza's recent scholarship on early modern Paris has shown that women, and particularly widows, were commonplace in guilds, with some even taking up masterships following the deaths of their merchant husbands.¹⁵⁷ Despite constraints on formal education and training, women were able to overcome some of their shortcomings thanks to the development of practical skills. Such studies do much to broaden our understanding of early modern women's daily experiences.

¹⁵⁰ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 53.

¹⁵¹ Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture*, 38.

¹⁵² Muurling, *Everyday Crime*, 26.

¹⁵³ Collins, 'The Economic Role of Women,' 454.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 456-457.

¹⁵⁵ Hardwick, 'Women "Working" the Law,' 36-38.

¹⁵⁶ Collins, 'The Economic Role of Women,' 458.

¹⁵⁷ Janine M. Lanza, *From Wives to Widows in Early Modern Paris: Gender, Economy, and Law* (London: Routledge, 2016).

Despite these developments, women's disputes in Languedoc primarily occurred around the environs of the home, in the street, and occasionally in the marketplace. This may have been a consequence of contemporary gender-social norms. Female litigants were careful to highlight their positioning within expected spaces during their petitions to the magistracy. In the 1681 case between Marie de Besset and Bernard and Pierre Faure, de Besset was specific in her detailing of the spatial elements of the case.¹⁵⁸ De Besset and her family were in their garden prior to the incident. The Faure brothers had entered through their gate, crossing the boundary onto their private land. Similarly, in a 1705 case between two residents of the Rue du Fourbastard, Toulouse (Haute-Garonne), Jeanne Cazettes, wife of Henri Malory, *maître tailleur d'habits*, and Antoinette Salles, wife of Saint Chaumont, *cocher*, Cazettes detailed that she and a female neighbour were walking to the parish church, at the corner of their road, to hear the mass when Salles attacked them.¹⁵⁹ However, I argue that the locations of these disputes, within gendered environments, reveal much about women's self-perception and their disputing strategies. Violent altercations erupted from individuals' attempts to control and define the boundaries of their personal authority. In Toulouse (Haute-Garonne), 1684, Marie Vitrié, wife of Arnaud Calmètes, *maître fournisseur*, was with an unnamed woman in front of widow Daubian's shop.¹⁶⁰ Daubian's son, Guillaume, emerged, and told the women to withdraw from the premises. Vitrié refused to leave, and the confrontation escalated to violence when Guillaume took a wooden stick from the shop front and beat the women. Bleeding, the two women left the area.¹⁶¹ Similarly, in the 1685 dispute between demoiselle Jeanne Marque and sieur maître Jean Bousanquet, in Sommières (Gard), the violent attack on Marque was precipitated by her position in the street, outside Bousanquet's house.¹⁶² When Bousanquet saw her, he insulted her and hit her multiple times on the head and face. We know that previous litigation between Marque and demoiselle de Bousanquet, Bousanquet's cousin, initiated the contention between the two parties. But, as Corley argues, the home "had a

¹⁵⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 1461.

¹⁵⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 7884.

¹⁶⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 1405.

¹⁶¹ Unfortunately, the *sac* for this case contains only the witness testimonies, and so we have no additional context on any antecedent relationship between the parties, or why the women's presence at the shop might have angered Daubian to the point of violence.

¹⁶² AD. H-G, 2B 2357.

moral sphere that extended into stairwells, courtyards, alleys and streets.”¹⁶³ It is likely therefore that Marque’s proximity to Bousanquet’s house, in the midst of this dispute, constituted a further sign of enmity.

Importantly, women also demonstrated this authority over the home and its environs. In May 1708, demoiselle Catherine d’Aoustene, widow of Louis Salva, bourgeois, passed in front of Marguerite Gellis’ house.¹⁶⁴ Gellis, wife of merchant François Bouissou, insulted d’Aoustene, calling her “sorciere” and “vieille” before physically attacking her. Gellis’ four daughters, her mother and her sister all joined in, insulting d’Aoustene in the same vein, tearing and scratching at her hands and veil. Conversely, witnesses claim that, as d’Aoustene walked past the Gellis house, one of the sisters spat at d’Aoustene, prompting d’Aoustene’s to attack Gellis and her family. Evidently, pre-existing tensions informed this interaction. However, the spatial setting tells us much about the dynamic between the two parties. The area around the home was contested; thresholds delineated legitimate from illegitimate behaviour.¹⁶⁵ An adversary in close proximity to the house represented a threat, as they crossed the boundary from public to private space. It seems likely that, by passing close to Gellis’ house, d’Aoustene had fuelled the enmity between them, and Gellis was legitimised by the spatial setting of the confrontation to escalate matters through physical violence.

Lipscomb argues that invisible lines within communities defined acceptable behaviour, and women’s disputes reveal how they negotiated and enforced these boundaries.¹⁶⁶ These boundaries resound in the accounts set forth by female litigants in Languedoc, telling us much about the politics of the early modern street, neighbourhood, and community. Violent altercations materialised in defence of personal authority, represented in the rights of individuals to control or engage in certain situations. Particularly revelatory are disputes over women’s involvement in others’ affairs. Capp has argued that “respectable women felt in some sense collectively responsible for the good behaviour and honour of their neighbours.”¹⁶⁷ To intervene in a dispute was to assume authority over those involved. However, in a society consumed

¹⁶³ Christopher R. Corley, ‘On the Threshold: Youth as Arbiters of Urban Space in Early Modern France,’ *Journal of Social History* 43, no. 1 (2009): 144.

¹⁶⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 6413.

¹⁶⁵ Corley, ‘On the Threshold,’ 144.

¹⁶⁶ Lipscomb, ‘Crossing Boundaries,’ 422.

¹⁶⁷ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 277.

with concerns over status and reputation, a neighbours' intervention might also be interpreted as a transgression of the authority of the individuals involved. Such processes are evident in the *sacs*. In Louise de Soubies' testimony to the *consuls* of Bagnères-de-Bigorre (Hautes-Pyrénées), she explained that she "honestly and charitably" represented to the Laporte sisters not to treat their stepmother in such a way.¹⁶⁸ Hardwick has shown that the rigidity of gender roles blurred in areas of middling domestic and professional life; the wives of notaries in Nantes were largely literate, despite their relatively low status, and they occasionally acted on behalf of their husbands in their work.¹⁶⁹ As the daughter of a notary, it is likely that de Soubies adopted some of these traits, leading her to intervene in defence of de Gelet. The sisters' aggressive response illustrates the affront they felt from de Soubies' assertion of her authority over them. Their violence against her, including disheveling her hair and clothing in front of gathered onlookers, served to humiliate de Soubies, and counter her claims to social superiority.

Interference in neighbours' lives could be justified through the policing of the moral conduct of communities. Lipscomb found that, in sixteenth-century Languedocian society, women "assumed an important role in maintaining the boundaries of acceptable behaviour."¹⁷⁰ But overstepping the boundaries could result in tensions growing between neighbours. These tensions are particularly evident in violent confrontations which emerged from the disciplining of a neighbours' child. In September 1703, Ester Dumas, widow of Moïse Desplast from Rebaillou (Ariège) filed a suit against Jeanne Bouregue, wife of Pierre Fauroux, *brassier*, and her children, François, Jean, and Catherine.¹⁷¹ Dumas' son, Jean, had complained to her of having been mistreated by François. When Dumas confronted François, he insulted her, "sorciere", "brouche", and attacked her. Bouregue joined in the attack, and together they pushed Dumas into a ditch where they continued their assault. Neighbours intervened, and Dumas escaped. In her hearing, Bouregue claimed that Dumas had slapped Bouregue's eight-year-old son Jean, triggering the confrontation between the two. François added that he had seen Dumas shove his younger sister Catherine before the confrontation. We

¹⁶⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 6441.

¹⁶⁹ Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*, 96.

¹⁷⁰ Lipscomb, 'Crossing Boundaries,' 411; see also: Manon Van der Heijden, *Women and Crime in Early Modern Holland* (Boston: Brill, 2016), 25.

¹⁷¹ AD. H-G, 2B 6634.

cannot know how the dispute started. However, on both sides, a perceived transgression of parental authority was used to legitimise the violence behaviour which followed. Dumas understood her son to have been mistreated. By confronting François, Dumas undoubtedly hoped to redress François' transgression of her parental authority. In Bourege's statement, her attack on Dumas was justified because Dumas had first hit her young son, Jean. An incident from 1709 elucidates similar tensions; when demoiselle Isabeau Sabatier, *marchande*, attempted to force a group of unruly children from her shop in Narbonne (Aude), one of the children's mother's, demoiselle Anne Bonnafons, widow of sieur Arnaud Caranoue, came to her child's defence.¹⁷² There followed a series of assaults and rounds of litigation between the two women, as each asserted their right to defend themselves and their households.

Scholars acknowledge women's use of violence in defence of their children; to beat a neighbour's child could trespass the natural domestic order, inflaming existing tensions between individuals. Capp argues that a woman striking another woman's child in the street was likely to result in dispute and litigation between the women.¹⁷³ Hanlon has argued that women used their children to provoke disputes with their neighbours.¹⁷⁴ While Hanlon's view on women's disputes and use of violence is, at times, narrow, the *sacs* concur that involving children in disputes could have served strategic purposes for adversaries. It is important to note, however, that the transgressions of such boundaries did not only incite disputes between women. In Chapter Four's sample, there are four instances of men disciplining a neighbour's child leading to physical violence between men. The cases suggest that the intentional transgression of boundaries, such as those of parental or household authority, could play important roles in the perpetuation and escalation of enmities for both men and women.

The aforementioned dispute between Antoinette Salles, wife of Antoine Bougrave, *cocher*, and Jeanne Cazettes, wife of Henri Maleri, *maître tailleur*, illustrates this particularly well.¹⁷⁵ Cazettes had been walking with Thoinette Viguier on their way to the nearby church of St Jerome. When they passed in front of Salles' house, Salles

¹⁷² AD. H-G, 2B 22270.

¹⁷³ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 187.

¹⁷⁴ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 85.

¹⁷⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 7883; 7884.

emerged carrying a large baton. She approached Cazettes from behind, hit her multiple times, and shouted “Whore, I will teach you not to hit my children”.¹⁷⁶ Salles was joined by an unnamed woman. They grabbed Cazettes by the hair and threw her to the ground before dragging her along the street. Both women continued to hit Cazettes on the face and body. Onlookers came to Cazettes’ aid, and she managed to escape. In her suit, Cazettes explained that Salles had long hated her because she had not complied with Salles’ wishes during an inquest into the suspicious death of a neighbour, Barthe. Salles had denounced sieur Campaigne, another resident of Rue du Fourbastard, as the murderer, and had asked Cazettes to give the same testimony. Cazettes had refused however, and from then on, whenever Cazettes encountered Salles in the road, Salles threatened and swore at her.

Given that the incident arose because of Cazettes’ refusal to comply during a previous inquest, Salles’ comment concerning her children during the attack on 23 August is noteworthy. Might Salles have shouted this for the benefit of onlookers, believing that witnesses would forgive her violent attack in defence of her children? This is certainly a possibility. However, Salles’ own litigation following the incident complicates the picture further. Salles’ filed a countersuit against Cazettes, and also a suit against Campaigne, widow, the mother of sieur Campaigne, and Thoinette Viguiet. Salles explained that some time before Barthes’ death, she had filed a complaint against Campaigne’s son, and others, for excesses that they had committed against her. Campaigne, widow, had, as a result, developed a hatred for Salles, and had called on her allies, Cazettes and Viguiet, to attack and insult Salles and her seven-year-old child whenever they met in the street. According to Salles, this is precisely what happened on 23 August. Cazettes and Viguiet had encountered Salles in the road; they insulted her honour and called her multiple ‘scandalous’ names, including whore and brothel keeper. They then attacked her physically and seriously injured her. She explained that she fought them off as best she could, despite her condition - Salles was pregnant at the time of the attack - and she added that the injuries she received left her at risk of miscarriage.

The two different sides of the story both highlight the potential for transgressions against kin, especially children, to proliferate intense enmities between neighbours. On the one hand, Campaigne, widow, had organised a network of friends

¹⁷⁶ “Putain, je te veux apprendre batu mes enfans.”

and allies, including Cazettes and Viguiier, on Rue du Fourbastard to seek revenge on Salles for her suit against Campaigne's son. On the other hand, Salles attacked Cazettes in the street because she had refused to comply during the inquest into Barthes' death. In order to justify the attack in the face of onlookers, Salles had publicly claimed the attack was in defence of her children. Regardless of the truth, the two sides to this incident centre the use of physical violence in defence of children, and the potential for that violence to result in drawn out enmities which permeated communities. Importantly, this incident demonstrates the diverse strategies involved in women's disputes. Not only did they draw on networks of kin and allies, but they utilised the social norms of their communities, such as the socially accepted defence of their children, as a way to legitimise their use of violence in the pursuit of their enmities. These enmities and violent confrontations tell us much about the scope of women's honour in early modern Languedoc. Far from being defined solely by concepts of sexual virtue, women's honour was multifaceted. Women's disputes arose in defence of their personal boundaries and the micropolitical stakes that they held within their communities. That women utilised violence as well as litigation to defend these interests underscores the value of the stakes that were threatened by their adversaries.

En haine d'un procès: Enmity and Litigation

The majority of the 200 cases reviewed in this thesis originated not at the *parlement*, but in the lesser royal, municipal, and *seigneurial* courts from across Languedoc. The cases most frequently reached the *parlement* because litigants were not satisfied with the judgements from the lesser courts. This contrasts with Piant's findings for the Vaucouleurs (Meuse), where litigants had no need to appeal to the higher courts because they were satisfied with the outcomes rendered by their local courts.¹⁷⁷ The very existence of the *parlement's* abundant criminal dossiers exemplifies the extent that disputants were willing to go to in order to pursue their enmities. As Christine Dousset argues, because plaintiffs were responsible for bearing the costs of going to court, "disputants needed a sufficiently powerful incentive to appeal to magistrates."¹⁷⁸ Legal

¹⁷⁷ Piant, *Une Justice Ordinaire*, 277.

¹⁷⁸ Christine Dousset, 'Des veuves spoliées? Conflits familiaux et justice civile dans le Midi de la France, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle,' in *Justice et Argent: Les Crimes et les Peines pécuniaires du XIIIe au XXIe siècle*, ed. Benoît Garnot (Dijon: EUD, 2005), 53.

costs compounded the further the lawsuit went through the courts.¹⁷⁹ Scholars have recognised that disputants continued to use the courts despite the significant time and costs involved.¹⁸⁰ Dinges determined that plaintiffs used the courts strategically; suits were filed in order to force an out of court settlement.¹⁸¹

The *sacs* indicate however, that this too provides only a partial explanation for the role of the courts in interpersonal dispute. Litigation did not necessarily lead to reconciliation. Importantly, and in contrast to many scholars' conclusions, appeals to the *parlement* were not limited to those from the upper echelons of society, who had abundant financial resources to invest in litigation.¹⁸² The litigants represented in the *sacs* disproportionately occupied the lower to middle echelons of the Third Estate. This chapter has discussed the various strategies that disputants deployed when appealing to the courts, and these are key to understanding the complexities of interpersonal dispute in early modern communities. Litigants used the judicial apparatus, not only to force informal settlements outside of the court system, but to vanquish their enemies. Reconciliation was not necessarily the hoped-for outcome. The *sacs* reveal that litigation was not the opposite of violence but existed alongside moments of violence. As Greenshields argues, recourse to the law "could become another affront between enemies that would lead to further rounds of private vengeance."¹⁸³ Undoubtedly, many litigants used formal means to force informal settlements outside of the courts. But as this section will discuss, litigation should not be taken to signify intent for resolution between disputing parties, whether through the courts or outside of them. Instead, female disputants used both their legal knowledge *and* physical violence to complicate their disputes and invest in their enmities.

Piant argues that "vengeance is in fact everywhere in the judicial archives, even if its presence is rarely explicit."¹⁸⁴ This is evident in the *sacs*; examples of violent revenge against insults and transgressions can be found across all four data sets examined in this thesis. But disputants also sought revenge for those who pursued legal suits against

¹⁷⁹ For an overview of the typical stages of an investigation, see Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 191-6.

¹⁸⁰ Vermeesch, 'Reflections on the Relative Accessibility of Law Courts,' 63.

¹⁸¹ Dinges, 'The Uses of Justice.'

¹⁸² See, for example: Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 192.

¹⁸³ Malcolm R. Greenshields, *An Economy of Violence in Early Modern France: Crime and Justice in the Haute Auvergne, 1587-1664* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 59.

¹⁸⁴ Piant, *Une Justice Ordinaire*, 202.

them. In March 1688, royal notary, maître Antoine Lugol, was attacked by Jean Iches, blacksmith, while returning on horseback to his house in Lalbenque (Lot).¹⁸⁵ Iches took hold of Lugol's horse's reins, demanded money, and threatened to kill the notary with the large baton he was carrying if he wasn't paid. Lugol refused, and Iches knocked him to the ground. Lugol explained that he was beaten with such violence that the baton broke. Lugol explained to the magistrates that Iches had threatened him with violence on multiple occasions, even telling Lugol's wife that he would make her a widow. The reason for this attack, according to Lugol, was revenge. Lugol had previously been engaged in litigation against Iche's brother, Arnaud, which resulted in Arnaud being whipped in punishment. Iches was avenging his brother and the honour of his family.

Cases such as these tell us that litigation did not constitute the end point of disputes. This complicates traditional views of individuals' relationships with, and use of, the courts. Reinhardt argues that the preference for local, popular, justice declined as the royal courts expanded, fuelling the "gradual transfer of political power from the local level to the Crown".¹⁸⁶ Michael Breen suggests that, while more research is indeed needed, litigants seemingly went to the courts because they worked "well enough to meet their needs".¹⁸⁷ The courts provided "reliable justice", and "effective mediation and dispute resolution that restored damaged social relations."¹⁸⁸ However, the cases from Languedoc tell us that disputants used the courts with the hope of injuring their adversaries, and that litigation formed only one part of the disputing process. Importantly, this behaviour can be identified in women's disputes, just as it can in male disputes.

In this chapter's sample, twenty-one (28%) of the seventy-five cases make reference to former or concurrent litigation, separate to the incident which brought the disputants to the *parlement*. The aforementioned incident between Cauquil and his wife Crost, and Bouissierre and his wife Mecouire erupted out of previous litigation regarding the contested ownership of a field.¹⁸⁹ Similarly, on 22 November 1688, Bernarde Suran, widow of François Labadeus, *maître chirurgien*, of Endoufielle (Gers)

¹⁸⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 7358.

¹⁸⁶ Stephen G. Reinhardt, *Justice in the Sarladais, 1770-1790* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 270.

¹⁸⁷ Breen, 'Law, Society, and the State,' 386.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 386.

¹⁸⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 7089.

appealed to the courts for help in her attempt to collect a debt from Anne Martin, wife of Jean François, *chirurgien*.¹⁹⁰ In response, Martin publicly mocked Suran, calling her “putain” and “carroigne”. One week later, while leaving the parish church after mass, Martin and her allies attacked Suran; they ordered her to leave the church quickly and then beat her in front of the congregation.¹⁹¹ These cases exemplify the potential for litigation to result in further discord between enemies, including female disputants. In addition to these twenty-one cases, there are multiple cases where reference is made by plaintiffs or defendants to ongoing disputes, without specific mention of litigation, as in the 1695 case between Catherine Roumiere, widow of Pierre Bras, and Jean Aiguesiver, *tailleur d’habits*, and Jean Baptiste, *boucher*, which took place in Montblanc (Hérault).¹⁹² In the investigation which followed Aiguesiver’s and Baptiste’s attack on Roumiere, and her unlawful and violent imprisonment by maître Bernard Julien, mayor of Montblanc, it is revealed that Roumiere had “un dispute” with Baptiste’s mother-in-law, which witnesses cite as the potential cause of Baptiste’s actions. Because we do not know if this initial dispute led to litigation, or to what extent the mother-in-law influenced the incident between Roumiere, Aiguesiver, and Baptiste, cases like this have not been included in the numbers of cases involving violence in response to litigation. But they serve to illustrate the complicated ways in which interpersonal disputes could proliferate throughout communities.

Of the twenty-one cases which make direct reference to previous or ongoing litigation between the parties, only one details an incident of violence following informal mediation, in this case the intervention of the local *curé*.¹⁹³ Jeanne d’Arrolis and Domenge Barbé both claimed ownership of a tomb in the parish church of Arrodets-*ez-Angles* (Hautes-Pyrénées). The two women had already sought intervention from the *curé* who had concluded that Barbé’s claim to the tomb was superior to d’Arrolis’s. Despite this decision, d’Arrolis continued to visit and maintain the tomb. Her refusal to accept the *curé*’s decision led to a violent confrontation between the adversaries in April 1711; Barbé insulted, kicked and punched d’Arrolis while she was praying at the tomb following Sunday Mass.

¹⁹⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 7813.

¹⁹¹ “Sort vit putain!”.

¹⁹² AD. H-G, 2B 2106.

¹⁹³ AD. H-G, 2B 7959.

The remaining twenty cases refer to incidents of violence which followed formal civil or criminal litigation in the courts. The references to separate incidents of litigation between parties demonstrates women's use of violence in response to their adversaries seeking recourse to the law. This connection is often recognised by the adversaries themselves, with victims determining that their appeal to authorities instigated their enemy's attack on them. In many cases, the phrase "en haine d'un procès" is used to identify the root of the violent attack on an individual in a previous round of litigation. This was the phrase used by the Laporte sisters to demonstrate that their step-mother, Jacqueline de Gelet, had been mistreating them following their suit against her in October 1699.¹⁹⁴ Such framing was undoubtedly an attempt to appeal to the concerns of the courts, and, in cases where the previous litigation had resulted in a sentence, plaintiffs often also include the point that their adversary's actions contravened the wishes and authority of the courts. But beyond this, these cases demonstrate the complex and drawn-out nature of women's disputes. Women were not reacting arbitrarily to adversaries when they encountered them in public places, as scholars have posited. Rather, women, like men, utilised violent tactics to address perceived wrongs, and to counter their adversaries' attempts to gain the upper hand through formal measures.

Not only did recourse to the law have the potential to instigate further dispute between adversaries, the cases suggest that such disputes had the potential to proliferate throughout communities, by way of kin networks and alliances. Carroll tells us that women often appeared in the background of disputes, urging male kin to use violence to pursue enmities.¹⁹⁵ The *sacs* give us the opportunity to examine more closely the different ways in which family or allied networks were utilised during moments of disputes. There are seven instances of litigation between two parties resulting in dispute and further litigation involving a third party. The 1684 case between demoiselle Jeanne Marque and sieur maître Jean Bousanquet was fuelled by Marque's ongoing dispute, and legal procedure, with Bousanquet's cousin.¹⁹⁶ Similarly, in May 1710, sieur Raymond Huc, bourgeois, attacked Claire Brugaillos, servant of maître Elizes, *prêtre*, and widow of Jean Gil, *tisserand*, while she was walking in the street.¹⁹⁷ The trial documents

¹⁹⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 6441; 7057; 7242.

¹⁹⁵ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 359.

¹⁹⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 2357.

¹⁹⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 7782.

reveal that a year prior, Brugaillos had developed an enmity with Huc's wife, Gabrielle de Canne, which resulted in litigation between the two women. Importantly, these cases also demonstrate the involvement of allies outside of immediate kin networks. In the case between demoiselle Anne de Thomas and sieur Jean Trémouille, de Thomas filed a suit concerning an assault on her by Trémouille as part of a plan to complicate an ongoing legal dispute between Trémouille and his young daughter, who was lodging with de Thomas.¹⁹⁸ As far as we can tell from the *sac*, demoiselle de Trémouille had no prior relationship with de Thomas or her husband. Rather, the two women seemingly developed an alliance which shaped the incident in the marketplace during de Trémouille's stay at de Thomas' house.

The proliferation of disputes throughout communities, the involvement of male and female kin, and the drawn-out nature of many of these incidents suggests that women's disputes were not driven by spontaneous and impulsive acts. That men were involved in women's disputes as third parties, pursuing their own strategies of violence and litigation against their female kin's adversaries tells us much about contemporary perceptions of women's disputes. Male defence of households and familial honour of course played an important role in steering male kin's defence of female relatives.¹⁹⁹ However, the cases urge us not to oversimplify third party involvement in women's disputes. Rather, we can conclude that the defence of women's honour and status was considered a legitimate investment of time and money for the third parties who were drawn into them.

Women's disputes were far more complex than scholars have acknowledged. Not only did women utilise the breadth of tools available to them to gain the upper hand over their enemies, including insult and physical violence, they pursued their disputes through the courts, at significant cost. As aforementioned, the legal system in Languedoc was not one of public prosecution. Plaintiff's brought the cases to the courts and paid for the ensuing investigations and trials. That the widows, wives, and daughters of merchants and artisans, as well as those of the upper notability and the nobility, frequently pursued their disputes through the courts, as well as through physical confrontation, is noteworthy. It suggests that plaintiffs, even those of lower socio-

¹⁹⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 6034.

¹⁹⁹ Farr, *Authority and Sexuality*, 51.

economic backgrounds, were willing to invest significant amounts of time and money into their enmities.

Unfortunately, the criminal dossiers do not provide insight into who actually paid for the litigation.²⁰⁰ However, thanks to the physical structure of the cases themselves, we can be relatively certain of the involvement, or lack thereof, of parties outside of the primary disputants, at least at the litigation stage. The *évangile*, stitched to the front of each *sac*, provides what Ratel calls the “map of the trial”.²⁰¹ Listed on a piece of parchment or vellum are the basic details of the case. Though these can vary in detail, they commonly include the names of the plaintiffs and the accused, the names of the parties’ lawyers, and the date the case was brought to the *parlement*.²⁰² This information was used by the *greffiers* and other officers to manage the abundant cases held in the *greffe*, and the functional purpose of the document allows us to understand the information that was deemed relevant to the officers, including the original jurisdiction of the case, and the names of the litigants involved on both sides of the dispute. It is therefore likely that only those who were mentioned on the *évangile* were involved in the litigation, at least directly.

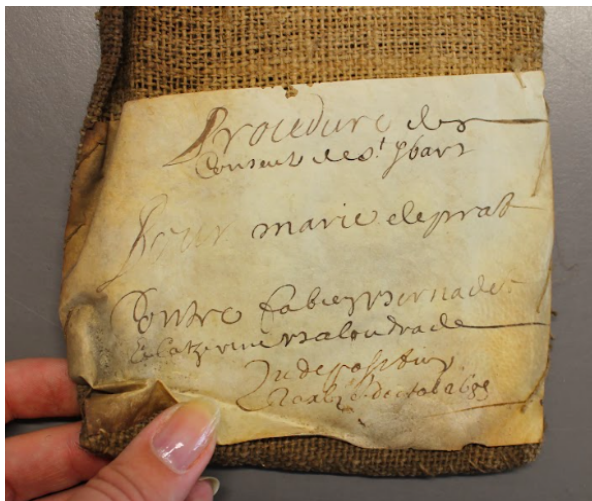


Illustration 1: 2B 2356

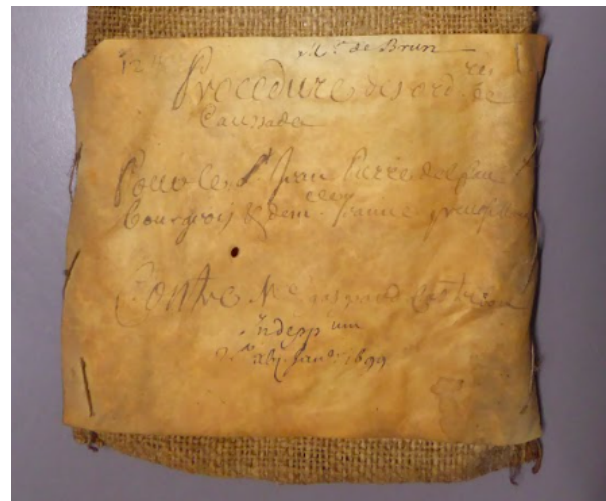


Illustration 2: 2B 5975

²⁰⁰ Exploration of the *parlement*'s *arrêts* might tell us more regarding the financing of suits. Unfortunately, there was not scope for this venture here.

²⁰¹ Ratel, 'Between Facts and Faith,' 162.

²⁰² For more information on the *évangile*, see: Ratel, 'Between Facts and Faith,' 162.

See, for example, case 2B 2356.²⁰³ The *évangile* reads: “Procédure des conseuls de St Ybars. Pour Marie de Prat. Contre Fabien Bernadet et Catherine de Balondrade. Octobre 1685” (See Illustration One). Throughout the case, we learn that Marie de Prat was the wife of maître Germain Bernadet. Although Bernadet is mentioned to contextualise de Prat’s status, there is no mention of him as being involved in the dispute, or in the ensuing litigation. We can deduce therefore that de Prat pursued her dispute with Fabien Bernadet and his wife Catherine de Balondrade on her own merit, and potentially, through her own means. Conversely, in cases where wives appear in dispute alongside their husbands, both husband and wife are listed on the *évangile*, as we see on the *sac* of 2B 5975 which reads “Procédure des ordinaires de Caussade. Pour le Sieur Jean Pierre del Fau, bourgeois, et Demoiselle Jeanne de Prevost. Contre maître Gaspard Castelbon. Janvier 1699” (See Illustration Two).²⁰⁴ This suggests that husbands and wives involved in disputes together were pursuing their litigation collectively against their adversaries.

The statistics from the sample contextualise this information. In the seventy-five cases, there are fifteen cases which list male and female co-plaintiffs. Four detail suits which were filed by male guardians on behalf of their female kin. In these incidents, the men were not involved in the conflict themselves; they filed the suits because their female dependents were unable to. In the 1701 case between demoiselle Marguerite Audemar and Jeanne Bastide, a young lemonade vendor, the suit was filed against Bastide at the ordinary court of Saint Hippolyte (Tarn-et-Garonne) by demoiselle

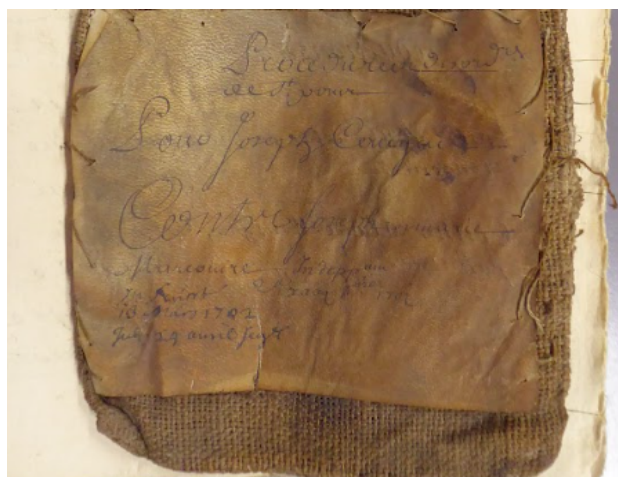


Illustration 3: 2B 7089

²⁰³ AD. H-G, 2B 2356.

²⁰⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 5975.

Audemar's father, sieur Pierre Audemar, *maître chirurgien* and *apothicaire*.²⁰⁵ In his statement, Audemar explained that his daughter was a "fort jeune" girl of less than fifteen years old, and had been lured into Bastide's house under the pretext of playing games before she was insulted, "in the worst possible way for a girl of honour", and beaten around the face and body. Two of the cases list examples of male kin filing suits on behalf of their wives, who had been severely injured and rendered bed bound by an attack. This was the case in 1701, when Joseph Cauquil, of Boissiere (Hèrault) filed a suit against Jean Mecouire, Marie Mecouire and Laurens Bouissiere.²⁰⁶ The adversaries had attacked Cauquil's wife, Marie Crost, who was pregnant at the time, causing severe injuries and resulting in the potential loss of the child. Cauquil filed the suit against the Mecouires and Bouissiere as Crost remained bed bound for some time following the incident. The *évangile* for this case does not include Marie Crost's name: it lists the case as occurring between Cauquil and Bouissiere / Mecouires (See Illustration Three).

In these incidents, the male plaintiffs likely provided the financial resources for the litigation. While we cannot comment on where the financial support came from to fund female plaintiffs' litigation, we can infer that some women did pursue their suits without the direct involvement of their male kin. This complicates the established view of women's disputes. Clearly, women were not simply engaging in purely minor disputes, characterised by gestures and mockery. The defence of honour and position in their communities was of the utmost importance for early modern women, as it was for men. I posit that the cases demonstrate that women invested, both physically and financially, in their disputes in defence of their interests.

Examining linked cases, or cases with multiple *sacs* attached to one or more related incidents, provides us with a useful access point to the ways in which women invested in their enmities. As discussed in the introduction, linked cases might include countersuits and/or cases filed against different members involved in an incident. Five of the seventy-five cases in this chapter's sample have linked cases, four of which are linked to two or more additional *sacs*.²⁰⁷ Of course, as more *sacs* become accessible through the archive, it is likely that more linked cases will emerge. It is also important to

²⁰⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 13819.

²⁰⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 7089.

²⁰⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 1229 (1221; 1209); 2B 2733 (5975; 5624); 2B 6441 (7057; 7242); 2B 7883 (7884); 2B 6848 (6587; 6670; 6696; 6697; 6834).

note that these represent only the criminal cases that reached the *parlement*; examination of civil litigation records and the records of the lower courts would undoubtedly reveal additional rounds of litigation linking adversaries. This potential has been evidenced already in the aforementioned case between Louise de Soubies, Jacquette de Gelet, and Marie and Marguerite Laporte.²⁰⁸ The three *sacs* which emerged from the incident in the bakery reveal a tension between the Laporte sisters and their step-mother de Gelet which had, as far as can be told, originated in a property dispute following the death of de Gelet's husband and the Laporte sisters' father. The sisters filed a civil suit against de Gelet, which concluded on 16 October, confirming the sisters' right to remain within their father's bakery, alongside de Gelet and their husbands and children. We can infer from this that, following the death of de Gelet's husband, de Gelet had attempted to have the sisters and their families removed from the house, despite the stipulations contained within their marriage contracts. Following the decision on 16 October, tensions between de Gelet and the Laportes escalated. The sisters claimed that de Gelet began physically assaulting them, beating them "atrociously".²⁰⁹ According to the sisters, the incident which followed on 26 October was the culmination of this dispute. Each of the parties involved, de Soubies, de Gelet, and the Laporte sisters, provided contradictory accounts of the incident. We cannot speak to the truth of any of the parties. However, we learn from these cases that the parties involved sought the intervention of the courts at least four times. These were not women of substantial means; their repetitive use of the courts tells us that, to the litigants, the stakes were significant enough to justify the financial outlay.

This case is not exceptional. The aforementioned dispute which took place on Rue du Fourbastard, Toulouse (Haute-Garonne) between Antoinette Salles and Jeanne Cazettes exemplifies the potential for women to invest in their disputes, both financially and physically.²¹⁰ Salles, by her own admission, was involved in three different legal procedures. She had brought a complaint against the son of Campaigne for violence against herself; she had denounced the same man for his involvement in the murder of Barthes; and she had brought a case against Cazettes, and another against Viguier and

²⁰⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 6441; 7057; 7242.

²⁰⁹ The worst of these attacks involved de Gelet breaking the floor in the doorway to Marguerite's room. Marguerite fell through the floor and was greatly injured.

²¹⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 7883; 7884.

Campaigne, widow, for violence against herself and her child. Including Cazettes' complaint against Salles, four different legal procedures entangled the lives of a small group of residents on the Rue du Fourbastard. Again, we should note here that these are just the criminal cases brought before the *parlement* of Toulouse; access to civil records and the records of the lesser courts in Toulouse might reveal additional litigation and violence linking the neighbours. This litigiousness is important for our understanding of women's disputes in early modern Languedoc. Neither Salles nor Cazettes appear to have been particularly affluent. Salles' litigiousness, as the wife of a coachman, highlights the severity of the perceived transgressions against her. The narratives constructed for the court indirectly gives us access to the social realities of shared urban spaces in early modern France. Farge's case study of an eighteenth-century Parisian apartment building illustrates particularly well the impact of living in close quarters with neighbours, the "ever-present visitor, whose intervention shaped lives."²¹¹ Cazettes' account of the enmity between herself and Salles frames the assault against a background of repeated, abusive encounters with her neighbour. This is suggestive of quotidian tensions being exacerbated by repeated interaction. But these were not petty or trivial incidents. The confrontation on 23 August was the potential culmination of a protracted enmity between neighbours which involved multiple episodes of litigation and multiple incidents of verbal and physical violence, resulting in serious injuries and even risk to life. The extremely rich spatial context of this case foregrounds the struggle for social dominance and authority which drove the disputants to violence and to the law.

This cyclical pattern is further exemplified in the case between demoiselle Isabeau Sabatier, *marchande*, and demoiselle Anne Bonnafons, widow of sieur Arnaud Caranoue which took place in Narbonne (Aude) in 1709.²¹² Sabatier, who had been in her shop on the evening of 14 April 1709, was disturbed by four or five young children entering the premises "en folâtrant". The children made a lot of noise, and so she asked them to leave. Instead of complying, they redoubled their efforts, making so much noise that Sabatier developed a headache. This obliged her to make the children leave; she forced them from the shop and closed the door behind them. Moments later, Bonnafons,

²¹¹ Arlette Farge, *La Vie Fragile: Violence, Pouvoirs et Solidarités à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1986), 10-13.

²¹² AD. H-G, 2B 22270.

the mother of one of the young boys, arrived with members of her family. Enraged, they began to insult Sabatier who replied “fort doucement et fort honnêtement”. Bonnafons ignored this, and continued to insult Sabatier, even accusing her of having more than ten bastards. This was likely a pointed reference to an incident from 1702, when Sabatier filed a suit against Pierre Donnadieu, *marchand*, for impregnating her during carnival.²¹³ As discussed in section two, economic credibility was firmly affixed to social credibility and honour in the early modern period.²¹⁴ Such a public attack on Sabatier’s honour, in the vicinity of her place of work undoubtedly would have caused serious hurt. Bonnefons and her allies then physically attacked Sabatier, causing her to bleed from her face. When the party eventually left, Sabatier filed a suit against Bonnafons with the *viguier* of Narbonne. This did not, however, constitute the end point of the dispute. Early the next morning, Sabatier encountered Bonnafons while walking in the street. Bonnafons once again attacked Sabatier, seizing her by her clothing and necklaces. Witnesses report seeing the two women ripping at each other’s garments and taking various items from each other, including keys and jewellery. Onlookers intervened, and the two women returned each other’s belongings. Bonnefons and Sabatier threatened each other, with Sabatier claiming that she would kill Bonnafons the next time they met.²¹⁵ Sabatier then filed a second suit against Bonnafons. The threat to Sabatier’s honour, and the threat to Bonnefons’ children motivated extreme reactions from both women. The use of both physical violence and the law exemplifies the considered and strategic nature of women’s disputes in early modern Languedoc. Evidently, to the women involved, the stakes threatened by their adversaries were not petty. They were worth investing in, both financially by way of the courts, and physically, by way of violent confrontation.

Conclusion

Women’s disputes, and the strategies with which they chose to pursue them, were complicated and calibrated. There were multiple avenues open to individuals for the

²¹³ AD. H-G, 2B 6611.

²¹⁴ Craig Muldrew, ‘Debt, Credit, and Poverty in Early Modern England,’ in *A Debtor’s World: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Debt*, ed. Ralph Brubaker, Robert M. Lawless, & Charles J. Tabb (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 10.

²¹⁵ “Elle promis t’avoir la vie a la premiere occasion”,

pursuit of enmities, as there were for their resolution, and women made use of the options available to them. This involved both physical violence and use of the civil and criminal courts. Our understanding of early modern enmities and the role of the courts needs to be expanded to accommodate this reality. Of course, every case is idiosyncratic. Gaps in the records abound, and extant sources can only give us a glimpse into the disputes of early modern Languedocians. I am not therefore claiming that litigation never served to restore peaceable relations. Rather, I suggest that recourse to the law had the capacity to complicate everyday relationships and should not necessarily be taken as a signifier of intended reconciliation between disputants. The criminal dossiers show that, not only were women in early modern Languedoc active participants in interpersonal conflict, but that they pursued and escalated their enmities through both physical violence and the law.

This chapter supplements recent research into women's lives in early modern communities. Women's and men's disputes and dispute strategies were not dissimilar; many of the factors which shaped male violence are evident too in women's disputes. Women, like men, used their legal knowledge to guide their use of the courts, not only to set themselves in the best light possible before the magistrates, but to complicate their enmities, and to stage their violence to suit their purposes and interests. Sexual honour was undoubtedly central to women's reputation, and women were willing, and indeed required, to utilise violence, even lethal violence, in the defence of this important commodity. But sexual reputation was just one component of women's identities and honour. The *sacs* show that women's honour was founded on much broader factors. Symbolic geographies played important roles in women's disputes, as they did for male disputes. The transgression of physical and symbolic boundaries of authority legitimised violence against the transgressor as the transgressed worked to determine and reinforce their position within the social hierarchy of their community. The public nature of women's violence, the framing involved in their accounts of the interactions, and indeed the multiple origins of the disputes exemplify the complex nature of women's identities in early modern Languedoc.

The cases from the *parlement* speak to the broader lives and experiences of women, and caution researchers not to assume that gendered social expectations resulted in correlating behaviours. Capp argues that "once politics is redefined to include parish affairs, the role of ordinary people of both sexes becomes at once

apparent.”²¹⁶ Women used the tools available to them, within or outside of what might be expected of them, to pursue and defend their interests, their honour, and the micropolitical stakes that they held within their communities. Importantly, as the cases have evidenced, women’s disputes were not simply childish and spontaneous, as scholars have purported. Female disputes pursued long standing enmities in which violence, insult, and indeed litigation, formed concomitant parts.

²¹⁶ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 288.

Chapter Two. The Private and Public Lives of the Rural Parish Clergy in Counter-Reformation Languedoc

The seventeenth century brought immense change for the French Catholic clergy, both regular and secular. At the beginning of the century, the weakened Catholic Church was reeling from the Wars of Religion. The recovery of the “physical fabric” of the Church took many decades, especially in the south where Calvinism was most firmly entrenched.¹ The 1685 Revocation of the Edict of Nantes saw mass conversions to Catholicism, and the exodus of those who refused to comply. The impact of these changes on social relations was significant. As a result, I expected to find a high proportion of cases involving Protestants, or after 1685, involving *nouveaux convertis* in the criminal dossiers. We know that false converts remained a concern for the monarchy at the turn of the century; in 1698 the monarchy published a declaration “intended to enforce Catholic education on the nominally converted Protestants.”² Despite this, and the resultant search for heretics, there are only a few mentions of Protestants in the *sacs à procès* between 1680 and 1720, and even fewer refer to incidents of physical violence. This absence is likely, as Jack Thomas points out, to have resulted from the transfer of jurisdiction over new converts and remaining Protestants to the *intendants*.³ For Languedoc, the *intendant* was Nicolas de Lamoignon de Basville, who, as Monahan describes, “created an almost legendary authority over the province” until his departure in 1718.⁴ It would be naive to assume that because such tensions do not feature explicitly in the criminal cases, they had not informed the disputes in any way. But based on the material contained in the trial bags, we can do no more than guess at how cross-confessional disputes might have been experienced in post-Revocation Languedoc.

¹ Joseph Bergin, *Church, Society, and Religious Change in France, 1580 - 1730* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 6; Elizabeth Tingle, ‘The Counter Reformation and the Parish Church in Western Brittany (France) 1500-1700,’ in *Parish Churches in the Early Modern World* ed. Andrew Spicer (London: Routledge, 2016), 77; Barbara Diefendorf, ‘Religious Conflict and Civic Identity: Battles Over the Sacred Landscape of Montpellier,’ *Past & Present* 237, no. 1 (2017): 56.

² Jack Thomas, *Les Protestants du Languedoc et la Justice Royale de Louis XIV à la Révolution: De l’obscurité à la Lumière* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2022), 26; Robin Briggs, *Communities of Belief: Cultural and Social Tensions in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 200.

³ Thomas, *Les Protestants du Languedoc*, 27.

⁴ Gregory W. Monahan, *Let God Arise: The War and Rebellion of the Camisards* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 18.

What the cases do shed light on is the impact of the Counter-Reformation on parochial life in France. Tridentine reforms began filtering into France following the Ordinance of Blois (1579) and the Estates-General (1614).⁵ Aside from limiting the spread of Protestantism, these reforms aimed to rectify the abuses of the clergy, stamp out immorality and improve the moral and spiritual quality of the parish priest.⁶ The creation of diocesan seminaries educated the priesthood and set out a standardised approach to clerics' pastoral duties.⁷ Additionally, the requirements for priests' increased record keeping, and for clerics to administer the sacraments and to oversee parishioners' important life events (baptisms, marriages, burials) aimed at ridding the 'spiritual' from everyday life and replacing popular religion with Tridentine Catholicism.⁸

Episcopal visitations played a large part in policing these new parochial dynamics, though the degree of success appears to have been inconsistent.⁹ In the early-seventeenth century, rural sociability still involved the clergy. Parish priests were frequently listed as godparents to their parishioners, they drank at taverns and pursued relationships with women.¹⁰ Clerical moral failings are known to have persisted at the turn of the eighteenth century. As Robin Briggs discusses, this was, in some cases, symptomatic of parishioners being unwilling to denounce their parish priest to an outsider.¹¹ However, by the final decades of the seventeenth century, most dioceses were reporting significant improvements in the behaviour and performance of the parish clergy.¹² Karen Carter's examination of the *procès verbaux* from episcopal visitations to the parishes of Auxerre (Yonne), Châlons-sur-Marne (Marne), and Reims

⁵ Philip T. Hoffman, *Church and Community in the Diocese of Lyon, 1500-1789* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 75; Tingle, 'The Counter Reformation and the Parish Church,' 80; 'Rural Seigneurs and the Counter Reformation: Parishes, Patrons, and Religious Reform in France, 1550-1700,' *Church History* 87, no. 1 (2018): 32; Anne Bonzon, *La Paix au Village: Clergé paroissial et règlement des conflits dans la France d'Ancien Régime* (Ceyzérieu, Champ Vallon: 2022), 21-23.

⁶ John Bossy, 'The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe,' *Past & Present*, 47 (1970): 52; Robert Sauzet, *Contre-Réforme et Réforme catholique en Bas-Languedoc. Le diocèse de Nîmes au XVIIe siècle* (Lovain: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1979).

⁷ Hoffman, *Church and Community*, 5.

⁸ Hoffman, *Church and Community*, 2; John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 72.

⁹ Bossy, 'The Counter-Reformation,' 52.

¹⁰ John Bossy, *Peace in the Post-Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 39-41.

¹¹ Briggs, *Communities of Belief*, 262.

¹² *Ibid.*, 262-263.

(Marne), details a marked improvement in the condition of the clergy by the eighteenth century. As a result of reforms to clerical education and increased episcopal oversight, 'badly behaved' priests which were "nearly ubiquitous in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries" were "rare exceptions by the end of the seventeenth century."¹³ The success of these reforms is characterised by the emergence in the eighteenth century of "the literary *bon prêtre*", a figure of esteem and respect.¹⁴

The role of the episcopacy was central to the Tridentine reforms, and consequently, scholars commonly view the Counter-Reformation through the administrative entity of the diocese.¹⁵ Estelle Martinazzo's study on the Counter-Reformation in the diocese of Toulouse, for example, explores the role of the bishop's administrative network, and the "relay of episcopal authority" through the canons and archbishops upon whom the bishop relied for information on the day to day workings of the diocese, and on the practices and behaviours of the parish clergy.¹⁶ This scholarly focus can also be found in studies of the Tridentine world beyond France. McNamara's study on the reforming bishop of Padua, Gregorio Barbarigo, (1664-1697), offers important insights into the practical and logistical realities of the Counter-Reformation, as well as the various strategies that Barbarigo deployed to educate the clergy and overcome resistance within his diocese.¹⁷ But, like Bergin and Martinazzo, McNamara's emphasis, as the title of her book suggests, is on the role of the bishopric in bringing about Catholic reform. Consequently, such studies perpetuate a 'top-down' interpretation of the Counter-Reformation, which delivered religious reform, directed by the bishops, to the clergy and the laity.

In recent years, however, scholars have begun to look beyond the bishopric to the parish priest in an attempt to understand the success and failures of the Catholic Reforms. As Tackett explains, under the bishops, the 'lower' secular clergy - the *curés* and *vicaires* that lived and worked amongst their parishioners, were the individuals

¹³ Karen Carter, *Creating Catholics: Catechism and Primary Education in Early Modern France* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 121.

¹⁴ Briggs, *Communities of Belief*, 233.

¹⁵ See, for example, Bergin, *Church, Society, and Religious Change*, 23; Sauzet, *Contre-Réforme et Réforme catholique en Bas-Languedoc*.

¹⁶ Estelle Martinazzo, *Toulouse au Grand Siècle. Le rayonnement de la Réforme catholique (1590-1710)* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015), 60.

¹⁷ Celeste McNamara, *The Bishop's Burden: Reforming the Catholic Church in Early Modern Italy* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press: 2020).

who implemented change at the parochial level.¹⁸ Anne Bonzon's study *La Paix au Village* identifies the peacemaking practices of the parish clergy as emblematic of the Counter-Reformation.¹⁹ While she maintains that a key aspect of the Counter-Reformation was a vertical impulse for dispute resolution within parishes, with parish priests assuring prelates of their peacemaking practices, Bonzon's research highlights the value in looking beyond the episcopacy to the quotidian lives and interactions of the parish clergy with their parishioners.²⁰ Carter's work on the catechism underscores this value. In examining the negotiations which took place between parish priest, local notables, and the parents and guardians of children receiving catechetical education, Carter identifies not simply a top-down implementation of religious reform, but a "process of compromise and adaptation by both clergy and laity."²¹

Once again, this conversation is not limited to France. Studies from around the world are contributing to the broadening of our understanding of how the Counter-Reformation was implemented in, and shaped by, the communities it was designed to reform. Henry Kamen's study on Mediona, in Catalonia, for example, demonstrates that, despite previous scholars' dismissal of the existence of a Catholic Reformation in Spain, Tridentine policies shaped the religious life of rural Catalonians during the early modern period. Crucially, Kamen highlights the local political context of these communities, arguing that, owing to local community customs, religious change took many generations as locals resisted or negotiated with the reforms in the defence of their individual and community interests.²² These findings are echoed in William B. Taylor's exhaustive study on eighteenth-century Bourbon Mexico.²³ Viewing the imperial reforms through the lens of the clergy in the diocese of Guadalajara, Taylor explores how power in rural indigenous parishes was negotiated between government officials, local leaders, and the clergy. He argues that, despite the priest's position of

¹⁸ Timothy Tackett, *Priest and Parish in Eighteenth Century France: A Social and Political Study of the Curés in a Diocese of Dauphiné 1750-1791* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

¹⁹ Anne Bonzon, *La Paix au Village: clergé paroissial et règlement des conflits dans la France d'Ancien Régime* (Ceyzérieu: Champ Vallon, 2022), 9.

²⁰ Bonzon, *La Paix au Village*, 35, 294.

²¹ Carter, *Creating Catholics*, 17.

²² Henry Kamen, *Phoenix and the Flame: Catalonia and the Counter-Reformation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 19, 43, 158-163.

²³ William B. Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in eighteenth-century Mexico* (Stanford, California: Standford University Press, 1996).

authority within the parish, and despite the existence of disputes between parishioners and their priests, engendered particularly over fees charged by clerics for parochial services, the relationship between priest and parishioner was not adversarial but based in communication and compromise.²⁴

Collectively, these studies paint a picture of religious reform which was brought about as a result of collaboration between the Church and the laity. Crucially, they suggest that the laity too had an important role in ensuring that their clerics upheld the values expected of them as Tridentine priests. McNamara, for example, details a 1687 request, sent by the villagers of Campo di Rovere to the Bishop of Padua, to replace their only priest. The request was accompanied by a three-page list of Father Pietro dale Baste's immoral offences.²⁵ For France, examination of the *officialité* registers evidence parishioners' dissatisfaction with their clerics' slow uptake of Tridentine morals in some parishes.²⁶ However, as the cases from the *parlement* of Toulouse make clear, moral failings were not the only cause for discord between parishioners and their clergy. The criminal dossiers involving the Languedocian clergy give us the opportunity to think about the impact of this changing dynamic on social relations, particularly clergy-laity relations, at the parochial level and examine the tensions and anxieties which underpinned clerics' violent disputes with their parishioners.

The Sample

Of the 1,259 criminal cases brought before the *parlement* between 1680 and 1720, eighty-three (7%) involved members of the clergy. This may not seem like a particularly high ratio, especially in comparison to the samples for the other three chapters. However, as Hoffman points out, the clergy made up a minority of the population, especially in rural areas.²⁷ That clerics were present in over twenty cases per decade, appealed or taken directly to the *parlement* is significant, especially when we consider the other options available to them. It is likely that many more disputes were brought before the lower courts, and the ecclesiastical courts (*officialités*), which were not appealed. The clergy were evidently actively involved in disputes during our period.

²⁴ Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 5; See also Angelo Torre, 'Politics Cloaked in Worship: State, Church, and Local Power in Piedmont, 1570-1770,' *Past & Present* 134, no. 1 (1992): 42-92.

²⁵ McNamara, *The Bishop's Burden*, 133.

²⁶ McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France*, vol. 1, 364-368.

²⁷ Hoffman, *Church and Community*, 147.

This complicates the notion that Tridentine reforms brought about a clergy firmly dedicated to moral leadership within their parishes. The *curé* was the “arbiter of disputes”, the moral leader of the community.²⁸ Why then were they engaging in violent disputes and criminal procedures?

In their examinations of the clergy’s uptake of Tridentine reforms, scholars have focused heavily on the urban clergy. Clerics had considerable influence in urban spaces, and some large towns and small cities were centres of religious activity. In Agen (Lot-et-Garonne), ecclesiastics made up almost 5% of the population by the end of the seventeenth century.²⁹ Scholars have argued that towns drove Counter-Reformation change: the uptake of Tridentine values was propagated in urban centres by new confraternities and religious orders.³⁰ However, if the lower secular clergy facilitated the integration of Tridentine values, the rural parish, often overseen by one *curé* and a supporting auxiliary priest (*vicaire*), is especially important for understanding the impact of the Counter-Reformation on communities at the turn of the eighteenth century.³¹ This approach is supported by the data from the criminal dossiers.

Table 6: The presence of the clergy in the sacs

Table Six: The presence of the clergy in the sacs (Plaintiffs/Victims and Defendants)	
Types of Clergy	Cases
Curé	5
Prêtre	4
Vicaire	3
Religieux	1
Clerc Tonsuré	1
Total	14

²⁸ McManners, *Church and Society*, 364-368.

²⁹ Gregory Hanlon, *L’Univers des gens de bien: culture et comportements des élites urbaines en Agenais-Condomois au XVIIe siècle* (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 1989), 24-25.

³⁰ Briggs, *Communities of Belief*, 261.

³¹ Tackett, *Priest and Parish*, 36.

Large towns and cities are almost entirely absent from this chapter's sample. Instead, the cases overwhelmingly feature the rural parochial clergy. Thirteen of the fourteen *sacs* originated in small towns, large villages, or disparate rural parishes. Twelve (85.7%) took place in communities of less than 3,000 inhabitants. Eight (57.1%) took place in communities with less than 1,000 inhabitants.³² As a result, the cases are dominated by the 'lower' secular clergy, the *curés* and *vicaires* that lived and worked amongst their parishioners and were charged with overseeing the implementation of Tridentine reform at the parochial level (see Table One). The data suggests therefore that the Counter-Reformation was experienced in different ways in urban and rural communities. While emphasis on education is central for understanding the progression of the Catholic Reformation as scholars of the urban clergy have emphasised, it is not the only important factor. Scholars disagree on the levels of native versus foreign clergy in the parishes in our period. John McManners found that, in the late-eighteenth century, the parochial clergy in Angers (Maine-et-Loire) were almost entirely native to the city.³³ Timothy Tackett, by contrast, has shown that, during the seventeenth century, clerics taking up benefices across France were commonly transplanted into new communities.³⁴ Undoubtedly these figures were contingent on multiple variables, amongst them the attractions of rural or urban parishes, and the socio-economic status of the clerics attracted to each. Might the transplantation of foreign clerics into the parishes of Languedoc have contributed to the prevalence of disputes involving the lower clergy in the records of the *parlement*? From the criminal dossiers, it is difficult to know whether the priests involved in these incidents of violence were local or foreign to their parishes. For some, familial names suggest long personal histories within their communities. In Najac (Aveyron), 1704, maître Pierre Barres, *curé* and mayor of Najac, features alongside his brother Maître Bernard Barres d'Audiguier, *lieutenant* in the *viguerie*, in dispute with Antoine Puechberty, *avocat*.³⁵ That Pierre Barres and Bernard Barres held secular and ecclesiastical positions in the same small community suggests

³² Cassini EHESS, 'Des Villages de Cassini aux communes d'aujourd'hui,' accessed April 2, 2023, <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

³³ John McManners, *French Ecclesiastical Society under the Ancien Régime: A Study of Angers in the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1961), 134.

³⁴ Tackett, *Priest and Parish*, 170.

³⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 7839.

that the *curé* was a native of the diocese, if not the town.³⁶ Others seem to have arrived in their parishes for the purpose of taking up a benefice. In 1698, a violent dispute erupted between Jacques Bach, *maître menuisier*, and maître Jean La Garrigue, *vicaire* of Concots (Lot) over a rented bed.³⁷ La Garrigue had hired the bed from Bach in 1697, for a term of one year. Although parish clergy were entitled to housing or lodging costs at the expense of their parish, they were required to fund furniture acquisition themselves.³⁸ That la Garrigue hired the bed in 1697 suggests that that is when he arrived in the parish, though he may well have been a native of the diocese. Certainly, foreign clergy might have been treated differently to those native to the parish. But that incidents of violence involving priests with familial foundations within the parish occurred suggests that questions over belonging and integration do not seem to have played a significant role in the proliferation of disputes involving the clergy. Hoffman found that, in the diocese of Lyon, rural notables commonly featured in dispute with their *curés*; “a rural notable’s stature in the community made it easier for him than others to oppose the *curé*.”³⁹ However, the sample that this chapter draws upon sees no distinct group with whom the clergy found themselves in contention. The only broad social group missing from the cases are the extreme ‘poor’ of the parishes. This is likely, in part, a consequence of the parish priest’s role in poor relief in the seventeenth century.⁴⁰ But it is also likely symptomatic of the royal government’s changing approach to the poor in the late-seventeenth-century and the creation of *hôpitaux-généraux*.⁴¹ That the clergy found themselves in dispute with parishioners from across the social spectrum is indicative of the impact of the Catholic reforms on the social and political structures of the parish. Moreover, the clergy’s involvement in violent conflict with individuals of lower status than themselves nuances our understanding of early modern interpersonal violence. Scholars have argued that disputants usually fought with

³⁶According to the 1793 *recensement*, Najac had a population of 2,029 inhabitants at the turn of the eighteenth-century. Cassini EHESS, ‘Najac’ (Aveyron), accessed August 12 2023, <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

³⁷AD. H-G, 2B 5785.

³⁸ Tackett, *Priest and Parish*, 131.

³⁹ Hoffman, *Church and Community*, 143.

⁴⁰ McManners, *Church and Society*, 380.

⁴¹ Cissie C. Fairchild, *Poverty and Charity in Aix-en-Provence, 1640-1789* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2019).

adversaries from similar socio-economic backgrounds.⁴² That the clergy were in dispute with lay people across the social spectrum highlights the potential of their claims to social capital to lead to conflict. Their position amplified the potential for conflict despite, and perhaps because of, the expectations, practices, and privileges of their profession.

Table Seven: The presence of the clergy in the cases – defendant vs plaintiff		
Defendants	Type	Plaintiff
1	Curé	4
3	Prêtre	1
1	Vicaire	2
0	Religieux	1
0	Clerc Tonsuré	1
5	Total	9

Table 7: The presence of the clergy in the cases - defendant vs plaintiff

The clergy should not be thought of as separate from the body of the community, and neither should they be thought of as separate from the body politic. Material, political, and kin interests integrated the parish priest in the secular lives of their parishioners and in their disputes, despite the efforts of the Counter-Reformation. They were keen customers of the courts; 57% of the cases in this chapter’s sample list the clergy member as the plaintiff (see Table Two).⁴³ This suggests that the clergy pursued their rights in the same ways that their parishioners did, despite the fact that litigation was seen as unchristian.⁴⁴ That clerics appealed all the way to the *parlement* is particularly significant. Piant states that “sworn enemies were unlikely to accept the

⁴² Roger Gould, *Collision of Wills: How Ambiguity about Social Rank Breeds Conflict* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003), 5.

⁴³ In the total eighty-three cases involving the clergy (1680-1720), the clergy appear as plaintiffs in fifty-three cases (63.9%) and as defendants in thirty-two cases (38.6%).

⁴⁴ Stuart Carroll, *Enmity and Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 290.

finality of a court judgement."⁴⁵ This holds true too for early modern clerics, despite the Christian imperative of peace. The clergy invested time and money in their disputes with parishioners, and adopted complex strategies including violence and the law to advantage themselves in their conflicts.

The sample suggests that the post-Tridentine transformation of the clergy in the lives of parishioners lay at the heart of disputes involving rural clerics in Languedoc. It has been argued that, in rural areas, the adoption of new values, by clerics and laity alike, was much slower than in urban spaces.⁴⁶ This thesis argues that the microcosm of small towns and villages amplified the role that social status and local politics had in proliferating tensions and incidents of violence. Nicole Castan has shown that the village quasi-democracy which informed the political landscape of Languedoc played a significant part in explaining levels of violence at the end of *ancien régime*, imbuing inhabitants across the social spectrum with a "spirit of equality."⁴⁷ This was true also for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As Georges Fournier states, the system of local representation in the south of France had "firmly established the roots of democracy and the habit of participation of large parts of the population in major political discussions."⁴⁸ It is in this setting that the rural clergy, as isolated representatives of the Catholic Church, were to implement the changes of the Counter-Reformation at the parish level. Claims for clerical and church power ran up against traditional forms of civic authority. But clerics were also individuals, with personal and familial interests. The defence and pursuit of these interests brought them into contention with their parishioners more broadly. Briggs states that the ideals of the Counter-Reformation required the parish clergy to be "at once of the world, and out of it."⁴⁹ They needed to integrate into their communities, to play important roles in the milestones of their parishioners' lives, but they needed to demonstrate moral superiority.

⁴⁵ Hervé Piant, *Une Justice Ordinaire: Justice civile et criminel dans la prévôté royale de Vaucouleurs sous l'Ancien Régime* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015), 202.

⁴⁶ Briggs, *Communities of Belief*, 261.

⁴⁷ Nicole Castan, *Les Criminels de Languedoc: les exigences d'ordre et les voies du ressentiment dans une société pré-révolutionnaire, 1750-1790* (Toulouse: Association des publications de l'Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 1980), 328.

⁴⁸ Georges Fournier, *Démocratie et vie municipale en Languedoc du milieu du XVIIIe siècle au début du XIXe siècle*, Tome I (Toulouse: Les Amis des Archives de la Haute-Garonne, 1994), 15.

⁴⁹ Robin Briggs, *Communities of Belief*, 265.

This dualism is the focus of this chapter. The Counter-Reformation increased the power of the clergy and raised them above the community. But at the same time, the Church and parishioners' expectations around the clergy's behaviour and activities were becoming more narrowly defined. This inevitably led to conflicts and clashes over the personal interests of both layman and cleric. The cases from the *parlement* give us the opportunity to examine this phenomenon at the turn of the eighteenth century, when clerical and lay values were shifting dramatically, though not necessarily harmoniously. Castan sees the "manifestations of mediocre aggressiveness" apparent at the end of the *ancien régime* as indicative of imbalances in social relations.⁵⁰ But the criminal dossiers demonstrate that these manifestations were apparent long before the Revolution. That the clergy feature in 7% of the criminal cases (1680-1720) raises important questions. As moral leaders, the clergy were supposed to facilitate order and good social relations. Why then did their disputes escalate to violence, and reach the high court of the *parlement* of Toulouse? The cases from the *parlement* echo scholars' findings concerning the continuation of clerical abuses at the turn of the eighteenth century. McManners' review of the *officialité* records highlight the continued moral failings of the clergy into the mid-eighteenth century.⁵¹ But where parishioners, concerned with their cleric's morality, turned to the *officialité*, the *sacs*, in contrast, concern issues of clerical criminality. Together, these two sets of documents suggest a far more complicated picture of clerical life in the post-Tridentine rural parish.

The criminal dossiers highlight two areas of contention emerging from the position of the parish clergy within their communities. First, as parochial authorities, clerics experienced resentment from their parishioners. This came in various forms; local notables challenged the hierarchical threat posed by clerics in post-Tridentine communities. Municipal authorities resisted perceived transgressions to their authority and jurisdictions. Parishioners targeted the hypocrisy of their clergy, utilising public spaces and pointed language to undermine the reputation of their *curés*. These accounts give us an important opportunity to supplement the scholarship on lay perceptions of the clergy in this period of religious reform. As Hoffman states, scholarship on the Counter-Reformation often "overlooks the role of the laity, and reinforces views of religious reform as a one-way process, moving from the clerical elite down to the

⁵⁰ Castan, *Les Criminels de Languedoc*, 6.

⁵¹ McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France*, vol. 1, 364-368.

populace.”⁵² Olwen Hufton tells us that “the origins of anti-clericalism in Languedoc long precede the eighteenth century.”⁵³ Section one examines clerics’ attempts to negotiate these moments of resistance, and parishioners’ utilisation of Counter-Reformation values to challenge their spiritual leaders in moments of discord. Second, the cases highlight the heterogeneity of the rural parish clergy. Despite belonging to the Church, clerics were individuals, with their own personal and familial interests to advance and defend. Their disputes reflect these interests; violent confrontations over personal economic concerns abound, as did incidents emerging from previous litigation and private enmities. Section two explores the dual nature of clerics within their parishes and examines the clergy’s use of their privileged position within the community, of violence, and of the law, to advantage their position in their personal enmities.

A note on the sample

The clergy are present in eighty-three (7%) of the 1,259 cases catalogued for the period 1680-1720. As discussed in the thesis introduction, the samples for each chapter are drawn from a representative sample of two hundred cases. The percentage of cases involving each of the four demographic groups (clergy, women, nobility, notability) within the total 1,259 cases equates to the percentage of the sample of two hundred cases the thesis examines. The clergy are therefore designated a sample of fourteen cases: 7% of the two hundred cases. The aim of this method is to give each social group equal attention throughout the research. However, clearly this chapter’s sample is much narrower than the samples for the other three chapters. Where necessary, this chapter refers to case summaries from the archival catalogue to illustrate broader patterns. As has been discussed, errors abound in the catalogue. Reference to cases from the larger sample of eighty-three cases is therefore only made where necessary, and where the information within the archival catalogue allows. In addition, notarial and parish records have been used, where available, to verify the identities of disputants in cases where I have not consulted the physical documents.

⁵² Hoffman, *Church and Community*, 2.

⁵³ Olwen Hufton, ‘Attitudes Towards Authority in Eighteenth-Century Languedoc,’ *Social History* 3, no. 3 (1978): 294.

Anticlericalism: The Clergy, Authority, and Local Parish Hierarchies

Tridentine reforms aimed particularly at regulating religious life in parishes across France and unifying parochial communities under the spiritual direction of the parish priest.⁵⁴ The centralised role of the *curé* in the everyday lives of their parishioners led to considerable resentment in some communities. Incidents of anticlericalism, most commonly associated with the late-eighteenth century, highlight discontent with the Church. As Hufton has shown, the repressive actions of the Languedocian clergy became the target of youth groups who set out to publicly defy clerical authority in the eighteenth century.⁵⁵ These confrontations often took place in the vicinity of taverns and the cabaret, where “priest-baiting was reduced to a fine art.”⁵⁶ As the primary representative of the Church in the parish, the *curé* was an obvious target for registering one’s discontent with the Church. But anticlericalism was not necessarily aimed at the broader structures of the Church; the *curé* himself could engender discord with his parishioners. While anticlericalism is apparent in the late-seventeenth century criminal dossiers, the patterns that Hufton identified are not. Rather, the *sacs* suggest that the Counter-Reformation’s transformation of the secular clergy shifted the parameters of parochial authority, bringing the cleric into contention with secular authorities and other local notables. This section uses the *sacs* to explore the position of the clergy in post-Tridentine parishes. It examines parishioners’ reactions to clerical intervention in quotidian life, and discusses the ways in which the parish clergy attempted to negotiate tensions with their flock.

As this thesis demonstrates, social hierarchies were fiercely defended in early modern Languedoc. Reputation and honour were important commodities that determined one’s position in society. The use of physical violence was commonly deployed by both men and women to defend the closely intertwined commodities of personal honour and personal interests.⁵⁷ Individuals were defined by their socio-economic backgrounds, their professions, and their alliances. The purchase of royal office was a preferred way for individuals to progress, both socially and economically. This route was, however, limited to those with the necessary financial means; offices

⁵⁴ Bossy, ‘The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe,’ 52.

⁵⁵ Hufton, ‘Attitudes Towards Authority,’ 292.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁵⁷ Gregory Hanlon, ‘Les Rituels de l’Agression en Aquitaine au XVIIe siècle,’ *Annales* 40, no. 2 (1985): 244.

were typically significant investments and would-be office holders were often required to utilise kin networks to gather the requisite funds for the purchase.⁵⁸ Status gained was therefore jealously guarded by not only the office holder, but by their kin who had likely contributed to the financial outlay of the position in the hopes of gaining themselves. In the Midi, as we have seen, minor civic roles provided individuals from lower social backgrounds with the opportunity for social advancement, even if only for a fixed term. The Church also provided opportunities for the laity to gain positions of privilege within their communities. The role of churchwarden (*marguillier*) could be a stepping stone to greater influence in parochial matters for the socially ambitious rural parishioner.⁵⁹ Amongst other privileges, *marguilliers* walked directly behind the clergy in processions, “often preceding even the officers of justice”, they oversaw the hiring of “lay employees” and they discussed “leases and investments with local bigwigs.”⁶⁰ As Chapters Three and Four highlight, civic office afforded notability within the community, and had the potential to disrupt traditional local hierarchies. The criminal dossiers attest to the pervasiveness of anxieties over status shaping violent disputes within Languedocian communities. Within this complex structure of social hierarchies, the *curé* embodied a set of contradictions. Clerics’ private identities, usually that of an artisan’s or merchant’s son, were complicated by the moral and sacred superiority of their public office.⁶¹ Local resentment to perceived transgressions made by the clergy were therefore multifaceted; the cleric from a lowly background was required to assume a position of moral and spiritual authority in order to fulfil their duty as a post-Tridentine *curé*. In order to do so, they had to negotiate the complex social hierarchies which shaped public and private life within their parishes.

Hoffman has argued that, whereas the nobility rarely appeared in violent confrontations with the clergy, local notables were frequently at odds with *curés*.⁶² Although the *sacs* show that clerics found themselves in dispute with individuals from all social backgrounds, disputes with notables were common. Of the fourteen cases in

⁵⁸ William Doyle, ‘The Price of Offices in Pre-Revolutionary France,’ *The Historical Journal* 27, no. 4 (1984): 833.

⁵⁹ David Garrioch, ‘Protestants and Bourgeois Notability in Eighteenth-Century Paris,’ *French History and Civilization* 6 (2015): 3; McManners, *Church and Society*, vol. 1, 305.

⁶⁰ McManners, *Church and Society*, vol. 1, 305.

⁶¹ For information on the socio-economic background of the clergy, see: McManners, *Church and Society*, vol. 1; Tackett, *Priest and Parish*.

⁶² Hoffman, *Church and Community*, 143.

this chapter's sample, eight (57.1%) list the clergy in dispute with local nobility, secular authorities, and other rural notables. Disputes between spiritual and secular authorities were not specific to the seventeenth century. In the fifteenth century, disputes over the allocation of benefices and the outcomes of elections sometimes resulted in violence between nobility and the clergy.⁶³ But the cases suggest that the Counter-Reformation placed new tensions on these relationships. In part, this was likely a consequence of the Tridentine emphasis on clerics' residence within their parishes. As Phillips argues, this major reform was targeted at officials across the church hierarchy; at the level of the parish, the lower clergy had "often preferred to leave their parishes in the charge of poor-quality vicars while themselves pursuing study and other activities in towns."⁶⁴ In order to oversee the implementation of Counter-Reformation values amongst their parishioners, the lower clergy were required to reside within their parishes. The Council of Trent therefore placed the *curé* physically within the parish, and symbolically at the head of their flock. This newly centralised position in the parish narrowed their field of influence to the parish and brought them into direct contention with lay notables for parochial influence and superiority. Two cases from this chapter's sample highlight particularly well the role of social status and lay authority in proliferating disputes with parish clergy.

In 1682, maître Jean Vedeille, *curé* of Saint Beauzile (Tarn) filed a suit against sieur Etienne Bonnefons, *praticien* and *marguillier* of the confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament.⁶⁵ While Vedeille had been taking confession during the parish's All Saints Day service, he saw Bonnefons enter the church at pace, and head to the altar to rearrange some candles. Vedeille approached and asked him not to touch the altar while he was taking confessions. Bonnefons responded angrily that he would not take lessons from the *curé*.⁶⁶ He continued to insult Vedeille, calling him a "malicieux" and a worthless man, before leaving the church, continuing to spew insults against the cleric.⁶⁷ Significantly, Bonnefons stated that he was equally as important as the *curé*, both in the church and outside of it, and that the *curé* was no more important than

⁶³ Stuart Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 44.

⁶⁴ Henry Phillips, *Church and Culture in Seventeenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10.

⁶⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 1408.

⁶⁶ "lui aurait brusquement reparty tout esmeu de colère quil ne devoir pas prendre lecon de lui".

⁶⁷ "Vomissant des injures".

anyone else in the parish.⁶⁸ This was a public, and direct attack on the authority of the *curé* within the physical space of the parish church, the seat of his authority. This attack was heightened by the fact that the *curé* was wearing his surplice and stole, the symbols of his sacred position at the head of the parish.⁶⁹ Bonnefons' appeal to the *parlement* adds that the men came to blows; Vedeille seized Bonnefons by his cravat and forced him violently and scandalously from the church, in view of all the parishioners.⁷⁰

Bonnefons' position as churchwarden is important for understanding the contention that lay at the heart of this violent confrontation. Across France, new confraternities were established in the seventeenth century. These were devotional confraternities, distinct from those of earlier centuries.⁷¹ Lay confraternities had been under secular control, but with a distinct religious focus and as such they were suspected, particularly by the episcopacy, of separating lay religion from the control of the church.⁷² Consequently, the old confraternities were targeted during the Counter-Reformation. Some were shut down or placed under the direct supervision of the parish priest. Many simply disbanded as they were no longer permitted to pursue the popular festivities which attracted many parishioners to their fold.⁷³ Devotional confraternities, like those of the Blessed Sacrament, of which Bonnefons was a member, were established in their place and brought religion and parishioners' religious practice under the direction of the parish priest.⁷⁴ Rather than worshipping in chapels or at sites of pilgrimage, devotional confraternities erected altars in prominent positions within parish churches, which they dressed for feast days, and at which they held masses, led by the parish priest.⁷⁵ It is with this broader context in mind that we should approach the case between Vedeille and Bonnefons.

⁶⁸ "Qu'il ne le reconnoissait pas dans lesglise plus qu'un autre".

⁶⁹ On the Counter-Reformation's directives relating to parish priests' clothing and presentation, see Tackett, *Priest and Parish*, 154-156.

⁷⁰ "En veue de tous les parroissiens".

⁷¹ Pierre Duparc, 'Confréries du Saint-Esprit et Communautés d'habitants au Moyen Âge,' *Revue Historique de droit Français et Étranger* 35 (1958): 349.

⁷² Bossy, *Peace in the Post-Reformation*, 33.

⁷³ On the confraternities see: J-P Gutton, 'Confraternities, *curés* and communities in rural areas of the diocese of Lyons under the ancien régime,' in *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800* ed. Kaspar von Greyerz (London: German Historical Institute, 1984); Tingle, 'Rural Seigneurs and the Counter Reformation,' 46.

⁷⁴ Hoffman, *Church and Community in the Diocese of Lyon, 1500-1789*, 109.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 119.

The position of churchwarden provided Bonnefons with the opportunity for social advancement and authority within the parish.⁷⁶ This authority was bound up in the tasks assigned to him. References are made by both parties to various points of contention. Vedeille had filed a suit against the community concerning the presbytery, of which Bonnefons was charged with overseeing as *marguillier*. Additionally, Vedeille's brother, maître Pierre Vedeille, *substitut du procureur général*, had filed a suit against Bonnefons for insults uttered against him in the parish church, suggesting that this was a matter that went beyond religious matters.⁷⁷ The relationship between the parties was evidently complex. However, the candles, the altar, and the confessional box provide an important gateway into the experiences which shaped this interaction. In Bonnefons' appeal to the *parlement*, he explained that he had purchased seven or eight pounds of candles to decorate the altar for the feast day. This was done "suivant la coutume". By highlighting the historical precedence for his actions, Bonnefons emphasised Vedeille's refusal to allow him to decorate the altar as a direct transgression of his authority as churchwarden of the Blessed Sacrament. As Bergin explains, pre-seventeenth-century churchwardens worked alongside parish priests without much reason for friction. However, "churchwardens were increasingly required to render account of their stewardship to the parish priest".⁷⁸ These tensions, as the incident between Vedeille and Bonnefons exemplifies, had the potential to engender bitter enmities between clerics and lay-officials as each fought to defend their authority within their community.

In his statement to the magistrates, Vedeille emphasised the churchwarden's lack of respect for his position as *curé* and the public nature of Bonnefons' attack on his character. Vedeille added that, as per the laws of the confraternity, the churchwarden was to be led and governed by the priest.⁷⁹ Bonnefons, however, had failed consistently in his monthly accounting duties and as a result Vedeille had to complete them on his behalf.⁸⁰ Clearly, Vedeille framed the interaction, and Bonnefons' previous failures, in

⁷⁶ Garrioch, 'Protestants and Bourgeois Notability,' 3.

⁷⁷ Unfortunately, we do not know the date or any further details of this litigation.

⁷⁸ Bergin, *Church, Society, and Religious Change*, 35.

⁷⁹ "le premier article du deuxieme chapitre des estats de ladite confrerie il saict quelle sera conduite et gouvernée par le cure".

⁸⁰ For more on parochial accounting and the responsibilities of the churchwardens, see: McManners, *Church and Society*, vol. 1, 306.

his statement to benefit his own position in the eyes of the magistrates. However, the information included in the documents also tells us much about Vedeille's actions as *curé*. We know, from Bonnefons' account, that Vedeille had emerged from the confessional box when he saw Bonnefons rushing towards the altar. Bossy tells us that "the coming of the box must also relate to the decline of the rite of public confession."⁸¹ We cannot know if Vedeille was the *curé* to install the confessional box in Saint Beauzile, but paired with his concerns over the financial administration of the parish, it seems likely that Vedeille was attempting to enforce the ideals of the Counter-Reformation cleric.

For both Bonnefons and Vedeille, anxieties over authority and reputation shaped their interaction on 3 November. But more than this, Bonnefons' actions exhibited resistance to changes brought about by the parish priest. His framing of the events on 3 November highlights the impact that these changes had on his status within the parish community. While the case between Bonnefons and Vedeille is the only incident in this chapter's sample which directly references changes implemented as a result of the Counter-Reformation, it is not the only example in the broader eighty-three cases brought before the *parlement* between 1680 and 1720. Jean Abadie, *curé* of Anclades (Hautes-Pyrénées) filed a suit against two of his parishioners, Pierre Abadie and Bernard Mestre.⁸² It is explained that, in the past, members of the laity were given the honour of carrying a staff during processions.⁸³ In 1705, Abadie, *curé*, had refused to allow this rite, and the laity, enraged, had argued with the cleric, insulted his honour, and assaulted him. In 1704, Dom Louise Fonses and Laurent Vidal, both *prêtres* and *religieux* of the Cistercian Abbey of Valmagne, filed a suit against Jean Boudes, Jean Badan and François Blanc, all residents of Villeveyrac (Hérault).⁸⁴ A dispute over the date of the harvest had led to a violent attack on the priests, who were both beaten with stones. Lastly, in 1704, Jacques Jauvert, *conseiller du roi* and *assesseur* of Verdun (Tarn-et-Garonne), and Jean Bonhomme, *maître cordonnier*, filed a suit against Antoine

⁸¹ Bossy, *Peace in the Post-Reformation*, 43.

⁸² AD. H-G, 2B 7127.

⁸³ We cannot tell from the case summary which procession this case refers to, however it is likely that it would have been part of the observance of All Saint's Day in Lourdes, which was celebrated at Anclades on 1 November.

⁸⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 6582.

Vignerès, *prêtre* and *curé*, and Guillaume Double, *prêtre* and *maire* of Verdun.⁸⁵ A violent altercation had occurred following a dispute over the customs of the confraternity of the White Penitents. As Barnes explains, the penitents were avidly resistant to parochial interference.⁸⁶ These cases all took place at the turn of the eighteenth century, the period when Counter-Reformation changes were beginning to take hold across broader swathes of France. They therefore tell us much about the obstacles that clerics faced during their reforms of the parish. The clergy were required to negotiate the social hierarchies which shaped their parishioners' lives. The laity were willing to use violence against their clerics where they perceived it necessary to defend their personal honour and interests. How both negotiated these tensions exemplifies the ways in which the Catholic reforms had the potential to negatively impact social relationships at the parochial level.

The second case that this section expands on is particularly revealing of the complex ways in which parish clergy could come into conflict with secular municipal and judicial authorities. The Counter-Reformation aimed at reinforcing the priest as head of his parish in order to facilitate a standardisation of Catholicism across France. However, as McManners discusses, the State also expected the clergy to participate in the policing of their parishes, alongside secular authorities.⁸⁷ There is certainly evidence of this in the archival catalogue. In 1698, Count François d'Estaing investigated a series of nighttime thefts that had taken place near Oustrac (Aveyron).⁸⁸ Ten different complaints had been received from different victims, and d'Estaing eventually arrested and imprisoned Amans Besombes, *marchand*. Besombes was sentenced to the galleys for six years, and to pay a fine. However, before he could be transported, Besombes broke out of prison. In the process, Lagardelle, *prêtre*, was wounded. What function Lagardelle was fulfilling before the prison break we do not know, however his presence in the case alongside d'Estaing suggests that he had been operating in a professional capacity during the arrest and/or imprisonment of Besombes. Similarly, in 1688 in Peyrusse-le-Roc (Aveyron), Raymond Dufour, bourgeois and lawyer, was seized on the

⁸⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 6525.

⁸⁶ Andrew E. Barnes, 'The Transformation of the Penitent Confraternities Over the Ancien Régime,' in *Confraternities and Catholic Reform in Italy, France, and Spain* eds. John Patrick Donnelly and Michael W. Maher (Philadelphia: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999).

⁸⁷ McManners, *Church and Society*, vol. 1, 88.

⁸⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 5796.

street by a group of men including maître Lafforgue, *notaire*, sieur baron de Moncourieres, and Bernard Lasserre, *prêtre*.⁸⁹ Dufour's wife, damoiselle de Pons, filed a suit against the men for the kidnapping of her husband and for assault and battery. We do not know any further context from the archival catalogue; access to the documents would undoubtedly reveal a complicated set of relationships between the parties. But from the catalogue entry we can infer that Dufour was arrested, however legally in the eyes of de Pons, and that Lasserre had assisted in that arrest. While clerics assisting municipal or judicial authorities do appear in the cases, they are not common. Presumably, this does not mean that the clergy rarely worked with local authorities, but rather that these episodes did not result in violent confrontations and litigation before the *parlement*.

We should not presume, however, that clerics' participation in local judicial or municipal matters was always welcome. As we have discussed, social hierarchies were fiercely defended in Languedocian communities. Chapter One has shown that transgressions of personal authority had the potential to engender bitter, and often violent, enmities between adversaries. The Counter-Reformation efforts to enhance the authority of the parish priest within the community undoubtedly fuelled competition with secular officials. However, the cases suggest that it was not always the existence of the priest as spiritual authority within the parish that brought secular and church officials into dispute. Rather, it was clerics' pursuit of personal interests which fuelled competition and raised concerns over parochial authority and influence. Two cases from the archival catalogue concern members of the secular or regular clergy who held both spiritual office, and secular positions of authority. In the aforementioned case which pitted two priests against members of the White Penitents in Verdun (Tarn-et-Garonne), one plaintiff, Guillaume Double, was listed as both *prêtre* and *maire* of Verdun.⁹⁰ In 1692, Mathieu de Ribaucourt, *religieux* of Escaladieu Abbey, and *seigneur* of Bordes, used his position as "haute-justicier" to bring a suit against Bernard Marcassus and his family for their attacks on de Ribaucourt's inhabitants in Bordes (Hautes-Pyrénées).⁹¹ The existence of clergy who held both secular and spiritual office complicates our understanding of clerical self-perception in Counter-Reformation

⁸⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 7814.

⁹⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 6525.

⁹¹ AD. H-G, 2B 2758.

France. These cases suggest that self-advancement and positions of secular authority were as much an attraction for some clerics as for the parishioners they were entrusted to lead. We therefore cannot presume that the sole interest of parish priests was the spiritual guidance they could provide to their flocks, as Tridentine ideals might have hoped for. As Luise Schorn-Schütte argues, “the image of the pastor as an “agent of state,” which has long been used to characterize both Protestant and Catholic structures, must be revised.”⁹² Section two will delineate further the complicated ways in which clerics’ private identities as individuals and family members undoubtedly shaped their public identities as parish priests. But the potential for clerics to hold secular and spiritual office adds yet another layer of complexity to how clerics understood their own position within their parishes at the turn of the eighteenth century. Secular office was an opportunity for social and political advancement, and clerics were willing to use violence to defend these positions. This is illustrated particularly clearly in a case from Najac (Aveyron).⁹³

On 15 October 1704, Antoine Puechberty, *avocat*, led an assembly which had gathered in Najac to deliver a judgement in a criminal trial which had been heard by the *viguerie* of Najac. Present alongside Puechberty were maître Pierre Lasjunies and maître Jean Devico Laport, both lawyers from the *presidial* court of Rouergue. They were also joined by maître Pierre Mastre, *premier consul* of Najac. The criminal trial concerned an attempted assassination on maître François Martin, *prêtre* of nearby Villeveyre. The attack was committed by Antoine la Garrigue, *forgeron*, who was, in October 1704, a prisoner in Najac. Puechberty had been commissioned to lead the assembly and execute the judgement because the officials from the *viguerie*, including maître Sarrus, *viguiier*, and sieur maître Bernard Barres, *lieutenant particulier*, had been required to recuse themselves from the case. It is not explained why they were obligated to do so, but this fact is evidently important for the incident which followed. While gathered to read and execute the sentence, Puechberty and the other officials present were interrupted by maître Pierre Barres, *prêtre, curé*, and *maire* of Najac. Barres, *curé*, was accompanied by multiple people including his brother, sieur maître Bernard Barres, who had been recused from the criminal case, and a number of local clergy and other inhabitants of

⁹² Luise Schorn-Schütte, ‘Priest, Preacher, Pastor: Research on Clerical Office in Early Modern Europe,’ *Central European History* 33, no. 1 (2000): 29.

⁹³ AD. H-G, 2B 7839.

Najac. The Barres brothers and their supporters attempted to force their way into the assembly while threatening and insulting the gathered judges. Barres, *curé*, gained access, and rushed at Puechberty to prevent the reading from being completed. Puechberty explained in his suit against the Barres brothers that Barres, *curé*, intended to physically replace him as head of the assembly, despite the fact that he had no legal right, and had no authority to do so.⁹⁴ Barres, *curé*, insulted and threatened Puechberty and his associates, shouting that he would teach them their duty.⁹⁵ He then used his cane to force the judges from the room and into the street. The Barres brothers had successfully prevented the judgement from being read, and the judges, fearing for their lives, fled the scene.

The *sac* for this case only contains the suit that Puechberty filed against the Barres brothers. There are unfortunately no witness testimonies or hearings with any of the accused. As such, we can do little more than speculate at the concerns which drove the parties to conflict in 1704. Clearly, the jurisdiction of the criminal case was being contested. It seems likely that the *curé*'s actions were motivated by loyalty to his brother, who had been recused from the original criminal investigation. But context from the parish records suggests that transgressions of professional authority only partly explain the incident on 15 October. The Barres family were local to Najac and are present in the parish records from at least the early seventeenth century. These records evidence the gradual upward social mobility of the family. The male line held increasingly influential lower and middle judicial offices; their father, Francois Barres, was listed as *greffier* on Bernard's baptism register.⁹⁶ Bernard Barres was *lieutenant particulier* for Najac by the time of the incident in 1704. The Barres family evidently invested in their professional and social advancement throughout the seventeenth century. Pierre Barres' clerical office would have fulfilled a similar role for the family. As Tackett explains, benefices provided both status and security, and it was notoriously difficult to remove a cleric from a benefice once it had been accepted.⁹⁷ More importantly, placing younger sons in spiritual office provided a safeguard against the

⁹⁴ "Quoique sans droit, sans habit".

⁹⁵ "Qu'il nous enseignerait nostre devoir".

⁹⁶ AD. A (12), 2E 178-M4 *Najac B* (1660/1663), 15.

⁹⁷ Tackett, *Priest and Parish*, 96.

division of inheritance.⁹⁸ That Pierre Barres held both the clerical office of *curé* and the municipal office of *maire* is particularly interesting. Based on the *sacs*, we cannot say how exceptional Barres' position was, as both secular and clerical authority in Najac. There is only one other case involving a cleric who also held a municipal office included in the archival catalogue.⁹⁹ But it suggests that, counter to Tridentine ideals, clerics sought out opportunities for personal and familial advancement within their communities. Importantly, both cases with *curés* who were also *maires* took place in small communities.¹⁰⁰ The Barres' brothers dominated the political and spiritual scene in Najac at the turn of the eighteenth century.

This case not only urges researchers to consider the geographic context of incidents of violence in early modern France, but it warns against interpreting the reception of Counter-Reformation changes solely through the urban experience. The public and private identities of individuals, particularly office-holders, in early modern France were closely interrelated.¹⁰¹ Reading the incident on 15 October within the context of the family's interest in status and authority, we can see that, to the Barres brothers, Puechberty's commission to lead the assembly instead of judges from the *viguerie* transgressed jurisdictional boundaries. But it also suggests that the violent confrontation was as much about personal authority as it was about professional rights. Barres', *curé*, actions are particularly revealing. He did not attempt to insert his brother, as *lieutenant particulier*, into the assembly. Instead, he tried to replace Puechberty as head of the assembly himself, and in doing so, physically ejected the gathered judges from the assembly room. This case is important for what it tells us about clerics' self-perception at the turn of the eighteenth century. The Tridentine elevation of the clergy within their parishes disrupted local hierarchies, as we saw in the dispute between Vedeille and Bonnefons.¹⁰² But it also placed the cleric in a position from which they could pursue personal authority and status, despite Tridentine ideals. Pierre Barres' professional and private interests were blended in his two offices, and the defence of both manifested in a violent attack on an unsuspecting lawyer, and in the disruption of

⁹⁸ Ibid., 71.

⁹⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 6525.

¹⁰⁰ Najac (Aveyron) had a population of 2,029 inhabitants in 1793; Verdun had a population of 4,315. Cassini EHESS, 'Verdun' (*Tarn-et-Garonne*), accessed August 12, 2023, <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

¹⁰¹ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 106.

¹⁰² AD. H-G, 1408.

local judicial systems. Crucially, the archival catalogue shows that maître François Martin, *prêtre*, was still pursuing his suit against his attacker, Antoine la Garrigue, a year later in 1705.¹⁰³

The previous section has shown that anticlerical sentiment was generated in post-Tridentine parishes by the very ideals of the Counter-Reformation. When clerics threatened the community's social hierarchy, parishioners were willing to utilise violence and the law to counteract their clergy and reassert their own rights and status. But the clergy themselves also provoked resentment amongst their parishioners. Clerical pursuit of personal status placed additional pressures on the delicate balance of parochial authority. Concerns over honour, reputation, and professional and personal authority underpinned incidents of violence against clerics. This tells us that the changes implemented by the Counter-Reformation might have had negative ramifications for social relations at the parochial level. But the cases also shed light on the ways that parishioners negotiated these tensions with their spiritual leaders. As Schorn-Schütte has argued, the aims of Tridentine reforms placed clerics "under the congregation's constant oversight of his conduct in life and in office."¹⁰⁴ The parish priest represented the moral authority of the community; ideals of the Counter-Reformation manifested in the image of the *Bon Prêtre*, the "reconciler of family feuds and [...] the moralistic commentator on the injustices of an unfeeling world."¹⁰⁵ The cases show that this ideal was not always realised in the parishes. As we will see in the second section of this chapter, there is ample evidence of clerical enmities shaping rural parochial relationships. This was not distinct to Languedoc, or indeed France. Carroll has found that in the early modern Italian states, clergy were actively involved in local feuds, some of which emerged from tensions over the impact of the Counter-Reformation on local politics.¹⁰⁶

How then might lay disputants have overcome the disadvantages they faced in their disputes with parish clergy? A common theme throughout the cases are issues of honour and morality. Chapter One showed that female disputants strategically framed their accounts of violent disputes to the magistrates in order to show themselves in the

¹⁰³ AD. H-G, 2B 7951.

¹⁰⁴ Schorn-Schütte, 'Priest, Preacher, Pastor,' 28.

¹⁰⁵ McManners, *Church and Society*, vol. 1, 358.

¹⁰⁶ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 52.

best light. Moreover, the cases discussed in Chapter One exemplified the ways in which disputants staged incidents of violence to maximise the damage done to their adversaries. Public spaces were common forums for female disputes, as they were for male disputes, and women utilised the space to their advantage. Disputants provoked reactions by symbolically transgressing the boundaries of their adversaries' authority. Importantly, this strategy is also evident in the ways in which parishioners approached disputes with clerics. The clergy were, by profession, morally superior to their parishioners. They were the spiritual leaders of their flocks, and this position was bolstered by the Counter-Reformation. It was undoubtedly a difficult disadvantage to overcome if your adversary was the parish priest. In the same way that female disputants utilised their knowledge of social norms and the law to overcome the gender-social constraints of early modern communities and pursue their disputes, parishioners in dispute with the clergy weaponised the values of the Counter-Reformation, and spaces of church authority, to undermine the status and reputation of their clerics during moments of confrontation.

An incident which took place in 1680, in Saint-Géry (Lot) illustrates this strategy particularly well.¹⁰⁷ Noble Pierre de Lacroix, sieur de Gironde, had gone to the parish church of Saint-Géry to hear the mass on the parish feast day (15 November). He found his niece, demoiselle Sainte du Danglars, in the churchyard conducting a collection of alms for some poor women from the parish who were gathered near the church door.¹⁰⁸ He stopped to help her and began asking passers-by to contribute to the fund. When noble Pierre Bouscot, *écolier* and *clerc tonsuré*, approached, on his way to help with the benediction in the church, Lacroix asked him for alms. Bouscot refused and claimed "avec insolence" that he had none to give. Lacroix explained that the alms were not for him, but for the poor, and asked Bouscot to look again to see if he had any money to spare. He requested this "avec toute civilité". Bouscot, in return, slapped Lacroix across the face with a glove, an affront usually associated with duelling. At this, Lacroix took his sword in hand, and with the flat of the blade, hit Bouscot on the head. Bouscot fled into the church, and witnesses confirm seeing a bleeding wound on his head.

Unfortunately, the two cases attached to this incident do not reveal anything about the antecedent relationship between the two parties. However, by placing the

¹⁰⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 1224; 21918.

¹⁰⁸ "Pour certaines demoiselles quetteres".

incident within the context of its locality, we can speculate at some of the points of contention which may have shaped the interaction in the churchyard. Saint-Géry had a population of less than 1,000 inhabitants at the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁹ In such a small community, it is likely that the two parties would have known each other, and perhaps interacted prior to the incident in November 1680. Both men were noble, however their professional trajectories were distinct. Lacroix was the son of the judge André de Lacroix, *seigneur* of Gironde and *conseiller* in the *présidial* court at Cahors.¹¹⁰ By contrast, Bouscot was a *clerc tonsuré*. Taking the tonsure was the lowest of the minor orders, and ordinarily signalled the first steps towards priesthood.¹¹¹ Noble families, keen to avoid the division of property through inheritance, commonly sent younger sons into the clerical orders.¹¹² But, as Bergin explains, “being a ‘cleric’, even if only in minor orders, conferred a special status, bringing with it the ‘privileges of clergy’.”¹¹³ In the context of the changing social landscape of the Counter-Reformation, these professional differences suggest that issues of status were central to the interaction. The fact that Bouscot, despite his minor position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, issued a challenge to Lacroix suggests that he was a man of honour with a strong sense of his own worth and dignity.

This is supported by Lacroix’s account of the incident. Lacroix emphasised his virtue and his reputation; he was collecting alms for poor women in the parish, he used civility in his request to Bouscot, and when Bouscot attempted to escalate the confrontation to a duel, an outlawed practice which was being closely monitored by the 1680s, Lacroix used the flat of the sword to both warn Bouscot, and draw the physical violence to a close.¹¹⁴ As Nassiet argues, to “frapper du plat” was to demonstrate moderation and control.¹¹⁵ By contrast, Lacroix drew attention to Bouscot’s lack of Christian charity throughout his statement. Bouscot refused to give alms, he became

¹⁰⁹ Cassini EHESS, ‘Saint-Géry’ (Lot), accessed August 12, 2023, <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

¹¹⁰ Louis Combarieu, *Inventaire sommaire des archives départementales antérieures à 1790: Lot*, Tome III (Cahors, 1900), 23.

¹¹¹ Bergin, *Society and Religious Change, 1580-1730*, 64.

¹¹² Tackett, *Priest and Parish*, 71.

¹¹³ Bergin, *Society and Religious Change*, 64.

¹¹⁴ Stuart Carroll, ‘The Peace in the Feud in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France,’ *Past & Present* 178 (2003): 112.

¹¹⁵ Michel Nassiet, *La Violence, Une Histoire Sociale: France XVIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 2011), 108-10.

angry quickly, and he attempted to initiate an illegal duel. Lacroix's framing of the interaction, while interesting, is undoubtedly a deliberate attempt to sway the magistrates' opinion in his favour. But more than this, the spatial setting of this case is particularly important, and tells us much about the ways in which the laity used the values of the Counter-Reformation to undermine their adversaries from the clergy. Three features deserve particular attention.

The first is Lacroix's public request for Bouscot to contribute alms for the poor parishioners. In the late seventeenth century, poor relief fell under the remit of the parish priest, though some devotional confraternities also collected on behalf of the poor.¹¹⁶ Counter-Reformation values, aimed at improving the morality and piety of parishioners, emphasised the importance of charity. As Cissie Fairchilds explains, "almsgiving was not simply a suggestion for the good Christian; it was rather an obligation."¹¹⁷ Indeed, Lacroix used this behaviour to place himself in a favourable light during his statement to the magistrates. But, in the context of tensions over status and position, Lacroix's act of asking Bouscot for charity might well have been strategic and intentionally provocative. We have seen, in Chapter One, that during debt collection, the spatial context of a confrontation could be used to advantage the claimant. Requesting the repayment of a debt was to question the debtor's credibility; to do so publicly was to call attention to the matter and undermine the debtor's reputation within the community.¹¹⁸ This was a strategy that could be employed by creditors, publicly leveraging the reputation of their debtors in order to benefit the creditor. We see public settings being used against adversaries from all social groups. It is possible therefore that Lacroix used an otherwise innocent request to publicly undermine Bouscot's position as cleric in the parish. The case clearly publicized Bouscot's unchristian behaviour and, if this was his intent, it was a success.

The second is the church yard. Church property was sacrosanct in early modern France, as in the rest of Europe. In the aftermath of the wars of religion, and the Council of Trent, churches were rebuilt en masse across France.¹¹⁹ This was both a product of

¹¹⁶ Briggs, *Communities of Belief*, 264.

¹¹⁷ Cissie C. Fairchilds, *Poverty and Charity in Aix-en-Provence, 1640-1789* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2019), 27.

¹¹⁸ Scott Taylor, 'Credit, Debt, and Honour in Castile, 1600-1650,' *Journal of Early Modern History* 7, no.1-2 (2003): 13.

¹¹⁹ Phillips, *Church and Culture*, 44-45.

necessity, as many churches had been destroyed, and an intentional part of Tridentine reform. As Phillips argues, “if the Church was visible in the seventeenth century through one thing alone, it would be through its buildings.”¹²⁰ Aside from emphasising the presence of the Church in the parish by way of the physical building, the Counter-Reformation aimed at policing parishioners’ behaviour within church buildings and their environs. Throughout the early modern period, the church was a common space for conflict.¹²¹ They existed at the centre of parish life, and for many were the primary source of news, and sociability.¹²² The Counter-Reformation attempted to reform the image of the church in the parish. As Elizabeth Tingle explains, “the use of religious space, the church and its cemetery, was another Tridentine preoccupation [...] to eliminate profane activities and separate off the holy from the everyday world.”¹²³ It was prohibited to speak loudly or to sell wares on church property.¹²⁴ Behaviour in the churchyard was regulated as in the church itself, but as Bonzon argues, “respect for the graveyard was even more difficult to instil”.¹²⁵ Indeed, we see issues arising over parishioners’ use of the churchyard in the cases of the *parlement*. In 1711, sieur Jean Cazalous, *premier consul* of Puisserguier (Hérault), filed a suit against Margueritte Garriguenque, wife of Jacques Guillaumon, shepherd.¹²⁶ During the burial of the previous consul, sieur Pierre Marliagues, the funeral procession filed into the churchyard, located outside the town, for the burial. There, Cazalous found that Garriguenque had hung out her laundry to dry on the churchyard walls, and on the tombs themselves, causing a scandal for the burial party. When Cazalous asked Garriguenque to remove the linens, she pushed him away, and insulted his honour. He explains that she acted in this way despite the fact that he was wearing his consular livery. He was obliged to leave the laundry where it was, because Garriguenque was pregnant and he did not want to escalate the confrontation further.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 44.

¹²¹ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 406.

¹²² Ibid., 406-8.

¹²³ Tingle, ‘The Counter Reformation and the Parish Church,’ 81.

¹²⁴ Anne Bonzon, *L’Esprit de Clocher: Prêtres et paroisses dans le diocèse de Beauvais, 1535-1650* (Paris: CERF, 1999), 382.

¹²⁵ Bonzon, *L’Esprit de Clocher*, 383.

¹²⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 7958.

In the sixteenth- and early-seventeenth century, the churchyard was a prime location for issuing challenges to an adversary.¹²⁷ The public forum, and the centrality of the church in the parish, amplified the impact of the challenge. Violence within church property was “a function of the ways in which sacred space was on the front line of hostilities.”¹²⁸ Despite Tridentine reforms, the *sacs* suggest that church buildings remained a powerful stage for disputes, particularly with parishioners’ adversaries within the clergy. In 1706, Bernard Soubee, *prêtre* and canon of the Cathedral Saint Gervais in Lectoure (Gers) filed a suit against noble Guillaume de Chastanet, *seigneur* of La Coupette.¹²⁹ De Chastanet had attacked the priest with a cane in front of the Cathedral in Saint Gervais. The physical space of the church also played an important role in intensifying the impact of sieur Bonnefons’ attack on maître Vedeille in the parish church of Saint Beauzile (Tarn).¹³⁰ In his statement to the magistrates, Vedeille expressed his shock at Bonnefons’ behaviour inside the church. The spatiality of the incident appears to have correlated directly to the hurt that Vedeille felt from Bonnefons’ actions. Similarly, Lacroix’s spatial staging of his confrontation with Bouscot served to heighten the impact on Bouscot’s standing within the parish.¹³¹

The third is that the confrontation took place on a feast day. Parish ceremonies, like processions and feast day celebrations provided opportunities for inhabitants to reassert their social standing. As Carroll argues, “processions and ceremonies were arranged strictly according to precedence, and whether at court or in the parish churchyard, were a microcosm of the social hierarchy.”¹³² Lacroix’s decision to confront Bouscot in the churchyard during a parish feast day foregrounds that status and reputation were on public display during holidays. But it also highlights the tools that individuals might employ during their disputes with clerics. This case is not an isolated incident. Vedeille and Bonnefons’ confrontation also took place on a feast day, that of Saint Beauzile.¹³³ More can be identified in the broader sample of eighty-three cases involving the clergy between 1680 and 1720. In 1689, Claude Truel and Marc Bounail

¹²⁷ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 68.

¹²⁸ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 413.

¹²⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 7434.

¹³⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 1408.

¹³¹ AD. H-G, 2B 1224; 21918.

¹³² Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 67.

¹³³ AD. H-G, 2B 1408.

were accused of the attempted murder maître Jean Vidal, *prêtre* of Salles-sur-l'Hers (Aude).¹³⁴ The events took place during the festival of the Purification of the Virgin. Similarly, the aforementioned case between maître Jean Abadie, *curé* of Anclades, east of Lourdes (Hautes-Pyrénées), and two of his parishioners, Pierre Abadie and Bernard Mestre, took place on a feast day in 1705.¹³⁵ The confrontation occurred following Abadie's refusal to allow his parishioners to carry a ceremonial staff during a parish procession. Undoubtedly, examination of further cases would reveal many more.

Importantly, all of the confrontations which took place on feast days, involving clerics, feature the cleric as a plaintiff, either in the original suit, or in a counter suit. To attack a cleric, a sacred leader of the parish, on a day so closely bound up with the symbolic hierarchy of the parish and the position of the Church, could serve a strategic purpose in the laity's disputes with their clerics. This anxiety is clearly exhibited in the cleric's accounts of their experiences during the attacks on them, as we have seen, particularly in the case between Vedeille and Bonnefons.¹³⁶ The symbolism of these attacks tells us much about lay perceptions of their parish clergy and how they might have negotiated perceived transgressions against them and their personal interests, made by clergy.

This section has examined the ways in which the position of the clergy disrupted the local social hierarchies of their parishes in the wake of Tridentine reforms. Anticlerical sentiment was aroused by the claims of the Counter-Reformation for clerical power. The cases of violent disputes involving the clergy tell us much about how the laity attempted to counter the influence of their clerics. Tensions and violent confrontation emerged particularly over issues of honour and status within the parish. Scholars have argued that the values of the Counter-Reformation took much longer to take hold in rural communities than they did in urban areas. This was due to the large number of confraternities and religious orders in towns and cities. But the criminal dossiers warn against assuming that Tridentine reform had not reached rural parishes. The cases reviewed in this section reveal the difficulties that clerics faced in trying to embody the Tridentine ideal of the *bon curé*. Their newly centralised position in the parish upset local hierarchies, and disputes arose over transgressions against lay

¹³⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 2165.

¹³⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 7127.

¹³⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 1408.

authorities in the process of clerics' pastoral and administrative duties. The tensions generated by the clerics centrality in the parish engendered anticlerical sentiment as the laity were brought under the direct authority of the parish priest. But more than this, these cases highlight the laity's approach to their disputes with cleric adversaries. That moral framing embodying the values of the Counter-Reformation is present in these disputes, in litigants' accounts to the magistrates, and in their staging of the violent interactions, serves to illustrate the diffusion of Counter-Reformation thought in rural spaces. Parishioners understood the position that the clergy were supposed to embody in the post-Tridentine parish, and they used this to undermine the position of their clerical adversaries.

Private Interest and Inter-Parochial Competition

Scholars agree that the Counter-Reformation played a significant role in upsetting clerical-lay relations in the parish.¹³⁷ However, it is claimed that this discord emerged primarily from lay resistance to the clergy's attempts to suppress popular culture and police the moral behaviours of their flock. Taverns were a particular focus. As Hoffman discusses, taverns were seen as "threats to religion, as sources of blasphemy, disorder, ruinous debauchery and drunkenness."¹³⁸ While they couldn't be shut down permanently, they could be closed during the hours of church services.¹³⁹ As McManners argues, clerics' policing of vices such as drinking, and particularly adherence with the Lenten feast became "an easy target for the anticlericals of the Enlightenment."¹⁴⁰ However, the *sacs* paint a different picture. While tensions certainly arose from clerical policing of parishioners' behaviour and spiritual observance, as we have seen in the incident between Puechberty and Barres, *curé*, many of the incidents of violence involving the clergy escalated from tensions over the private interests of the clergy.¹⁴¹ While eighteenth-century imagery of the *bon curé* enshrined the altruism and piety of the parish clergy, the cases from the *parlement* serve to highlight the clerics' atavism.

¹³⁷ Hoffman, *Church and Community*, 140; Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 415.

¹³⁸ Hoffman, *Church and Community*, 142.

¹³⁹ McManners, *Church and Society*, vol. 1, 81.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁴¹ AD. H-G, 2B 7839.

This is not a novel revelation. Scholars have shown that clerics' moral laxity persisted into the eighteenth century. While incidents of drinking and brawling began to decline, sexual offences remained constant.¹⁴² However, focusing on the moral behaviours of the clergy only reveals part of the ways in which the Counter-Reformation and the clergy shaped parochial life. There is ample evidence in the *sacs* to suggest that clerical criminality remained an issue into the eighteenth century, alongside the more commonly studied issues of immorality. In 1689, Jean Larai, *laboureur*, of Lansac (Pyrénées-Orientales) was attacked by maître Dominique Darré, *prêtre* and *curé* of Lansac. Darré beat Larai with a baton and a sword.¹⁴³ In 1716, maître Jean de Lamarque, *procureur du roi* led a suit against maître Joseph Saint-Arroman, the *curé* of Miélan (Gers) for a variety of offences, including issuing false baptism certificates, terrorising his parishioners, and leading a licentious life.¹⁴⁴ Most seriously, Saint-Arroman was accused of beating a parishioner to death.

While the role of the clergy was to implement a homogeneous practice of Catholicism across the parishes, the clergy themselves were individuals with personal interests to pursue. Bergin warns that it would be a mistake to “think of the early modern lower clergy [...] as shaped exclusively by the parish system, and as having a sense of ‘calling’ defined by parochial pastoral activity.”¹⁴⁵ There was much to be gained from obtaining a benefice and clerics sought them out as opportunities for personal advancement. McManners has shown that, in Angers, dynasties of clerics monopolised the positions of the lower clergy; the positions of *vicaire* and churchwarden were occupied by relatives of the *curé*.¹⁴⁶ As Tackett explains, the benefice “had much the same status within ecclesiastical society as the *office* within secular society.”¹⁴⁷ The records of the *parlement* provide us with another angle from which to assess the relationship between the clergy and the laity during the Counter-Reformation. This section examines the personal interests of the Languedocian parish clergy and their disputes with parishioners. Not only did clerics pursue private and familial economic gain, but they utilised violent means and litigation to gain the upperhand in their private

¹⁴² McManners, *Church and Society*, vol. 1, 365.

¹⁴³ AD. H-G, 2B 5758.

¹⁴⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 11254.

¹⁴⁵ Bergin, *Church, Society, and Religious Change 1580-1730*, 62.

¹⁴⁶ McManners, *French Ecclesiastical Society Under the Ancien Régime*, 134.

¹⁴⁷ Tackett, *Priest and Parish*, 97.

disputes with parishioners. As Carroll argues, the Counter-Reformation "reasserted the role of peacemaking as a moral imperative."¹⁴⁸ Participation in the sacraments was a sign of peace and amity; the personal disputes of the clergy therefore undoubtedly had significant ramifications for the successful adoption of Counter-Reformation values in the parishes.

Economic interests feature prominently in the disputes of all of the social groups examined throughout this thesis. While economic concerns are known to have played particularly important roles in the disputes between clergy and laity, scholars disagree on the nature of these disputes. Hoffman has found that, in urban centres, merchants commonly featured in disputes with the clergy.¹⁴⁹ Clerics, concerned that wealthy merchants were exploiting the poor through usurious loans, came to the defence of their poor parishioners. Carroll found that, in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries, contentions emerged in particular over disputed benefices and the collection of tithes.¹⁵⁰ Tackett, similarly, has found that, in the eighteenth century, the majority of concerns between clergy and laity lay in tithe collection.¹⁵¹ These disputes emphasise the clerics' role in defending public and Church interests. Undoubtedly, these tensions existed in Languedoc also. However, the cases from the *parlement* paint a different picture. In the sample for this chapter, there are no references to tithe collection, or protection of the poor.

That is not to say that such issues didn't influence the cases being taken to the *parlement*, but they were not directly referenced by the litigants, plaintiffs or defendants, and therefore do not appear to have featured as prominent points of contention. In the broader sample of eighty-three cases, there are no direct references, however there are clues that such disputes did occur. In 1699, Thomas Albuy, *prêtre* and *religieux* of the Saint-Martial abbey in Rieupeyroux (Aveyron), filed a suit against Jean Miquel and other local inhabitants for insults and violence.¹⁵² The dispute between the parties originated over the leasing of land belonging to priests at the abbey, and the ownership of the wheat produced there. Of course, the case summaries provided by the

¹⁴⁸ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 288.

¹⁴⁹ Hoffman, *Church and Community*, 143-144.

¹⁵⁰ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 47.

¹⁵¹ Tackett, *Priest and Parish*, 172.

¹⁵² AD. H-G, 2B 7218; 7228.

archive ordinarily tell us very little about the events of the altercations between adversaries, let alone the origins of those disputes. The summaries usually extend to only one or two sentences, detailing the main litigants and a brief note on the nature of the dispute. There may well have been references made to such concerns in the abundant material contained in the *sacs*, but from the summaries we can do no more than speculate.

This difference might be a consequence of the source base. The *parlement* was the highest court of appeals for Languedoc; as plaintiffs had to support the costs of litigation through each stage of the investigation and any subsequent trial, legal disputes were commonly dropped, or taken out of court, at the initial stages of litigation.¹⁵³ Parish priests were rarely from wealthy backgrounds. Although the Church provided a viable career option for the youngest sons of noble families, McManners found only 1% of the secular clergy in eighteenth-century France came from the nobility.¹⁵⁴ Those that did make their way into the Church usually sought out positions in the regular clergy, or the benefices most befitting a young nobleman, in large towns and cities where they could live comfortably. Instead, the majority of the secular clergy were from backgrounds ranging from artisan to bourgeois. In rural parishes, the balance shifted in favour of shopkeepers and wealthy peasants, where “the parochial ministry (delineated) the utmost boundaries of a father’s ambition for his son.”¹⁵⁵

Although scholars often argue that less wealthy individuals were unlikely to pursue litigation beyond the initial levels of the courts, Chapter One has shown that economic status did not necessarily correspond to willingness to invest significant sums in legal disputes.¹⁵⁶ Rather, the personal value of the socio-economic stakes threatened by adversaries dictated the level to which disputants were willing to pursue their cases through the courts. This explains the trends emerging from the criminal dossiers involving the secular clergy. Economic tensions are prominent in the disputes concerning the clergy, as in the cases examined in the other three chapters of this thesis.

¹⁵³ This is discussed further in Chapter One, 8.; For litigants’ use of the courts to influence out of court negotiations, see: Martin Dinges, ‘The Uses of Justice as a Form of Social Control in Early Modern Europe,’ in *Social Control in Europe* eds. Herman Roodenburg and Peter Spierenburg (Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 2004).

¹⁵⁴ McManners, *Church and Society*, vol. 1, 323.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 326.

¹⁵⁶ On different social groups’ use of the courts, see: Benoît Garnot, *Justice et Société en France aux XVIe, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Ophrys Editions, 2002), 83.

However, the clergy do not appear to have used their position to defend the less well off. As we have seen in the aforementioned case between noble Pierre de Lacroix and Pierre Bouscot, *clerc tonsuré*, in fact, there is evidence of clerics actively refusing requests for alms for the poor.¹⁵⁷

What is clear is that disputes over clergy member's material and familial interests were common. 43% of the sample that this chapter draws on refer to disputes related to the personal or familial property and private economic interests of clergy members. As Tackett found for Lyon, secular clergymen were often native to the parish or diocese in which they served; many clergy "retained ties to their families and local friends."¹⁵⁸ The interests of their families therefore remained present in the quotidian lives of secular clergy who remained local to their native dioceses, and defence of these interests, in part, explains the clerics' presence in the criminal dossiers. These cases do not solely concern the criminal behaviour of the parish clergy. There are multiple incidents of clerics using the courts, not violence, to defend their families. In 1711, Pierre Valat, canon, filed a suit against Françoise Barte, wife of François Baldi, gardener, for insulting his mother, an eighty-year-old widow who ran a shop in Agde (Hérault).¹⁵⁹ Similarly, in 1672, Mathieu Loubeyrac, merchant, was accused of murdering Jean Pradier in Le-Puy-en-Velay (Haute-Loire).¹⁶⁰ Loubeyrac and his accomplice Arnaud were condemned to death by the *ordinaires* of Le Puy. However, by 1686, the sentence had not been carried out, and as such, Pradier's brother, Gabriel Pradier, *prêtre* and canon of the cathedral church Notre-Dame du Puy, appealed to the courts to have the sentence applied. We find Gabriel Pradier in the *sacs* again two years later, in 1688.¹⁶¹ Loubeyrac had obtained a pardon from the king which applied both to the sentence of death, and to the financial compensation of 400 *livres* he owed to the Pradier family. Pradier was appealing this pardon.

However, there are many incidents of violence directly involving the clergy, in both this chapter's sample of fourteen cases, and in the broader sample of eighty-three cases. We have already seen that a dispute between maître Vedeille and sieur

¹⁵⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 1224; 21918.

¹⁵⁸ Tackett, *Priest and Parish*, 15.

¹⁵⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 7980.

¹⁶⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 7695.

¹⁶¹ AD. H-G, 2B 7915.

Bonnefons over the presbytery and insults against family members escalated to a violent altercation in the parish church of Saint Beauzile (Gers).¹⁶² In 1683, a long standing property dispute between Jean Laborie, merchant and bourgeois of Figeac (Lot), and demoiselle Anne de Bellet, widow of noble Bernard de Gimel, sieur de Palvel, turned violent.¹⁶³ Laborie had sent mowers to harvest the hay in a meadow which he had obtained ownership of through verdicts of both the *sénéchaussée* and the *parlement*. De Bellet, the previous owner of the meadow, refused to accept the legal outcome, and turned up to defend the property from Laborie and his workers. De Bellet was accompanied by her adult children, Marguerite de Palvel and Jean de Palvel, *prêtre*. Ultimately, both Laborie and Jean de Palvel were both injured, and both received treatments for swelling and scratches on their faces. The following day, Jean de Palvel filed a countersuit against Laborie, in which he detailed the physical fight between the two and reiterated his family's ownership of the field.¹⁶⁴ Cases which concern the defence of familial economics illustrate the close ties that parish clergy had in their communities, and the ways in which their public position as moral and spiritual leader of the community might be complicated by familial interests.

However, the cases detailing violence emerging from the clerics' purely personal interests illustrate the piecemeal adoption of Counter-Reformation values in communities by the turn of the eighteenth century. Violent interactions were not limited to injurious words and threatening gestures. Carroll has argued, in regard to Italy, that prelates in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries contributed to anticlericalism through their adoption of feuding practices that were at odds with the ideals of the Counter-Reformation.¹⁶⁵ The *sacs* demonstrate that the Counter-Reformation did not suppress these behaviours in Languedoc; indeed, the parish clergy utilised significant levels of violence against their parishioners well into the eighteenth century. I argue that this is, in part, a result of the Counter-Reformation. It is in these interactions that we see the dual strains placed on Counter-Reformation clerics, as both public figureheads and private individuals, give out in favour of personal interest.

¹⁶² AD. H-G, 2B 1408.

¹⁶³ AD. H-G, 2B 2037.

¹⁶⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 2115.

¹⁶⁵ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 44.

The case between Jacques Bach, *maître menuisier*, and maître Jean la Garrigue, *vicaire* of Concots (Lot) demonstrates the ramifications that clerics' private interests had on the quotidian lives of their parishioners.¹⁶⁶ The dispute between the two parties escalated from la Garrigue's refusal to return a bed that he had rented from Bach for a one-year-term. One month before the contract ended, Bach informed la Garrigue that the contract was due to end, and that he would need the bed back. Bach detailed in his statement that he tried multiple times to amicably retrieve the bed from la Garrigue. He asked him personally and he involved various third parties to ask on his behalf. He next turned to the *officialité*, who ordered la Garrigue to return the property. Many weeks later, the bed had still not been returned, and so Bach again approached la Garrigue. He begged him to return the bed so that he would not have to pursue their dispute with the magistrates.¹⁶⁷ He then sought the help of the *seigneur* of Concots, the *seigneur* of St Cirq and the priest of Concots. In the house of the sieur d'Ascamps, *prieur*, it was agreed that la Garrigue should return the bed the following day, the 7 November. La Garrigue gave his "parole d'honneur". However, he again failed to return the bed. On 20 November, Bach was forced to try and retrieve the bed himself. Having arrived at the presbytery, Bach located the bed and began to remove it from la Garrigue's room. La Garrigue became enraged and, blaspheming, attacked Bach.¹⁶⁸ He seized Bach by his hair and threw him to the ground. When Bach's valet, Jean Costes, and Bach's pregnant wife, Claire de Ganille, entered the presbytery to try and help, la Garrigue attacked them too. Costes was beaten about the head, and de Ganille was thrown to the floor before being kicked and punched. La Garrigue called de Ganille a whore and other "parolles sales". Finally, Bach's son, Etienne, arrived. La Garrigue turned on him and called him "coquin". He then slapped Etienne across the face, causing Etienne to bleed, and threw a hunting knife at Etienne's face, which wounded his right eye. The family fled the presbytery, without retrieving the bed. La Garrigue filed a countersuit against Bach and his family with the *ordinaires* of Concots. In his statement he explained that as part of the financial agreement he had taken out with Bach, he had rented six chairs alongside the bed. He had paid in advance, but when he received the bed, he was only given two chairs. He did not receive the remaining four chairs. It seems likely therefore that la Garrigue was

¹⁶⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 5785.

¹⁶⁷ "Pour ne obliger pas de le poursuivre en justice".

¹⁶⁸ "tout esmeu de colere, en blasphemement et deniant horriblement le st nom de dieu"

withholding Bach's property in lieu of the money he believed he was owed. He explained that, when the Bach family arrived on 20 November to retrieve the property, they had attempted to strangle him. He explained his defence of the property by adding that, during the mediation provided by the *seigneurs* of Concots and Saint Cirq, he had been advised to return the bed before 24 November.

Beyond the physical violence itself, these criminal dossiers demonstrate that clerics not only acted outside the mould set out for them by the Counter-Reformation, but that they were ultimately willing to undermine the social cohesion of their parishes, and the prosperity of their parishioners, in the pursuit of private gain. Bach's concern prior to the incident on 20 November was his and his family's financial wellbeing.¹⁶⁹ He explained in his suit that the feast of Saint Clement, on 24 November, was a profitable time for him, however he needed the bed in order to monopolise on the increased traffic of merchants and other visitors to the area during the festivities. Bach concluded his statement to the court by noting that the fact that these blasphemies, insults and attacks had been committed by a priest in his own parish was particularly scandalous.

The incident of serious violence between Bach and la Garrigue over financial terms was not exceptional. An incident in 1699 between maître Jaques Freche, *vicaire* of Mauzac, and Guillaume Saux and his wife Marie Pegot, of Boussens (Haute-Garonne) escalated from a financial agreement between the parties.¹⁷⁰ Freche, who also traded in sheepskins alongside his clerical office of *vicaire*, had unofficially housed some sheep at Saux's property. When he went to retrieve them, Saux was not in. Pegot asked the *vicaire* to return later when her husband was home. Freche obliged, but when he returned Saux was still not home. He let himself into the stables, and when Pegot tried to stop him, Freche beat her, leaving her badly wounded. As a result, Pegot was bed bound for two months. As peasants, Saux and Pegot would have undoubtedly struggled financially as a result of Pegot's injuries and convalescence. As with the rest of the cases this thesis examines, there were surely complicated antecedent relationships which shaped the interactions between these clerics and their parishioners, and which are invisible to the researcher. But the clergy's pursuit of personal gain, despite its impact on the physical and economic wellbeing of their parishioners tells us that the efforts of

¹⁶⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 5785.

¹⁷⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 7016.

the Counter-Reformation, at least in Languedoc at the turn of the eighteenth century, were hindered by the atavistic nature of the many parish priests.

Particularly evident from the cases is that the clergy were concerned with their social position and reputation. In this way, they were no different from the other litigants discussed in this thesis. The clergy's concern with reputation is illustrated in their choice of benefices; as McManners argues, the socially superior clerics were more likely to gravitate towards "well-paid and dignified offices".¹⁷¹ It is also evident in cleric's framing of their disputes to the magistracy. Following their altercation over the bed rental, la Garrigue explained to the magistrates that Bach had attacked him "contre l'honneur" of the *vicaire*.¹⁷² Maître Jean Vedeille claimed that sieur Etienne Bonnefons had conceived a hatred against him, despite the fact that he was his parish priest.¹⁷³ Furthermore, Bonnefons verbally assaulted the priest "sans aucun respect" in front of other parishioners while he was wearing his surplice and stole, the symbols of his sacred authority within the parish. Lastly, interest in personal and familial status can also be detected in the social trajectories of some clerics and their kin. As we saw in section one, maître Pierre Barres, *prêtre* and *maire* of Najac (Aveyron) came from a local Najac family, whose line can be traced in the parish records from at least the early seventeenth century.¹⁷⁴ The male line had advanced through the lower ranks of judicial offices to pursue familial status.¹⁷⁵ By the time of the incident between Barres, *curé*, and Antoine Puechberty, *avocat*, the Barres brothers dominated the spiritual and political landscape of Najac.

The prevalence of concerns of honour, status and reputation held by the clergy is perhaps unsurprising. Early modern France was a strictly hierarchical society; the clergy were the First Estate, and their superior position in the parish was reaffirmed by the Counter-Reformation. The clergy were moral and spiritual leaders, charged with guiding the piety and devotion of their flock. They were also the personal representatives of the Church in their communities. But, above all, the *sacs* demonstrate the individualism of the cleric. Their private identities could not be divorced from their

¹⁷¹ McManners, *Church and*, vol. 1, 323.

¹⁷² AD. H-G, 2B 5785.

¹⁷³ AD. H-G, 2B 1408.

¹⁷⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 7839.

¹⁷⁵ AD. A12, 2E 178-M4 (Najac B 1660/1663), 15.

public identities. The criminal dossiers show that, particularly in rural parishes, the public honour afforded to clerics by way of their parochial office was often co-opted to the benefit of the clerics' private identity. This is particularly evident in the cases which detail drawn out enmities between parishioners and the clergy. References to previous litigation between clerics and their parishioners are abundant in the cases, as they are in the dossiers discussed in the rest of this thesis. In this chapter's sample, seven (50%) of the fourteen cases reference ongoing disputes between the parties. Five of those seven cases specifically cite previous litigation involving the parties.¹⁷⁶ Chapter One argued that women's disputes were not dissimilar from male disputes. Physical violence and the law were both tools used by adversaries to complicate their disputes and invest in their enmities. This was a product of the intensely hierarchical structure of early modern communities in France, and defence of honour and status were primary instigators in the escalation of quotidian contentions to established enmities. The *sacs* suggest that the clergy too utilised violence and the law to pursue their enmities. This is significant for our understanding of post-Tridentine France. Briggs notes that the evolution of ideas of the *bon curé* emerged from the clergy's role as mediators within their communities.¹⁷⁷ Studies on delays in the uptake of Counter-Reformation values ordinarily focus on the moral laxity of the clergy; their reliance on vices such as drink and sex. But in Languedoc, at the turn of the eighteenth century, the crimes which had plagued the clergy's reputation in the sixteenth century appear to have remained a serious problem.¹⁷⁸

Clerical self-interest and personal gain are dominant themes in the enmity which raged between maître Pierre Turbide, *curé* of Roquefort (Haute-Garonne) and two of his parishioners, Jean Turbide (known as Mondin), *tisserand*, and his wife Cecile Saint-Salvi.¹⁷⁹ While we do not know how long the contention between the parties had been brewing, we do know that it escalated to violence on 21 August 1688. From the abundant trial documents contained within the *sac*, a complicated relationship emerges which illustrates the potential for parish clergy to pursue personal enmities with their parishioners and exploit their public identity in order to gain advantages against their

¹⁷⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 1408; 5281; 5785; 6204; 7350.

¹⁷⁷ Robin Briggs, *Communities of Belief*, 233.

¹⁷⁸ For more on the clergy in the sixteenth century, particularly prelates and their involvement in noble feuding, see: Carroll, Chapter 12 'The Crisis of the Wars of Religion,' in *Blood and Violence*.

¹⁷⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 7350.

adversaries. From Saint-Salvi's and Mondin's hearings, conducted by the *sénéchal* of Pamiers, we learn that the contention between the parties originated from a legal dispute between Turbide and another parishioner. Saint-Salvi and Mondin had testified as witnesses against the *curé* during this case, engendering the cleric's resentment against them. Turbide had, in the intervening period, attempted to exact revenge on the couple. In addition to his position as *curé* of Roquefort, Turbide held the position of *procureur* for the nearby convent of Saint-Gaudens. In this position, Turbide was charged with the protection and administration of the convent's interests.¹⁸⁰ From the documents, this role appears to have included overseeing the collection of taxes owed to the *religieux*. Turbide had ordered sergeants to collect a portion of *gerbes* from Mondin and Saint-Salvi. The couple explained that they did not owe anything, and that they had the "quittances" to prove it.¹⁸¹ They informed the magistrates that Turbide was using his position as *procureur* to take the grain from them, despite them not owing anything. They believed that Turbide was taking such action to get revenge on them for testifying against him during the trial with their fellow parishioner.

On Sunday 21 August, Turbide had delivered the mass in the parish church, and then visited a sick parishioner, Mabouteau, at his home to take his confession. When he left Mabouteau's house, he found Mondin and Saint-Salvi waiting by the door. Saint-Salvi was particularly enraged, and whilst holding two rocks in her hands, she insulted Turbide. Amongst other insults, Saint-Salvi loudly and publicly called Turbide "Judas", "Barbe Roux", "acheter des proces" and "mechant homme ruinant tout le monde". Saint Salvi threatened his life and shouted that "toutes les femmes se devoient lever pour le lapider". She was prevented from reaching the *curé* by two onlookers, without whom, Turbide asserted, Saint-Salvi would have surely killed him.¹⁸² The insults and warnings detailed in the case tell us much about the nature of this dispute. Saint-Salvi's use of "Judas", "acheter des proces", and "méchant homme ruinant tout le monde" evidence her belief in Turbide's corrupt nature. She calls attention to his role in litigation, suggesting that he had used his position to influence the outcome of litigation in the past. Presumably this also refers to the case in which Saint-Salvi and Mondin had given

¹⁸⁰ Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales: Lexicographie, s.v. "procureur," accessed March 10, 2023, <https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/procureur>.

¹⁸¹ "il estait vrai que son dit mari avait de quittances en main".

¹⁸² "Infailliblement tué".

testimony against Turbide. The use of Judas is particularly interesting, perhaps highlighting Turbide's betrayal of his duty to the parish in his pursuit of personal gain. This seems likely when paired with her similarly biblical call for the women of the parish to rise up and stone Turbide.

Unfortunately, we cannot be certain of Saint-Salvi's meaning. However, from the details of the case, and the broader context of the rural parish in early-eighteenth century France, we can infer two things. First, Turbide was interested in advancing his own interests. Second, Turbide's pursuit of his personal interests had negative ramifications for his parishioners, particularly in the context of the post-Tridentine parish. In his statement to the magistrates following the attack on 21 August, Turbide underscored that Saint-Salvi's and Mondin's actions were undertaken despite Turbide's position as their parish priest, and against his honour.¹⁸³ The incident and Saint-Salvi's insults against him, occurred in a public place, and Saint-Salvi had spoken "en haute voix", increasing the damage done to him. Turbide was the *curé* and the status that this position afforded him in the parish was reiterated throughout his statements. In addition, Turbide was *procureur* for the *religieux* at Saint-Gaudens. This position gave him additional influence and power within his parish, and potentially outside of it too. As aforementioned, the position of *consul* was highly sought after in communities across Languedoc as it provided office holders with additional prestige, and above all, access to, and control of, the land registers which dictated the portions of the community's tax to be paid by each inhabitant. Presumably, the position of *procureur* gave Turbide similar benefits; including the opportunity to direct the collection of grain from his parishioners on behalf of the convent.

Crucially, Turbide was willing to go to the law against his own parishioners, despite the fact that the church considered going to law unchristian and lacking in charity. As far as we can tell from the criminal dossier, Turbide had been involved in two different cases with his parishioners. If Saint-Salvi's claims are to be believed, then Turbide was also willing to use his position, and perhaps his superior financial situation, to influence the outcome of his legal disputes in his favour. These points combined paint Turbide as obsessed with status and reputation. Instead of mediating between

¹⁸³ "les adversaires mari et femme parroissiens du suppliant sans avoir egard a la qualite de pasteur et a son age qui est septuagénaire s'en sont pris non seulement sa persone mais encore a son honneur par de parolles quil ont proferees publiquement quil est une calomnie pure".

parishioners' disputes and drawing together his flock by setting a good example, Turbide sowed the seeds of discontent. Saint-Salvi's insults echo Counter-Reformation expectations of the clergy; her focus on his use, and manipulation, of the law, his potential betrayal of the parish in favour of personal gain, "ruinant tout le monde", emphasise both Turbide's negative impact on the community, and his failure to meet the requirements of a Tridentine reformer.

Although the detail contained in this case is exceptional, as far as the criminal dossiers are concerned, the behaviours exhibited by Turbide are not. Indeed, one case from this chapter's sample exhibits the potential ramifications of such behaviours, not only on the parish, but on the clergy members themselves.¹⁸⁴ In December 1683, maître Sans de Margastaud, *curé* of Escatalens (Tarn-et-Garonne) dined, as he usually did, at the house of maître Bertrand Lacaze, *docteur* and *avocat*. After dinner, he played a game of "piquet" with *religieux* Père Salvi. Around 9pm, Margastaud informed his hosts that he was going to return home, and he sent his valet for a lit candle. Lacaze walked Margastaud to the door; he could not walk him out into the street as normal because he was suffering from a flare up of gout.¹⁸⁵ Instead, Lacaze's children walked him out to the street. Approximately four paces from Lacaze's front door, Margastaud was shot in the back of the head. Nobody had seen the perpetrator. Lacaze, who heard the gunshot, grabbed his pistols and rushed out of the house, ordering onlookers to fetch the *consuls*. Margastaud's body was taken back inside Lacaze's house, and then, when the *consuls* realised they could not investigate the attack during the night, it was taken to his house. During the ensuing investigation, eight witnesses were called. Père Salvi, and other witnesses, accused Lacaze's third son, Jean, known as La Pujade, of the murder. It was revealed that Lacaze and Margastaud had been involved in a legal dispute over a decade prior. Lacaze had lost the case and had borne a grudge against Margastaud since. He was known to have wanted revenge, and witnesses report that Lacaze had publicly stated that he would not let a *curé* or priest enter his house again, and that he expected his children to avenge him against Margastaud. Lacaze, during his hearing, stated that he had not ordered his children to murder the *curé*, he had never seen his son La Pujade with pistols, and that he and the *curé* were "bon amis". Little else is revealed, but the *consuls* did render a death sentence against La Pujade; he was to be hanged and

¹⁸⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 6204.

¹⁸⁵ "Une incommodité du goutte".

strangled. It is unknown if this sentence was carried out, however, while Bertrand Lacaze, and his eldest son Guillaume, were interrogated as part of the *consuls'* investigation, La Pujade was not. It seems likely therefore that La Pujade had fled before he could be caught.

Margastaud had been the *curé* of Escatalens for over fifteen years before he was assassinated.¹⁸⁶ During this time, he had been present at multiple life events for the Lacaze family, including the marriage of Lacaze's daughter, Claire, to maître Joseph Pradié, *conseiller du roi* and *juge criminel* of Lauzert, which took place on 3 November 1681.¹⁸⁷ Bertrand Lacaze was listed as a witness in the parish registers. As far as the parish records show, Margastaud and Lacaze were "bon amis", and yet, if the witnesses to Margastaud's killing are to be believed, a serious enmity had festered between the men following their legal dispute. This case highlights the potential for clerics' personal disputes to have long lasting consequences for the local community. Margastaud's legal dispute with Lacaze had resulted in a bitter enmity between the two men which culminated in a violent and public assassination. The cases discussed in this section demonstrate the inconsistencies with which clerics adhered to Counter-Reformation values at the turn of the eighteenth century. Personal gain flew in the face of the idealised image of the Tridentine cleric. Members of the clergy utilised violence and the law in order to pursue their personal interests. This pursuit was amplified by clerics' privileged and recently empowered position within the parish.

Conclusion

The dossiers of the *parlement* of Toulouse illustrate the value of assessing the impact of the Counter-Reformation through criminal documents. Valuable works on the records of the *officialité* and on episcopal visitations have outlined many of the challenges that the church faced in reforming the behaviour of the parish clergy; they have demonstrated the continuation of clerics' immoral behaviour well into the eighteenth century. But these studies only present part of the issue. The *sacs* add to our understanding of these challenges. They demonstrate the complex ways in which clerics' pursuit of their own interests, through both the use of violence, and recourse to the law, continued despite

¹⁸⁶ AD. T-G, 3E 052-2: BMC (AC) 1668-1677: Margastaud is present in the parish records as far back as 1668.

¹⁸⁷ AD. T-G, 3E 052-3: BMC (AC) 1678-1688.

the Catholic reforms. Indeed, they suggest that the centrality of the post-Tridentine cleric within the parish not only upset local social and political hierarchies but provided clerics with the opportunity to pursue their own personal and familial interests. As for any historical inquiry based in judicial sources, it is important to note that the cases examined in this thesis do not necessarily represent the norms of society. The parish priest was purportedly a figure of esteem and stability. Their pastoral responsibilities included mediating disputes between parishioners, between families, and between husbands and wives, as well as setting moral and spiritual guidelines for their flock. Despite the use of violence by some, there is also evidence that the *bon curé* was not an entirely fictional being. In the case between Bach and la Garrigue, we see that the priest of Concots and a *prieur* were involved in the mediation between the parties and had provided a solution to the disputants needs, regardless of the fact that la Garrigue chose to ignore the guidance. But, that clerics appeared so frequently in the courts in defence of their personal and familial interests exemplifies the duality of their position in the community.

The first section of this chapter discussed the difficulties and resentment that the parish clergy faced because of their public identity as spiritual head of the parish, reforming parochial life and religion in line with the values of the Counter-Reformation. In contrast, the cases discussed in the second section highlight the private interests of the clerics, and the ways in which they used their positions to advance their socio-economic interests, even at the expense of their parishioners. That they pursued their enmities in much the same way as disputants from across the other three demographic groups examined in this thesis speaks to the broader cultural norms of dispute and enmity within Languedoc. The Counter-Reformation did not alter this for members of the clergy, at least not by the opening decades of the eighteenth century. The clergy's pursuit of personal enmities most clearly exemplifies the duality of the cleric's position in the parish, and the difficulties facing observance of Counter-Reformation values, particularly in rural communities. By actively pursuing enmities rather than peace with their adversaries, clerics ignored a central tenet of the Catholic reforms. Undoubtedly this would have impacted parishioners' reception to the clerics' spiritual teachings; as we discussed in Section One, parishioners were aware of clerics' moral position as spiritual heads of the parishes, and they used this against them during their disputes

with clergy members. Rather than sowing the seeds of peace and piety, clerics' enmities had the potential to sow the seeds of anticlericalism.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 45.

Chapter Three. The petite noblesse: Identity and Status

The lives and values of the nobility are some of the most studied aspects of *ancien régime* France. However, historians have overwhelmingly centred on the upper echelons of the Second Estate. This is particularly the case for the reign of Louis XIV. Scholarship broadly engages with two overlapping foci. The first aims to understand the impact of ‘absolutist’ monarchy on traditional noble identities. This approach is motivated by Elias’s theories of Louis XIV’s ‘domestication’ of the nobility.¹ It seeks to understand, or complicate, the notion of the nobility’s apparent shift in behaviour from the ‘warrior’ elite, the *épée*, who earned their nobility on the battlefield and played decisive roles in the tumultuous years of the Wars of Religion and the Fronde, to the ‘civilised’ elite of the Versailles court.² The second focuses on the rise of the bourgeoisie and the socio-economic diversification of the Second Estate.³ The monarchy’s creation and sale of ennobling offices afforded opportunities for the wealthiest members of the Third Estate to buy their way into the nobility, as part of the *noblesse de robe*.⁴ Both fields necessitate a fixation with noble elites, rather than the Second Estate as a whole.⁵ This is in part due to more abundant extant sources on the wealthy, and in part, particularly for historians examining monarchy-noble relations, due to the proximity of the upper-nobility to the court and to the monarch. However, despite established

¹ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978-82) tr. by Edmund Jephcott.

² For example: William Beik, *A Social and Cultural History of Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); James B. Collins, *The State in Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Stuart Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Robert Muchembled, *L’invention de l’homme moderne: Sensibilités, mœurs et comportements collectifs sous l’Ancien Régime* (Paris: Fayard, 1988).

³ This field was, until recently, dominated by discussions on the causes of the French Revolution. For an overview of the pertinent scholarship, see William Doyle, *The Origins of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5-41. In recent decades, the focus has shifted to the identity of the nobility and the relationships and conflicts between the *robe* and the *épée*. See Élie Haddad, ‘Nobility of the Sword, Nobility of the Robe: Social Spaces and Ideological Borders,’ *L’Atelier du Centre de Recherches Historiques* 22 (2021): 1-16; Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France*; David Parker, *Class and State in Ancien Régime France: The Road to Modernity?* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1997); Roger Mettam, ‘The French Nobility, 1600-1715’ in *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, vol. 1, ed. H. M. Scott (Harlow: Longman, 1995); Robert J. Kalas, ‘The Selve Family of Limousin: Members of a New Elite in Early Modern France,’ *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18, no. 2 (1987): 147-172.

⁴ Beik, *A Social and Cultural History of Early Modern France*, 135.

⁵ For one of the few studies of poor nobles see Michel Nassiet, *Noblesse et pauvreté: La petite noblesse en Bretagne XVe-XVIIIe siècle* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012).

understanding of the deep socio-economic variations within the Second Estate, conclusions from such studies are too-often superimposed onto 'the nobility' as if it were a homogenous group.⁶

A characteristic example is Beik's study of Languedoc's aristocracy during the seventeenth century which refreshes both of the abovementioned fields of research. Beik investigates Languedoc's ruling elite, their relationships with one another, with and between provincial institutions, and how these relationships informed provincial relations with the monarchy. The study reveals a pattern of monarchical defence of ruling class interests and puts "Louis XIV's great 'contagion of obedience'" down to collaboration between the monarchy and Languedoc's elite individuals.⁷ Convincing and important though this argument is, Beik's exclusive focus on a narrowly defined 'elite', categorised by only those who held "significant authority", results in a narrow conception of Languedoc's nobility during the seventeenth century.⁸

The Languedocian nobility were, as in the rest of *ancien régime* France, extremely diverse in their socio-economic profile. Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret used the extant records from the *capitation* tax to divide the French nobility into five wealth brackets. These show that well over half of the noble population in eighteenth-century France survived on revenues of less than 4,000 *livres*, as opposed to the top tier of families which lived on excesses of 250,000 *livres*.⁹ Significantly, William Doyle notes that approximately 20% of the nobility had revenues of less than 1,000 *livres*, making them financially inferior to "most of the bourgeoisie whom they disdained."¹⁰ Similarly, Michel Nassiet's study on the *pauvre noblesse* of Brittany draws parallels between the living conditions of the lowest of the Second Estate and the rural peasantry.¹¹ Élie Haddad takes this conversation further; it is not enough to only acknowledge the variation in financial situation that existed within the Second Estate. We must also be mindful of the changing definition of nobility, as first a quality, and later a legally defined status, between the middle ages and the early modern period.¹² How nobles

⁶ On the economic disparities of the Second Estate, see in the first instance: Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret, *La Noblesse au XVIIIe siècle: de la féodalité aux lumières* (Paris: Hachette, 1976).

⁷ Beik, *Absolutism and Society*, 31.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁹ Chaussinand-Nogaret, *La Noblesse au XVIIIe siècle*, 77-8; Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution*, 118.

¹⁰ Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution*, 118.

¹¹ Nassiet, *Noblesse et pauvreté*, 199-240.

¹² Élie Haddad, *D'une Noblesse l'autre: France XVIe-XVIIIe siècle* (Ceyzérieu: Champ Vallon, 2024), 16.

across the socioeconomic spectrum experienced and adapted to these changes is both geographically and temporally specific.

It is therefore not sufficient to solely focus on the political and financial elites of society in order to understand the implications of Louis XIV's reign on the lives and experiences of the Second Estate. This chapter aims to supplement our understanding of the noble experience at the turn of the eighteenth century by foregrounding the lives of the petty nobility. This is both a necessary contribution, and one that is supported by the data from the criminal dossiers of the *parlement* of Toulouse.

The Sample

The nobility are present in 174 (13.8%) of the 1,259 cases brought before the *parlement* between 1680 and 1720.¹³ On the surface, this number seems low in comparison to the cases involving the notability (42.4%) and women (38%). As noble disputants were entitled to take their complaints directly to the *parlement*, rather than to a lesser court, it might be expected that they would feature more prominently in the records. However, a number of archival and socio-cultural factors may have influenced the data.

Firstly, and potentially most significantly, is the impact of archival processes on the data sets emerging from the *sacs à procès*. This is discussed in depth in the thesis introduction, but it is also worth mentioning in relation to incidents of noble violence because errors in cataloguing appear to disproportionately affect the categorisation of noble cases. The archival catalogue, from which this thesis's data sample has been collected, inconsistently, and sometimes inaccurately, lists the social status of the parties involved in the cases.¹⁴ These inconsistencies seem to arise from difficulties in reading the early modern script, and more commonly, in discerning the contractions of different titles and forms of address. In the documents, 'seigneur' and 'sieur' are

¹³ This includes both male and female nobles; incidents of violence involving female nobles without the involvement of a male noble account for 15 of the 174 cases (8.6%). Though this chapter will focus on incidents of male noble violence, I feel it is important to include noble women's violence as part of the wider picture of the anxieties and tensions affecting the nobility and their relationships. Cases of women's violence, including noble women's violence, are discussed in a separate chapter and therefore are not included in the representative sample of 27 cases this chapter is built upon. However, they are referred to in this chapter when appropriate to illustrate broader points about noble violence, honour and households.

¹⁴ As discussed in the introduction, this is not the fault of the archive, merely a consequence of the need to process and catalogue the monumental number of trial bags without sufficient manpower.

frequently contracted to simply 's~r', and 'maître', 'messire' and 'monsieur' are often written as 'm~e' and 'm~r'. However, the catalogue occasionally conflates these contracted titles, thereby attributing status inaccurately to the disputants. These inaccuracies led to a number of mis-categorisations on my part which only became apparent once I accessed the physical documents. For example, a case from 1689 lists the two parties involved as messire Louis de Cahuzac, *lieutenant principal* in the *sénéchaussé* of Montauban, and seigneur de Chambert, *lieutenant particulier*, and *assesseur criminel* in Montauban.¹⁵ Based on the use of 'seigneur' and 'messire', I categorised the case as involving nobility, and it was selected as part of the sample for this chapter. Upon reading the case documents, it became clear that, though interesting, neither of the parties were noble. The signifiers of nobility used by the archives, 'messire', and 'seigneur', do not appear in the case itself. Instead, both Cahuzac and Chambert are referred to as 'maître', a title denoting professional position, and 'sieur', a title used by individuals of all three Estates, conferring status, but not necessarily nobility.¹⁶ Moreover, a civil case between Jean Chambert, *lieutenant particulier*, and *assesseur criminel* in the *sénéchaussée* of Montauban, and Louis Antoine Cahuzac, *lieutenant criminel* of the same court was brought to the *parlement* in 1738.¹⁷ It is likely that these two men were kin of the parties listed in the aforementioned case, and yet this case is included in the archive catalogue without any reference to nobility. Similarly, I initially filed case 2B 6886 as involving only non-noble notability.¹⁸ The catalogue lists the case as occurring between Jean-Pierre Bina, bourgeois, and Vitache Claverie. However, when I accessed the documents, I found that Vitache Claverie was listed in the litigation as noble Charles Eustache de Caverie, *écuyer*. Consequently, these errors in the archival catalogue have resulted in errors in my database. This might account for the seemingly low numbers of nobility present in the *sacs à procès*.

Secondly, the public nature of litigation may have prevented individuals concerned with their reputation from appealing to the courts. Hardwick explains that, particularly for incidents of sexual or domestic violence, despite direct access to the

¹⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 5363.

¹⁶ Archives Nationales, 'Lettres de Provisions d'Office 1641-1790' (V/1/49): Jean Hiérome Chambert acquired the office of 'lieutenant particulier' in Montauban in 1686. There are no other Chambert's listed and there is no mention of his having any noble affiliation.

¹⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 15215.

¹⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 6886.

highest courts and the necessary financial means, the nobility were less likely to seek legal resolutions to their problems.¹⁹ This pattern seems consistent for Languedoc. From the archival data, it appears that only three incidents of sexual or domestic violence involving the nobility were brought before the *parlement* between 1680 and 1720.²⁰ However, while inter-familial disputes, including matters of inheritance, are found in the noble cases, the majority of the cases principally concern interpersonal disputes stemming from confrontations over reputation and precedence. Carroll has shown that “litigation and violence were different means to one end: the vanquishing of their enemy.”²¹ Their considerable presence in the *parlement’s* cases suggests that, for the nobility, as with the rest of litigants seeking legal intervention from the tribunal, the public forum of the court was desirable, and indeed necessary, for the restoration of personal and familial reputations.

Lastly, the French nobility, as with the clergy, were far less populous than the Third Estate, amounting to between 1% and 2% of the population. The numbers fluctuated throughout the *ancien régime*. Royal initiatives aimed at preventing non-nobles from claiming noble tax exemptions thinned false claimants through a series of verifications.²² Conversely, the nobility expanded as the elites of the Third Estate became ennobled through the purchase of royal offices. This was the favoured way for non-noble families to enter the Second Estate, and such positions were highly desirable for socially ambitious individuals. As Doyle explains, buyers primarily came to venal offices from financial, industrial and trade backgrounds.²³ By the second half of the eighteenth century, there were “at least 3,700 civil ennobling offices in France.”²⁴ However, the numbers of noble families remained low in comparison to individuals

¹⁹ Julie Hardwick, ‘Early Modern Perspectives on the Long History of Domestic Violence: The Case of Seventeenth-Century France,’ *The Journal of Modern History* 78, no. 1 (2006): 8-9.

²⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 219; AD. H-G, 2B 5291; AD. H-G, 2B 7330. The latter two of these cases are incidents of uxoricide, and as such the investigations were initiated by public prosecution rather than by the decision of litigants.

²¹ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 37.

²² Steve Murdoch, ‘Fabricating nobility? Genealogy and Social Mobility among Franco-Scottish Families in the Early Modern period,’ *Recherches Anglaises et Nord-Américaines* 40, no. 1 (2007): 39; Parker, *Class and State in Ancien Regime France*, 139.

²³ William Doyle, ‘The Price of Offices in Pre-Revolutionary France,’ *The Historical Journal* 27, no. 4 (1984): 842.

²⁴ Doyle, ‘The Price of Offices,’ 834.

from the Third Estate.²⁵ The *intendant* Basville recorded 4,485 noble families in Languedoc in 1698; in contrast, he estimated the total population of Languedoc, at 1,545,442.²⁶ This must be considered when comparing demographic data sets within the criminal dossiers.

This chapter is based on a sample of twenty-seven cases, mirroring the ratio by decade of the 174 cases involving nobility.²⁷ Noble violence appears to have increased in the 1680s, and again in the 1700s, before reducing dramatically in the 1710s (see Figure Two). Interestingly, this pattern reflects that of the 1,259 cases accessed from the records of the *parlement*. This suggests that factors instigating rates of violence within the province at large affected the nobility in similar ways to individuals from the First and Third Estates. The noble experience was not distinct when it came to violent disputes.



Figure 2: Rates of violence involving the nobility, 1680-1720

²⁵ Julian Swann, 'The French Nobility, 1715-1789,' in *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, vol. 1, ed. H. M. Scott (Harlow: Longman, 1995), 144.

²⁶ Dom Devic & Dom Vaissette, *Histoire Générale de Languedoc: Tome Treizième* (Toulouse: Édouard Privat, 1872), 692.

²⁷ Three of the twenty-seven cases are linked to additional or reciprocal cases. These are listed in the appendix, and discussed in this chapter, but they are not included in the statistical analysis so as to avoid duplication of data. These cases are AD. H-G, 2B 2294, linked to AD. H-G, 2B 2287; AD. H-G, 2B 2792, linked to AD. H-G, 2B 2441; AD. H-G, 2B 7681, linked to AD. H-G, 2B 7614.

The types of nobility involved in the sample provide insight into the potential reason for this shared experience. The members of the nobility who brought cases before the *parlement* were overwhelmingly members of the petty nobility (see Table 1). Of the twenty-seven cases, only four involved a *baron*, *comte*, or *marquis*. The remaining twenty-three cases feature *seigneurs*, *co-seigneurs*, *écuyers*, or nobles without any further classification.

Table 8: Types of nobles involved in incidents of violence

Table Eight: Types of nobles involved in incidents of violence (plaintiffs/victims and defendants)	
Comte	1
Marquis	1
Baron	2
Seigneur	9
Écuyer	8
Noble	6
Total	27

Categorising the cases listing nobility as simply noble or *écuyer* is challenging. These individuals vary in their status, but remain within the lower echelons of the Second Estate.²⁸ Four feature the sons of titled nobility, such as Charles du Mazel, sieur de Quintingac, who is listed as ‘noble’, and the son of sieur d’Ussel, the *seigneur* of Quintignac in the Lozère.²⁹ However, in other cases, noble and *écuyer* are used by members of the royal or judicial bureaucracy who may have gained noble status through the purchase of office. Noble Jean de Carrière lists himself as *écuyer, conseiller du roi* and *lieutenant général* in the *sénéchaussée* of Toulouse.³⁰ Similarly, sieur Jacques de Baudan is described as captain in the cavalry and the youngest son of the late noble

²⁸ Kalas, ‘The Selve Family of Limousin,’ 167.

²⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 2287.

³⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 7316.

Maurice de Baudan, *président trésorier général de France*, for the *généralité* of Montpellier.³¹

Further insight can be gleaned from the adversaries of the petty nobility. As previous chapters have demonstrated, the incidents brought before the *parlement* emerged chiefly from disputes over status, honour, and social precedence. Scholarship on the nobility has long highlighted the changing identity of the Second Estate which exacerbated anxieties over their status in the seventeenth century. This was due, in part, to the *robe* nobility whose social ascension threatened the traditional social position of the *épée* nobles. But as Roger Mettam points out, disputes over status were not limited to between old and new nobility; conflicts also proliferated between *épée* families vying for precedence.³² As such, I expected Languedocian noble violence to be dominated by inter-noble disputes. However, this is not the case, and these findings highlight the need to examine the distinct experiences of the nobility at different levels.

Of the twenty-seven incidences of violence, only six (22.2%) occurred between noble parties. Of these six, only four relate to interpersonal disputes outside of the family.³³ The majority of cases involving the nobility therefore took place between nobles and non-nobles. A second noticeable rarity in the cases are incidents between the nobility and the clergy. Chapter Two discussed the dramatic shift in the role of the clergy during the seventeenth century. The ramifications of the Council of Trent resulted in greater parochial oversight, and the centring of the parish priest in the lives of parishioners. This brought the parish clergy into direct confrontation with other leading notables within their communities. As the cases involving the nobility occurred primarily in small communities, it might be expected that conflicts over local supremacy and influence would have proliferated between nobles and clerics. Furthermore, Carroll has shown that, as competition for peasant resources increased with the rise in taxation, so too did tensions between the local clergy and the nobility who both defended claims to portions of harvest production.³⁴ Despite the resistance of the Estates, taxation in

³¹ AD. H-G, 2B 5794.

³² Mettam, 'The French Nobility, 1600-1715,' 127.

³³ Two of these six saw violence between kin over property or inheritance rights, as with the 1680 incident between Marguerite Dupuy, widow of the seigneur of Vilemore and other places, and her son, Antoine Bridiers, seigneur of Mauvesin. Dupuy complained that Bridiers not only stole grain, fruit, and poultry from her land, including that reserved for the *taille*, but that he mistreated and insulted the inhabitants of her land: AD. H-G, 2B 2110.

³⁴ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 47.

Languedoc increased extraordinarily across the seventeenth century, and reached new heights in the final decades of the century as France entered a series of lengthy and expensive wars.³⁵ It would be unsurprising therefore if tensions over taxation burdens led to a rise in disputes between Languedoc's nobility and clergy. However, there are no incidents of clergy-noble violence in this chapter's sample, and of the total 174 cases involving the nobility between 1680 and 1720, only eight (0.05%) list them in conflict with members of the secular or regular clergy.

Instead, twenty-one cases (78%) from the sample concern violence between nobles and individuals from the Third Estate. Within this, thirteen of the cases took place between nobles and other notables, including merchants and judicial and municipal officials, and eight are between the nobility and the broader peasantry, including artisans, wealthy farmers (*laboureurs*) and labourers (*travailleurs*). Importantly, the nobility feature in these cases as defendants or plaintiffs in almost equal measure. Of the twenty-one cases of violence between nobles and non-nobles, eleven (52.4%) feature a noble defendant, whereas ten (47.6%) feature a noble plaintiff. Scholarship on violence between nobles and non-nobles is limited and contrasting. Piant, for example, found, for the *prévôté* of Vaucouleurs (Meuse) in northern France that the nobility, together with the clergy, accounted for 9.4% of the plaintiffs in 435 criminal cases between 1670 and 1790, whereas they accounted for only 1.5% of the accused.³⁶ Dewald's study establishes that nobles in the barony of Pont-St-Pierre (Eure) were marginally less likely to appear as victims than as accused in incidents of violence.³⁷ Mettam has shown that the nobility in seventeenth-century France were under pressure from above, the Crown and its ministers, and from below, the rise and assimilation of the upper bureaucracy into the traditional social hierarchy.³⁸ James Farr argues that the increasing stratification of society in seventeenth-century France, amplified by the ascension of the newly rich, heightened both the need to distance

³⁵ Beik, *Absolutism and Society*, 142-144.

³⁶ Hervé Piant, 'Des procès innombrables: Éléments méthodologiques pour une histoire de la justice civile d'Ancien Régime,' *Histoire & Mesure* 22, no. 2 (2007); 31.

³⁷ Jonathan Dewald, *Pont-St-Pierre 1398-1789: Lordship, Community, and Capitalism in Early Modern France*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 134-137.

³⁸ Roger Mettam, 'Definitions of Nobility in Seventeenth-Century France', in Penelope J. Corfield (Ed.) *Language, History, and Class* (Oxford; Wiley-Blackwell, 1991), 80.

oneself from the socially inferior, and the need to redress perceived slights to one's honour or social status, through the law, and even through the use of violence.³⁹

Clearly, the French nobility experienced substantial socio-economic changes under Louis XIV's reign, and consequently we find them as both plaintiffs and defendants in courts across the kingdom. However, the scholarship does not, at present, fully explain the link between these pressures and the nobility's presence in incidents of interpersonal violence with disputants from the Third Estate. The almost equal ratio of Languedocian nobility as plaintiffs or defendants in disputes with individuals from a lower social background is significant. The *sacs* allow us to think about this problem at the provincial level and offer a more nuanced interpretation for the tensions experienced by the nobility at the turn of the eighteenth century. Not only did the Languedocian petty nobility feel it necessary to utilise violent means to dispel challenges from the lower orders, but individuals from the Third Estate too felt justified in pursuing their disputes with noble adversaries through the use of violence and the law.

As with the majority of the cases examined in this thesis, the incidents of violence involving the nobility occurred overwhelmingly in villages and small towns. Only five (18.5%) of the twenty-seven cases in the sample took place in cities or large towns.⁴⁰ The remaining twenty-two (81.5%) cases occurred in communities of less than 4,000 inhabitants.⁴¹ Eleven (40.7%) of the cases occurred in very small communities, of less than 1,000 inhabitants. This is important. Scholarship on noble demographics in the seventeenth century foregrounds the urbanisation of the nobility. Philip Benedict has shown that, as revenues from land began to rise, increasing numbers of nobles could afford residences in cities alongside their estates in the countryside.⁴² This trend can be identified in the architectural landscape of many urban centres. Forster describes the St Etienne quarter of eighteenth-century Toulouse as the "aristocratic quarter par excellence"; the new townhouses of the quarter housed the oldest families of the sword

³⁹ James R. Farr, 'The Death of a Judge: Performance, Honor, and Legitimacy in Seventeenth-Century France' *The Journal of Modern History* 1:75 (2003) 4.

⁴⁰ Cases in cities and large towns: Toulouse: 2, Nîmes: 1, Montpellier: 1, Albi: 1.

⁴¹ Cassini EHESS, "Des Villages de Cassini aux communes d'aujourd'hui," accessed September 09, 2023, <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

⁴² Philip Benedict, 'French Cities from the Sixteenth Century to the Revolution: An Overview' in *Cities and Social Change in Early Modern France* ed. Philip Benedict (London: Routledge, 1992), 40.

nobility.⁴³ Changing attitudes toward luxury consumption and cultural pursuits also encouraged nobles' permanent residence in large towns and cities.⁴⁴ Dewald found, for the Roncherolles family, that by the mid-eighteenth century, "there had taken place what may be described as an urbanisation of their spending habits".⁴⁵ Noble families increasingly purchased their luxuries from urban centres, even when residing or visiting the countryside.

However, the rurality of the Languedocian cases once again calls for distinct examination of the lives and experiences of the lowest levels of the nobility. Their locales were not the cities, but the small towns and villages which peppered the *parlement's* jurisdiction. While there is evidence of the trend for urbanisation reaching the petty nobility of Languedoc, the *sacs* suggest that the scale of this trend was limited. In 1684, a dispute occurred between neighbours in Tillac (Gers), a small town of just 693 inhabitants at the end of the eighteenth century.⁴⁶ The disputants, Paul de Lasserre, *écuyer*, and noble Emmanuel d'Abadie, both lived in Tillac. However, d'Abadie was *seigneur* of Mongardin, a small stretch of land approximately twenty-two kilometres east of Tillac. Auch, the capital of Gers, with a population of 8,444 at the end of the eighteenth century, is located twenty-three kilometres north of Mongardin.⁴⁷ We can only speculate why d'Abadie, or his family before him, might have chosen Tillac over Auch; perhaps Tillac was more financially attractive, or perhaps d'Abadie had established kin networks in Tillac. However, d'Abadie's decision complicates the view that the nobility collectively sought residence in urban centres. The cases suggest that, for much of the petty nobility, the scale of their urban horizon was limited to small towns.

The narrow geographical reach of the petty nobility's disputes in turn shaped the focus of their concerns. Of the twenty-seven cases, thirteen (48%) took place between adversaries from the same community. A further ten incidents (37%) occurred between

⁴³ Robert Forster, *The Nobility of Toulouse in the Eighteenth Century: A Social and Economic Study*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1960), 18.

⁴⁴ Benedict, 'French Cities,' 40.

⁴⁵ Dewald, *Pont-St-Pierre*, 193.

⁴⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 22562; Cassini EHESS, 'Tillac' (Gers), accessed September 10, 2023, <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

⁴⁷ Cassini EHESS, 'Auch' (Gers), accessed September 12, 2023, <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

individuals from nearby communities.⁴⁸ Only four cases (15%) involved adversaries from further afield. The data suggests that disputes involving the nobility were motivated by tensions and anxieties hinged on local issues. This is reiterated by the public nature of the nobility's disputes. The street was a common venue for violent interaction due to the large numbers of passers-by creating opportunities for confrontation.⁴⁹ Undoubtedly, this contributed to the frequency of public disputes. But the time and place of these incidents also emphasises adversaries' concerns over reputation and honour. Seventeen (63%) cases took place outdoors in public spaces, including in the road, outside of houses and on doorsteps, and in town and village squares.⁵⁰ Twenty-one (78%) of the cases took place during daylight hours, and, of the six cases which occurred after dark, four took place in busy public places, despite the late hour.⁵¹ These were sites of intense sociability, where the presence of witnesses could be relied upon.⁵² In the 1698 nighttime attack on noble Raymond de Reynes in the streets of Albi (Tarn), eight witnesses reported on the fight and the aftermath.⁵³ The nine (33%) cases that took place in or on private property were by no means private or hidden confrontations. When the *château* of Saint Orens (Gers) was attacked in 1698 during a property dispute, eight witnesses from Saint Orens and the surrounding villages were present and called on to recount what they had seen.⁵⁴ The publicity of petty nobles' violent disputes, paired with their tendency to engage in conflict with individuals from the Third Estate, rather than with clerics or fellow nobles, is telling. It suggests that the petty nobleman's concerns lay in their position and identity within their communities, and that individuals from the Third Estate were the primary agents exacerbating noble anxieties over status and hierarchy.

⁴⁸ This includes, for example, adversaries from neighbouring villages, as in AD. H-G, 2B 6080, and incidents which occurred on the land of private *châteaux*, with attackers coming from surrounding communities, as in AD. H-G, 2B 1406.

⁴⁹ Benoît Garnot, 'La Violence dans la France moderne: Une Violence apprivoisée?' in *Violence, Conciliation et Répression: Recherches sur l'histoire du crime, de l'Antiquité au XXI^e siècle*, ed. Aude Musin, Xavier Rousseaux, and Frederic Vesentini (Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 2013): 294.

⁵⁰ Only two of these seventeen cases are listed in public spaces which were remote. These include a vineyard, and a road between two villages.

⁵¹ These include confrontations in cabarets and in public squares and streets.

⁵² Gregory Hanlon, *L'Univers des gens de bien: Culture et Comportements des Élités Urbaines en Agenais-Comdomois au XVII^e siècle* (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 1989), 49.

⁵³ AD. H-G, 2B 6996.

⁵⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 5370.

In 1975, Pierre Deyon, in reviewing the field of study into relations between the monarchy and the nobility in the first half of the seventeenth-century, stated that “we understand poorly the collective psychology and the material situation of the noble order as a whole.”⁵⁵ This sentiment, despite numerous important studies on the subject, holds true today, and applies equally to the second half of the seventeenth century. This chapter does not aim to provide an account of the collective experience of the nobility. Indeed, I would argue that this is not possible; the experiences, expectations and relationships of the Second Estate cannot be distilled into one narrative. Rather, this chapter aims to supplement this growing field by examining, through the lens of their disputes and confrontations, the experiences of the lowest of the Second Estate. It argues that, while members of the Second Estate undoubtedly shared certain ideological understandings of their own identities, the everyday life of the petty nobleman, concerned with local rather than state matters, was distinct from that of the aristocracy. This is not a novel revelation. Julian Swann argues that the very concept of a single *noblesse* is flawed; “there was not one but several nobilities.”⁵⁶ However, by focusing primarily on the lives of the lower orders of the Second Estate, we can begin to expand and complicate our understanding of the noble experience during the seventeenth century.

Few studies have contributed to this conversation, however those that have are integral to this chapter. Foremost, Nassiet has demonstrated the methods and strategies that the lowest of the nobility in Brittany used to maintain their position within the Second Estate, despite encroaching poverty and competition for resources from the wealthier individuals of the Third Estate.⁵⁷ Carroll has shown that state intervention in provincial life did much to upset traditional social relations.⁵⁸ Forster has emphasised the variety of *seigneurial* landholdings in the diocese of Toulouse in the eighteenth century, illustrating the economic disparity of the Languedocian nobility.⁵⁹ Farr has highlighted that divinely established concepts of social hierarchy underscored

⁵⁵ Pierre Deyon, ‘Relations Between the French Nobility and the Absolute Monarchy during the First Half of the Seventeenth Century,’ in *State and Society in Seventeenth-Century France*, ed. Raymond F. Kierstead (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975), 25.

⁵⁶ Swann, ‘The French Nobility, 1715-1789,’ 146.

⁵⁷ Nassiet, *Noblesse et pauvreté*.

⁵⁸ Stuart Carroll, *Enmity and Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

⁵⁹ Forster, *The Nobility of Toulouse*, 36-38.

contemporary notions of honour. This understanding of honour was “mediated through signs and symbols by which hierarchy could be read.”⁶⁰ Similarly, Hanlon underscores the code of behaviour which informed interpersonal interactions in southern France.⁶¹ Bonar sheds light on the pressures placed on the peasantry in the Auvergne to pay dues to their lords, amidst rising taxes and difficult harvests.⁶² These studies collectively underscore the importance of the nobility’s sense of position in their communities, and the various ways in which that perception might have been challenged. Carroll has called for greater attention to be paid to the impact of Louis XIV’s policies on reviving discord in communities.⁶³ This chapter uses the criminal dossiers of the *parlement* to trace this conversation into the rural communities of late-seventeenth century Languedoc. It will show that the socio-economic changes brought about by the monarch’s international exploits disrupted traditional social hierarchies and placed the petty nobility in direct competition for authority and precedence with individuals from the Third Estate.

Social Asymmetry and Economic Relationships

The *sacs* illustrate the diverse economic ties that the Languedocian petty nobility had to their communities. But they also show the potential for financial relationships to proliferate rates of interpersonal violence. Of the twenty-seven cases in this chapter’s sample, fourteen (52%) contain reference to economic motives. That is not to say that financial concerns do not feature in the remaining thirteen cases. Dewald emphasises the difficulty in establishing motive using trial documents; the courts “seem to have attached little importance to the discovery of motives”, and as such, clear statements of intent are rarely included in the dossiers.⁶⁴ However, these fourteen cases make specific references to economic interests, ranging from land or property ownership to credit arrangements, which either in part or fully motivated the conflict which led the individuals to violent confrontation and to the courts. Economic competition provides important insights into the social hierarchies which shaped communities.

⁶⁰ Farr, ‘The Death of a Judge,’ 4.

⁶¹ Hanlon, *L’Univers des gens de bien*, 72.

⁶² Daphne L. Bonar, ‘Debt and Taxes: Village Relations and Economic Obligations in Seventeenth Century Auvergne,’ *French Historical Studies* 35, no. 4 (2012): 670-671.

⁶³ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 307.

⁶⁴ Dewald, *Pont-St-Pierre 1398-1789*, 132.

Muldrew's work on social and financial obligation is key to understanding how reputation and economic interests were coupled in early modern societies.⁶⁵ One's social credit was informed by one's economic reputation. Trust was integral; to be creditworthy was to say that one could be trusted to pay their debts.⁶⁶ Communities had an interest in preserving what Muldrew terms 'networks of obligation': "people's livelihoods, and the economic stability of society as a whole, depended upon people trusting one another."⁶⁷ However, economic relationships are at the root of many of the disputes recounted in the *sacs*. Dewald argues that, for the barony of Pont-St-Pierre (Eure), conflict within the community was born out of disputes over individuals' economic interests, rather than over passions.⁶⁸ Conversely, Nicole Castan highlights the roles of both personal honour and economic interests in motivating interpersonal conflict in eighteenth-century Languedoc.⁶⁹ The cases from 1680-1720 underscore the intersection of honour and economic interest in early modern disputes. I argue that it is impossible to understand disputes over economic interests without also considering the important role of honour and social hierarchies in undermining financial relationships. The attack on the *château* of Saint Orens (Gers) in 1698, for example, features both overt economic motivations and underlying tensions of superiority and power.⁷⁰ When Jean de Miramon, *seigneur* of Aignan (Gers), and alleged leader of the attack, was questioned by the court, he was asked if he was aware that, following the death of noble Gabriel de Bérail in 1695, ownership of the *château* had been transferred to de Bérail's son, Alexandre de Bérail, the then *seigneur* of Saint Orens. This transfer had been confirmed by a decree from the court in January 1696. Miramon denied any knowledge of the new ownership. The inclusion of this question suggests that the Miramon family may have had, or may have believed they had, a claim to the property and title of Saint Orens. De Bérail stressed the attackers' use of fire and their targeting of the roof and doors during the incident in his appeal to the court; he was emphasising that the

⁶⁵ Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998).

⁶⁶ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, 3.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁶⁸ Dewald, *Pont-St-Pierre 1398-1789*, 132.

⁶⁹ Nicole Castan, *Les Criminels de Languedoc: Les exigences d'ordre et les voies du ressentiment dans une société pré-révolutionnaire* (Toulouse: Association des publications de l'Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 1980), 327.

⁷⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 5370; 7277.

attackers' aim had been to leave the castle insecure. Additional issues between the families are alluded to throughout the investigation, including antecedent court proceedings between de Bérail and Jacques de Miramon, *écuyer*. Chapters One and Two discussed the important role of litigation in propagating bitter enmities between adversaries in Languedoc; it seems likely that the incident at the *château* was just one episode in a long-drawn-out dispute between the two families. This is confirmed by a countersuit for defamation filed by Miramon against de Bérail the following year, 1699.⁷¹ However, that the contested ownership and attempted destruction of the *château* is the focus of the initial suit evidences the underlying tensions which may have driven the enmity. Ownership of the *château* and its associated titles represented the extension of financial wealth, and the advancement or reinforcement of familial position in the traditional social hierarchy. The motives behind the attack on the *château* and its inhabitants were both economic and personal.

By examining the interplay between economic interests and perceptions of honour and social position, this section aims to emphasise the complexity of noble-community relationships and underscore the intricate ways in which the identities of the nobility might have been shaped or threatened by members of the Third Estate. This relationship is particularly important for understanding disputes involving the petty nobility at the turn of the eighteenth century. As Rafe Blaufarb argues, taxation increases at the end of the seventeenth century directly targeted noble land holders; "as the fiscal burden on the seigneurs increased, their determination to defend their surviving exemptions grew apace."⁷² The cases suggest that the petty nobility were equally concerned about their position in their communities, and financial relationships provided a forum to reassert their social dominance at a time when their economic position was at its most fragile. The majority of the fourteen cases involving economic motivations involve disputes over land access, hunting rights, property ownership or theft. These cases are common across the thesis sample. In 1683, for example, eighteen-year-old Arnaude Poumejean, the daughter of widow Françoise du Laur, was guarding a flock of sheep in a field in Saint Clar (Gers).⁷³ The field belonged to Pierre Carrefour,

⁷¹ AD. H-G, 2B 7277.

⁷² Rafe Blaufarb, 'Conflict and Compromise: Communauté and Seigneurie in Early Modern Provence,' *The Journal of Modern History* 82, no. 3 (2010): 529.

⁷³ AD. H-G, 2B 2569.

bourgeois. Poumejean was approached by noble Charles de Capdeville, *seigneur* of nearby Larié and Ponsan. He carried a large baton in his hand, and when he reached her, he hit her multiple times about the arms and body. He insulted her, calling her a “coquine” and a “pandarde”, and told her that he would teach her for grazing the animals on that land.⁷⁴ De Capdeville’s interest in that particular field is not explained, however we can infer from his threats and actions that he held personal stakes in the land being grazed.

Disputes over land access and ownership undoubtedly demonstrate tensions arising over threats to both economic prosperity and social position. Less common, and yet equally important, are issues arising from transactional economic relationships, particularly those made across the boundaries of the Second and Third Estates. Despite their apparent rarity in this chapter’s sample, these cases are valuable for what they tell us about the asymmetric socio-economic expectations of the parties involved, and the violence which emerged from the breakdown of financial agreements. This section will focus on two such relationships, a creditor/debtor contract and a rental agreement. The incidents suggest that, despite societal interest in the maintenance of trust and cooperation in financial relationships, the expectations, and perceived obligations of those involved may have been irreconcilably misaligned. Factors outside of societal trust and reciprocity, including perceptions of honour and personal status, played important roles in the management, and eventual breakdown, of such relationships.

Scholars have emphasised the complex nature of economic relationships in early modern communities. Muldrew found that “in social and economic terms, credit was a levelling force within the community. Rich and poor alike were bound by reciprocal bonds of indebtedness and needed to trust one another.”⁷⁵ When these bonds deteriorated, “the poor could, and did, sue the elite of the town.”⁷⁶ The cases from the *parlement* of Toulouse showcase a range of working relationships between individuals, including rental contracts and formal credit agreements. We can see Muldrew’s theory at play in these cases. However, that the breakdown of such relationships led to protracted disputes which were eventually appealed up to the *parlement* is noteworthy.

⁷⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 2569: “tu le payeras et je raprandre de venir faire paistre le bestails dans tous ces cartiers”.

⁷⁵ Craig Muldrew, ‘Credit and the Courts: Debt Litigation in a Seventeenth-Century Urban Community,’ *The Economic History Review* 46, no.1 (1993): 36.

⁷⁶ Muldrew, ‘Credit and the Courts,’ 34.

It tells us that, for those involved, expectations regarding the fulfilment of the contract were misaligned. The cases give the researcher an opportunity to explore the deterioration of networks of obligation. Rather than concepts of trust and social cohesion guiding the outcome of financial transactions, perceptions of status and hierarchy feature prominently. This is particularly the case in transactional relationships between nobility and individuals from the Third Estate.

A suit from April 1692 displays the distinct perspectives of the parties involved particularly clearly.⁷⁷ Etienne Ferrière, *marchand*, from Montpellier (Hérault) had attempted to reclaim a debt that was owed to him by Jean de Baudan, *trésorier de France* in the *généralité* of Montpellier. The debt of 500 *livres* was in the form of a bill of exchange, a credit arrangement typically used for short term loans involving merchants and artisans.⁷⁸ Ferrière had first turned to the *bourse*, and then to the *parlement* for support in the collection of this debt. This he received, including a decree from the *parlement* on 6 January 1692, which ordered de Baudan to satisfy the debt. Armed with formal legal support, Ferrière attempted to commission bailiffs and archers to reclaim the debt on his behalf. However, he was unable to find any who were willing to aid his cause. This point is not explained further, though the reticence of the bailiffs to participate in the collection suggests that either they did not want to involve themselves, perhaps owing to the status and influence of de Baudan, or de Baudan had preemptively coerced their inaction. As a result, on 19 January, Ferrière appealed directly to Languedoc's *intendant*, Nicolas de Lamoignon de Basville. The working relationship between the *trésoriers* and the provincial *intendants* changed dramatically over the course of the seventeenth century; the remit of the *intendant* expanded to involve close supervision of tax collection in their provinces.⁷⁹ While the position of the *trésoriers* was not superseded by the *intendants*, and they retained "important oversight functions", the *intendants* were critical of the *trésoriers*. As Collins argues, their position was the subject of "constant complaints".⁸⁰ Ferrière's request to Basville for intervention in his issue with de Baudan was potentially provocative; de Baudan was

⁷⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 5794.

⁷⁸ Philip T. Hoffman, Gilles Postel-Vinay, and Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, *Dark Matter Credit: The Development of Peer-to-Peer Lending and Banking in France* (Princeton University Press, 2019), 122.

⁷⁹ Collins, *The State in Early Modern France*, 131.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 132.

trésorier in Montpellier, as his father Maurice de Baudan had been before him.⁸¹

Whether or not any contention existed between de Baudan and Basville is not apparent from the *sacs*. However, it is interesting to think that Ferrière's appeal to the *intendant* might have been strategic, playing on these institutional tensions to benefit his case.⁸² Regardless, Ferrière's appeal to Basville would have undoubtedly registered against the backdrop of the changing relationship between the *intendants* and the *trésoriers*.

Ferrière's request was successful, and Basville enjoined all bailiffs and archers to comply with Ferrière's collection. If they refused, they risked the loss of their positions. Ferrière used the administrative and judicial apparatuses available to him to pursue this debt. However, the support Ferrière received did not ensure the return of the money owed to him. Instead, it appears to have engendered a more severe reaction from the de Baudan family. Following Basville's decree, Ferrière retained the services of multiple bailiffs and an archer. On the morning of 2 April, Ferrière and the bailiffs arrived at the house of dame Françoise Delavere de la Boissière, mother of de Baudan, in Nîmes (Gard), where de Baudan was staying. They were informed by a servant that de Baudan was in bed. Before they could reach the bedroom, the group was attacked by de Baudan's younger brother, Jacques de Baudan, *capitaine des chevaux légers*. Whilst blaspheming, "sacre mort dieu", Jacques informed them that they could not enter de Baudan's chamber and threatened that he would kill the first person who tried. He punched Bijonnet, a bailiff, in the face before calling for support from within the house: "à moi!". Five men, each armed with a pistol, emerged from the kitchen and blocked the entrance to the bedroom. Jacques de Baudan continued to insult the men, calling Ferrière "canaille" and demanding to know how he dared to enter their house.⁸³ Concerns over status and boundaries of authority are evident in de Baudan's attack. The men explained the reason for their presence: "Messieurs, nous executtons un arret du parlement de Toulouse, et une ordonnance de monsieur l'intendant." This did not sway de Baudan, who dismissed the authority of the courts and threatened, once again, to kill them. La Boissière, enraged, joined in her son's efforts and the group were forced to leave without collecting the debt.

⁸¹ This lineage is detailed in the case documents.

⁸² For more on litigants' legal consciousness and strategic use of the courts, see Chapter One.

⁸³ "Vous ozes venir dans cette maison?"

This case is important for two reasons. First, as Castan has highlighted for eighteenth-century Languedoc, individuals had multiple options available to them for pursuing disputes against their social superiors in the seventeenth century. In the course of his attempt to reclaim the money owed to him, Ferrière utilised both civil and criminal legal channels. He appealed on separate occasions to the *bourse*, the *parlement*, the *intendant* and the *sénéchal* in Montpellier. Each time, the bureaucratic system supported his efforts. The asymmetrical social hierarchy between Ferrière and de Baudan did not preclude Ferrière from pursuing his dispute and gaining support from the judicial and financial bureaucratic systems. This case expands Muldrew's conclusions on the role of the law in England's informal credit networks to France: "the legal system was essential to the stability of credit".⁸⁴ Theoretically, Languedoc's institutional apparatus supported the creditor and encouraged debtors to uphold their obligations.

Second, the case illustrates the potential for credit relationships to fall apart as a result of the asymmetrical social hierarchies of the parties involved. Despite institutional support, Ferrière was still attempting to collect the debt in April 1692. In fact, the case was still being investigated in 1698, when Jacques de Baudan, who had been on military service for the intervening six years, was questioned over his part in the confrontation.⁸⁵ When, or indeed if, the debt was finally paid is unclear. However, the details contained within the dossiers reveals something of de Baudan's, and his family's, self-perception regarding their financial obligations to Ferrière. They were astounded by the collectors' 'daring' to enter the de Baudan house. When informed that the collection was supported by various authorities, de Baudan and la Boissière expressed disdain for those authorities.⁸⁶ This self-perception likely played an important role in the escalation of the confrontation between Ferrière and de Baudan. Taylor discusses the social politics of debt collection in early modern Castile; creditors could leverage the reputation of their debtors in order to influence the outcome of the

⁸⁴ Craig Muldrew, 'Debt, Credit, and Poverty in Early Modern England,' in *A Debtor World: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Debt* eds. Ralph Brubaker, Robert M. Lawless and Charles J. Tabb (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012): 10.

⁸⁵ These documents do not comment on the status of the debt in 1698. They primarily focus on the brother's involvement in the incident of violence, and if he knew of his brother's financial dealings. The debt may well have been repaid by that time, however this cannot be claimed with any certainty.

⁸⁶ "On se fout de votre ordre, jen tueray"

dispute in their favour.⁸⁷ Chapter One found similar strategies at work in credit networks involving women in Languedocian communities. It is likely, therefore, that Ferrière's decision to publicise his debt dispute with de Baudan before the various courts he called on for support may have worked to undermine de Baudan's social standing. That this publicity did not persuade de Baudan to concede and repay the debt in order to protect his and his family's credibility speaks to de Baudan's self-perception. The misaligned position of Ferrière and de Baudan in the social hierarchy is important. De Baudan was part of the financial elite, and was therefore far superior to Ferrière, a merchant. Theories of mutual obligation indicate that the maintenance of trust through reciprocal credit networks was in the interest of the 'common good': "the business of the world depended on the trust which householders extended to their neighbours and to others they did business with."⁸⁸ However, it is clear that De Baudan's and Ferrière's social asymmetry played an important role in undermining the security of their economic relationship. De Baudan's social and political legitimacy was derived from his office, rather than solely from his financial credibility, as Ferrière's may well have been.⁸⁹ Economic obligations and perceptions of creditworthiness were therefore limited or challenged by the complex interplay of social hierarchies present in early modern communities.

It is difficult to know how representative the incident between de Baudan and Ferrière was of the system of credit and debt between nobles and non-nobles. There is only one other comparable case in this chapter's sample, though there may well be more in the *sacs*, especially as additional cases are processed and added to the archival catalogue.⁹⁰ Despite its level of exceptionalism, similar themes can be found in disputes arising from non-credit based relationships. These cases together warn researchers not to oversimplify and attribute the breakdown of financial relationships to purely economic reasons. Anxieties over honour and place within traditional social hierarchies shaped all relationships and played an important role in their breakdown.

⁸⁷ Scott Taylor, 'Credit, Debt, and Honour in Castile, 1600-1650,' *Journal of Early Modern History* 7, no. 1-2 (2003).

⁸⁸ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, 137.

⁸⁹ Farr, "The Death of a Judge," 19.

⁹⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 2441; 2792. These linked cases detail a violent and protracted dispute between Guillaume Gibert, a royal notary from Les Broutous, and Noble François de Beaumont, Baron of Les Junies (Lot). A debt owed by the de Beaumont family appears to have originated the dispute which culminated in extreme violence on both sides.

In October 1701, noble Charles Chrestien Frederic Hagek de Bornim of Nîmes (Gard), filed a suit against Anne Mathieu (known both as ‘Lagarde’, and ‘La Negre’), the widow of Etienne Martin.⁹¹ De Bornim was a native of Brandenburg, Germany, but had been resident in Nîmes since 1683, and had married Demoiselle Magdelaine Mazel, the daughter of a Nîmes bourgeois, sieur Jacques Mazel.⁹² According to de Bornim’s suit, Mathieu had rented an apartment in his house. The tenancy had been arranged by his wife, Mazel, without his involvement. De Bornim disapproved of the rental agreement and told Mathieu that he needed the apartment back. From this point onwards, Mathieu had quarrelled and fought with de Bornim whenever the opportunity arose. She insulted him and called him names including “coquin” and “espion”, claiming that he had only come to the area to ruin the town.⁹³ On 14 October, these quarrels escalated to violence. De Bornim stated that he was in his study when Mathieu entered. She insulted him, calling him a “malheureux”, and a “connard”, and then beat him with a piece of wood, bruising his left arm.⁹⁴ She then turned on de Bournim’s wife and sister-in-law, calling them “putains” and “empoisonneures”, shouting that they wanted to poison de Bornim. In Mathieu’s hearing, she recounted a different version of events. She explained that the contract for the apartment was for the duration of two years; she had almost one year of the contract left when de Bornim attempted to terminate the agreement. Mathieu was clear on the reasoning for this; de Bornim’s marriage to Mazel was not amicable, and de Bornim wanted Mathieu to leave the house so that she couldn’t intervene. De Bornim had beaten and threatened Mathieu on multiple occasions, including on the morning of 14 September. When she returned to the apartment later the same day, de Bornim met her with a wooden stick. He chased her out of the house, hitting her multiple times.

This fascinating case exemplifies the need to look beyond the surface of interpersonal violence in early modern communities, and particularly so in disputes emerging from economic relationships. Far from simply a rental agreement gone wrong, this case places honour and boundaries of authority at the very heart of the breakdown

⁹¹ AD. H-G, 2B 6743.

⁹² AD. Gard, E36, 615, *Registres Paroissiaux Saint-Castor* (1640-1705), 456; De Bornim’s father, Monsieur Frederik Hagek de Bournimb was the Seigneur of Bournimb [SIC. Bornim, near Potsdam].

⁹³ “Pour y perdre la ville”.

⁹⁴ Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales: Lexicographie, s. v. “Cornard,” accessed September 12, 2023, www.cnrtl.fr/definition/cornard.

of the economic agreement. The references to de Bornim's and Mazel's marriage provide a key for interpreting this incident. Mathieu explained that her interference in the less-than-amicable marriage caused de Bornim to terminate the tenancy.⁹⁵ The nature of the discord in de Bornim's and Mazel's marriage is not specified. There are repeated references to de Bornim's violence against Mathieu in her statement, and witnesses report rumours of Mazel's conduct with male visitors. Scholarship on domestic violence provides some relevant context for de Bornim's behaviour regarding Mathieu. Hardwick tells us that, in incidents of marital discord involving the nobility, privacy was of utmost importance. The neighbours of non-elite families were quick to intervene in marital troubles. However, this was not the case for noble families; indeed, elite women were less likely to publicise their marital troubles by appealing to the courts for intervention.⁹⁶ If there were concerns over rumours about the marriage reaching the ears of neighbours, then this might explain de Bornim's disapproval of the rental agreement, and his interest in removing Mathieu from the household. Hurl-Eamon has discussed the prevalence of lodgers as witnesses in cases of uxoricide in early modern England.⁹⁷ Cramped or inadequate partitions between living quarters afforded tenants both auditory and visual insight into the domestic struggles between husband and wife. The spatial context of de Bornim's household set out in the suit supports this; the house and apartment do not seem to have been separate entities, and the adversaries appear to have had relatively easy access to each other's spaces. Mathieu entered into de Bornim's study; de Bornim was waiting in Mathieu's room before chasing her down the stairs with a stick. By renting an apartment in de Bornim's home, Mathieu had undoubtedly been witness to the private relationship between husband and wife in a way that she would not ordinarily have been.

The asymmetric social positions of de Bornim and Mathieu are also important here. Mathieu was the widow of an artisan, living within a noble household. There is little in the scholarship to help us unpick the boundaries at play between tenant and landlord. However, scholarship on servant/master relationships and the patriarchal household provides some context. It goes without saying that the relationship between

⁹⁵ "Tout les demelles frequacass que ledit sieur Bournim avait avec la demoiselle sa femme."

⁹⁶ Hardwick, 'Early Modern Perspectives,' 31.

⁹⁷ Jennine Hurl-Eamon, "I will forgive you if the world will': Wife-Murder and Limits on Patriarchal Violence in London, 1690-1750,' in *Violence, Politics and Gender in Early Modern England*, Joseph P. Ward, ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 235.

Mathieu and de Bornim was not that of a servant and master; Mathieu was not part of the household in the traditional sense of the term, nor was she financially dependent on de Bornim as a servant would have been.⁹⁸ However, boundaries of privacy would likely have been dismantled by her presence, and the close living quarters.⁹⁹ Where strong ties of loyalty and obedience dictated the conduct of servants living in masters' households, Mathieu's position was not restricted.¹⁰⁰ As such, she weaponised the information that she had become privy to during the course of the dispute. Alongside commonly used insults, like "coquin" and "putain", Mathieu used pointed, and highly personal insults. Particularly revelatory is Mathieu's use of "empoisoneure". Scholars argue that poison, or the threat of poison, enabled women to subvert the domestic order and gain power over their husbands.¹⁰¹ This insult made public the private discord between husband and wife, and became a tool that Mathieu could use to defend her interests and her actions before the magistrates. We cannot speak to Mazel's intention in renting the apartment to Mathieu and bringing a third party into the home. However, it is worth noting that women did seek the support of female networks when faced with domestic or marital discord.¹⁰² There is evidence of this in the *sacs*: Chapter One discussed demoiselle de Trémouille's use of female kin and allies to influence her position while in dispute with her father.¹⁰³ We can infer from de Bornim's interest in removing Mathieu from the house, and his specification that Mazel had made the tenancy arrangement without his involvement, that he was concerned about private matters being made public. De Bornim's inclusion of Mathieu's insults against him in his statement to the magistrates foregrounds his concerns for his reputation and standing, both within the household, as patriarch, and in the wider community, as a nobleman.

By reading these cases in relation to each other, we can see that perceptions of honour and social status had the potential to undermine the success of economic

⁹⁸ Cissie Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies: Servants & Their Masters in Old Regime France* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 138.

⁹⁹ Sarah C. Maza, *Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century France: The Uses of Loyalty* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 185.

¹⁰⁰ Cissie Fairchilds, 'Masters and Servants in Eighteenth-Century Toulouse,' *Journal of Social History* 12, no. 3 (1979): 371-373.

¹⁰¹ Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 199; Lisa Wynne Smith, 'Resisting Silences: Gender and Family Trauma in Eighteenth-Century England,' *Gender and History* 32, no. 1 (2020): 38.

¹⁰² Hurl-Eamon, "I will forgive you if the world will," 232.

¹⁰³ AD. H-G, 2B 6034.

relationships in early modern communities. This was particularly the case in financial agreements made across the boundaries of social strata. Both disputes arose from contractual economic relationships in which one party, the noble party, broke the terms of a financial agreement. In each case, violence resulted from the breakdown of these agreements as the non-noble party attempted to hold their adversary to their economic obligations. Muldrew tells us that economic relationships relied heavily on reciprocal obligation and trust.¹⁰⁴ These cases suggest however that contemporary perceptions of reciprocal obligations could be misaligned. It is therefore important to understand the financial relationships which tied the nobility to their communities in order to understand their involvement in incidents of interpersonal violence at the turn of the eighteenth century. As the cases make clear, the demand for financial agreements to be honoured was enough to warrant a violent reaction aimed at reasserting dominance in the relationship, as in the case between de Baudan and Ferrière. Similarly, as in the case between de Bornim and Mathieu, economic relationships might be broken in the defence of traditional perceptions of honour.

Social Hierarchies and Political Authority

The Second Estate saw significant socio-economic and cultural change in the early modern period.¹⁰⁵ Scholars commonly focus on the threat that the *anoblis* posed to the social dominance of the *épée* nobility.¹⁰⁶ In the 174 cases involving the nobility, there is some evidence of such tensions leading to violence between robe and sword nobles. In 1702, noble François Georges de Cassaignes, *conseiller* and *co-seigneur* of La Calmette (Gard) filed a suit against the son of fellow *co-seigneur*, Philippe d'Ardouin de la Calmette.¹⁰⁷ The two came to blows following a dispute about their positioning in a religious procession in Nîmes; de Cassaignes, a robe noble, was publicly humiliated and sought reparations through the *sénéchal* of Nîmes. Evidently, competition for authority between robe and sword nobles could result in incidents of violence. However, the twenty-seven cases that this chapter draws on suggest that we should look beyond

¹⁰⁴ Muldrew, 'Credit and the Courts,' 36.

¹⁰⁵ Beik, *A Social and Cultural History of France*, 66-67.

¹⁰⁶ Roger Mettam, 'Definitions of Nobility in Seventeenth-Century France,' *Language, History and Class* ed. Penelope J. Corfield (Wiley-Blackwell, 1991), 79; Beik, *A Social and Cultural History*, 275-276.

¹⁰⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 7215.

inter-noble disputes in order to understand the tensions and anxieties which shaped noble violence at the turn of the eighteenth century. Only six (22.2%) of the twenty-seven cases refer to disputes between nobles, and importantly, none feature violence between robe and sword nobility. The majority concern inter-familial competitions for inheritance and disputes over property. Only one case emerged as a result of hierarchical anxieties between noblemen. In September 1684, noble Paul de Lasserre, *écuyer*, a new arrival in Tillac (Gers) filed a complaint against his neighbour Emmanuel d'Abadie, *seigneur* of nearby Mongardin (Saint-Médard).¹⁰⁸ D'Abadie sequestered two of de Lasserre's foals which had caused damage to his land. De Lasserre's requests that the foals be released or turned over to Tillac's *consuls* were denied. On 29 September, while de Lasserre was appealing to d'Abadie's wife at their home, d'Abadie fired a pistol, "chargé de gros plomb", at de Lasserre. He was knocked to the ground and ultimately lost the use of his right eye. The violence enacted on de Lasserre is clearly significant. As Garnot explains, violence broke out in communities "when individuals felt that their personal, familial, or professional honour had been affected; when the codes that governed social relations had been broken."¹⁰⁹ A connected *sac* from the same year adds important context. It recounts a second incident in which Lasserre had beaten one of d'Abadie's servants with a baton on the main road in the town.¹¹⁰ Although the dates are not specified, it seems likely, considering the extent of de Lasserre's injuries following d'Abadie's attack with the pistol, that the incident involving the servant occurred first. Servants were common targets in incidents of vindictory violence.¹¹¹ Male servants in particular were recognised as status symbols.¹¹² Consequently, Lasserre's attack on d'Abadie's servant might have been experienced as a direct challenge to d'Abadie's status in the community. These cases together paint a picture of a struggle between two noblemen for precedence in a small community of less than 1,000 inhabitants.¹¹³ It is important that such interactions be placed within their geographic context; only then

¹⁰⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 22562.

¹⁰⁹ Garnot, 'La Violence,' 293.

¹¹⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 7415; Unfortunately, this case has not been consulted in person, and so the information is provided solely by the archival catalogue.

¹¹¹ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 101.

¹¹² Fairchilds, 'Masters and Servants,' 369.

¹¹³ Tillac had a population of 693 in 1793. Cassini EHESS, *Tillac' (Gers)*, accessed September 09, 2023, <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

can the various factors informing such confrontations be fully appreciated. Chapter One argues that disputants' physical and financial investments in the pursuit of enmities was indicative of the value of the stakes held by the adversaries. The incidents between d'Abadie and de Lasserre exhibit similar traits. As Beik argues, "life among the nobility was a constant dialogue in which one's place and reputation were tested by encounters of all sorts."¹¹⁴ De Lasserre's arrival in the small community of Tillac seemingly upset the local social hierarchy and resulted in a fierce enmity between the two as each attempted to negotiate their position over the other. This was evidently a serious concern for both noblemen, and the enmity culminated, as far as we can tell from the cases, in the use of near-lethal violence.

But the *parlement's* criminal dossiers tell us that struggles for local social dominance far more commonly occurred between nobles and non-nobles. This suggests that factors outside of inter-noble competition contributed to the potential spike in noble violence at the end of the seventeenth century. The dossiers also make clear that Languedoc's petty nobility were as likely to feature in litigation concerning violent disputes as defendants as they were plaintiffs. Scholars have shown that state policies had an adverse effect on social cohesion in the early modern period. Contentions between individuals from the Second and Third Estates were likely shaped by the monarchy's attempts, in the 1660s and 1670s, to curb false claimants of nobility and reduce those claiming the privileges of nobility.¹¹⁵ Although the upwardly mobile commonly sought noble status through the purchase of venal offices, the number of ennobling offices was relatively few.¹¹⁶ By the end of the seventeenth century, the process of gaining noble status had become increasingly difficult.¹¹⁷ Similarly, the increase in taxation at the end of the seventeenth century, including the introduction of taxes aimed directly at the nobility, added additional pressures.¹¹⁸ Undoubtedly, the taxes on the nobility were felt most strongly amongst the Second Estate's economically insecure lower echelons. Blaufarb's convincing case study illustrates the tensions which emerged between the *communauté* and the *seigneurie* in Cabannes.¹¹⁹ The external

¹¹⁴ Beik, *A Social and Cultural History*, 276.

¹¹⁵ Beik, *A Social and Cultural History*, 70.

¹¹⁶ Doyle, 'The Price of Offices,' 835.

¹¹⁷ Beik, *A Social and Cultural History*, 68.

¹¹⁸ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 271, 288.

¹¹⁹ Blaufarb, 'Conflict and Compromise,' 529-30.

pressure of monarchical tax policies forced municipal administrative structures into conflict with local nobility who wanted to avoid their land being “declared *roturier* and added to the tax base.”¹²⁰

Twenty-one (77.8%) of the twenty-seven cases in this chapter’s sample feature disputes between individuals from the Second and Third Estates. The petty nobility, like individuals from the Third Estate, were acutely sensitive to challenges to their authority and position, from their social inferiors, as well as from their social equals.¹²¹ We have already seen that nobles’ economic relationships with non-elites provided a forum for struggles over authority and honour. Economic threats had the potential to undermine traditional hierarchies. Crucially, these cases demonstrate that non-elites, bolstered by their own sense of honour and expectations of reciprocity were emboldened to publicly challenge the position and reputation of noble adversaries when they failed to uphold financial agreements. This section examines the political landscape of early modern communities, and the nobleman’s place within it. Scholars’ focus on inter-noble violence implies that non-nobles only became a significant threat to the nobility once the boundary between the Estates had been crossed. Robert Kalas’ study of the Selve family in Limousin exemplifies the impressive trajectories that families could have, from merchant origins to high *parlementaires* by way of increasingly influential judicial offices and the purchase of minor landholdings.¹²² Undoubtedly, tensions arose because of the potential for non-elites to rise into the ranks of the nobility. Indeed, as Carroll’s example of a judge murdered by a local nobleman in the Angoumois evidences, noblemen even felt compelled to use lethal violence to prevent the social ascension of their adversaries from the Third Estate.¹²³ However, the *sacs* show that violence between nobles and non-nobles proliferated because of the challenges that non-elites posed to the nobility’s influence and authority within communities. Noble status was not a prerequisite for influence and authority in the local context. Reputation was conferred by public opinion, and the potential for the development of significant local influence was amplified by the positions of authority afforded to those from lower socio-economic backgrounds by municipal and administrative institutions in the

¹²⁰ Ibid., 530.

¹²¹ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 57.

¹²² Kalas, ‘The Selve Family of Limousin,’ 154.

¹²³ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 306.

predominantly rural communities of Languedoc.¹²⁴ These cases urge researchers to consider local power structures in our analysis of social hierarchies in early modern France, especially when attempting to analyse the noble experience under Louis XIV.

Eight (29.6%) of the twenty-seven cases in this chapter's sample feature disputes between nobles and notables from the Third Estate who occupied positions of authority within their communities. As Chapter Four discusses, notability was most commonly displayed through office-holding.¹²⁵ Importantly, these individuals were not elite office-holders. They occupied lower administrative positions, including those of notaries, *consuls*, sergeants, and bailiffs. As we have seen, municipal, judicial and ecclesiastic offices provided the ladder rungs of social ascension for those with the requisite means. Chapter Two discussed the potential for even the most ordinary individuals to gain positions of relative power within their communities through minor offices, such as that of the church warden. These positions entitled the holder to certain rights and privileges, defence of which had the potential to bring the office-holder into contention with traditional authorities, including the clergy, as both parties attempted to negotiate their position within the relationship, and within the community.¹²⁶ A struggle between maître Jean Vedeille, *curé* of Saint Beauzile (Tarn) and sieur Etienne Bonnefons, *marguillier*, over the boundaries of each of their offices in the parish resulted in a violent confrontation after mass in 1682.¹²⁷ Individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds could therefore gain significant local influence through a public function. This was particularly the case for the rural communities in the south of France where office-holding was often elective.¹²⁸ That such individuals feature prominently in violent disputes with individuals from the Second Estate tells us that their elevated status had the potential to disrupt traditional social hierarchies. Although Hanlon argues that "a penniless young nobleman will always receive more esteem than a master founder", the cases suggest that this was less of a certainty for the Languedocian petty nobility.¹²⁹ The

¹²⁴ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 49; Stéphane Durand et al., *Des États dans l'État - les États de Languedoc de la Fronde à la Révolution* (Geneva: Droz, 2014), 118.

¹²⁵ Farr, 'The Death of a Judge,' 19.

¹²⁶ John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 305.

¹²⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 1408.

¹²⁸ Georges Fournier, *Démocratie et Vie Municipale en Languedoc: Tome 1* (Toulouse: Les Amis des Archives de la Haute-Garonne, 1994), 20.

¹²⁹ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 29.

nobility's use of violence and the law to assert their dominance over their adversaries from the Third Estate tells us much about how they experienced and managed competition for influence and authority within their communities.

A dispute between noble Jean François du Fesc, Baron of Sumène (Gard), *conseiller* in the *cour des aides, finances et comptes* and Jean Massane, *contrôleur des exploits*, illustrates these tensions well.¹³⁰ Du Fesc had a long history of taking legal action against the inhabitants of Sumène in order to reduce their hunting and fishing privileges. The *communauté* chose Massane to defend the community's interests in court proceedings. As a result, du Fesc developed a hatred for Massane, and over a number of years, 1679-1682, sought to dishonour Massane at any given opportunity. Du Fesc's attempts to restrict the community's rights were likely rooted in financial concerns; unfortunately, the documents in the *sac* are only those produced by Massane and his lawyers and consequently we know little about du Fesc's motivations. However, du Fesc's treatment of Massane is indicative of the baron's frustrations over the community's attempt to block his aims. Unfortunately, we do not learn much about Massane's socio-economic standing from the criminal dossier, or from notarial and parish records. He is primarily referred to by his last name, without any titular claims to status, and as a "habitant du Sumène". From this we can infer that he was of humble origins. In an appeal to *intendant d'Aguesseau* in 1682, Massane titled himself *contrôleur des exploits*. Despite his low socio-economic background, his role in the defence of the Sumène's inhabitants, paired with his position as *contrôleur des exploits* gave him a public function which would have endowed him with local authority beyond that which might have been afforded to him by his social status alone.¹³¹ Although the word 'syndic' or 'syndicate' is not used in the documents, we can infer that Massane's position was exactly that. It is likely that Massane's position as *contrôleur* made him a viable candidate to represent the community's interests against their common enemy, du Fesc.¹³² The documents suggest that Massane was self-aware of his position within the community; he referred to himself as an "homme d'honneur" and, in his appeal to the *parlement*, Massane explained that du Fesc's attacks were aimed at removing him from the community because he was in an esteemed enough position, with "assais a

¹³⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 1464.

¹³¹ Farr, 'The Death of a Judge,' 19.

¹³² Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 279.

credite” to represent the community’s interests against the baron.¹³³ To have credit in the seventeenth century was a claim to status.¹³⁴ That du Fesc turned to violence in his dealings with Massane tells us that the authority which Massane was afforded by the community was significant enough to threaten the baron’s own interests, and to require him to take action. Despite his lack of official status, Massane was enough of a local figure to present a significant obstacle to du Fesc’s plans.

Similarly, in August 1702, noble Alexandre Galliot de Crussol d’Uzès, *comte* of Amboise and *seigneur* and baron of Graulhet (Tarn) filed a suit against Jean Besse, merchant and *premier consul* of Graulhet.¹³⁵ The two men had a history of dispute. Besse, alongside sieur de la Decuse, *fermier*, had previously filed a civil suit against d’Uzès’ father over revenues from the land at Graulhet. On 7 August 1702, during the town fair, Besse and d’Uzès came to blows in the Place du Mercadial in Graulhet. D’Uzès claimed that while he was using the *tambour* to warn fairgoers not to hunt on his land without his permission, Besse attacked him with a knife. During his hearing, Besse, who d’Uzès referred to as “soi-disant bourgeois et premier consul”, explained that he had been in the market square to assist in a proclamation about the payment of taxes, including the *capitation*, made by Graulhet’s *valet consulaire* and *crieur publique*. D’Uzès attacked the two men and threatened to have Besse hanged.¹³⁶ As Blaufarb found for Cabannes, the *capitation* had the potential to create severe tensions between communities and their *seigneurs*.¹³⁷ D’Uzès’ pejorative remarks regarding Besse’s position foreground issues of status between the two men. *Consuls* were charged with administering the community’s tax allocation, including the *capitation*.¹³⁸ In the Midi, the *taille réelle* made nobles liable for their non-noble property. Besse’s exercise of his consular authority, both to pursue litigation against the barony for debts owed, and to collect taxes that fell on all non-noble property, placed him in direct contention with the d’Uzès family.

¹³³ “Qu’il est assais a credite dans icelle pour soutenir en ceste leurs intherets communs contre ledit Sieur du Sumène”.

¹³⁴ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, 3.

¹³⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 7211.

¹³⁶ “Il le ferait pendre, et qu’il le perdrait”.

¹³⁷ Blaufarb, ‘Conflict and Compromise,’ 530.

¹³⁸ Fournier, *Démocratie et Vie Municipale en Languedoc*, 20.

Similar tensions can be seen in 1691, when the community of Madiran (Hautes-Pyrénées) elected Pierre Ducasse, bourgeois, as captain of their new *garde bourgeois*.¹³⁹ Noble Gabriel de Mieussens, sieur of nearby Cauhadet, disputed the legitimacy of Ducasse's election. In his suit, Ducasse explained that De Mieussens took advantage of any opportunity to trouble Ducasse in his position as captain and engaged his family to do the same. According to Ducasse, de Mieussens claimed to have been elected captain, even though he did not have adequate support from the community.¹⁴⁰ On 17 April 1691, de Mieussens arrived in Madiran. He was accompanied by his father, Antoine de Mieussens, sieur of La Parade, and his uncle and cousin, Gaspard and Guy de Mieussens, sieurs of Mondiques. The group located Ducasse, who was at the head of the guard, on parade in Madiran. Gabriel de Mieussens attacked Ducasse, punching him on the chin, and then took his position at the head of the company. De Mieussen's family joined in the attack, beating Ducasse and pulling at his hair. Gabriel de Mieussens also attempted to provoke a duel with Ducasse before the group left, leaving Ducasse bloodied on the floor.¹⁴¹ The incident between Ducasse and de Mieussens exemplifies the tensions which arose between nobles and non-nobles for positions of influence within communities. As Hardwick explains, local or parochial organisations provided middling men with a "key means of establishing their own local social prominence and of having some political voice in the day-to-day running of their immediate communities."¹⁴² De Mieussen's reaction to Ducasse's election, and subsequent attempts to replace the captain as head of the bourgeois militia is indicative of his own anxieties regarding status and influence within the community, despite his hierarchical superiority.

These cases collectively demonstrate the varied ways in which individuals from the Third Estate could disrupt local hierarchies and challenge the authority of the nobility. Mettam argued that social elites acknowledged that "an elected mayor or royal judge was given added status by the office he held, and had accordingly risen above the position in society to which he was entitled on personal and familial grounds."¹⁴³ But

¹³⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 5362; the order to form the militia had come from Sieur Vicomte de Labatut.

¹⁴⁰ "Il n'eut point les suffrages de la communauté".

¹⁴¹ This fact was later used by Ducasse to attract the attention and support of the *procureur général*. De Mieussens was ultimately sentenced to five years service on the galleys. It is unlikely that this sentence was ever executed; Ducasse's appeals to the *sénéchal* and *parlement* in the remaining months of 1691 indicate that de Mieussens had not submitted to the court.

¹⁴² Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*, 203.

¹⁴³ Mettam, 'Definitions of Nobility,' 84.

these cases suggest that we should look beyond the upper echelons of the Third Estate in order to understand the factors shaping noble violence at the turn of the eighteenth century. Massane, Besse and Ducasse each obtained positions of influence within the local political sphere despite their lowly position in the traditional social hierarchy. Such public functions came with an augmentation in personal honour, which, as Mousnier explains, might be conferred only for specific duration of the commission or elected position.¹⁴⁴ But the conferral of authority and honour to individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds had the potential to disrupt local socio-political hierarchies, and bring officials into contention with members of the nobility. Indeed, as the next section will discuss, the disruption to social hierarchies posed by individuals such as Massane and Besse were likely amplified by their low social status.

The power of the local political context in augmenting the influence of low status individuals against members of the Second Estate is exemplified in incidences of violence between notaries and the nobility. Of the twenty-seven cases in this chapter's sample, three (11.1%) involve notary-nobility disputes.¹⁴⁵ In the broader sample of 174 cases in the archival catalogue, a total of twelve (6.9%) cases list a notary in dispute with a nobleman. As many of the case summaries in the catalogue do not include any personal specifications, we should take this number as a conservative indication of rates of disputes between notaries and nobility. Hardwick has argued that the notarial families of Nantes, at least in the early seventeenth-century, were less interested in upward social mobility than in retaining their "precarious hold on middling status."¹⁴⁶ However, they were keen to establish themselves in the hierarchy of their communities and gained influence through their roles in "municipal assemblies, militia duty, parish meetings, and poorhouse administration."¹⁴⁷ That is not to say that notaries did not pursue personal gain. A notarial office could provide a platform for extraordinary upward social mobility, as Carroll's example of Jacques Brandouin, demonstrates.¹⁴⁸ Brandouin's father was a notary in Languedoc in 1610; he pursued a strategy of land

¹⁴⁴ Mousnier, *La Vénalité des Offices Sous Henri IV et Louis XIII*, 7.

¹⁴⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 2441; 7758; 8011.

¹⁴⁶ Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*, 7.

¹⁴⁷ Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*, 201-202.

¹⁴⁸ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 274-5.

purchase and money lending and within approximately forty years his son had risen to become *trésorier de France* in the *généralité* of Toulouse.

But regardless of their long-term aspirations, notaries, and the influence they held within their communities, had the potential to bring them into contention with local noblemen. The recent study by Philip Hoffman, Gilles Postel-Vinay and Jean-Laurent Rosenthal on the shadow credit system of pre-Revolution France underscores the notary's prominence within their communities, and in linking individuals across communities. Notaries were educated and had knowledge of the law. As such, they provided functional support for many aspects of quotidian life; they brought lenders and borrowers together, and, as "government sanctioned keepers of legal records", kept detailed accounts of individuals' creditability.¹⁴⁹ As Hardwick argues, notaries provided "gateways to the legal system" and served "as mediators between literate and oral cultures."¹⁵⁰ It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that they feature prominently in dispute with members of the nobility. As social legitimacy "derived from the exercise of public functions", notaries were socially and politically powerful figures within the local community, despite their often low socio-economic status.¹⁵¹ Their authority was legitimised by their public function, which was key to the maintenance of important credit networks and the facilitation of everyday life in the community. As a result, incidents of violent dispute between nobles and notaries are important for what they reveal about noble anxieties at the turn of the eighteenth century, particularly in the rural communities of Languedoc. These cases reveal that the lower echelons of the Second Estate were not solely concerned with hierarchical threats from the newly ennobled. They similarly recognised the potential for locally significant individuals, such as notaries, to undermine their reputation and interfere in their social and economic interests within their communities.¹⁵²

These anxieties are exemplified in a protracted dispute between noble François de Beaumont, baron of Les Junies (Lot), and Guillaume Gibert, royal notary of Les Broutous in the jurisdiction of Les Junies.¹⁵³ Gibert filed a suit against de Beaumont with

¹⁴⁹ Hoffman, Postel-Vinay, and Rosenthal, *Dark Matter Credit*, 4;16.

¹⁵⁰ Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*, 5.

¹⁵¹ Farr, 'The Death of a Judge,' 19.

¹⁵² Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*, 21.

¹⁵³ AD. H-G, 2B 2441; 2B 2792; 2B 5025.

the *sénéchal* in Cahors on 27 February 1685. He described an enmity between the two which stemmed as far back as 1677.¹⁵⁴ Both de Beaumont's father, and de Beaumont himself owed money to Gibert. When de Beaumont inherited the estate, he also inherited his father's debt, but, as of 1685, the debt remained outstanding. Gibert stated that he was "assez malheureux" to have not received any recompense for these debts. In addition, Gibert had attracted de Beaumont's hatred because he had given a statement against the baron in a trial between de Beaumont and Gibert's cousin, Guillaume Labroue in 1684. The *sénéchal* consequently threw the case out of court in September 1684. To seek revenge, the baron had, on a number of occasions, disguised himself by wearing a peasant's coat, "contre son ordinaire", in order to assault Gibert with batons and sticks. Witnesses report de Beaumont asking inhabitants to reveal Gibert's location on multiple occasions so that he could assault the notary. Furthermore, Gibert complained that de Beaumont had ridden his horse on Gibert's land in the months preceding harvest, so as to do the most damage he could to Gibert's crops. On 27 February, Gibert was with another notary, Arpigne, in the square at Les Junies. They saw de Beaumont approaching, and Gibert greeted him, "salué et tiré le chapeau avec tout sorte d'honetete et de respect." The baron attacked Gibert, insulted him, "coquin", and shouted that he would kill him.¹⁵⁵ De Beaumont then bit Gibert's nose and punched him multiple times on his face and body, whilst blaspheming and swearing. He also beat Gibert multiple times on the head with a stone before onlookers could intervene. Gibert took refuge in a nearby house, but de Beaumont followed him, and waited outside the door with a pistol, shouting "a pleine voix" for Gibert to come out so that he could kill him.¹⁵⁶ De Beaumont counter-sued, claiming that Gibert and Arpigne had attacked him. As he had walked past them in the square, Gibert had not greeted him with the appropriate respect, which obliged him to ask what he meant by such an affront.¹⁵⁷ Both notaries attacked, and Gibert beat de Beaumont with a billhook that he had been hiding under his clothing. Gibert then pulled a knife from his pocket and stabbed de Beaumont twice, in the stomach and thigh, leaving the baron gravely injured.

¹⁵⁴ "Une si grande inimitie et adversion sans nul sujet ny pretexte".

¹⁵⁵ "Il faut que je te tué".

¹⁵⁶ "Coquin, ouvre il fau que je te tue."

¹⁵⁷ "Lui demander ce qu'il desirait et pourquoi il ne le saluer pas".

As with any criminal case, we cannot speak to the veracity of either of the accounts put forward in this trial bag. However, the statements make clear that tensions over authority within the community, and the defence of personal interests, played an important role in escalating this protracted dispute to serious physical violence. The confrontation itself was highly public. As Chapters One and Two discuss, the spatial settings of disputes can tell us much about the intentions of the disputants. Confronting an adversary in public spaces such as in the road, in churchyards or in market squares was often an intentional decision, staging the violence to maximise the damage and embarrassment done to an adversary.¹⁵⁸ This was important for disputes concerning matters of honour and reputation; as Hanlon argues, provocation could undermine an adversary's position.¹⁵⁹ To do so publicly only amplified the impact. Les Junies was a very small community, of only 589 inhabitants at the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁶⁰ Gibert and de Beaumont's confrontation took place in the square, at approximately 10 am on a Tuesday. That this was a busy and highly public space is confirmed by the forty-four witness statements included in the two trial bags attached to this case.¹⁶¹ Twenty-eight of the witnesses were called on to provide testimony by either Gibert or de Beaumont as part of their investigations. The remaining sixteen witnesses came forward as a result of a *monitoire* which was published in the parish as part of Gibert's suit against de Beaumont. The *monitoire*, published on 24 April 1685 in Cahors, was read out, as stated, on three consecutive Sundays, by the "curez ou vicaires des parroisses de nostre dioceze", including the churches at Les Junies and at Goujounac, approximately eight kilometres away.¹⁶² While having the purpose of reaching as many potential witnesses as possible in order to aid the investigation and find judicial proof, a *monitoire* also inadvertently advertised the dispute to the community, amplifying knowledge of the contention between the disputants, and likely generated injurious

¹⁵⁸ Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 197.

¹⁵⁹ Gregory Hanlon, 'Les Rituels de l'Agression en Aquitaine au XVIIe siècle,' *Annales* 40, no. 2 (1985): 245.

¹⁶⁰ Cassini EHESS, 'Les Junies (Lot)', accessed August 08, 2023, <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

¹⁶¹ AD. H-G, 2B 2441; 2B 2792. A third sac, 2B 5025, is also linked to the incident, but this link was discovered only after archival research had been completed. Information for this trial bag discussed here comes solely from the archival catalogue.

¹⁶² "Chef de Monitoire, 24 Avril 1685", Cahors.

speculation.¹⁶³ As Capp explains, the aim of public confrontations was not just “to demoralise their adversary, but to trigger damaging gossip throughout the neighbourhood”.¹⁶⁴ Words, even the words of ordinary people, had the power to influence a person’s standing within a community. This was recognised by all, even the nobility, who “were highly sensitive to anything said about them in public or to rumours about their conduct.”¹⁶⁵ Gibert’s advertisement to the parish that he was pursuing de Beaumont in law would likely have served to turn local public opinion against the baron.

That so many witness statements are included in this case also reveals the gravity of the interests at stake for the disputants. As Chapter One discussed, litigants were obliged to support the costs of the magistrates’ investigation.¹⁶⁶ This included the cost of sending out bailiffs to notify witnesses, and of bringing witnesses to the magistrates to provide their statements. The *cahiers* of witness statements attached to Gibert’s suit specifies that testimonies were given in Goujounac, approximately seven kilometres north of Les Junies. The witnesses were primarily residents of Les Junies, but some lived in neighbouring towns or villages. Antoine Pardes, *praticien*, for example, was a resident of Castelfranc, five kilometres south of Les Junies, and George Merlin and Jean Lettes, *vigniers*, were both residents of the village of La Masse, two kilometres south of Les Junies. These witnesses would have been required to travel upwards of ten kilometres each way in order to provide the magistrates in Goujounac with their testimony. Additionally, while the witness statements for de Beaumont’s investigation were taken in Les Junies, the *huissier* charged with giving notice to the witnesses was Barthelemy Juisson, a resident of Cahors, almost thirty kilometres from Les Junies. The *assignation* document, published on 7 March 1685, details his travels around the parish of Les Junies, notifying witnesses in their houses and in public spaces that they were required to provide an account of what they had witnessed. Unfortunately, the costs of litigation are rarely included in the *sacs*. However, we can glean some indication of the costs for each witness. In the final paragraph at the end of each testimony, witnesses

¹⁶³ On the *Monitoire* and its use throughout the *ancien régime*, see Éric Wenzel, ‘Forcer les témoignages: le délicat recours au monitoire sous l’Ancien Régime,’ in *Les Témoins Devant la Justice: Une Histoire des Statuts et des Comportements*, ed. Benoît Garnot (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2003), 83-90.

¹⁶⁴ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 200.

¹⁶⁵ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 83.

¹⁶⁶ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 228.

were asked if they required recompense, or *taxe*. The witnesses travelling from Les Junies as part of Gibert's suit were each granted between five and ten *sols*. The cumulative costs for each investigation would undoubtedly have been significant.

That both Gibert and de Beaumont were willing to invest substantial sums of money into their legal disputes with one another is important. Gibert evidently felt justified to challenge the baron through the courts. His position as notary afforded him significant authority within the local community, and this is evidenced by both his historic involvement in litigation against the baron, and in his own legal strategy. His financial investment in public testimony, including that provided as a result of a *monitoire*, indicates that he was confident in his reputation in the community for his case to benefit from the statements. De Beaumont's investment in enmity with a social inferior is particularly interesting. According to Gibert, the baron was preoccupied with maximising opportunities to gain the upper hand in the conflict. He had targeted Gibert's property and his body and had made it known to inhabitants of the community that he was looking for Gibert, thereby advertising their dispute. Evidently, Gibert's influence within the community, afforded to him by his occupation, challenged de Beaumont's own standing in Les Junies.

The impact of the monarchy's economic policies is important for understanding the tensions underpinning all of the cases discussed in this section. Forster has shown that, at the end of the seventeenth century, the creation of new offices engendered deeper anxieties for the nobility. Louis XIV had "temporarily threatened seigniorial control over the village community by creating the offices of mayor and lieutenant-mayor."¹⁶⁷ Noble families bought up the new offices rather than allow individuals of lesser standing to occupy positions of political influence.¹⁶⁸ There is evidence of this in this chapter's sample; noble Pierre Besson, sieur of la Rochette, paid 200 *livres* for the position of mayor in Grazac (Haute-Loire) in 1693.¹⁶⁹ His eager uptake of his mayoral duties before the funds had been transferred brought him into contention with local

¹⁶⁷ Forster, *The Nobility of Toulouse*, 21.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*; The creation of such offices also had institutional ramifications. As Faure identified for Toulouse, the venal office of mayor provided an opportunity for royal control over the municipal court; the mayor held the casting vote in the election of new *capitouls*. Consequently, there were various attempts, including a successful bid in 1699, made by the *capitouls* to abolish or purchase the office in order to restore their privileges. Claire Faure, *La justice criminelle des capitouls de Toulouse (1566 - 1789)* (Toulouse: Presses de l'Université Toulouse 1 Capitole, 2017), 28.

¹⁶⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 5090.

hosts when he attempted to inspect their conformity to weights and measures regulations. Carroll argues that, “in the sixteenth century a great deal of conflict was generated by anxiety over reputation and the requirement to prove one’s status and place in the social order.”¹⁷⁰ The cases from this chapter’s sample indicate that such conflicts had not disappeared by the end of the seventeenth century. Rather, they were amplified by state policies which undermined traditional hierarchies and engendered competition for authority at the local level. In the South of France, the negative ramifications of increased taxation, including the introduction of the *capitation*, was amplified by the local political context. The municipal administration afforded opportunities for social advancement outside of urban centres.¹⁷¹ This advancement enabled individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds to garner enough authority to influence the lives and interests of local nobility. Ultimately, these cases underscore the importance of foregrounding local power structures in analyses of social experiences in early modern France, particularly if we are to better understand the factors which shaped noble violence at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Social Authority in Everyday Life

The preceding sections of this chapter have examined the roles of economic relationships and competition for local political authority in the instigation of noble violence. They have shown that the petty nobility were first and foremost concerned with their reputation and standing in the local community. They have also highlighted the role of royal policy in amplifying noble anxieties concerning their position in the social hierarchy of their communities. The introduction of taxes targeting noble lands in the 1690s engendered dispute between local notables and the financially insecure petty nobility. Similarly, the monarchy’s creation of additional offices in the state and judicial apparatuses amplified competition for local political authority. Moreover, these sections have exemplified the tensions which existed between individuals from the Second and Third Estates and their mutual use of violence and the law in pursuing their disputes across social boundaries.

¹⁷⁰ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 186.

¹⁷¹ Fournier, *Démocratie et Vie Municipale en Languedoc*, 35.

This section examines the relationship between the nobility and their communities through their interactions in everyday life. This is a particularly important field of analysis for assessing noble-community relations because, as we have seen, the nobility underwent significant socio-ideological changes throughout the early modern period, particularly with regard to the growth of the robe nobility.¹⁷² Despite these changes, however, many continuities endured. The nobility occupied a socially superior position which was both juridically defined and defended. This was even the case for the lowest echelons of the Second Estate, the financially insecure rural *seigneurs* and the nobles who had newly bridged the gap into the Second Estate through the purchase of a minor *seigneurie* or ennobling office. Despite their economic position, which, as Chaussinand-Nogaret illustrated, could be significantly inferior to individuals from the Third Estate, the nobility held a position of esteem within their community and society more broadly.¹⁷³ As Hanlon argues, the penniless nobleman would always receive more esteem than a wealthy merchant or artisan.¹⁷⁴ This inherent superiority afforded the nobility a position of social authority in their communities. As such, they were often called on, alongside the clergy, to mediate local disputes and grievances.¹⁷⁵ We have seen evidence of this in the cases. In the 1698 dispute between Jacques Bach, *maître menuisier*, and maître Jean la Garrigue, *vicair*e of Concots (Lot), Bach sought the mediation of multiple local notables, including the priest of Concots, and the *seigneurs* of Concots and Cirq.¹⁷⁶

As Castan argues, deciding who should mediate disputes relied on traditional concepts of hierarchical authority and esteem; mediators were chosen from the upper echelons of local society because their higher position in the social hierarchy afforded them “the esteem and authority sufficient for the conciliation of disputes.”¹⁷⁷ Carroll similarly highlights the link between successful mediation and the authority of the

¹⁷² Élie Haddad, ‘Kinship and Transmission within the French Nobility, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: The Case of the Vassé,’ *French Historical Studies* 38, no. 4 (2015), 567.

¹⁷³ Chaussinand-Nogaret, *La Noblesse au XVIIIe siècle: de la féodalité aux lumières*, 77-8; Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution*, 118.

¹⁷⁴ Hanlon, *L’Univers des Gens de Bien*, 29.

¹⁷⁵ Roger Mettam, *Power and Faction in Louis XIV’s France* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 262.

¹⁷⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 5785.

¹⁷⁷ Nicole Castan, ‘The Arbitration of Disputes under the ‘Ancien Régime,’ trans. John Bossy, in. *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West* ed. John Bossy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 235.

mediator.¹⁷⁸ However, Castan identifies a marked decline in the role of the nobility in settling disputes in eighteenth-century Languedoc; no more than 12% of cases in urban environments, and no more than 27% of cases in the countryside.¹⁷⁹ We might associate this decline in the mediating role of the nobility with the Counter-Reformation's efforts to centralise the role of the parish clergy in the lives of their communities and the move of the nobility to urban townhouses. This pattern remained throughout the eighteenth century; in the decades leading up to the Revolution, "priests in rural Languedoc were still arbitrating a third of disputes."¹⁸⁰ Castan attributes the change in noble status to the broader social changes of the late seventeenth- and early-eighteenth centuries. The "foundations of social influence" shifted from the public authority afforded by one's superior position in the traditional social hierarchy, to that afforded by wealth.¹⁸¹ In this regard, Castan and Hanlon diverge in their assessment of the longevity of noble esteem in the early modern period. The scholarship on the nobility's role in mediating disputes provides an important point of departure for our consideration of the nobility's quotidian interactions with individuals from the Third Estate; the shift away from noble mediators is suggestive of a broader loss in the social authority of the nobility in rural Languedocian communities.

Castan identified the largest change in noble social authority in urban environments. By contrast, the criminal cases from the turn of the eighteenth century allow us to consider this shift in the rural communities which dominate the locales of violent disputes in our period. We cannot speak to the experience of the nobility as mediators; there are scant references to informal means of dispute resolution in the *sacs*. But we can assess the prestige and social authority of the local nobility through other means. The qualities which made the nobility suitable mediators also afforded them the paternal authority to police the behaviour of their social inferiors. As Beik argues, the noble's ideological position "set them apart from the rest of the population, they claimed to epitomise the standards and aspirations of the entire society."¹⁸² The nobility's position in society emulated the structure of domestic authority; as Diane Hall

¹⁷⁸ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 226.

¹⁷⁹ Castan, 'The Arbitration of Disputes,' 240.

¹⁸⁰ Stuart Carroll, 'The Peace in the Feud in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France,' *Past & Present* 178 (2003): 93.

¹⁸¹ Castan, 'The Arbitration of Disputes,' 240.

¹⁸² Beik, *A Social and Cultural History*, 95.

and Elizabeth Malcolm discuss, “those in charge of the household had the moral authority to employ violence in disciplining people occupying positions beneath them, who were expected to accept it.”¹⁸³

We can see evidence of the nobility’s paternalistic correction of behaviour and conduct in the cases from this chapter’s sample. In October 1687, maître Jean Vacquier, royal notary of Sénergues (Aveyron), filed a suit against the *seigneur* of Sénergues, noble Jean Guirard de Montarnal.¹⁸⁴ Vacquier claimed that de Guirard had beaten him with batons. This act of violence from Guirard is perhaps unsurprising; he was known for his aggression and had been outlawed by the *Grand Jours* in the 1660s.¹⁸⁵ During his interrogation, however, Guirard framed his actions as disciplinary. Vacquier led a debauched life; he lived with both his wife and a wet nurse who he had impregnated. Vacquier’s behaviour caused a “grand scandale pour tous les paroissiens.” Guirard also added that he treated all people with moderation, in particular his vassals, signifying that Vacquier’s behaviour had gone beyond the bounds of acceptability, and required correction. Similarly, in 1683, eighteen-year-old Arnaude Poumejean of Saint-Clar-de-Lomagne (Gers) filed a suit against noble Charles de Capdeville, *seigneur* of Ponsan and de Larié.¹⁸⁶ Poumejean had been grazing sheep on land belonging to Pierre Carrefour, bourgeois of Saint-Clar. De Capdeville saw her and approached with his baton raised. He shouted that he would teach her to pasture her sheep on that land, and indeed in all the land in the area, and he hit her multiple times on the arms and body. The blows knocked her to the ground and left her bruised and injured. There are no statements from de Capdeville in the *sac*, but we can infer from his behaviour that he did not believe Poumejean had the right to pasture the sheep in that particular field, and he used violent means to correct her behaviour.

That both of these incidents ended up before the *parlement* is significant and speaks to the adversaries’ asymmetrical expectations of the interactions. Evidently, the two plaintiffs in the cases did not believe that the use of violence by the noblemen was justified. Moreover, they must have felt somewhat certain that the magistrates would

¹⁸³ Dianne Hall and Elizabeth Malcolm, ‘Sexual and Family Violence in Europe,’ in *The Cambridge World History of Violence* eds. Robert Antony, Stuart Carroll and Caroline Dodds Pennock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 275.

¹⁸⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 8011.

¹⁸⁵ Stuart Carroll, ‘Vendetta in the Seventeenth-Century Midi,’ *Krypton* 5/6 (2016): 32.

¹⁸⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 2569.

agree with them; both plaintiffs were individuals from the Third Estate, and while we cannot know the precise details of their economic situation, we can infer from the cases that they were not necessarily wealthy individuals. Vacquier was a royal notary; while his profession afforded him significant authority within the local community, it did not necessarily confer wealth. It did mean that he had some legal expertise.¹⁸⁷ Poumejean was likely a member of the peasantry, the daughter of Françoise Dulaur, widow of Pierre, whose occupation is not specified in the investigation documents.¹⁸⁸ That they deemed it necessary to file a suit against their noble adversary, financially supported by themselves, is indicative of their conviction on the matter. As Chapter One discussed, individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds were not dissuaded from accessing the courts, despite the costs of litigation. The social stakes involved in the dispute often outweighed the potential financial losses. This highlights contemporary perceptions of the nobility's social authority within their communities, and suggests, like Castan found, that the authority of the Second Estate could be challenged by those of lower social status.

A shift away from deference is further supported by two incidents of non-nobles publicly disciplining the children of noblemen. On St Martin's Day, November 1681, in Vacquiers (Haute-Garonne), the two young sons of noble Pierre Rocquier, *écuyer*, sieur of Castelfort, *prévost en chef* and *chevalier du guet* in the *maréchaussée* of Carcassonne, were publicly beaten by Louis Rouziers, *travailleur*.¹⁸⁹ During his hearing, Rouzier explained that he had been at his uncle's house, near the square, when he saw the two boys mistreating another inhabitant named Cognac. He approached to intervene and saw that the two young noblemen were using their swords. He informed them that they were doing wrong by beating Cognac.¹⁹⁰ He claimed that the two boys turned on him, and he fled to "garantir sa vie", however eleven witnesses confirmed that Rouzier beat the two schoolboys on the head and shoulders with his baton. Similarly, in June 1711, noble Jean de Carriere, *écuyer*, *conseiller du roi*, and *lieutenant général* in the *sénéchaussée* of Toulouse, filed a suit against sieur Dominique Bonnet, a fish merchant

¹⁸⁷ Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*.

¹⁸⁸ Unfortunately, the parish registers for Saint-Clar prior to 1767, held by A.D Gers either no longer exist or are not digitally accessible. Consequently, I have not been able to find any further context for the Poumejean family.

¹⁸⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 2305.

¹⁹⁰ "ils este faisais pas bien de battu led Cognac."

from Bordeaux.¹⁹¹ De Carriere filed the suit on behalf of his twelve-year-old son, noble Jean Paul de Carriere, who had been publicly and violently beaten by Bonnet. According to the suit, Bonnet had encountered Jean Paul in the street and beat him with his cane, using “tout sa force.” Jean Paul fled, but Bonnet caught up with him, and hit him across the face, causing him to bleed. A crowd intervened, warning Bonnet that he was wrong to treat a young nobleman in such a way. Bonnet was prevented from beating the boy further, and instead shouted insults, calling him the “fils du diable”. Evidently, Bonnet had an outstanding issue with Jean Paul’s father. During the investigation, Bonnet explained that he had been walking in the street when a boy stole some items that he had been carrying from his hand.¹⁹² The boy fled, and Bonnet pursued. He caught the boy, and after retrieving his belongings, he slapped the boy on the head. He then returned home, where he was met by one of de Carriere’s servants who told him that the nobleman wished to speak with him. When he arrived at de Carriere’s house, he apologised for hitting Jean Paul, and claimed that he did not know the boy was de Carriere’s son. The nobleman was not content with the apology, and had Bonnet escorted to prison.

These two cases are important for what they reveal about contemporary perceptions of personal authority and the position of the nobility in local communities. Both Rouzier and Bonnet, although belonging to the Third Estate, used violence against the sons of local noblemen. Both did so in order to correct behaviour that they deemed inappropriate. This tells us that the conduct of both defendants was informed by their own sense of moral authority. This authority appears to have derived from an economic and/or political sense of notability. Although Rouzier was of a low socio-economic background, his father Jean, a sergeant, held a position of authority within Vacquier, a small town of only 532 inhabitants at the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁹³ As we have already seen, even minor offices afforded notables a sense of authority within their communities. Rouzier’s father’s position may well have bestowed Rouzier with a sense of authority by association, which ultimately led to his intervention in the incident between the young noblemen and Cognac. Bonnet, a fish merchant from Bordeaux, was evidently wealthy. He claimed to own “fort bel” possessions. Moreover, witnesses claim

¹⁹¹ AD. H-G, 2B 7316.

¹⁹² “Une fort bel huillet”.

¹⁹³ Cassini EHESS, ‘*Vacquiers*’ (*Haute-Garonne*), accessed August 17, 2023, <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

that he wore a wig, and his presence in Toulouse attests to his significant geographic mobility. Furthermore, he appears to have been a man with many important connections; he explained during his hearing that he was in Toulouse on business but was due to return home as he had received a letter from the *intendant* in Bordeaux requesting his presence at the presentation of a memorandum in the city. His treatment of de Carriere's son, paired with his inferences at his own notability and authority during his hearing suggest that Bonnet did not see the difference in social position between himself and de Carriere as a reason for him not to correct the conduct of de Carriere's son.

As Chapter One discussed, the transgression of boundaries of domestic and parental authority had the potential to result in violent enmities between parents. Capp argues that the striking of another's child, especially when done so publicly, was likely to engender dispute and litigation between the parents, particularly between mothers.¹⁹⁴ The family was a private domain; male heads of household were entitled, by the privilege of their station, to rule their household without outside interference, and with violence if they deemed it necessary.¹⁹⁵ Malcolm and Hall add that family violence "must be understood within the contemporary household structure, composed of a male head of the family" and his dependents.¹⁹⁶ To transgress this authority, by intervening in private domestic affairs, or by disciplining somebody else's child or dependent, was to disrupt what Philippa Maddern has termed the "moral hierarchy of violence".¹⁹⁷ But placed within the context of the shifting social authority of the nobility at the turn of the eighteenth century, these cases offer insights into the tensions which ultimately led to incidents of violent dispute. Non-noble's correction of the behaviour of individuals from the Second Estate subverted the traditional social hierarchy in their communities. That the noblemen filed suits on behalf of their sons indicates that they took the challenge to their authority seriously, and the court in these incidents functioned as a platform for the restoration of their social authority.

¹⁹⁴ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 187.

¹⁹⁵ Beik, *A Social and Cultural History*, 228.

¹⁹⁶ Hall and Malcolm, 'Sexual and Family Violence in Europe,' 275.

¹⁹⁷ Philippa Maddern, *Violence and Social Order: East Anglia 1422-1442* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

Conclusion

The *sacs à procès* tell us that the experiences of 'the nobility' during the reign of Louis XIV cannot be distilled into one narrative. While the upper echelons of the Second Estate may have benefited from the monarchy's collaboration, as demonstrated by scholars such as Beik and Collins, the political, economic, and social position of Languedoc's petty nobility was less assured.¹⁹⁸ Significantly, incidents of violence involving the nobility were not driven by competition with other nobles. The long-purported competition between the *robe* and *épée* nobility does not feature in this chapter's sample of criminal cases. Instead, the *sacs* evidence tensions over social hierarchies and local authority resulting in violent confrontations between the lowest echelons of the Second Estate and individuals from the Third Estate. This chapter explores these interactions through the lens of the nobility's economic, political, and social relationships with the Third Estate.

The first section analyses the economic interests which brought the nobility into conflict with individuals from the Third Estate. It argues that, despite societal interest in the maintenance of trust in financial relationships, perceptions of honour and social status contributed to the breakdown of financial agreements. This was especially true for agreements made across socio-economic boundaries, where members of the nobility entered into transactional economic relationships with individuals from the Third Estate. Analysis of two such cases evidences the asymmetrical expectations of the parties involved. In both cases, noble parties were willing to break financial agreements, and were willing to use violent means when the injured parties attempted to hold them to account.

The second section assesses the violent interactions which occurred as a result of the nobility's attempts to defend or increase their political authority within their communities. This is examined particularly through violent interactions between petty office holders and the petty nobility. The section argues that in order to understand the tensions motivating the nobility's use of violence, we must place the incidents within the context of local power structures. The prevalence of representative office in Languedocian communities, and the potential for individuals with low socio-economic

¹⁹⁸ Beik, *Absolutism and Society*; James B. Collins, *Classes, Estates and Order in Early-Modern Brittany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

backgrounds to gain significant local authority through those offices contributed to noble anxieties regarding their position within social and political hierarchies.

The final section discusses contemporary perceptions of the social authority of the petty nobility. The nobility's superiority was juridically defined, and even the petty nobility who experienced economic precarity were deemed to have been held in greater esteem than their often-wealthier neighbours from the Third Estate. The nobility's superiority afforded them significant social authority. Consequently, they were called on to mediate in disputes, and saw it as part of their duty to maintain social order within their communities, even through the use of physical punishment. However, the cases from the *parlement* suggest that the social authority of Languedoc's petty nobility was less assured than scholars have previously assumed. Nobles were brought before the courts by both peasants and notables for abuses of authority and the use of physical violence against them. But the *sacs* also demonstrate an even greater shift in contemporary perceptions of noble authority. This is evidenced through two incidents in which individuals from the Third Estate publicly and violently disciplined the children of noblemen. In these cases, both of the attackers claimed status for themselves and appeared not to have deemed the noble status of their victims as a reason to have acted any differently.

Read together, the cases in this chapter's sample provide important insights into individuals' self-perception in early modern communities, and the factors which motivated the use of violence and the law in defence of one's position in the social hierarchy. It is significant that individuals from the Third Estate felt legitimated to use violence and the law against their noble adversaries. Scholars have shown that non-nobles did bring litigation against their *seigneurs*, but that this was often part of the management of local tax burdens.¹⁹⁹ By contrast, the incidents presented in the *sacs* suggest that individuals of low socio-economic status engaged in violence and litigation against noble adversaries in the pursuit and defence of greater social and political authority within their communities. It is equally significant that the petty nobility felt required to pursue complex dispute strategies against individuals from the Third Estate. These cases reveal that the threats that such adversaries posed to the nobility's social, political, and economic authority within local communities were considered severe

¹⁹⁹ See, for example, Blaufarb, 'Conflict and Compromise,' 529-530.

enough for the nobility to invest significant time and money to defend their position. The move away from deference for social superiors evidenced in these cases brings the changing identity of the petty nobility at the turn of the eighteenth century into sharp relief. By examining these cases within the context of local power structures, it is evident that the petty nobility's involvement in incidents of violence were underpinned by anxieties concerning their place and authority within their local communities. Importantly, the incidents from the *parlement* of Toulouse make clear that these anxieties were exacerbated by the monarchy's policies in the closing decades of Louis XIV's reign.

Chapter Four. The Notability: Office-Holding and Local Authority in Languedoc

534 (34%) of the 1,569 cases brought before the *parlement* between 1680 and 1720 involved the notability. Notables, unlike nobles, were not juridically defined. They were generally propertied and educated, but professionally they were a diverse group. As such, they are difficult to categorise. For a contemporary conception of notability, we might turn to Charles Loyseau's seventeenth-century treatise on the social hierarchy of the Three Estates.¹ Loyseau drew on classical models and used sociolegal and professional categorisations to structure the melange of the Third Estate. At the top were the most educated, and the most honourable. These included the highest legal officials and descended from there through the *financiers* and the lower legal officials to the merchants, which he categorised as the lowest of the honourable professions. Everyone beneath that, the artisans, wealthy farmers, tenant farmers, day labourers, vagabonds and other "viles personnes", were considered without honour. We should be cautious, however, in our application of such rigid frameworks to early modern society. As Jonathan Patterson argues, the *menu peuple* occupying the dishonourable ranks beneath the merchants held a "far from insignificant place in the overarching social hierarchy."² If we use such rigid concepts of honour as a guideline for notability, then merchants, according to Loyseau, would signify the lowest levels of notability. Recent scholarship has shown that this was not the case; honour was a possession found and claimed across the social hierarchy.³ Moreover, social categories were not fixed, and both upward and downward mobility was possible at all levels.⁴ Crucially, individuals

¹ Charles Loyseau, 'Des Ordres de Tiers Estat,' in *Traité des Ordres et Simples Dignités* (1610).

² Jonathan Patterson, "'Viles Personnes": The Plebeian Multitudes in Charles Loyseau's *Traité des Ordres*,' *The Seventeenth Century* 31, no. 1 (2016): 71.

³ Gregory Hanlon, 'Les Rituels de l'Agression en Aquitaine au XVIIe Siècle,' *Annales* 40, no. 2 (1985): 244; James R. Farr, *Hands of Honor: Artisans and Their World in Dijon, 1550-1650* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 177.

⁴ On precedence, social mobility and decline in the highest ranks of the Second Estate, see Fanny Cosandey 'L'insoutenable légèreté du rang,' in *Dire et vivre l'ordre social en France sous l'Ancien Régime*, ed. Fanny Cosandey (Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2005): 169- 189. Other key works include: James B. Collins, 'Geographic and Social Mobility in Early Modern France,' *Journal of Social History* 24, no. 3 (1991): 563-577; Robert J. Kalas, 'Marriage, Clientage, Office Holding, and the Advancement of the Early Modern French Nobility: The Noailles Family of Limousin,' *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 27, no. 2 (1996): 365; James R. Farr, *The Work of France: Labor and Culture in Early Modern Times, 1350-1800* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 4-5; Fanny Cosandey, *Le Rang. Préséances et hiérarchies dans la France d'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Gallimard, 2016).

from low socio-economic backgrounds were able to gain positions of notability through various means. Artisans, for example, had the potential to gain royal patronage.⁵ Office-holding, as we will see, was one of the most common strategies for establishing notability.

Honour was a commodity that could be gained or lost, and as such early modern identities were constantly renegotiated in the face of opportunities and challenges from the state and from within communities.⁶ Upward social mobility granted individuals superior status, and superior honour, to that which they had been born with. This is exemplified by the emergence of the *noblesse de robe*, the judicial elites of the Third Estate who progressed into the ranks of the nobility through the acquisition of ennobling office.⁷ Sarah Maza's work on the 'Social Imaginary' emphasises the breadth of contemporary notions of social hierarchies and advises scholars to steer clear of rigid approaches to contemporary perceptions of society.⁸ Loyseau was not alone in his attempts to order society. However, while notions of order were often inspired by the divine, where Loyseau's contemporaries drew the boundaries between orders, and to which they attached notions of honour and superiority, varied greatly.⁹ These variations make clear that traditional hierarchies based on honour do not account for the realities of society, or of individual identities, in early modern communities.

Consequently, scholars vary in their attribution of notability. Piant draws heavily on Loyseau's model in his study of Vaucouleurs (Meuse), and categorises notables as the uppermost echelons of society: ecclesiastics, *seigneurs*, *officiers*, and merchants.¹⁰ Breen

⁵ Patterson, "'Viles Personnes"; 77, 80.

⁶ Gregory Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien: Culture et Comportements des Élités Urbaines en Agenais - Condomois au XVIIe Siècle* (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 1989), 69.

⁷ See, for example: George Huppert, 'A Matter of Quality: The Pasquier Family between Bourgeoisie and Noblesse,' *Réflexions Historiques* 27, no. 2 (2001): 183-199; William Beik, *A Social and Cultural History of Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Robert Descimon and Élie Haddad, ed., *Épreuves de noblesse: Les expériences nobiliaires de la haute robe Parisienne (XVIe-XVIIIe siècle)* (Paris: Société d'Édition Les Belles Lettres, 2010); Jonathan Dewald, *The Formation of a Provincial Nobility: the Magistrates of the Parlement of Rouen, 1499-1610* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Élie Haddad, 'Noblesse d'épée, noblesse de robe: espaces sociaux et frontières idéologiques,' *L'Atelier du Centre de Recherches Historiques*, 21, Bis (2020): 6.

⁸ Sarah Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie: An Essay on the Social Imaginary* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁹ Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie*, 15-21.

¹⁰ Hervé Piant, 'Des procès innombrables. Éléments méthodologiques pour une histoire de la justice civile d'Ancien Régime,' 22, no. 2 *Histoire & Mesure*, (2007): 31.

detaches the notability from traditional hierarchies of honour and distinguishes them from the First and Second Estates. He argues that notables were a “loosely defined group, characterised primarily by their intermediate and indeterminate sociocultural status.”¹¹ Accordingly, notables’ claims to notability, and to “participate in public life”, were not based on status attributed at birth, but on education and political skills “which provided them with access to political opportunities afforded by privileged corporations.”¹² Hanlon describes the notability as “not necessarily rich, nor necessarily citizens”, what they shared was access to positions of influence within their community.¹³ Claims to notability were also based on more than proximity to Paris or other centres of high politics. Michel Cassan has highlighted the importance of the ‘officier moyen’ in provincial state administration. Holding non-ennobling offices in finance and justice, these ‘middle-ranking’ *officiers* wielded significant authority and influence within “low-ranking towns” and “through their role in the collection of royal taxes and the distributon of royal justice [...] were a driving force in the construction of the state.”¹⁴ Similarly, David Garrioch argues that notability “was the quality that gave access to institutional and symbolic forms of power within the city, and that was at the same time created by exercising such forms of power.”¹⁵

While the boundaries of notability vary, scholars agree that notability was a quality which derived from positions of political influence and authority within communities. This is the definition that I adopt. Notability was not a fixed position in the traditional honour-based social hierarchy, although acquisition of notability did result in increased social standing. While one might be born notable, notability could also be attained, permanently, through the purchase of venal office, or temporarily, from elected office, co-optation, commission, or appointment.¹⁶ Temporary opportunities arose most commonly in the municipalities and allowed individuals, including those

¹¹ Michael P. Breen, *Law, City, and King: Legal Culture, Municipal Politics, and State Formation in Early Modern Dijon* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 10.

¹² Breen, *Law, City, and King*, 10.

¹³ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 31.

¹⁴ Michel Cassan, ‘Pour une enquête sur les officiers <<moyens>>,’ *Annales de Midi* 108, no. 213 (1996): 89-112, 94; Michel Cassan, ed., *Offices et officiers moyens en France à l'époque moderne: profession, culture* (Limoges: Presses universitaires de Limoges, 2004).

¹⁵ David Garrioch, ‘Protestants and Bourgeois Notability in Eighteenth-Century Paris,’ *French History and Civilization* 6 (2015): 2.

¹⁶ Breen, *Law, City, and King*, 10.

already in possession of venal office, to amass social and political power.¹⁷ As Schneider has shown for officials in the bailiwicks of Normandy, and Breen has shown for lawyers in Dijon, office holders who were unable to afford the offices opening up within the sovereign courts looked to municipal roles to advance their influence within their communities.¹⁸ Parishes and guilds were also important sites for the construction of notability.¹⁹ Positions such as churchwarden (*marguillier*) or guild *syndic* afforded low status individuals the opportunity to command positions of local authority, even if only for a set period of time.²⁰

In the Midi, the signification of notability was amplified by the quasi-democratic system of local governance. Each community in Languedoc annually elected *consuls* to maintain the land register, the *compoix*, and to oversee the collection of taxes in their jurisdiction, amongst other civic duties such as the maintenance of roads and bridges.²¹ These positions placed significant power in the hands of the *consuls*.²² Tax rises in the final decades of the seventeenth century undoubtedly increased the power of *consuls* within communities, and amplified competition for such positions.²³ Individuals were prohibited from being elected more than once in a five year period. However, kin groups enabled families to dominate the *consulat* and therefore to dominate local government within their community for extended periods.²⁴ Ordinarily, three *consuls* were elected in each locality for a one-year term, and the *consuls* comprised representatives from the Second and Third Estates. The position of *premier consul* was reserved for the nobility or social elite.²⁵ Importantly however, in smaller communities, like those that feature as

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁸ Zoë A. Schneider, *The King's Bench: Bailiwick Magistrates and Local Governance in Normandy, 1670-1740* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 70; Breen, *Law, City, and King*, 4.

¹⁹ Garrioch, 'Protestants and Bourgeois Notability,' 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

²¹ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 30-33; Gregory Hanlon, *Confession and Community in Seventeenth-Century France* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 41; Georges Fournier, *Démocratie et Vie Municipale en Languedoc du milieu du XVIIIe au début du XIXe siècle*, Tome 1 (Toulouse: Associations Les Amis des Archives de la Haute-Garonne, 1994), 16; Michael P. Breen, 'Law, Society, and the State in Early Modern France,' *The Journal of Modern History* 83, no. 2 (2011): 378; Stuart Carroll, *Enmity and Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 271.

²² Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 271; Hanlon, *Confession and Community*, 61; William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 141.

²³ Beik, *Absolutism and Society*, 144.

²⁴ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 31.

²⁵ Hanlon, *Confession and Community*, 39.

the locales of the majority of the disputes represented in the criminal dossiers that this thesis examines, the social elite might have been significantly lower in status than in large towns. This provided opportunities for individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds to take on central roles in the administration and politics of their towns or villages.²⁶ We can see this in practice in the *sacs*. Jean Barbasan, the plaintiff in a 1691 case in Bordes (Hautes-Pyrénées) identified himself as *régent*, and as *premier consul*.²⁷ Similarly, Vincent Baux from Fontiers-Cabardès (Aude) listed himself as *marchand* and *premier consul* in his 1680 complaint against Anthoine Masoux.²⁸ Both small in scale and population, Bordes and Fontiers-Cabardès provided the setting for Barbasan and Baux to dominate positions of authority within their communities, despite their modest positions in the traditional social hierarchy.²⁹

In Languedoc, the combination of venal offices and elected municipal positions provided increased opportunities for personal advancement, but also for contention. Communities in early modern France were not sealed entities, closed off from the goings on in the rest of the kingdom. The decisions made at the highest levels of government had serious consequences for quotidian life in the provinces, and for levels of interpersonal violence. As Carroll has identified, high rates of violence, and especially of blood feuds, in the seventeenth century were driven by religious upheaval in the sixteenth century and the growing demands placed on communities by royal fiscality.³⁰ The end of the seventeenth century also saw significant religious disruption, as the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 forced Huguenots to leave France, or convert to Catholicism.³¹ Indeed, Raymond Mentzer speculates that the dissolution of Languedoc's bi-partisan court, the *chambre de l'Édit*, in 1679 might have fuelled confessional violence amongst Languedocians as Protestants were no longer able to

²⁶ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 32.

²⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 5793.

²⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 23317.

²⁹ Cassini EHESS, 'Des Villages de Cassini aux communes d'aujourd'hui,' 'Bordes' (Hautes-Pyrénées): population of 645 in 1793; 'Fontiers-Cabardès (Aude): population of 839 in 1793, accessed June 17, 2023, <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

³⁰ Stuart Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 7.

³¹ Gregory W. Monahan, *Let God Arise: The War and Rebellion of the Camisards* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 18.

turn to the magistracy for intervention in their disputes.³² Unfortunately, the criminal dossiers do not shed light on how the revocation shaped social relations. What they do reveal, however, is how royal policy regarding office holding and taxation negatively impacted social cohesion at the local level. Honour defined life in French communities long before our period, and yet Languedoc exhibited a potential spike in interpersonal violence, overwhelmingly related to tensions over status, in the final decades of the seventeenth century. External stressors thus undermined the social cohesion of Languedocian communities. France was involved in two long and costly wars during our period, the Nine Years War (1688-1697) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1714). Consequently, levels of taxation rose exponentially across France. Taxation in Languedoc increased throughout the seventeenth century, but economic demands on the province worsened dramatically in the final decades of the century.³³ Moreover, as we will see, the monarchy's policies around the creation and suppression of offices fluctuated throughout the period in relation to the crown's fiscal requirements. This destabilised avenues for upward social mobility within communities. The *sacs* suggest that the monarchy's economic demands drove incidents of interpersonal violence involving the notability by placing new stressors on local social hierarchies.

The Sample

The notability are present in 534 (34%) of the 1,569 cases brought before the *parlement* between 1680 and 1720. I attribute 'notability' to all male individuals within the Third Estate from upper office-holders, unspecified *sieurs* and bourgeois, to merchants.³⁴ But I also include those who specified some form of public function in their descriptions of themselves to the magistrates. For many, additional public functions added to already notable identities. As Schneider argues, *cumuls*, or cumulative offices, were common, despite their prohibition, and enabled notables to dominate posts across all levels of local governance.³⁵ Maître Antoine Depie, the victim of a violent attack in 1702, was

³² Raymond A. Mentzer, *Blood and Belief: Family Survival and Confessional Identity Among the Provincial Huguenot Nobility* (Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1994), 156.

³³ Beik, *Absolutism and Society*, 142-144.

³⁴ Although many scholars include the clergy and the nobility in their definitions of 'notability', I have excluded them from this sample as they are treated separately in Chapters Two and Three.

³⁵ Schneider, *The King's Bench*, 5.

both notary, and *procureur* in the *sénéchaussée* of Isle Jourdain (Gers).³⁶ Sieur Joseph Blanc was listed in his 1699 suit against residents of Saint-Julien-de-Peyrolas (Gard) as *conseiller du roi*, and as *maire* of Saint-Julien.³⁷ Others were of lower socio-economic status, but are included as notables on the basis of a temporary office or commission, which provided them with political power within the community at the time of the incident which brought them before the *parlement*. Antoine Calvet, for example, was elected as second *consul* of Saint-Rome-de-Tarn (Aveyron) in 1702.³⁸ We can infer that Calvet had no further claims to status as he did not use any professional titles, nor was he referred to during his suit against maître Antoine Maurin, *praticien*, as anything other than ‘Calvet’. Similarly, neither Pierre Ruth nor François Castanet, *consuls* of Belpech (Aude), utilised any signifiers of status in their 1693 suit against Guillaume Delpoy following a violent confrontation at the “assemblée politique”.³⁹

This chapter draws on a sample of eighty-four cases. Of these, notables feature as plaintiffs to non-notables in twenty-five (29.8%) cases, as defendants to non-notables in eleven (13.1%) cases, and as both plaintiff and defendant in forty-eight (57.1%) cases. The prevalence of notables in dispute with each other is significant, and, I argue, a product of the local context of office-holding. Acquisition of office provided the holder with public authority. But, as Chapter Two argued, office also provided notables with an elevated position within the community from which to pursue personal interests. Public and private identities were “inextricably linked”, and as Carroll identifies, this amplified the impact of “trivial insults or casual slights over honour.”⁴⁰

Office-holders are present in sixty-one (72.6%) of the eighty-four cases in this chapter’s sample. Their prevalence in the criminal dossiers is unsurprising. Officials were singularly well placed, socially and professionally, to access the law as part of their dispute strategies. Throughout the seventeenth century, the education of judges and lawyers improved dramatically, “enhancing exposure to both theory and practice” of the law.⁴¹ Kin networks and familial accumulation of office improved access to legal

³⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 6548.

³⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 5454.

³⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 7117.

³⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 6073.

⁴⁰ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 106.

⁴¹ Schneider, *The King’s Bench*, 75-6.

practitioners and legal knowledge.⁴² Moreover, the quantity of offices in early modern France was extraordinary. As Schneider details, the number of judges alone was significant: in 1665, there was approximately one royal or seigneurial judge for every 450-600 people.⁴³ Officers were attached to the overlapping legal, municipal, ecclesiastic, and financial jurisdictions. Many of these were venal offices, including, amongst others, notaries, clerks, bailiffs, lawyers, and surgeons. These offices were purchased as an investment, but also for increased social standing.⁴⁴ Very few offices were ennobling, and certainly not those that were within financial reach of the majority of the notability. Regardless, office-holding was a recognisable and largely assured route for ambitious individuals to pursue upward social mobility.⁴⁵ Positions within the state apparatus increased throughout the early modern period as successive monarchs created and sold new offices to fund their military campaigns.⁴⁶ Louis XIV also resorted to this expedient. In Languedoc, 1690 alone saw the publication of three different *édits* announcing the creation of new offices, including that of the *garde des archives*, and the *departeur des rôles des impositions* for “chaque ville, lieu et communauté de la province de Languedoc.”⁴⁷ But it was not simply the royal state that expanded. By the eighteenth century, there were over 70,000 law courts in France, the vast majority of which covered a few villages under the control of a *seigneur*.⁴⁸ The system of local governance in Languedoc only added to this complex web of offices.⁴⁹

Office-holders were professionally and socio-economically diverse, but they played an important role in both their local communities and in the wider scheme of

⁴² Ibid., 72-3.

⁴³ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁴ Roland Mousnier, *La Vénalité des Offices sous Henri IV et Louis XIII* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), 79-80; Ralph E. Giesey, ‘State-Building in Early Modern France: The Role of Royal Officialdom,’ *The Journal of Modern History* 55, no. 2 (1983): 203; William Doyle, ‘The Price of Offices in Pre-Revolutionary France,’ *The Historical Journal* 27, no. 4 (1984): 833; Julie Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy: Gender and the Politics of Household Authority in Early Modern France* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 7.

⁴⁵ Mousnier, *La Vénalité des Offices*, 77; Robert J. Kalas, ‘The Selve Family of Limousin: Members of a New Elite in Early Modern France,’ *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18, no. 2 (1987): 154.

⁴⁶ Breen, ‘Law, Society and the State,’ 347; Philip T. Hoffman, Gilles Vinay-Postel, and Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, *Dark Matter Credit: The Development of Peer-to-Peer Lending and Banking in France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 75.

⁴⁷ Jean Albisson, *Lois municipales et économiques du Languedoc* Tome 7 (Montpellier, 1786), 39-48, 45.

⁴⁸ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 19.

⁴⁹ Fournier, *Démocratie et Vie Municipale en Languedoc*, 35; Jouanna Durand, and Pélaquier, *Des États dans l’État*, 17.

state building. Office, permanent or temporary, increased opportunities for personal advancement. However, as the number of officials present in the *sacs* attest, office-holding also engendered bitter enmities. Competition for office was fierce, and opportunities were reduced by individuals' monopolisation of offices across jurisdictions.⁵⁰ Scholars have demonstrated the proliferation of enmities between notables; political bodies such as the jurade often became places "of social, religious, and even personal confrontations."⁵¹ Rivalries over status and authority were also amplified by the social and political constraints of the small communities in which they occurred. The population of France was predominantly rural. During our period, less than twenty percent of France's inhabitants lived in communities with populations over two thousand.⁵² Despite this, the majority of scholarship on notables, and on office-holders, prioritises urban communities. Hardwick's work on the lives of early modern notaries focuses on Nantes (Loire-Atlantique), a city with approximately 80,000 inhabitants at the end of the eighteenth century.⁵³ Similarly, Breen's work, expounding the influential position of lawyers in mediating political relationships, concentrates primarily on seventeenth-century Dijon (Côte-d'Or), a city with over 20,000 inhabitants.⁵⁴ Hanlon's work on the Agenais region has gone some way to blur the urban/rural boundary, conceding the existence of elites in small towns and villages, and arguing that small towns should be included in our understanding of urban networks.⁵⁵ Schneider's work on Normandy's *bailliages*, the northern counterpart to the intermediary *sénéchaussées* found in Languedoc, contributes an important palliative and argues that the "bailiwick officers of village and town developed their own brand of governance" distinct from that of urban political elites.⁵⁶ Similarly, Carroll's recent work on rural Curvalle (Tarn) shows the significance of municipal office-holding for helping friends and pursuing enemies.⁵⁷ The factional violence that resulted from a seemingly

⁵⁰ Schneider, *The King's Bench*, 70-2.

⁵¹ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 38.

⁵² Philip Benedict, 'French Cities from the Sixteenth Century to the Revolution: An Overview' in Philip Benedict, ed. *Cities and Social Change in Early Modern France* (Routledge, 1992) 7.

⁵³ Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*; Cassini EHESS, 'Nantes' (Loire-Atlantique), <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

⁵⁴ Breen, *Law, City, and King*; Cassini EHESS, 'Dijon' (Côte-d'Or), <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

⁵⁵ Hanlon, *L'Univers des gens de bien*, 10, 18; *Confession and Community*, 73.

⁵⁶ Schneider, *The King's Bench*, 1.

⁵⁷ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 270-285.

minor dispute over the community's debts impacted social relations for decades.⁵⁸ However, such studies are rare. This chapter therefore focuses primarily on office-holders and aims to remedy this historiographical lacuna.

In the eighty-four cases in this chapter's sample, only twelve cases (14.3%) took place in large towns or cities with populations over 20,000. Conversely, forty-nine (58.3%) took place in communities with less than 4,000 inhabitants. 26.2% took place in communities with less than 1,000 inhabitants. Despite the rural nature of most communities, the dominance of notables in small communities, evidenced through their violent disputes, represents an important contribution to the scholarship. Languedoc's system of local governance provided positions of notability in even the smallest of communities: "the village commune was a hierarchical institution that was far from being dominated by a homogenous peasantry."⁵⁹ This is particularly important for scholars of interpersonal violence. Hanlon argues that enmities were perpetuated by the enclosed nature of communities in early modern France, reducing the options for avoidance in dispute.⁶⁰ As previous chapters have shown, the spatial contexts of the incidents represented in the cases certainly support this. Most violent confrontations took place in public spaces, foregrounding concerns of honour and reputation as adversaries attempted to assert their position in the local social hierarchy. In this chapter's sample, fifty-three (63.1%) of the eighty-four cases took place in public spaces, including the street, the market or town square, in taverns and cabarets. In 1681, for example, maître Guillaume Causse, *consul* and *lieutenant* in the ordinary court of Péret (Hérault) was exercising his duty as *consul* when he was attacked, "en plein rue", by Anne Cabassude, wife of Jacques Arnail, bourgeois.⁶¹ Similarly, in 1680, Bernard Marcassus, bailiff for the abbot of Escaladieu (Hautes-Pyrénées), was attacked "en plein jour" at the market of nearby Tournay.⁶² Both Péret and Tournay were, at the end of the eighteenth century, small communities with populations under 1,000 inhabitants.⁶³ The

⁵⁸ Curvalle had a population of 2,034 at the end of the eighteenth century. Cassini EHESS, 'Curvalle' (Tarn), <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

⁵⁹ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 286.

⁶⁰ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Biens*, 92-3.

⁶¹ AD. H-G, 2B 23204.

⁶² AD. H-G, 2B 23318.

⁶³ 'Péret' (Hérault): population of 645 in 1793; 'Tournay' (Hautes-Pyrénées): population of 840 in 1793. Cassini EHESS, <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>.

small scale of such communities undoubtedly increased interactions between adversaries.

However, the cases also demonstrate that confrontations were not necessarily a product of chance. Competition for limited positions of authority engendered bitter enmities within communities. As scholars have argued, and as Chapter One illustrated, disputants staged violent confrontations to amplify the damage done to an adversary.⁶⁴ Public requests for debt repayment, for example, could have significant ramifications for the reputation of the debtor; the advertisement of the debtor's failure to uphold the financial agreement to the wider community cast doubt on the debtor's credibility.⁶⁵ Public and private identities were closely intertwined in early modern communities, and positions of authority rested firmly on social credibility and trustworthiness.⁶⁶ This was as much the case for venal office holders as it was for elected municipal officials. As Farr explains, magistrates' "social persona was legitimated by the impartiality of their task, and their claim to high social status in turn rested upon this legitimacy."⁶⁷ The public attack on a notable, particularly an office-holder, could have had significant ramifications for the career and reputation of the office-holder, and, by association, their family and kin.⁶⁸

This chapter explores the impact of the quest for office-holding, and associated social advancement, on the social landscape of Languedocian communities at the turn of the eighteenth century. The prevalence of the notability in the criminal dossiers foregrounds struggles for social and political superiority within communities. But to understand the pressures and tensions which underpinned these struggles, it is necessary to place the incidents within their specific geographic setting. Only then can researchers begin to comprehend the complex identities involved in notables' disputes, and the stakes at risk during incidents of violent confrontation. The Languedocian case study allows us to step further beyond the large town and examine the complexity of

⁶⁴ Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁶⁵ Scott Taylor, 'Credit, Debt, and Honour in Castile, 1600-1650,' *Journal of Early Modern History* 7, no. 1-2 (2003): 13.

⁶⁶ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 106.

⁶⁷ James R. Farr, *A Tale of Two Murders: Passion and Power in Seventeenth-Century France* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2005), 204.

⁶⁸ James R. Farr, 'The Death of a Judge: Performance, Honor, and Legitimacy in Seventeenth-Century France,' *The Journal of Modern History* 75, no. 1 (2003): 9.

opportunities for social advancement within communities across the province, and their implications for rates of interpersonal violence.

Section One examines interpersonal violence between office-holders. It argues that, in order to understand the tensions underpinning office-holders' disputes, scholars must approach officials as individuals outside of their institutional associations, and outside of their function within the expansion of the state. While some disputes did indeed emerge from jurisdictional competition, the majority arose out of competition for personal influence and authority within the community. Moreover, while the function of office brought office-holders into contact within and across jurisdictions, this did not result in an increase in jurisdictional disputes. Rather, office provided opportunity for the pursuit of personal interest, and enmities arose both from this competition, and from office-holders' attempts to maintain their influence in the locality.

Section Two examines interpersonal violence between office-holders and non-office-holders. It argues that the seventeenth-century pursuit of social mobility via office-holding contributed to the high rates of violence in Languedocian communities. Farr's 'culture of dissociation' is evident in the cases from the *parlement*.⁶⁹ Individuals, notables and non-notables, commonly claimed status beyond that which was afforded to them by birth. Violence was legitimised as individuals attempted to assert their status within the community by checking others' undue claims to status. But these tensions were amplified as opportunities for social mobility, afforded by the acquisition of temporary or permanent office, disrupted local social hierarchies. Importantly, violence was not only perpetuated against office-holders. The criminal dossiers show that office-holders in turn used their positions of notability to distance themselves from their social inferiors. Office-holders' public use of violence played an important role in the assertion and defence of their newly established status. Undoubtedly, this phenomenon was not confined to Languedoc. But the local context of office-holding and the small scale of the communities in which the majority of the disputes took place amplified competition for positions of notability, and consequently, rates of interpersonal violence.

⁶⁹ Farr, 'The Death of a Judge,' 4.

Office-holders in Dispute

France's institutions, and the office-holders that staffed them, have long been studied for their role in the expansion of the *ancien régime* state, in debates on the realities of legislative sovereignty, and on the monarch's approach to local power.⁷⁰ However, office-holders are the subject of these studies only in-as-much as they functioned as cogs in the state apparatus, representing the authority, or perhaps resistance to the authority, of the monarch in the provinces.⁷¹ Top-down approaches to local politics and power fail to grasp the complexity of the early modern state, and the identities of the people that functioned within it. As David Parker argued in 1989, "the dearth of studies dealing with the dynamics of the legal system is in part a consequence of the assumption that the public law was essentially an expression of either royal or national interest."⁷² Such narrow conceptions of the state were not limited to scholarship on early modern France; across Europe, institutional histories expounding the "figures, structures, and practices" of *ancien régime* states have dominated the scholarship, without sufficient attention paid to the individuals who operated within them.⁷³

In recent decades, scholarship has begun to step beyond traditionally institutional approaches to local politics. As Georgio Chittolini outlines, developments in the study of public institutions and private interest have enriched the scholarship on political organisation.⁷⁴ For early modern France, important studies have nuanced not only our understanding of the relationship between monarch and provincial institutions, but also of the private interests which shaped the attitudes and practices of office-holders. Beik's study on Languedoc argues that Louis XIV protected the vested socio-economic interests of Languedoc's ruling elite in return for their cooperation in royal initiatives.⁷⁵ Ralph Giesey's work on 'patrimonial officeholding' reveals the

⁷⁰ Particular focus has been paid to the *parlements* and the relationship between monarchy and *robe* nobility. See for example: A. Lloyd Moote, *The Revolt of the Judges: The Parlement of Paris and the Fronde, 1643-1652* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); John Hurt, *Louis XIV and the Parlements: The Assertion of Royal Authority* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002). On scholars' problematic approach to the concept of legal sovereignty, see David Parker, 'Sovereignty, Absolutism and the Function of the Law in Seventeenth-Century France,' *Past & Present* 122 (1989).

⁷¹ Breen, 'Law, Society and the State,' 351.

⁷² Parker, 'Sovereignty, Absolutism and the Function of the Law,' 37.

⁷³ Georgio Chittolini, 'The "Private", the "Public", the State,' *The Journal of Modern History* 67 (1995): 41-42.

⁷⁴ Chittolini, 'The "Private", the "Public", the State,' 41-42.

⁷⁵ Beik, *Absolutism and Society*.

“historical individuality” of office-holders beneath the uppermost echelons; hereditary office was a familial investment in upward social mobility and as such officials’ and their families’ vested interests must be considered when analysing the role of, and quest for, office in early modern society.⁷⁶ Regional studies by Schneider, Hardwick and Breen focus on the lower echelons of office-holders, illuminating their private interests, and the ways in which those interests and identities shaped officials’ approaches to their positions within the broader state apparatus.⁷⁷ Importantly, these studies reveal that officials were primarily concerned with their localities, as opposed to their function in state initiatives. As Breen argues, most judges within the intermediary courts, the *sénéchaussées* and attached *présidiaux*, “were focused on local concerns, despite their status as royal officers.”⁷⁸

The *sacs* advance this conversation. Of the sixty-one cases involving office-holders in this chapter’s sample, twenty-two (36.1%) feature them in dispute with other office-holders.⁷⁹ By examining disputes between office-holders we can see that the locality, and the official’s place within local social hierarchies, was an important instigator of interpersonal violence. This is not necessarily a novel development; the formative study of Languedoc’s *États*, by Arlette Jouanna, Stéphane Durand and Élie Pélaquier tells us that the annual convocation of the Estates was often dominated by “partis”, eminent personalities from the First and Second Estates.⁸⁰ Particular concern was raised by the significant authority of the Bishops, who used their influence over the Third Estate to increase the power of their votes.⁸¹ But it is worth expounding this point within the context of Languedoc’s rural communities. Small towns and villages provided opportunities for social advancement for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, but the opportunities available were also limited by the geographic scale of the political community and by royal policies concerning the creation and suppression of venal offices in the final decades of Louis XIV’s reign. Competition for influence and authority was therefore particularly fierce in such localities, providing the

⁷⁶ Giesey, ‘State Building in Early Modern France,’ 193, 200-1.

⁷⁷ Schneider, *The King’s Bench*; Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*; Breen, *Law, City, and King*.

⁷⁸ Breen, ‘Law, Society and the State,’ 366.

⁷⁹ These twenty-two cases equate to 26.2% of the eighty-four cases included in this chapter’s sample.

⁸⁰ Jouanna, Durand, and Pélaquier, *Des États dans l’État*, 87-8.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 90-1.

researcher with important insights into local power struggles and negotiations at the turn of the eighteenth century.

An institutional approach to the *sacs* might illuminate the complex relationships between the jurisdictions and political institutions of Languedoc, and the tensions which emerged at their intersections. The disputes of office-holders attached to these jurisdictions would likely reveal much about institutional hierarchies, the collective identities of the various corps within them, and the impact of royal policies on the province. Such themes are now well covered in the scholarship and we know that jurisdictional tensions were common at the provincial and local levels.⁸² Competition between church and civil courts increased in the sixteenth century as legal reforms changed the parameters of the courts' competencies.⁸³ Across judicial institutions, lower courts worked to retain important cases for themselves, whereas the higher courts attempted to assert dominance over their lesser counterparts by claiming jurisdictional authority.⁸⁴ Beik tells us that rivalries between municipal agencies were pervasive in towns and cities in the seventeenth century.⁸⁵

We can see jurisdictional disputes at play in the cases from the *parlement*. A partial case from March 1685, for example, reveals struggles between the *viguerie* and *sénéchaussée* of Montpellier (Hérault) that originated in the 1670s.⁸⁶ Monsieur maître Jean Bezac, *conseiller du roi* and *substitut procureur général du roi* of the *viguerie* filed a suit against maître Valescure, *conseiller* of the *sénéchaussée*, on behalf of maître Roquefort, *concierge* of the *viguerie* prison. The ordinary court had been investigating allegations of theft and failure to pay a debt made against Suzanne d'Assau by Françoise Pioche. D'Assau owed Pioche five hundred *livres* and the court, as part of their investigation, had ordered confrontations between the accused and witnesses. D'Assau was held in prison with her young child. According to Bezac's suit and Roquefort's statement, d'Assau attempted to avoid punishment by asking Valescure and other

⁸² Lisa Silverman, *Tortured Subjects: Pain, Truth, and the Body in Early Modern France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

⁸³ Sarah Hanley, 'Engendering the State: Family Formation and State Building in Early Modern France,' *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 1 (1989): 15.

⁸⁴ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 65.

⁸⁵ Beik, *A Social and Cultural History*, 296.

⁸⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 2418.

officers from the *sénéchaussée* to break her out of prison.⁸⁷ D'Assau's request was successful and on 22 March, Valescure arrived at the prison wearing his "robe de palais". He was accompanied by a retinue of officers including Bonnet, archer, and Piloux, bailiff. The men broke d'Assau out of the prison "par force et violence", and in the process, Roquefort was wounded on his stomach, legs and face.

The *sénéchaussées* were superior to the *vigueries*; they supervised their activities and functioned as the appellate court for cases heard by the *viguier*.⁸⁸ However, the courts had distinct competencies; the *viguerie* had "first jurisdiction over all cases involving commoners residing within their district [...] provided the case involved personal possession and concerned contracts or payments."⁸⁹ The officers of the *sénéchaussée* of Montpellier therefore went beyond the bounds of their jurisdiction by intervening in the case between d'Assau and Pioche. Bezac used the prison break to highlight the *sénéchaussée's* quite literal overstepping of their jurisdiction, and he concluded his statement with the assessment that the *sénéchal* was providing protection for criminals who should be judged in the first instance by the ordinary court. The contention between the two courts is further emphasised by the inclusion in the *sac* of documents referring to jurisdictional transgressions going back to 1675.

But the case between Bezac, Roquefort and Valescure is rare for its seemingly straightforward links to jurisdictional tensions.⁹⁰ Of the twenty-two incidents which occurred between office-holders, there are only two others which concern comparable themes.⁹¹ We should not, therefore, presume that disputes between office-holders were solely inspired by institutional competition. Recent developments in the scholarship provide researchers with the tools necessary to approach such disputes with the understanding that office-holders were individuals with personal and familial interests to pursue and defend.⁹² Personal honour, shaped by public office, undoubtedly played

⁸⁷ It is not clear how this request was made, or if d'Assau actually requested to be broken out of prison; it may be that she appealed to the *sénéchal* as part of her legal dispute against Pioche.

⁸⁸ Roland Mousnier, *The Institutions of France Under the Absolute Monarchy, 1598-1789: Vol. II, The Organs of State and Society*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 274.

⁸⁹ Mousnier, *The Institutions of France: Vol. II*, 274.

⁹⁰ This simplicity may be a consequence of the extant sources in the trial bag; the *sac* only contains Roquefort's complaint, five brief witness testimonies and the document compiled by maître Jean Bezac, *substitut du procureur général* in the *viguerie* of Montpellier. There are no statements or accounts given by the officers of the *sénéchal* included in the *sac*.

⁹¹ AD. H-G, 2B 2539; 6658.

⁹² Schneider, *The King's Bench*, 71.

an important role in the use of violence in such disputes; office-holders' public and private identities were closely interlinked in the early modern period.⁹³ Jurisdictions were hierarchical, and affiliation with the upper courts afforded greater prestige than those with lesser competencies.⁹⁴ As Hanlon argues, the retention of major cases within the lower courts benefited the status of the presiding judges.⁹⁵ Consequently, jurisdictional transgressions were escalated to violence, not only because they represented a threat to the institution's function within the state apparatus, but also because they transgressed the boundaries of personal authority held by the officials within those jurisdictions.

Significantly, the remaining nineteen cases feature disputes between office-holders over matters seemingly unrelated to institutional concerns. In 1685, for example, Jean Agnet Lacassaigne, *praticien*, attacked maître Jean Bianne, *avocat*, in Masseube (Gers), because Bianne had been employed by Lacassaigne's adversary to plead a case against him.⁹⁶ Lacassaigne became enraged during the court session, and shouted that Bianne should be ashamed to speak against him. He then beat Bianne with a baton, and, two days later, fired his pistol at Bianne as they passed on the road to nearby Saissan. Similarly, in 1709, maître Vital Chabert, bailiff of La Canourgue (Lozère), was attacked by Jacques Nogaret, *avocat*, as a result of his involvement in a murder investigation.⁹⁷ The victim, Jean Preget, was a peasant from nearby Les Hermaux, and before he died, he accused Sauvart de Saint Laurens, Nogaret's kinsman, of the crime. On Sunday 29 September, Chabert exited the church of La Canourgue into the village square. There he was met by Nogaret who protested Saint Laurens' innocence, and threatened to beat Chabert one hundred times with his baton if he did not stop the investigation. Chabert refused. Nogaret, "tout furieux" pushed and attempted to beat the bailiff with his baton. Onlookers intervened and prevented any further violence between the two men.

Both cases highlight the potential for office and the duties attached to office to result in enmities within communities. But such use of physical violence was not the

⁹³ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 106.

⁹⁴ Mousnier, *The Institutions of France: Vol. II*, 253-4.

⁹⁵ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 65.

⁹⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 2032.

⁹⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 22266.

product of office-holders' concerns over institutional competencies. Office-holding was a strategic investment in upward social mobility.⁹⁸ Office afforded the owner a position of notability and political influence, but it also provided the owner with the status and means with which to pursue further mobility.⁹⁹ Violent interactions between office-holders were more commonly a consequence of the interrelationship between the public and private identities of the office-holders. As Farr argues, "social and political legitimacy were inextricably bound together."¹⁰⁰ The cases in this chapter's sample suggest that disputes between office-holders were not a product of jurisdictional concerns, although they were linked to the ownership and function of office. This increased contention between office-holders as each attempted to monopolise positions of authority within communities and assert or maintain their new position within the traditional social hierarchy.

In this chapter's sample of eighty-four cases, forty-nine (58.3%) incidents took place in communities with less than 4,000 inhabitants. Office, and the authority that office conferred to the holder, enabled officials to pursue their own interests within their communities. This is attested by the many families who used office to climb into the ranks of the Second Estate.¹⁰¹ However, in small towns and villages, these positions were limited by the geographic scale of the community and its institutions, amplifying competition between individuals for available office. This competition is particularly evident in the disputes which emerged as a result of elections and the appointment of officials. Annual *consular* elections in Languedocian communities provided public forums for the display of political authority. That they resulted in violence between officials highlights the importance with which such positions were regarded. Not only did control of the land register, the *compoix*, enable *consuls* to look after their own interests, but they were also able to protect the interests of kin and *clientèle* networks. As Fournier explains, personal information, including wealth and the value of land, could be edited by those in control of the tax rolls to reduce the tax owed.¹⁰² Carroll's

⁹⁸ Farr, 'The Death of a Judge,' 20; Chittolini, 'The "Private", the "Public", the State,' 67.

⁹⁹ Schneider, *The King's Bench*, 71.

¹⁰⁰ Farr, 'The Death of a Judge,' 19.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, William Beik, *A Social and Cultural History of Early Modern France*, 70; Kalas, 'The Selve Family of Limousin,'; Sarah Chapman, *Private Ambition and Political Alliances: The Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain Family and Louis XIV's Government, 1650-1715* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2004).

¹⁰² Fournier, *Démocratie et Vie Municipale en Languedoc*, 20.

study on Curvalle (Tarn) exemplifies the potential that control of the tax register had for engendering violent enmities between local notables who sought to protect and advance their personal and familial interests.¹⁰³

We can see evidence of violent disputes concerning the election of *consuls* in this chapter's sample. These cases tell us much about struggles for power within communities, and the strategies that individuals deployed in order to claim, or maintain, political influence. Such tensions were particularly vivid in small communities where opportunity for office holding was limited. In July 1682, in Saint-Ybars (Ariège), the *consular* election provided the stage for the continuation of bitter enmities, and the use of significant violence as the elected *consuls* attempted to increase their political authority.¹⁰⁴ Jean Paul Dufau was elected as *premier consul* in 1682. Jean Banquels de Fantillou was elected alongside Ferre and Latour as second and third *consuls*.¹⁰⁵ The three lower *consuls* collectively conspired to undermine Dufau's position in Saint-Ybars; they claimed that he had, in fact, been elected as third *consul*, and that de Fantillou had been elected as *premier consul*. In what Dufau termed an unjust and extraordinary move, the lower *consuls* appealed to the *juge-mage* of Pamiers for support in replacing Dufau with de Fantillou.¹⁰⁶ The judge, however, ruled in Dufau's favour, re-establishing Dufau as *premier consul* and de Fantillou as third *consul*. This decision caused a significant "chagrin" between Dufau and the remaining *consuls*. De Fantillou was particularly angered by the judge's decision, and he sought revenge against Dufau on several occasions.¹⁰⁷ On 5 July, the tension between the two men came to a head; de Fantillou attacked Dufau in the town square. He beat Dufau with his baton, knocked him to the ground and knocked Dufau's hat from his head. Sieur Franajal, notary, separated the two men. In his witness statement, Franajal estimated that de Fantillou had beaten Dufau ten to twelve times with his baton.

Concerns over status and superiority clearly shaped this interaction. The attack took place in the town square, and the eleven witnesses included in the *sac* testify to the assault's public nature. Public attacks foreground anxieties over reputation, and de

¹⁰³ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 270-274.

¹⁰⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 2314.

¹⁰⁵ No further information is included concerning Latour or Ferre.

¹⁰⁶ "Ses collègues auroint entrepris de lui contestes son rang par une voye autant injuste quelle est extraordinaire."

¹⁰⁷ "Il n'a pas perdu le moment pour maltraiter le suppliant."

Fantillou's focus on Dufau's head and hat emphasised such concerns. As scholars have identified, disputants in France, and Europe more broadly, commonly targeted their adversary's head during physical confrontations as both the area most likely to result in significant injury, and as the symbolic seat of the adversary's honour.¹⁰⁸ Witnesses also reported that de Fantillou threatened and mocked Dufau during the attack: "va tu est un bougre aussi bien que ton feu père, souviens toi que je t'ai batie d'autre fois, et que je te batrai encore." Evidently, a contentious relationship existed between the two men which informed the confrontation on 5 July. The documents in the *sac* tell us very little about the parties involved in the incident. However, we learn more about their socio-economic status from Saint-Ybars' parish registers. The entry for Dufau's death in 1699 lists him as "sieur Jean Pol Dufau, bourgeois."¹⁰⁹ The registers also reveal that de Fantillou had, by 1682, been recently ennobled. De Fantillou's first son, Pierre, was born in 1669.¹¹⁰ In the baptism entry, de Fantillou is listed only as Jean Banquels, without any title or association with the nearby *seigneurie* of Fantillou. However, by the baptism of his second son, Jean, in 1670, de Fantillou is listed as *seigneur* of Fantillou.¹¹¹ De Fantillou clearly invested in his and his family's upward social mobility; Jean Banquels, *fils*, eventually became a lawyer in the *parlement*.¹¹² Men, like these, on the margins of the social elite were especially keen to assert their status at any opportunity and sensitive to any sign of diminution.

But these concerns over status must be understood within the context of office-holding in small communities. The *premier consul* position was reserved for the nobility, or the social elite.¹¹³ That Dufau, as bourgeois, had been elected as *premier consul* instead of de Fantillou, a nobleman, is important for understanding the intent of de Fantillou's public attack on 5 July. As Chapter Three discussed, offices had the potential to subvert traditional hierarchies. Individuals with positions of local authority and

¹⁰⁸ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 74; Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 43; Benoît Garnot, 'La Violence dans la France moderne: Une Violence Apprivoisée?', in *Violence, Conciliation et Répression: Recherches sur l'Histoire du Crime, de l'Antiquité au XXIe siècle*, eds. Aude Musin, Xavier Rousseaux and Frédéric Vesentini (Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 2013), 292.

¹⁰⁹ AD. Ariège, 1NUM/139EDT/GG15, *Registres Paroissiaux Saint-Ybars*, (1681-1704), Image 199.

¹¹⁰ AD. Ariège, 1NUM/139EDT/GG9, "Saint-Ybars," (1669-1673), Image 4.

¹¹¹ AD. Ariège, 1NUM/139EDT/GG9, "Saint-Ybars," (1669-1673), Image 15.

¹¹² Société Ariégeoise des Sciences, Lettres et Arts, *Bulletin de la Société Ariégeoise des Sciences, Lettres et Arts* (Foix: Société Ariégeoise des Sciences, Lettres et Arts, 1889), 69.

¹¹³ Hanlon, *Confession and Community*, 39.

influence could use their notability to undermine the authority of their social superiors by indirectly participating in, or directly pursuing, initiatives counter to the noble's interests, as in the previously discussed case between noble Jean François du Fesc, *baron* of Sumène (Gard) and *conseiller* in the *cour des aides, finances et comptes* and Jean Massane, *contrôleur des exploits*.¹¹⁴ But the incident between Dufau and de Fantillou adds yet another feature to disputes between notables. Competition for office, particularly within small towns and villages was fierce. Saint-Ybars had a population of just 2,350 at the turn of the eighteenth century.¹¹⁵ Opportunities were limited by the geographical scale of the community, and this brought individuals from across the traditional social hierarchy into contention as they competed for office. Saint-Ybars' *consular* election in 1682 fixed the hierarchical authority of the office-holders counter to the traditional social hierarchy of the village. We do not know why de Fantillou was not elected in the top position, but this was evidently a serious matter for de Fantillou who used both legal and violent methods to attempt to assert his dominance over Dufau.

But the quest to attain notability within a community only partly explains the violence between office-holders at the turn of the eighteenth century. Maintaining political authority and influence was a difficult task. Notability, once achieved, was not a guaranteed commodity. Many offices within municipal administration were temporary; *consuls* were elected for one year, and they were theoretically prohibited from holding the position again within five years.¹¹⁶ This was not just a feature of the rural municipality; many urban administrative offices were also fixed-term. Mayors in Dijon, for example, were elected for a two-year term.¹¹⁷ Consequently, while positions of political influence could be gained from municipal office, they could be short-lived. Anxieties over the maintenance of notability were no doubt exacerbated by broader changes to the structure of venal offices during Louis XIV's reign. As Doyle details, the creation and sale of office had long been understood to be financially beneficial in the

¹¹⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 1464.

¹¹⁵ 'Saint-Ybars' (Ariège) 'Des Villages de Cassini aux communes d'aujourd'hui', *Cassini EHESS*. <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>

¹¹⁶ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 31.

¹¹⁷ Breen, *Law, City, and King*, 141.

short term, but increasingly problematic for the monarchy in the long term.¹¹⁸ Beginning in the 1660s, Colbert, with Louis' support, revoked a number of municipal and judicial venal offices; in 1664, for example, all offices of the *secrétaire du roi* were suppressed.¹¹⁹ However, during the Dutch War in the 1670s, the monarch's need to secure additional funds signalled the creation of a new wave of offices. Such was the need for money that even positions such as wig makers became venal offices.¹²⁰ The Nine Years War saw the creation of another wave of venal offices; as Doyle notes, "every place with a town hall was given a procurator and a clerk in 1690, a venal mayor and an assessor in 1692, a receiver and a comptroller of tolls in 1696 and a police lieutenant in 1699."¹²¹ While the creation of venal offices provided opportunity for those with financial means, for the less wealthy, it excluded them from access to such positions.¹²²

The fluctuation in access to office was undoubtedly felt by office-holders, and would-be office-holders. Changes in royal policy made clear that notability, even that acquired through venal office, was not necessarily permanent. Consequently, individuals used diverse strategies to maintain positions of authority. One tactic, as Schneider identified in Normandy, was to accumulate offices across jurisdictions.¹²³ Others built networks of mutual alliance, as Breen found for Dijon's mayors.¹²⁴ As we will see, both of these strategies are evident in the cases from the *parlement*. But the disputes between office holders also provide insight into the use of violence to maintain positions of, and access to, notability. Following the 1682 *consular* election in Aspet (Haute-Garonne), Fabien Dedieu, bailiff, was deputised by the royal judge, sieur Jean de Ribet, to inform the outgoing *premier consul*, Jean Toussan, of the election results.¹²⁵ The system of *consular* election in Aspet worked on the basis that each of the four outgoing *consuls* nominated two candidates to be considered by the judge as their replacement.¹²⁶ De Ribet had dismissed both of the individuals that Toussan had

¹¹⁸ William Doyle, *Venality: The Sale of Offices in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1996), 18-20.

¹¹⁹ Doyle, *Venality*, 21.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 23-4.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹²² Breen, *Law, City, and King*, 142.

¹²³ Schneider, *The King's Bench*, 5.

¹²⁴ Breen, *Law, City, and King*, 140-1.

¹²⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 1465.

¹²⁶ Société des Études du Comminges, *Revue de Comminges: Sciences, Historiques, et Naturelles*, 107.

nominated, and elected in their place Roger Bouery, merchant. Dedieu delivered the *arrêt* on the evening of 24 March. This included the warning that Toussan was not to trouble or hinder the new *consuls* in their office; the penalty for doing so was a fine of 1,000 *livres*. The inclusion of this warning, while potentially formulaic, is important. If specific to this particular election, it suggests that Toussan's violent reaction to having his nominations dismissed might have been foreseen by the judge. If formulaic, the warning suggests that violent reactions were commonly experienced, and the municipality had adopted the punishment as a deterrent for any potential disorder. Either way, the inclusion of the warning suggests that violence was a likely outcome for the rejection of Toussan's candidates. The following morning, at approximately 6am, Dedieu exited his house to find an enraged Toussan waiting in the road. Toussan insulted Dedieu, calling him a "fausser". He then seized Dedieu by his neck and collar and dragged him to the prisons of the town hall. Dedieu was imprisoned until 3pm, and on his release, he filed a suit against Toussan with the judge, de Ribet. We do not know the outcome of the investigation; the *sac* does not contain a sentence and Toussan was not brought in for questioning. But it seems likely that Toussan's intention was to prevent his removal from office. This appears to have been partially successful; Aspet's parish records show that in July 1682, four months after the incident, Toussan was still *premier consul*.¹²⁷ However, by 29 November, Bouery is mentioned in the parish registers as *premier consul* of Aspet.¹²⁸

We can infer that the root of the dispute between Toussan and Dedieu lay in Toussan's removal from office and the rejection of Toussan's candidates. But Dedieu was merely the messenger; why did Toussan use violence against the bailiff? The *sac* reveals little about Toussan, although additional information can be found in the parish registers. Toussan was a landholder in Aspet, with *metayers*, and at the time of his death and burial in January 1692, he was known as "sieur Jean Toussan, bourgeois."¹²⁹ Aspet was a small town, with only 3,492 inhabitants at the end of the eighteenth century.¹³⁰ It is therefore likely that Toussan enjoyed significant influence within his community. This is supported by the fact that he held the position of *consul* five times between 1670 and

¹²⁷ AD. H-G, 2E 2853, *BMS* "Aspet," 1 E 2, (1681-1699), Image 26.

¹²⁸ AD. H-G, 2E 2853, *BMS* "Aspet," Image 31.

¹²⁹ AD. H-G, 2E 2853, *BMS* "Aspet," Image 45, 157.

¹³⁰ 'Aspet' (Haute-Garonne), 'Des Villages de Cassini aux communes d'aujourd'hui', *Cassini EHES*.
<http://cassini.ehess.fr/>

1682, and he was *premier consul* in 1681 until his removal in 1682.¹³¹ And yet, when this removal occurred, Toussan used violent means to attempt to delay or prevent his removal from office. This tells us that Toussan's position of notability within the community was firmly linked to his office. Moreover, Toussan's actions suggest that the loss of this position was serious enough to legitimise his violence against Dedieu.

We know that individuals were prohibited from holding the position of *consul* more than once every five years. However, Toussan held the position five times in twelve years. Hanlon argues that mutual aid alliances were a common strategy for navigating daily interactions within France's highly competitive communities.¹³² For office-holders, "kin groups allowed continuity in the expression of interests of each group of faction."¹³³ The foundation of these networks was the family and relatives.¹³⁴ There are indeed examples of kin groups dominating local politics, as we saw in the Chapter Two; in Najac (Aveyron) in 1704, two brothers held between them the positions of *maire*, *prêtre*, *curé* and *lieutenant particulier* of the *viguerie*.¹³⁵ But the criminal dossiers, particularly those relating to disputes involving *consuls* show that we can think more broadly about alliance networks, particularly within the political landscape of small communities. Aspet's parish registers reveal *consuls'* use of godparentage and intermarriage to solidify alliances. Toussan featured prominently in these networks. While Toussan was second *consul*, in 1675, he became godfather to the son of David Ribet, *premier consul*.¹³⁶ On 16 June 1681, Toussan and Antoine Dumas, both *consuls*, became godfathers to the daughter of Jean Costet, another of Aspet's *consuls*.¹³⁷ Similarly, in July 1682, Toussan appears in the register alongside Jean Boué and Geraud Marrast as godfathers to the son of Arnaud Revat. Toussan and Revat are listed as *consuls* of Aspet, and Boué and Marrast as *consuls* of nearby Milhas and Girosp respectively.¹³⁸

¹³¹ Société des Études du Comminges, *Revue de Comminges: Sciences, Historiques, et Naturelles* (Bordeaux: Ch. Higounet, 1947), 108.

¹³² Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 73.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹³⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 7839.

¹³⁶ AD. H-G, 2E 2852, *BMS 'Aspet' 1 E 1*, (1671-1680), Image 73; Société des Études du Comminges, *Revue de Comminges*, 108.

¹³⁷ AD. H-G, 2E 2853, *BMS "Aspet,"* Image 11.

¹³⁸ AD. H-G, 2E 2853, *BMS "Aspet,"* Image 26.

Kettering's work on patronage and *clientèle* networks tells us that such networks are "most visible and easily documented, and thus most frequently analysed, in a political context."¹³⁹ While scholars frequently foreground noble patronage networks, due in part to the abundance of extant sources, it is possible to identify such networks at play amongst non-nobles.¹⁴⁰ Although direct sources related to non-noble patronage are rare, indirect evidence, including "book dedications, godparentage, witnesses to marriage contracts, inherited family loyalties, vassalage ties, appointments to office, and legacies in wills", provides researchers with important insights into the power networks that linked non-noble individuals in the early modern period.¹⁴¹ John Bossy has shown that the 'spiritual kinship' formed through god-parentage played a crucial role in the development of mutual assistance networks in France, and beyond, in the mediaeval and early modern periods.¹⁴² These networks are evident in Aspet's parish records, and not just in relation to Toussan. Subsequent *consuls* also used inter-marriage and god-parentage to fix their position in local power networks. In January 1684, for example, Jean Ferran, *consul* of Fontagneres, and Bernat Encausse, *consul* of Milhas, became godfathers to the son of sieur Jean Burgalat, *maître apothicaire* and *premier consul* of Aspet.¹⁴³ Similarly, in July 1684, Burgalat became godfather to the son of Paul Peyroulat, second *consul* of Aspet.¹⁴⁴ Ferran and Encausse also signed the baptism record.

The position of *consul* afforded Toussan political influence within his community. But it also situated him within a wider network of power relations, within Aspet and across neighbouring communities. We can infer that Toussan used this network to ensure his frequent return to the *consulary*. The system of nominating replacements allowed *consuls* to elect kin or allies to their position, who could return the favour the following year and protect the interests of their allies while in positions of influence. Though we do not know who Toussan nominated as his replacement, we do know that de Ribet rejected these candidates, and elected Bouery in Toussan's place. Toussan's

¹³⁹ Sharon Kettering, 'Patronage in Early Modern France,' *French Historical Studies* 17, no. 4 (1992): 839.

¹⁴⁰ See in particular, Beik, *Absolutism and Society*; Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Kettering, 'Patronage in Early Modern France,' 841-2.

¹⁴¹ Kettering, "Patronage in Early Modern France," 842.

¹⁴² John Bossy, 'Blood and Baptism: Kinship, Community and Christianity in Western Europe from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries,' *Studies in Church History* 10 (1973): 134.

¹⁴³ AD. H-G, 2E 2853, *BMS* "Aspet," Image 44.

¹⁴⁴ AD. H-G, 2E 2853, *BMS* "Aspet," Image 48.

violence against Dedieu should be understood with this broader context of clientage and access to notability in mind. The rejection of his candidates likely signified the end of his involvement in local networks of influence. Indeed, after his removal from office in 1682, Toussan is only mentioned in the parish registers on one further occasion, and that is in the burial record of Marie Estoup, widow of Bernat Duos, who had been a *métayère* on his land before her death in 1684.¹⁴⁵ After that, Toussan disappeared from the records until his death in 1692. There are of course many reasons why Toussan may have been less active within his community; he may, for example, have moved away from the area for some time. We can only speculate. But that his sudden distance from parochial relations, signified by his presence, or lack thereof, in the parish registers, coincided with the end of Toussan's tenure as *consul* is significant. The incident between Dedieu and Toussan is of course just one case, and at this point we cannot know how exceptional the experience of the office-holders in Aspet was for municipal officials across Languedoc. This would no doubt be a fruitful area for future research into local politics in early modern communities. But regardless of its exceptionalism, this case encourages researchers to think about how notables, particularly those within small communities, used such *clientèle* networks to reinforce and even prolong their political influence within the local community, and how violence might have been legitimated by those networks.

Crucially, similar struggles, and subsequent use of violence, can be identified in incidents which occurred between venal office-holders. As aforementioned, access to venal office in the final decades of the seventeenth century was far from assured. The suppression of offices, and transformation of previously non-venal positions into offices for sale from the 1660s onwards limited access to such positions to those with the requisite wealth.¹⁴⁶ Although the system of venal offices "would reach its widest extent" in the final decades of Louis XIV's reign, competition for office drove up the prices of office, further excluding those without the necessary means from such positions.¹⁴⁷ As Doyle identified, there were a number of offices left vacant in the opening decades of the eighteenth century simply because individuals could not afford the exorbitant costs required to purchase the positions; in Carcassonne in 1708, the *présidial* reported

¹⁴⁵ AD. H-G, 2E 2853, *BMS* "Aspet," Image 45.

¹⁴⁶ Breen, *Law, City, and King*, 142.

¹⁴⁷ Doyle, *Venality*, 10.

vacancies for seventeen of their twenty-six offices.¹⁴⁸ In order to gain access to positions of notability, and to build on positions already attained, office-holders frequently accumulated lesser offices across municipal, financial and judicial jurisdictions.¹⁴⁹ As the introduction illustrated, there is ample evidence of such strategies in the criminal dossiers. These cases are important for what they tell us about the tactics that office-holders adopted to cement their notability. But they are also important for what they reveal about office-holders' self-perception at the turn of the eighteenth century, and the impact that the competition for office had on local social relations and social hierarchies.

In April 1701, a violent confrontation occurred between maître Armand de Violet, *lieutenant-général criminel*, and maître Philippe Jacques Benech, *greffier en chef*, both of the *sénéchaussée* in Pamiers (Ariège).¹⁵⁰ De Violet had been investigating the murder of Géraud Mercourrant, at the request of Mercourrant's family and heirs. Violet asked Benech to provide him with some documents from the *greffe*, the repository for all documents pertaining to cases seen by the *sénéchaussée*, including the original investigation records, *lettres de grâce* and final sentences against the accused. Benech refused to comply, and instructed Broussac, his clerk, to inform de Violet that, as the investigation had concluded at the *sénéchaussée*, the original documents should remain in the registry.¹⁵¹ This refusal and disrespect angered de Violet who, accompanied by two archers, confronted Benech in the street. De Violet instructed Benech and the others to follow him to the *greffe*, located at Benech's house, where he told Benech to unlock the door, and to retrieve the documents he required. Benech replied "avec mepris" that the registry was closed and that he would not give de Violet the documents. De Violet explained in his statement to the *parlement* that this disobedience, committed by a clerk, warranted punishment, and he ordered the two archers to seize

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 36.

¹⁴⁹ Schneider, *The King's Bench*, 5.

¹⁵⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 6645. Additional cases (2B 6816 & 6747) are mentioned in the documentation, however these have not been accessed as these references were found after my final trip to the archives in Toulouse. Information about these linked cases comes from the archival catalogue only.

¹⁵¹ "quil crioit quattandu que cette affaire avoir pris fin devant le seneschal au moyen de la sentence diffinitive rendue il estoit necessaire que led original de procedure crimnelle restat au greffe."

Benech and take him to prison.¹⁵² Benech escaped into a small kitchen next to the registry, and returned holding a spit with which he threatened to stab his adversaries. Witnesses confirmed that Benech brandished the spit at de Violet, who fell to the ground, losing his hat and wig in the process.

As with the previous two cases, the incident between de Violet and Benech foregrounds concerns over status and hierarchy. Beik explains that the corps of royal officers attached to the *sénéchaussées* had political power within their districts akin to that wielded by the judges and presidents of the *parlements*.¹⁵³ As *lieutenant-général criminel*, de Violet was a presiding judge in the *sénéchaussée* of Pamiers. He was therefore professionally, and likely also socio-economically, superior to Benech.¹⁵⁴ And yet, Benech's actions and position clearly posed a threat to de Violet's status and reputation. Evidence of this can be found in de Violet's construction of the incident for the magistrates. De Violet emphasised Benech's disrespect repeatedly throughout his statement, using phrases such as "dessein et mepris", and "manque du respect" to describe Benech's behaviour. De Violet also detailed that he was wearing his judicial robes when he confronted Benech, signifying his status and his authority of office. The insult that Benech committed by refusing to comply with de Violet's wishes was amplified by the fact that he kept his hat on his head while speaking to de Violet.¹⁵⁵ As Walker details, "vestiary affronts were greatly significant. Clothing, including headgear, was an idiom that communicated identities, status and values."¹⁵⁶ By failing to remove his hat, Benech publicly disrespected de Violet's authority, and professional superiority.

Crucially, the criminal dossier suggests that the transgression of personal and professional authority was felt by Benech as well as by de Violet. This tells us much about the impact of office on local social hierarchies. During his hearing, and despite his inferior position, Benech highlighted de Violet's professional wrongdoing. He explained that, in refusing to let the documents leave the *greffe*, he, as *greffier en chef*, complied

¹⁵² "comme ce refus et desobeissance comise par un greffier a son chef de justice méritait sans doute reprehension le sieur suppliant commanda auxdits Comenge et Sainges archers de ce saisir dudit Benech pour le conduire en prison".

¹⁵³ Beik, *A Social and Cultural History*, 294.

¹⁵⁴ Philip Dawson, 'The Bourgeoisie de Robe in 1789,' *French Historical Studies* 4, no. 1 (1965): 9.

¹⁵⁵ "Benech tenant son chapeau sur sa teste repondit avec dessein et mepris que le greffe estoit fermé et quil ne vouloit point bailler lesd informations".

¹⁵⁶ Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, 43.

with the orders of the king, and of the court.¹⁵⁷ The resulting implication was that de Violet had overstepped the authority of his post, and had attempted to undermine Benech's authority, as well as the king's. We also know that Benech filed a suit against de Violet for the same altercation and initiated an investigation into de Violet's procedural failings.¹⁵⁸ Authority, and the boundaries of the two officials' roles clearly played an important role in the dispute between Benech and de Violet. Disputes between office-holders attached to the same court were not rare. As Dawson explains, "every local group of legal professionals had exclusive territorial rights in the performance of its function."¹⁵⁹ Many of these disputes arose from the rights to perform profitable duties, including, for example, the right to draw up inventories.¹⁶⁰ Consequently, transgressions of the boundaries of office could result in disputes between office-holders. But while such struggles often involved litigation between office-holders, they did not necessarily escalate to violent altercations.¹⁶¹ In order to understand the escalation of Benech's and de Violet's professional confrontation, the incident needs to be read within the context of office-holding at the turn of the eighteenth century.

As *greffier en chef*, Benech played a crucial role in the functioning of the *sénéchaussée*. Not only did the *greffier* control access to the records of the court, but, as Guillaume Ratel and Adrien Pitor highlight in their institutional studies, the *greffier* formulated the documents required for all procedures, and assisted in the hearings and sessions of the court.¹⁶² In the *élection* of Paris, the *greffier* was so important to the functioning of the court that the *greffier en chef* and his clerk were housed on site, close to the registry.¹⁶³ The position of *greffier* therefore afforded Benech notability and professional authority. However, it did not confer significant wealth, and many *greffiers*

¹⁵⁷ "quil falloit que ladite procedure restat au greffe suivant les ordonnances et declarations du roy et arrest de la cour".

¹⁵⁸ AD. H-G, 2B 6816.

¹⁵⁹ Dawson, 'The Bourgeoisie de Robe in 1789,' 10.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 10.

¹⁶² Guillaume Ratel, 'Between Facts and Faith: The Judicial Practices of the Conseillers in the Parlement de Toulouse, 1550-1700,' (PhD Dissertation, Cornell University, 2017), 152, 160; Adrien Pitor, 'L'Univers matériel et spatial d'une Juridiction Palatiale: le Tribunal de l'Élection de Paris à la Fin de l'Ancien Régime,' *Histoire de la Justice* 33, no. 1 (2022): 328.

¹⁶³ Pitor, 'L'Univers matériel et spatial d'une Juridiction Palatiale,' 328.

came from low socio-economic backgrounds. As Breen has shown, based on the 1643 *taille* rolls, Dijon's *greffiers*, alongside *sergeants* and *huissiers*, occupied the lower rungs of the legal hierarchy, "drew modest incomes" and had "limited possibilities for social advancement."¹⁶⁴ Despite these obstacles, we know that Benech actively pursued the extension of his personal and political influence outside of the *sénéchaussée*. In 1701, the same year as his confrontation with de Violet, Benech became *commissaire de police* of Pamiers.¹⁶⁵ It appears, therefore, that despite his lower socio-economic status, Benech was able to accumulate offices within his community. This was undoubtedly a consequence of the small scale of his community; Pamiers had a population of less than 5,000 individuals at the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁶⁶ We have seen that small communities afforded those of lower social status the opportunity for social mobility. Benech undoubtedly benefited from such opportunities, and at the time of his dispute with de Violet, he was actively pursuing further influence through the office of *commissaire*. But this dispute, and others like it, suggest that whilst also conferring political authority, offices conferred a social authority to their holders beyond that which was afforded by their place in the traditional social hierarchy. Benech not only felt confident to challenge de Violet professionally by refusing access to the *greffe* and by filing a suit against the *lieutenant-général* for professional misconduct. He also felt legitimised to publicly disrespect de Violet, and to defend his position with violence.

Benech and de Violet were both venal office holders in a small community at the turn of the eighteenth century. Their confrontation, when read in relation to the other disputes discussed in this chapter, urges scholars to think beyond institutional competition in order to understand incidents of violence between office-holders. It is crucial that office-holders' disputes be placed within the context of competition for status in early modern Languedoc. Office was a favoured route for climbing the social ladder, and individuals sought both venal and non-venal offices to maximise their influence within their communities and beyond. In small communities, as we have seen, non-venal municipal offices afforded individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds the opportunity for social advancement. However, under Louis XIV, royal

¹⁶⁴ Breen, *Law, City, and King*, 37.

¹⁶⁵ Archives Nationales, V/1/144 (24): "Lettres de provision d'offices," 1700-1701.

¹⁶⁶ 'Pamiers' (Ariège): population of 4,954 in 1793. 'Des Villages de Cassini aux communes d'aujourd'hui', *Cassini EHESS*. <http://cassini.ehess.fr/>

policies limited the accessibility of offices. While new offices were created in the 1670s and 1690s, many were suppressed, and those that were created were too costly for the majority of would-be office holders. Consequently, the instability of venal office, and the competition for social and political authority in the face of these changes, had a direct impact on levels of violence between office-holders. Crucially, the cases discussed in this section also illustrate the broader impact of office-holding on social relations at the turn of the eighteenth century. Public and private identities were closely interrelated in the early modern period. Office had the potential to subvert traditional hierarchies, and consequently brought individuals into contention as each attempted to assert their political authority and defend their position in the local social hierarchy. But as the next section discusses, this quest for upward mobility had broader implications for social relations in Languedocian communities.

Office-holders and the Community

Scholars have shown that royal policy had the potential to directly affect the professional lives of individuals within the provinces. Breen's work on Dijon's lawyers, for example, exemplifies the struggles for professional advancement that lawyers faced as the monarchy shifted its focus from judicial to municipal administration during the wars of Louis XIV's reign.¹⁶⁷ Hardwick's work on notaries in Nantes tells us much about the professional networks that petty legal officials developed in order to cement their tenuous position in the city's judicial and municipal structures.¹⁶⁸ Schneider's work on cumulative office in Normandy's intermediary jurisdictions exemplifies the use of kin networks to dominate positions within royal and *seigneurial* legal institutions as venal offices in the judiciary increased in price.¹⁶⁹ But the impact of royal policy on office-holders' lives was social as much as it was professional. Despite this, scholars rarely discuss the ramifications of royal policy for office-holders' relationships with non-office-holders. The *parlement's* criminal dossiers show that the blending of public and private identities in office heightened the challenges that office-holders faced in their quotidian interactions. As Chapter Three discussed, this was, in large part, a consequence of office-holders' mobility within social hierarchies. Office-holders were required to negotiate a

¹⁶⁷ Breen, *Law, City, and King*, 8.

¹⁶⁸ Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*. See in particular 'Chapter 8: Public Life in the City,' 195-218.

¹⁶⁹ Schneider, *The King's Bench*, 71.

complex set of conflicting priorities, balancing “the need to defend the status of his social group against his best interest as a member of an institution or profession”, with the advancement of personal and familial interests.¹⁷⁰ Crucially, this was not only a concern for the office-holding elites; the *sacs* show that these priorities were negotiated by Languedoc’s office-holders across jurisdictional and social hierarchies.

Section One exemplified the potential for royal policies concerning venal offices to undermine socio-professional relationships between office-holders by increasing the competition for office, and the associated opportunities for social advancement. However, thirty-nine (63.9%) of the sixty-one cases involving office-holders in this chapter’s sample feature officers in dispute with non-office holders. This is significant and suggests that office-holders’ quest for socio-professional and socio-economic advancement had broader implications for social relations in Languedocian communities at the turn of the eighteenth century. This section examines the disputes that occurred between office-holders and individuals from their communities. It argues that perceptions of authority, complicated by the social mobility that office afforded its holder, shaped these interactions. Chapter Three demonstrated the potential for office to subvert local hierarchies, engendering bitter enmities between local nobles and notables. The disruption to traditional social order legitimised the nobility’s use of violence against notables as they attempted to claim social and political authority within their communities. This chapter’s sample exhibits similar tensions, but significantly, these can be identified across the social hierarchy. Nobles, bourgeois, and peasants used violent means in their disputes with office-holders. The sample shows that the escalation of these disputes may have been rooted in the polarity of the office-holder’s public authority and their personal position in the traditional social hierarchy. But in as much as violence was waged against office-holders because of their low social origins, the same social mobility also legitimised office-holders’ use of violence against individuals from their communities. Farr has argued that French society became increasingly stratified throughout the seventeenth century.¹⁷¹ This resulted in a ‘culture of dissociation’ which shaped interactions across the social hierarchy. This section argues that the precarity of office-holding at the turn of the eighteenth-century

¹⁷⁰ Roger Mettam, ‘Power, Status and Precedence: Rivalries Among the Provincial Élités of Louis XIV’s France,’ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 38 (1988): 44.

¹⁷¹ Farr, ‘The Death of a Judge,’ 4.

amplified this cultural phenomenon. Office-holders, keen to defend their often tenuous socio-political status within their local communities, utilised violence to dissociate themselves from their social inferiors and, paradoxically, ossify the social hierarchy and their new found place in it.

Twenty-one (25%) cases in this chapter's sample feature an office-holder as plaintiff to a non-office-holding defendant. Considering their important function within communities, this statistic is noteworthy. Judicial and administrative officials provided key services in the mediation and shaping of legal procedures, and provided laymen and women with legal advice and knowledge of the complex jurisdictional apparatus.¹⁷² *Procureurs*, for example, "initiated and channelled all litigation", but they also functioned as bankers well into the eighteenth century.¹⁷³ Notaries "drew up private contracts and legal documents", and served as "mediators between literate and oral cultures."¹⁷⁴ As Chapter One, and indeed the rest of this thesis, demonstrates, Languedocian's were highly litigious during the early modern period. Legal officials were integral to the development of Languedocians' disputes and their strategies. Municipal officials also provided key services for their local communities. As Breen details, the *échevins* attached to Dijon's *mairie* were charged with diverse duties, including the defence of "the city's interests when dealing with the king, provincial governors, Parlement, and others", as well as issuing "ordinances concerning public works, urban commerce, [...] public health and safety, and any other issue that might affect "le bien public".¹⁷⁵ The *consulat* offered low-cost and rapid legal intervention.¹⁷⁶ Office-holders across jurisdictions and institutions therefore provided valuable services for their communities. Why, then, did office-holders feature so prominently as plaintiffs to non-office-holding adversaries in Languedoc's criminal dossiers?

The numbers may, in part, be explained by office-holders' access to judicial institutions. As discussed in this chapter's introduction, officials of all stripes were singularly well placed to utilise the law as part of their dispute strategies. They were

¹⁷² Dawson, 'The Bourgeoisie de Robe,' 5-7; Joanne Bailey, 'Voices in Court: Lawyers' or Litigants?,' *Historical Research* 74, no. 186 (2001): 394-6.

¹⁷³ Doyle, 'The Price of Offices,' 850.

¹⁷⁴ Hoffman, Postel-Vinay and Rosenthal, *Dark Matter Credit*, 16; Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy*, 4-5.

¹⁷⁵ Breen, *Law, City, and King*, 56.

¹⁷⁶ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 33.

educated and were often situated within extensive institutional and kin networks which could be drawn on for legal advice and access.¹⁷⁷ Scholars have also illuminated the role of office-holders in the policing of their communities, and the violence they experienced whilst performing the duties of their office. Sergeants and bailiffs, for example, were frequently subjected to violent attacks while carrying out property seizures following court decisions.¹⁷⁸ Indeed, there are multiple examples of violence committed against office-holders during the function of their office in the cases from the *parlement*. In 1680, for example, Bernard Marcassus, bailiff for the abbot of l'Escaladieu (Hautes-Pyrénées), was beaten with batons in the marketplace of Tournay.¹⁷⁹ His attackers, noble Dominique Palat, *seigneur* of nearby Peyraube, and his brother Jacques Palat, left Marcassus “comme mort” in revenge for his seizure of their property on behalf of the abbot. Similarly, in 1695, following litigation between maître Timotie, baker, and maître Gabrielles, merchant, Jean Petit Assié was commissioned to collect a fine of grains and fruits from Gabrielles.¹⁸⁰ When Assié arrived at the property in Lagardelle-sur-Lèze (Haute-Garonne), he was shot at with a pistol. However, cases such as these are in the minority; they are the only three incidents in this chapter's sample. The sample instead suggests that perceptions of authority lay at the heart of many of the violent attacks on office-holders. These perceptions were shaped by concerns over local social hierarchies, and the potential that office had for increasing office-holders' social and political influence beyond that which they were afforded at birth. Crucially, these tensions can be identified in incidents between office-holders and non-office-holders from across the traditional social hierarchy.

On the evening of 5 March 1685, Antoine Fabré, third *consul* of Montréal (Aude) was called to a lodging house where Pierre Plazolles, *voiturier*, was said to be causing disorder.¹⁸¹ When he arrived, he found Plazolles loudly blaspheming and swearing. He was also holding “un grand raffort” [radish] shaped “comme un membre d'homme” which he waved around in front of a group of young women. Fabré informed Plazolles “fort doucement” that his actions were not wise and asked him to leave the lodging

¹⁷⁷ Schneider, *The King's Bench*, 72-6.

¹⁷⁸ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 79;

¹⁷⁹ AD. H-G, 2B 23318.

¹⁸⁰ AD. H-G, 2B 6100.

¹⁸¹ AD. H-G, 2B 2562.

house. This angered Plazolles who seized Fabr  by the hair. He slapped Fabr  and pulled out chunks of his hair, which witnesses report seeing on the floor of the lodging house the next day. Plazolles' violent reaction to Fabr 's request hints at an antecedent relationship between the two men. Montr al had a population of only 3,000 individuals at the end of the eighteenth century; it is likely that their paths had crossed prior to the incident on 5 March.¹⁸² Indeed, Fabr  explained in his complaint that he believed Plazolles' response to have been motivated by Plazolles' relationship with another Montr al resident, the sieur Etienne Coste. Coste had filed a suit with the *conseiller du roi* in Montr al, appealing the result of that year's consular election. Coste's reasons for appealing the result are not specified. As we saw with the cases between Dufau and de Fantillou, and Dedieu and Toussan, consular elections were often the cause of violent interactions between individuals competing for status and political influence in their communities.¹⁸³ Regardless of the reason for the appeal, it is likely that Plazolles' reaction was, at least in part, inspired by his loyalty to Coste.

But this case also foregrounds contentions arising from perceptions of personal and public authority. Both adversaries appear to have occupied a similar position in the local social hierarchy. Plazolles is listed in the criminal dossier as a *voiturier*, that is, someone who transported merchandise via horse and cart.¹⁸⁴ Although the investigation materials tell us little about Fabr 's socio-economic status, we can infer, based on his lack of title and the fact that he had been elected as third *consul*, the lowest rung of the consular hierarchy, that he was from an equally humble background. This supposition is supported by Montr al's parish records. There are references to multiple Fabr s in the parish, all of whom are of a similar low standing; Fran ois Fabr  and Etienne Fabr , for example, are listed as a *brassier* and a *m tayer* respectively in the entries for 1683.¹⁸⁵ Antoine Fabr  appears only once in the records for the 1680s, as a witness to the 1684 baptism of Marie Ann Fabr , the daughter of George Fabr , *tailleur d'habits*.¹⁸⁶ We cannot be certain that the Fabr s listed above were all related, but given the size of the population in Montr al, it is likely that they were.

¹⁸² 'Montr al' (Aude), 'Des Villages de Cassini aux communes d'aujourd'hui', *Cassini EHESS*.

¹⁸³ AD. H-G, 2B 2314; 2B 1465.

¹⁸⁴ Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales: Lexicographie, s.v. "voiturier," accessed March 10, 2023, www.cnrtl.fr/definition/voiturier.

¹⁸⁵ AD. Aude, 100NUM/AC254/1E5, "Montr al," (1675-1691), Image 151, 153.

¹⁸⁶ AD. Aude, 100NUM/AC254/1E5, "Montr al," (1675-1691), Image 161.

Both Fabré and Plazolles therefore occupied low positions in the local social hierarchy. Despite this, Fabré's office afforded him additional standing and situated him, at least for the term of his office, as Plazolles' social superior. Chapter One argued that an individual's intervention in a neighbour's affairs could be perceived as a transgression of personal boundaries of authority. This was exemplified in the 1699 incident between demoiselle Louise de Soubies and the Laporte sisters.¹⁸⁷ De Soubies, the daughter of a notary, intervened in a physical altercation between the Laporte sisters and their stepmother, Jaquette de Gelet. After reprimanding the sisters for their behaviour, de Soubies was herself attacked. The Laporte sisters ripped at her hair and clothing and attempted to strangle her. De Soubies' assumption of authority over the sisters likely motivated the sisters' violent response; by attacking de Soubies' hair and clothing, they publicly humiliated their adversary, and countered her claims to authority over them. The question of social authority is also central to the dispute between Fabré and Plazolles, and this incident tells us much about the effect that office had on office-holders' relationships with individuals from their communities. Fabré's office increased his standing and authority in the local community. Much like de Soubies' intervention in the Laporte sisters' altercation with their stepmother, Fabré's public policing of Plazolles' behaviour in the crowded lodging house served to assert his authority over Plazolles. This authority was derived from Fabré's office as *consul*, not from his position in the local social hierarchy, which was akin to that of the *voiturier*.¹⁸⁸ Plazolles' use of violence, in particular his targeting of Fabré's head and hair, disputed Fabré's authority over him, and reasserted his position in relation to Fabré in the local social hierarchy.¹⁸⁹ As Nassiet explains, slapping one's adversary delivered a "stinging humiliation" and reminded them, and any onlookers, of their adversary's inferiority.¹⁹⁰ This case exemplifies the potential for office-holding to disrupt social relationships within communities. Office might be a burden in which positions of public authority over their social equals brought power but also opprobrium. It might generate tensions between office-holders and non-office-holders.

¹⁸⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 6441.

¹⁸⁸ Farr, 'The Death of a Judge,' 19.

¹⁸⁹ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 74.

¹⁹⁰ Nassiet, *La Violence*, 105.

The incident between Fabré and Plazolles was not exceptional. Concerns over the authority of office-holders, and their assertion of personal authority through their intervention in private matters or personal conduct can be identified as the root of multiple incidents of violence against office-holders. Crucially, these tensions can be identified in violent attacks against office-holders across the social hierarchy. On 3 July 1692, sieur Jean Viala, *premier consul*, of Thoiras (Gard) intervened in a dispute between Pierre Velais, from Barre-des-Cévennes (Lozère) and the sieur Teisseire, from Anduze (Gard).¹⁹¹ Velais and Teisseire had been arguing publicly about money; Viala intervened and asked the two men if there was a lawsuit between them. He further advised them that if they did have ongoing proceedings, they should come to an agreement in order to avoid further costs.¹⁹² Viala's unsolicited counsel enraged Velais, who seized the *consul* by the cravat and ripped at his shirt. He insulted him, calling him "coquin", "mangeur", and "malhonnête homme". He then slapped Viala across the face, knocked him to the ground, and beat him with a baton.

The altercation between Viala and Velais exhibits many of the same traits as the confrontation between Fabré and Plazolles. Viala, as *premier consul*, attempted to intervene in the conduct and affairs of a non-office-holder and was publicly, beaten. Velais' violence aimed at creating as much embarrassment for the *consul* as possible; he slapped him across the face and knocked him to the ground.¹⁹³ The symbolic power of such attacks aimed at restoring a broken balance of power between individuals.¹⁹⁴ By knocking Viala to the ground, Velais attempted to reassert his authority in the conduct of his own affairs. But there are some important differences which exemplify the diverse ways in which office, and the authority that office conferred upon its holder, was perceived by non-office-holders in early modern Languedoc. Velais occupied a much lower position in the social hierarchy than Viala; notarial records reveal that Velais was a *muletier*, and his son a *chapelier*.¹⁹⁵ Viala, by contrast, was part of Thoiras' social elite. He was *premier consul* in 1692, and parish records reveal that he was actively involved

¹⁹¹ AD. H-G, 2B 5356.

¹⁹² "le plaignant aurait dit que s'ils avoient de proces entre eux il falloit dacorder et esvitter fraix".

¹⁹³ Nassiet, *La Violence*, 105.

¹⁹⁴ Garnot, 'La Violence dans la France moderne,' 292; 'Le Peuple et la Violence dans les Villes Bourguignonnes au XVIIIe Siècle,' in *Le Peuple des Villes dans l'Europe du Nord-Ouest (fin du Moyen-Âge-1945)*, ed. Philippe Guignet (Lille: Publications de l'Institut de Recherches Historiques du Septentrion, 2018), 403-410.

¹⁹⁵ AD. Gard, 2-E-58/468, *Minutier des notaires*, "Saint-Jean-du-Gard: Marc Antoine Lefebvre," (1706).

in parish life. In 1689 alone, Viala was present as a witness at nine different baptisms, marriages, and burials.¹⁹⁶ Importantly, neither Teisseire nor Velais were residents of Thoiras. By intervening in their dispute, Viala adopted a position of authority over the two adversaries. Velais' response and use of violence indicates that he did not recognise Viala's authority to intervene in his dispute with Teisseire, nor to mediate between them. Although Viala was socially superior, his authority to police others' conduct was derived from his position as *premier consul* of Thoiras, and he was, therefore, intervening in matters of which he had no concern.

Both Viala's and Fabré's public authority stemmed from their election to civic office. Given the opportunities and duties that these positions provided, it is perhaps unsurprising that *consuls* featured frequently as the victims of violent attacks. But, importantly, anxieties rooted in contentions over authority also engendered violence against venal office-holders. On 28 January 1696, maître Guillaume Fabré, *juge* and *lieutenant criminel* of Narbonne (Aude) submitted a complaint detailing the first of several incidents between himself and noble Jean André de Lamerie de Cazalèdes, a major in the regiment of Rouergue.¹⁹⁷ The *consuls* of Narbonne had alerted Fabré to their investigation into a theft. Their investigation identified a suspect, Claire Vila, the wife of Dominique Crouty. Vila and Crouty were lodgers in an apartment belonging to Cazalèdes, and on inspection of their residence, the *consuls* identified some of the stolen belongings. Vila was transported to the prisons, and Fabré was called on to proceed with the investigation. On the morning of 28 January, Fabré, wearing his court robes, attended Vila's house to examine the evidence, before continuing on to the town hall to conduct Vila's interrogation.

Approximately fifty paces from Vila's house, Fabré was met by Cazalèdes, wearing his sword at his side, and carrying his cane in his hand. Cazalèdes was enraged and, without greeting Fabré, he confronted the judge, "fort pres" to his face. He accused Fabré of failing to appropriately greet him as his social superior.¹⁹⁸ Greeting conventions were fiercely observed in early modern communities; failing to conform to

¹⁹⁶ AD. Gard, E dépôt 103, 6. *Actes paroissiaux d'état civil*, "Thoiras," (1682-1792), Images 13, 15, 16, 17, 18.

¹⁹⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 5658. There are at least three trial bags linked to this initial complaint: 5350; 5708; 10479.

¹⁹⁸ "je vous trouve fort plaisant de ne pas me saluer, d'ou vient que vous ne me levez point le chapeau, attandes vous que je vous le leve le premier".

the expected customs could signal enmity between individuals or be taken as a provocation.¹⁹⁹ Fabré detailed in his complaint that he had no previous dealings with Cazalèdes. As such, he was taken aback by Cazalèdes' confrontation, and simply replied "moi?". At this, Cazalèdes seized Fabré's hat, "avec violence", and threw it in the mud. He then attempted to hit Fabré with his cane, but Fabré managed to escape thanks to the intervention of onlookers. Fabré fled into the nearby house.²⁰⁰ As Cazalèdes was heard shouting in the street for his lackeys to come and help him break down the front door, Fabré climbed out of a top-floor window, and onto the roof and terrace of a neighbouring house.²⁰¹ From there, he descended to the street "avec beaucoup de risque". He proceeded to the prisons to continue with Vila's interrogation. When he reached the prisons, he was informed that Cazalèdes and his lackeys were following close behind him, armed with swords and batons. Fabré was required to wait in the prisons until Narbonne's commandant convinced Cazalèdes to leave. Fabré was then able to return home.

The altercation between Fabré and de Cazalèdes is particularly interesting for the colourful detail and for Cazalèdes' persistent attempts to redress Fabré's disrespect towards him. Indeed, the incident did not end at the prison. A few hours after leaving the prison on 28 January, Cazalèdes was spotted outside Fabré's home. He was accompanied by two soldiers and a lackey, all of whom, according to witnesses, were armed with pistols and other weapons. Cazalèdes entered Fabré's home and confronted Fabré's wife. He threatened that he would teach Fabré the difference between them, and remind Fabré that, on all occasions, Fabré should take his hat off to him first.²⁰² Cazalèdes left after being confronted by Fabré's brother-in-law. As he left, however, the nobleman repeated his threats, and warned those present that he would take his time to find Fabré.²⁰³ A second trial bag from 10 March 1696 details yet another confrontation between the two men.²⁰⁴ On this occasion, Cazalèdes intimidated Fabré during mass at

¹⁹⁹ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 56.

²⁰⁰ "nous poursuivit et nous menacoit de quelque grande violence".

²⁰¹ "va t'en ches moi dire a mes valets quil viennent pour enfoncer cett porte, je veux faire bailer cent coups diverses a ce coquin".

²⁰² "il lui auroit repondeu quil voulait nous apprendre la difference quil y avoit de luy a nous et quen toute occasion il nous feroit connaistre que nous denions luy lever le chapeau le premier".

²⁰³ "il auroit adjouté quil prendrait mieux son temps pour nous trouver lors quil ny aurait personne et quil ne nous manquerait pas une autre fois".

²⁰⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 5708.

the parish church; he stood “vis à vis” the judge, and stared at him throughout the service.²⁰⁵ After the mass, Fabré left the church to return home. Cazalèdes followed and seized Fabré from behind. He pushed him to the lower part of the pavement so that he could take the higher ground. Street design made movement within towns and cities difficult. Water and other effluence gathered in the middle of the sloping streets, making the high ground a micro-space for battles over status.²⁰⁶ To concede the higher position on the pavement was to concede one’s social position to another. Onlookers intervened, preventing the confrontation from escalating further, and Fabré returned home. As far as we can tell from the archival catalogue, the altercation on 10 March was the final incident between Fabré and Cazalèdes. Indeed, given the persistence of Cazalèdes’ attempts to redress the slight he received from Fabré, there may have been many more confrontations between the two men. We will only know more once more cases are inventoried. But the dossiers that we do have access to are significant for what they reveal about the everyday squabble between an officer of the *robe* and a *noble d’épée*.

Cazalèdes was the youngest of four sons to noble Henri Sébastien de Cazalèdes, seigneur of Marcorignan.²⁰⁷ The Cazalèdes had a long history of serving the King; both Cazalèdes’ father, Henri Sébastien, and his brother, Jean-Jacques, had held the title of *capitaine des morte-payes* in the 1650s and 60s.²⁰⁸ Conversely, Fabré was not a nobleman, but he had evidently enjoyed rapid social ascension in the 1680s and 90s. In 1685, Fabré married Isabeau de Caunes, daughter of Jean Caunes, bourgeois. The entry for the marriage in the parish register lists Fabré as *procureur du roi*.²⁰⁹ By the time of the confrontation with Cazalèdes in 1696, Fabré was *juge* and *lieutenant criminel* of Narbonne. As Chapter Three discussed, disputes between nobles and non-nobles were often motivated by the potential for the elites of the Third Estate to cross the boundary into the nobility.

Fabré’s social ascension likely played an important role in motivating Cazalèdes’ violence against him. Cazalèdes’ contention with Fabré, and the tools he used to reassert

²⁰⁵ “il nous regarde toujours avec fureur sans jamais détourner sa veüe”.

²⁰⁶ Beik, *A Social and Cultural History*, 103.

²⁰⁷ AD. Aude, GG 39-41, *Registres Paroissiaux*, “Narbonne: Saint Paul,” 20: 7 January 1696, Marriage between Noble Jean André de Cazalèdes and Dame Henrietta de Brugairoux de Crozet.

²⁰⁸ Germaine Mouynès, *Ville de Narbonne: Inventaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790: série AA et Annexes*, (Narbonne: E. Caillard, 1877), 209, 217.

²⁰⁹ AD. Aude, GG12, *Registres Paroissiaux*, ‘Narbonne: Saint-Just-et-Saint-Pasteur’ (1685), Image 11.

his superiority over the judge, certainly seems to have been rooted in issues of status and traditional social hierarchies. Cazalèdes initially became enraged by Fabrè's public lack of respect toward him. This disrespect was communicated by Fabrè's failure to conform to expected greeting conventions. Cazalèdes attempted to redress this slight on multiple occasions, and he utilised symbolically meaningful methods and locations to assert his superiority over Fabrè. He physically assaulted Fabrè in the street, threw his hat into the mud and attempted to beat the judge with his cane and sword.²¹⁰ When he spoke to Fabrè, Cazalèdes utilised the diminutive 'tu', "tu doibs passer de sous", instead of the formal 'vous' which denoted respect.²¹¹ He pursued Fabrè to the town hall, the seat of Fabrè's authority as a *lieutenant criminel*. From there, he followed Fabrè to his home. He stationed soldiers outside, and crucially, he entered Fabrè's home, crossing the boundary of Fabrè's private authority, and threatened those inside.²¹² Lastly, he confronted Fabrè in the parish church. As Chapter Two discussed, the church existed at the centre of parish life, and for many, was the primary source of news and sociability.²¹³ Cazalèdes' use of the church setting in this confrontation served to amplify the publicity of his enmity with Fabrè, and likely increased the intimidation that Fabrè felt.

But the case should also be understood within the context of boundaries of personal and private authority. Indeed, Fabrè recognised the root of Cazalèdes' contention with him in his investigation into Cazalèdes' tenant, Vila.²¹⁴ Fabrè's social ascension was achieved through venal office. At the time of the initial confrontation on 28 January, Fabrè was exercising the duties of his office by investigating the criminal behaviour of Cazalèdes' tenant. Much like the incidents between Plazolles and Fabrè, and Viala and Velais, Fabrè's intervention in such matters might have been perceived as a transgression of Cazalèdes' authority over his personal affairs and household.²¹⁵ As Hall and Malcolm argue, "responsibility for discipline devolved down the household

²¹⁰ Hanlon, *L'Univers des Gens de Bien*, 74; Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, 43.

²¹¹ Carroll, *Blood and Violence*, 56.

²¹² Corley, 'On the Threshold,' 140.

²¹³ Carroll, *Enmity and Violence*, 406-8.

²¹⁴ "toutes ses entreprises et menaces montrent et demonstre le mepris que ledit sieur de Cazaledes a de la justice et a nostre charge en haine de ce que nous remplissons nos obligations contre ladite Vila et Crouty, ses locataires, et voleurs reconnues".

²¹⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 2562; 5356.

hierarchy.”²¹⁶ Male heads of households had authority over all subordinates, “including children, servants and apprentices”.²¹⁷ It is important to note that, while lodgers did not form part of the traditional household, honour and credibility were collective in the early modern period.²¹⁸ Consequently, associations with disreputable individuals had the potential to undermine an individual’s reputation. By investigating Cazalèdes’ tenants for potential criminal conduct, Fabrè not only called into question Cazalèdes’ authority as the head of his household, but he also undermined the nobleman’s reputation. This transgression was likely amplified by the asymmetry in Fabrè’s and Cazalèdes position in the traditional social hierarchy. As Chapter Three argued, office had the potential to subvert traditional social hierarchies, and the nobility frequently used violent means to check non-nobles’ claims to status and authority. Fabrè’s venal office afforded him the authority to investigate the conduct, and potential criminality of Cazalèdes’ tenant. However, Cazalèdes’ reaction to Fabrè during the course of the investigation suggests that he did not recognise this authority. Instead, we can infer that Cazalèdes took Fabrè’s investigation as a transgression of his private authority and an attack on his position in the traditional social hierarchy.

The incidents of violence committed against office-holders in this chapter’s sample tell us that individuals’ contentions with office-holders went beyond their policing of communities. At the root of many of these incidents were anxieties over personal status, and the authority that the office-holder had to perform the duties of office against that particular person. In these disputes, the intersection of office-holders’ public and private identities is especially prominent. The cases show that contemporary perceptions of authority were informed by the position of the office-holder in the local social hierarchy. While participation in public life afforded political and social legitimacy, as Farr has shown, the *sacs* illustrate the difficulties faced by office-holders in asserting their new-found legitimacy in the face of traditional social hierarchies.²¹⁹ Importantly, such struggles for superiority were not confined to relationships between non-elites; violence was committed against office-holders from across the social hierarchy. These cases, when read together, reveal the potential that the quest for

²¹⁶ Hall and Malcolm, ‘Sexual and Family Violence in Europe,’ 276.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 276.

²¹⁸ Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, 4.

²¹⁹ Farr, ‘The Death of a Judge,’ 19.

office-holding and notability had to destabilise social relationships within communities, and in turn, increase rates of violence against office-holders.

This chapter has shown that violent disputes involving office-holders demonstrate the fickle nature of authority around 1700. These cases illustrate the potential for office-holders' claims to status to be a source of resentment. Significantly, civil office-holders also used violence. Almost half (46.2%) of the incidents of interpersonal violence between office-holders and non-office-holders lists the official as the defendant. Farr has argued that French society became increasingly stratified in the seventeenth century.²²⁰ Consequently, social differentiation shaped social interactions as individuals attempted to distinguish themselves from their social inferiors by adopting cultural markers of status and honour.²²¹ Such self-fashioning is evident across the social hierarchy; as this thesis has already discussed, individuals adopted titles such as 'sieur' or 'demoiselle' as markers of status, regardless of their socio-economic position.

The tensions discussed in this section were a consequence of the expansion of office-holding in the early modern period and its crucial role as a marker of social distinction. Office was both a key vector of social mobility and it brought burdens and responsibilities. Colbert had tried to reduce the number of venal offices, but the demands of wartime finance led to a reversal of the policy. Venal officers thus faced renewed competition from *parvenus* and the hostility of ordinary people who ultimately had to pay for these positions.²²² Section One demonstrated the impact that these changes had on social relations and why rates of interpersonal violence between office-holders may have increased towards the end of the seventeenth century. But, the tenuous nature of authority and the multiplication of all sorts of offices also shaped the causes of violence against non-office-holders. Breen explains that notables were "extremely sensitive to changes in the local political order and acutely aware of threats to their authority from both above and below."²²³ The *sacs* suggest that the tensions underpinning incidents of violence between the nobility and the notability, discussed in Chapter Three, also informed disputes between office-holders and members of their

²²⁰ Ibid., 4.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Schneider, *The King's Bench*, 5.

²²³ Breen, *Law, City, and King*, 11.

communities. Concerned with their often precarious status, office-holders responded with violence in order to assert their standing within their communities. Take, for example, the following two cases. The first features a violent attack on an apprentice merchant by a nobleman.²²⁴ The second features a violent attack by a lawyer on a merchant's son.²²⁵ In both incidents, the plaintiffs were perceived, by the defendant, to have crossed a threshold in the social hierarchy. In both incidents, the plaintiffs' claims to status were violently rebuked by the nobleman and the office-holder.

In 1710, Etienne Delort, an apprentice Chandler from Figeac (Lot), who styled himself the sieur Delort, was living in Marcillac (-Vallon) (Aveyron) learning his trade.²²⁶ On 5 July, he was in Marcillac's square, in the company of sieur Barré. They were approached by noble Pierre de Mazars, *écuyer*, who asked Delort, in "un ton aigre" if he had won "cent pistoles" at the game he was playing.²²⁷ Delort denied gambling, or winning any money, explaining that he was not rich enough to play. Mazars replied that he knew well that Delort was not rich enough, before grabbing him by his cravat and shouting repeatedly that he was too beggarly to be able to play.²²⁸ Delort defended himself, crying that he was "un honeste homme". He ordered Mazars to release him and leave him alone. This angered Mazars, who instructed Delort to wait for him in the square while he went to retrieve his pistol and sword; he planned to teach Delort a lesson.²²⁹ Mazars left, and Delort, believing their confrontation had come to an end, was "extrêmement surpris" to see Mazars return some time later with his sword and a baton in hand. Mazars announced his arrival, "tu es encore ici bougre", before hitting Delort over the head with his baton. Delort grabbed hold of Mazars to stop him from unsheathing his sword, and told him that he was wrong to mistreat him. The two men continued to struggle; Mazars shouted that he wanted to kill Delort, and beat him a further six times with his baton across the head and shoulders. Mazars eventually

²²⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 301.

²²⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 7416.

²²⁶ AD. H-G, 2B 301.

²²⁷ Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales: Lexicographie, s.v. "pistole," accessed March 10, 2023, <https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/pistole>.

²²⁸ "Il croyait bein qu'il n'était pas un estat de les jouer".

²²⁹ "Mazars lui dit "attendez moi la je m'en vay chercher un pistolet et mon épée pour l'apprende auire"."

released Delort, who pleaded to onlookers to remember the mistreatment that he had received at Mazars' hands. Witnesses report that Delort fled the square in tears.²³⁰

The action demonstrates that there was an antecedent relationship between the two men. Mazars was an *écuyer*, one of the lowest, and often poorest, echelons of the Second Estate.²³¹ Delort was of higher social status than a Chandler might suggest. We know from the parish records that he was born into an established merchant family in Figeac.²³² His father Henri Delort and his godfather Etienne Delort were both merchants. Delort's social position in the Third Estate did not preclude him from upward social mobility. As Beik discusses, merchants were socio-economically diverse and were considered part of the urban elite.²³³ As such, they were able to benefit from access to positions of notability and often operated within local power networks. This appears to have been the case in Delort's family; Delort's baptism in 1684 was attended by Pierre Baltal, *écolier* and maître Pierre Vilhes, royal notary and *greffier*.²³⁴

We should therefore understand Mazar's aggressive behaviour within the context of Languedoc's fluid social landscape at the turn of the eighteenth century. Delort was a man of pretension. He referred to himself as 'sieur', and an 'honnête homme'. He also reacted with civility during the confrontation, rebuking the nobleman's actions, and signalling his intent to go to law against Mazars by requesting that onlookers remember what they had seen.²³⁵ Mazars' contempt for his enemy is underscored in his testimony to the court, when he diminutively referred to him as "le nomme Delort, garçon de boutique du sieur Manaval, marchand". Moreover, Delort's request for Mazars to treat him with respect played a crucial role in the escalation of the incident. It was after this remark that Mazars asserted that he would teach Delort a lesson and left to retrieve his weapons. Chapter Three discussed the paternalist authority that members of the Second Estate claimed in policing the behaviour of their

²³⁰ "Delort se mit a fuir en pleurant requerant les personnes qui estoit autour de ladite place de se souvenir des mauvais traitements quil recevoir dudit sieur Mazars".

²³¹ Kalas, 'The Selve Family of Limousin,' 167.

²³² AD. Lot, EDT 102 GG19, BMS 'Figeac: Notre-Dame du Puy' (1681-1690), Image 508.

²³³ Beik, *A Social and Cultural History*, 108-109.

²³⁴ AD. Lot, EDT 102 GG20, BMS 'Figeac Notre-Dame du Puy' (1691-1696), Image 188.

²³⁵ It is notable that the six witnesses who presented their accounts on behalf of Delort during the investigation all referred to Mazars as 'sieur' or noble, but none referred to Delort as 'sieur'.

social inferiors.²³⁶ Delort's reaction to Mazars demonstrates a lack of deference for badly behaved nobles in Languedocian communities.

But crucially, these tensions did not only exist between the Second and Third Estate. On 19 October 1704, twenty-two-year-old Antoine Jouery, merchant of Agde (Hérault), filed a suit against forty-three-year-old maître Charles Pellier, lawyer.²³⁷ On the night of 18 October, Pellier, who was standing in the doorway to his house, insulted Jouery as he walked past in the street. Pellier shouted that Jouery's associates were rogues and rascals.²³⁸ Jouery asked Pellier if he was talking to him, after which Pellier hit Jouery with his cane. Maître Jordan, *viguier*, maître Carratié, *procureur* in the *parlement*, and maître Senegua, *procureur* in the *sénéchaussée* of Béziers, all emerged from Pellier's house, and joined in the beating. During the attack, both Jouery's and Pellier's hats and wigs were knocked to the floor. Multiple onlookers intervened to separate the men, and Pellier returned to his house, taking Jouery's hat with him. This is verified by several witnesses who helped Jouery to look for his hat, and later saw him kicking Pellier's door, shouting for the return of his hat.²³⁹

Pellier's actions are revealing of his sense of authority and position within the community, and of his contempt for Jouery. Pellier instigated the public confrontation with Jouery, and his assertion that Jouery associated with dishonourable people served to humiliate Jouery in front of onlookers. Pellier's physical attack was both performative and targeted. He beat Jouery on the head, the symbolic seat of one's honour, and his confiscation of Jouery's hat, perhaps as Walker explains, "connoted emasculation."²⁴⁰ Clothing, and particularly headgear, were claims to status and conveyed the wearer's sense of identity and social position.²⁴¹ To add insult to injury, by refusing to return the hat, Pellier left Jouery to return home bare-headed, no doubt generating gossip and derision from onlookers in the busy street.²⁴² The staging of Pellier's confrontation with Jouery suggests that, much like the dispute between Delort and Mazars, this incident

²³⁶ Beik, *A Social and Cultural History*, 95.

²³⁷ AD. H-G, 2B 7416

²³⁸ "tous ceux qui parloient estoient de coquins et de canailles."

²³⁹ "randu moy mon chapeau"

²⁴⁰ Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, 43; see also William Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 32.

²⁴¹ Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, 99.

²⁴² Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 200.

should be interpreted within the context of competition for position within local social hierarchies. But why might a lawyer have felt threatened by a young merchant? And why might he have decided that violence was a legitimate course of action?

Breen's work on the lawyers of Dijon tells us that, despite lawyers' middling position in the urban notability, their education and expertise shaped their expectations for upward social mobility, and their perception of themselves as "homme politiques" who were entitled to participate in the governance of their communities.²⁴³ Unable to afford the prestigious offices in the judiciary, many provincial lawyers had to be content with scratching a living. Pellier was evidently well established in power networks within Agde and further afield. Pellier was very active within his parish; he appeared at least twelve times as witness to weddings and baptisms of notables in the community between 1674 and his death in 1715. These include the baptism of Marguerite Apolit, daughter of Pierre Apolit, bourgeois, in 1674, the baptism of Marc Austry, godson of maître Marc Austry, *greffier*, in 1686, and the birth of Jacques Gaches, son of Henri Denis Gaches, *maître chirurgien*, in 1706.²⁴⁴ We do not know whether Pellier had obtained, or was pursuing, municipal offices within the community, but we can see that he used other strategies to bolster his standing. We can infer from the timing of the incident with Jouery, late in the evening, that Pellier had been dining and socialising with the men who emerged from his house and joined in the attack on Jouery. Pellier's relationship with maîtres Jordan, Carratié, and Senegua, all judicial office-holders, tells us that, while he was a lawyer in the ordinary court in Agde, he had friendships with judicial office-holders from courts across the province, including the *parlement*.

By contrast, we know very little about Jouery; he was a young merchant and was the son of a merchant. We have seen that merchants, like office-holders, could be socially mobile and were well positioned socio-economically to attain status within their communities. But the parish records do not reveal any indication that Jouery was connected to other notables within Agde; his father only appears once in the records, as godfather to Jean Antoine Girbal, the son of Pierre Girbal, in 1687.²⁴⁵ Despite this, Jouery was evidently conscious of his position within the community, and claimed status for

²⁴³ Breen, *Law, City, and King*, 4.

²⁴⁴ AD. Hérault, GG 10, *BMS* "Agde: Saint Sever," (1670-1675), 531; 1 MI EC 3/10, *BMS* "Agde: Saint André," (1611-1698), 426; 1 M1 EC 3/11, *BMS* "Agde: Saint André," (1699-1710), 73.

²⁴⁵ AD. Hérault, 1 MI EC 3/10, *BMS* "Agde: Saint André," (1611-1698), 443.

himself in the way that he dressed, and in his adoption of the title 'sieur' in the criminal dossier.²⁴⁶ Moreover, the witness testimonies reveal something of Jouery's self-perception of his standing in relation to that of Pellier. We know that he also targeted Pellier's head - his wig and hat were also knocked to the floor - and after Pellier left, taking Jouery's hat with him, Jouery proceeded to kick at Pellier's door, demanding the return of his possessions. He does not leave the scene until his father arrives and escorts him away.

It is significant that the confrontation between Pellier and Jouery shares many of the same characteristics as the dispute between Mazars and Delort discussed above. Both Mazars and Pellier used a public setting to rebuke their social inferiors' pretensions to status. These claims to status were primarily vestimentary and titular, and yet Pellier and Mazars evidently deemed beyond the bounds of acceptability for individuals of Delort's and Jouery's standing. In both cases, the public confrontations served to reinforce Pellier's and Mazars' superiority over Jouery and Delort, and to reassert their own position within the local social hierarchy. Crucially however, while Mazars, as a member of the Second Estate, was clearly Delort's social superior, the line between Pellier and Jouery was less defined. Both men were of the Third Estate, and we know that both lawyers and merchants were notables within their communities. In these incidents we can see evidence of Farr's 'culture of dissociation' in practice.²⁴⁷ Pellier's intervention in Jouery's behaviour is revealing of the sense of social authority that office bestowed on its' owner. But, as this chapter has already demonstrated, notability, once attained, was not necessarily permanent. Consequently, office-holders were alert to threats to their positions from other office-holders, from their social superiors in the Second Estate, and from non-office holders within their communities. The incident between Pellier and Jouery, and others like it, evidence the potential that office-holding had for engendering disputes and enmities within communities.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ The surgeon's report, for example, states that he was "appella pour alla visiter le sieur Antoine Jouery fils du sieur Jean Jouery marchand de la present ville".

²⁴⁷ Farr, 'The Death of a Judge,' 4.

²⁴⁸ See for example AD. H-G, 2B 2414: sieur Pierre Cortade, bourgeois, of Bagnères-de-Bigorre (Hautes-Pyrénées) filed a suit against sieur d'Ancla, *consul*, after d'Ancla publicly beat him in the town square. Cortade had been quarrelling with d'Ancla's son, when d'Ancla intervened, slapped Cortade and insulted him, "fripon" and "bougre". There is mention within the documents about a dispute between the two parties concerning the *consul* election. See also, 2B 2541: maître Paul Vialat, lawyer and royal notary, was confronted by a client, David Pages in a lodging house in Saint-Jean-du-Gard (Gard). Pages was concerned

Conclusion

Office-holders provoked violence in order to demonstrate the boundaries of social and political authority. In the male dominated world of public office, there was also a level of masculine bravado at work. In a small community, violence was a way of testing the social hierarchy and showing publicly who was on top. Office-holders' public and private identities were closely interlinked in the early modern period and the status that office afforded its holder provided opportunities for the pursuit of private interests. Consequently, competition for such positions was fierce and contentions developed between office-holders who sought to advance their influence within their communities. But the ramifications of this competition were as much social as it was political. Squabbles between officers were shaped by masculine ideas about excellence and bravado.

The chapter further argues that, in order to understand how this competition for notability was experienced, and how it impacted on social cohesion within communities, we must place incidents of violence involving office-holders within the context of local power structures. The *sacs* suggest that we should not correlate contemporary concepts of notability with rigid hierarchies of honour. Rather, notability was relative, and who might attain it or pursue it depended on the specific geographic and political contexts of each community. In the Midi, the political landscape was further shaped by the existence of representative offices, the *consulat*, in both urban and rural communities. These municipal offices in rural communities provided opportunities for socio-political advancement for those who, in urban communities, might have been excluded from positions of power on the basis of their low socio-economic backgrounds. But these offices might also bring the burden of policing communities and settling disputes, generating resentment among those who felt they had been unjustly treated.

Finally, this chapter highlights the impact that royal policy had on engendering violent discord within communities. Louis XIV's creation and suppression of offices in the final decades of the seventeenth century increased both competition between *officiers* and resentment of those who had to pay for these new appointments in the fees and emoluments they claimed. Moreover, tax increases during the costly wars in the

about Vialat's professional conduct; outraged at Pages' overstepping, Vialat slapped Pages and kicked him while he was lying on the floor.

final decades of Louis XIV's reign placed additional power and burdens on municipal office-holders charged with maintaining the *compoix* and collecting taxes. These policies exacerbated competition and most likely increased contention within communities. But the cases also demonstrate that the fickleness of public authority legitimised the use of violence, both by and against office-holders, as individuals sought to press, defend, or enforce their rights and privileges.

Conclusion

This thesis opened with summaries from four criminal cases (*sacs à procès*), brought before Languedoc's *parlement* of Toulouse between 1680 and 1720, a period when rates of violence appear to have spiked in France's largest province. These cases all concern incidents of physical interpersonal violence, enacted by and against ordinary people in communities across the province. Collectively, the cases highlight early modern disputants' anxieties relating to place and status in their communities. I stated that these cases, and the more than 100,000 like them that are held by Toulouse's Archives départementales de la Haute-Garonne, open a window onto the social landscape of early modern Languedoc. In its analysis of two hundred of these cases, it is my hope that this study has opened that window a little further. To conclude, I will first provide an overview of the project and its primary aims and interventions. I will then summarise the findings from this study's four chapters, before discussing the scope of the project and some potential avenues for further research.

Judicial records have long been the domain of narrow studies into criminality. These studies, inspired by dominant sociological theories from the early twentieth century, maintain that the rise of the modern state from the fourteenth century onwards led to a linear decline in rates of interpersonal violence.¹ It is argued that the monarchic absolutism of Louis XIV's reign was a crucial turning point in this transformation. His taming of the warrior elite at the court in Versailles effected a behavioural shift which permeated French society at all levels, curtailing rates of violence across the kingdom. Moreover, scholars determine that the expansion of the law courts into the provinces through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries also played a crucial role in the centralisation of the state; mechanisms of popular justice were replaced with that of royal justice. The corresponding increase in rates of litigation has bolstered theories of the punitive nature of the law, and the monarchy's efficiency in the repression of criminality.

This thesis contributes to the dismantling of such teleological theories of modernity, and in doing so makes important interventions in the expansive historiography of the state and its development, and of violence and its control. Quantitative analysis of the *parlement's* criminal records suggest that rates of litigation

¹ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

relating to incidents of interpersonal violence increased in the closing years of the seventeenth century. While an uptick in litigation may, in part be explained by increased royal funding for the prosecution of crimes, as Hamscher has indicated, the cases from Languedoc suggest that, far from effecting a steady decline in violent mores, the final decades of Louis XIV's reign did not tackle the problem of violent dispute in Languedocian society.

This thesis aimed to understand the link between the monarchy's policies and Languedoc's social landscape. Languedoc was subject to significant religious, economic and political upheaval during the period under study (1680-1720). Costly wars, droughts, and increases in the provinces' tax burden placed economic pressures on communities across the province. The fallout from the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 reached a violent crescendo in the Camisard Rebellion (1702-1704). Importantly, however, this study does not attempt to make direct correlations between the events of the period and the potential spikes in violence exhibited in the *parlement's* criminal dossiers. Indeed, given the nature of the source base, such links are not possible. Rather, it uses the *sacs* to demonstrate the broader implications of decisions made at the state level for social cohesion at the local level.

The project adopted a blended approach to the *sacs*. Quantitative analysis provided guidance for the direction of the thesis and for narrowing down the overwhelming scale of the criminal dossiers. Because the thesis sought to explore the impact of state power on social relations in Languedoc, I excluded all incidents of sexual and domestic violence from the sample. Such cases are abundant, and given the richness of the *parlement's* criminal dossiers, these cases would undoubtedly have much to tell us about sexual violence in early modern communities. This would be a worthy subject for future studies. I also chose to focus solely on physical violence, as opposed to verbal violence. This decision was based primarily in practicality; the time constraints of the project did not allow for the exploration of multiple typologies of violence. Moreover, the majority of the cases concerning physical violence also include accusations of insult and threats. As a result, by focusing solely on physical interpersonal violence, the thesis was still able to explore the diverse verbal and physical strategies that disputants adopted in the pursuit of their enmities.

The selection of the two hundred cases examined during archival visits was shaped by the dominant presence of four social groups in the cases.² The involvement of the parish clergy, the petty nobility, and the notability in violent confrontations indicated that rates of violence were firmly correlated with interactions within local power structures. Exploration of these cases provided an important opportunity to explore the impact of Louis XIV's religious and fiscal policies on power relations within urban and rural communities across the province. The presence of women in the cases in such significant numbers was especially interesting. Given scholars' narrow conceptions of women's involvement in violence in early modern communities, the *sacs* provided a unique opportunity to reassess women's role in the disputing process. The thesis' chapters took each of these social groups in turn. Crucially, this study goes beyond criminality in its assessment of the cases. Inspired by the cultural turn of the twentieth century, I have sought to understand the motivating factors behind disputants' use of violence, and to access the lived experiences of the individuals present in the cases.

My analysis of the cases adopted methodologies from social anthropology and literary studies to aid this process. The chapters explored the tensions which appear to have underpinned those individuals' enmities, and placed them within the broader social, political, and economic contexts which shaped their communities. In doing so, the chapters have shed light on the distinct factors which informed the experiences and expectations of each social group. When read together, however, the chapters highlight a number of shared socio-cultural realities which informed Languedocians' use of violence during the pursuit of their enmities. Ultimately, the thesis has argued that the monarchy's fiscal and political policies at the turn of the eighteenth-century placed strains on local social hierarchies, and exacerbated individuals' anxieties relating to status, identity, and authority.

This thesis has made important interventions in several fields of scholarship. First, it has advanced the extensive historiography on the relationship between Louis XIV's government and the provinces. Traditional histories of French absolutism have sought to convey the monarch as a modernising force, subjugating the nobility and

² 71% of the cases of physical violence from this period include at least one member from these social groups, as either plaintiff, defendant or both.

centralising power in Versailles.³ Revisionist scholars of the 1980s reconceptualised this relationship. Instead of stripping power from the provinces, Louis XIV, it is argued, collaborated with provincial elites and in doing so defended their position in traditional social hierarchies.⁴ Heeding Roger Mettam's warning that the history of France, when studied from the centre, looks very different to the histories which lie hidden in the provincial archives, this thesis used the criminal cases from the *parlement* of Toulouse to examine the impact of this relationship in France's largest province.⁵ Importantly, however, where much of the revisionist scholarship rests on analysis of the relationship between the monarchy and the aristocracy, in the provinces and at court, this thesis took the assessment of Louis XIV's monarchy further and has examined the impact of the monarchy's policies on ordinary people.

The focus on ordinary people has advanced our understanding of the ways in which life in urban and rural communities was shaped by external strains. The potential upswing in rates of interpersonal violence in these communities at the turn of the eighteenth century tells us that day-to-day tensions within communities were being placed under new pressures. Through close analysis of two hundred cases, this thesis has argued that these pressures were a consequence of the interaction between royal political, economic, and religious policies, and the local socio-political structures which shaped Languedocian communities. This conclusion on its own is not novel. Castan identified an upswing in litigation brought before the *parlement* of Toulouse in the years preceding the Revolution. She also correlated this phenomenon with the policies of the state interacting with, and exacerbating the impact of, social changes in the province.⁶ However, my analysis of the *sacs* takes these conclusions further. The thesis has argued that growing state power in the late-seventeenth century did not only increase disputants' access to and use of judicial courts. Rather, I argue, the pressures that royal policies placed on local communities also made disputants readier to use violence in the pursuit of their enmities.

³ Roland Mousnier, *La Vénalité des offices sous Henri IV et Louis XIII* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971); *The Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy, 1598-1789*, trans. Brian Pearce and Arthur Goldhammer, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979-1984).

⁴ William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁵ Roger Mettam, *Power and Faction in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 24.

⁶ Nicole Castan, 'The Arbitration of Disputes under the 'Ancien Régime'', in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. John Bossy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 222.

The second intervention that this thesis makes is to the scholarship on dispute and social control in early modern communities. The anthropological turn of the twentieth century inspired a reassessment of the role of the law in societies. Where traditional histories foregrounded the punitive nature of the law, scholars began to explore the motivations of the plaintiffs in appealing to judicial courts. This thesis builds on these developments. Rather than considering the cases from the narrow perspective of crime history, I used the cases to explore how violence and the law were used in disputants' pursuit of their enmities. Crucially, the thesis analyses the cases from the perspective of the litigants themselves. This has been possible thanks to the richness of the source base. The inclusion of the plaintiffs', defendants' and witnesses' testimonies facilitated this project's novel approach to the question of dispute. Analysis of these testimonies revealed common anxieties relating to status and authority across the four social groups discussed in the thesis. But it also allowed me to take our understanding of dispute in early modern communities further.

This thesis has shed light on the value of incorporating appellate courts into analysis of early moderners' use of formal and informal mechanisms of dispute resolution. Scholars' focus on the records of the lower criminal courts, civil courts, church courts, confraternities, and guilds has told us much about the variety of options open to disputants seeking reconciliation. However, the existence of an increase in rates of litigation relating to incidents of violence brought before Languedoc's highest appellate court suggests that there was much more variation in the motives that litigants had for turning to the courts. Scholars have argued that because cases were frequently dropped before reaching sentencing, disputants turned to law, and to infrajudicial measures, because they were seeking a return to peaceable relations. In contrast, this thesis has argued that, while it is likely that the majority of litigants turned to the courts seeking reconciliation with their adversaries, we should not take the fact that cases were dropped before reaching sentencing to mean that peace was restored through alternative forums. The cases from the *parlement* evidence the role of revenge in disputants' use of the law. Rather, this study has evidenced litigants' use of the courts as a forum for the continuation and escalation, rather than the resolution, of their enmities.

These themes are developed across the thesis' four chapters. But the chapters themselves make a number of important contributions to our understanding to the lived

experience of dispute in early modern Languedoc. Chapter One has addressed a significant lacuna in our understanding of early modern enmity: the role of women in the disputing process. Scholars frequently overlook women's use of, and involvement in, interpersonal violence in early modern communities. This is predominantly a consequence of the scholarly preoccupation with using studies of lethal, ritual violence as a way into the cultural norms of past societies. It is also a result of narrow conceptions of honour which confined female honour to that which relates to sexual reputation and purity; defence of women's honour was the duty of male kin.⁷ This chapter has complicated both of these conclusions. Analysis of seventy-four criminal cases involving women demonstrates the value of examining incidents of petty violence for insights into the socio-cultural norms of early modern communities. Indeed this is not entirely novel. Sanne Muurling has made similar observations in her study of criminality and gender in early modern Bologna.⁸ However, this chapter has also evidenced that, by examining the incidents of petty violence involving women, we can build a more detailed conception of women's honour in early modern France. Women's accounts of their disputes reveal concerns over boundaries of authority, credibility, and the micro-political stakes that women held in their communities. Violence was a legitimate mechanism for enforcing those boundaries and defending their private and familial interests. This analysis has also served to break down gendered preconceptions concerning male and female disputing strategies. It has argued that male and female dispute strategies were not as dissimilar as scholars have previously suggested. Far from being childish and petty, as scholars have previously categorised them, women's disputes evidence the diverse and considered strategies with which women managed their enmities.⁹ Lastly, Chapter One has evidenced the legal consciousness which permeated early modern Languedocian communities, and crucially, it has foregrounded women's part in this. It argues that women utilised their knowledge of the law in the diverse ways that they pursued their enmities. We see evidence of this knowledge in the ways in which women constructed their testimonies, and in their frequent use of the

⁷ Satu Lidman, 'Violence or Justice? Gender-Specific Structures and Strategies in Early Modern Europe,' *The History of the Family* 18, no.3 (2013): 240.

⁸ Sanne Muurling, *Everyday Crime, Criminal Justice and Gender in Early Modern Bologna* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

⁹ Yves Castan, *Honnêteté et relations sociales en Languedoc, 1715-1780* (Paris: Plon, 1974), 171-2; Gregory Hanlon, *L'univers des gens de bien: culture et comportements des élites urbaines en Agenais-Comdomois au XVIIe siècle* (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 1989), 85.

courts. But, importantly, the chapter argues that women made use of their legal knowledge to amplify the damage done to their adversaries during their confrontations.

Chapter Two has assessed the presence of the parish clergy in the *parlement's* criminal dossiers. The chapter places these incidents within the context of the Counter-Reformation and its impact on clergy-laity relationships in rural communities. Where scholars frequently approach the Counter-Reformation, and its success or failures, through the lens of the episcopacy, this chapter has foregrounded the parish priest. It was, as Tackett argues, the parish priest who was charged with implementing Tridentine reforms at the parochial level.¹⁰ Moreover, scholars frequently focus their analysis of the Counter-Reformation on urban centres, where seminaries and new religious orders helped to disseminate Tridentine values. This chapter's focus on the rural parish offers a different perspective. In contrast to scholarship on the urban religious landscape, this chapter has argued that the successes of the Counter-Reformation were less clear cut. The re-fashioning of the Tridentine parish priest as the moral and spiritual leader of the parish engendered tensions between the clergy and his parishioners in two key ways. Clerical reforms disrupted local social hierarchies. Violent clashes between clergy and laity increased as the lay notables' status and authority were threatened by the clergy's newly enforced position within the parish. In its assessment of the physical and temporal spaces in which confrontations between clergy and parishioners took place, this chapter has made important contributions to our understanding of power relations within rural parishes, and of how spaces of church authority were used by parishioners to undermine the reputation of their cleric adversaries. Additionally, the chapter has demonstrated that the Counter-Reformation failed to overcome the heterogeneity of the clergy. Despite Tridentine efforts to overcome clerics' abuses, the dossiers illustrate the development of personal enmities between clergy and laity as clerics used their public authority to pursue private interests.

Chapters Three and Four further develop our understanding of the complex ways in which threats to authority and status could engender hostility and violence in early modern communities. Chapter Three assessed the presence of the nobility in the *parlement's* cases. The chapter's primary intervention is its focus on the petty nobility.

¹⁰ Timothy Tackett, *Priest and Parish in Eighteenth Century France: A Social and Political Study of the Curés in a Diocese of Dauphiné 1750-1791* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 37-39.

Too often, scholars' work on 'the nobility', by which they mean the aristocracy, is used to explain the experiences and expectations of the nobility, as if they were a homogeneous group. But, I argue, the experiences of 'the nobility' during the reign of Louis XIV cannot be distilled into one narrative. Scholars have shown that the upper echelons of the Second Estate may have benefitted from the monarchy's collaborative policies which defended their position within the traditional social hierarchy. The *sacs* demonstrate that the economic, political, and social position of Languedoc's petty nobility was less assured. Crucially, this chapter has argued that incidents of violence involving the nobility were not driven by competition for local authority with other nobles but rather by individuals from the Third Estate. The chapter explored the relationship between the two Estates through economic, political, and social relationships and interactions. Ultimately, the chapter has argued that the *sacs* evidence a shift away from deference for the nobility. Individuals from the Third Estate challenged nobles to maintain financial agreements and to respect their positions of local authority. Where the actions of the petty nobility did not meet these expectations, individuals from the Third Estate used both the law and violence to vanquish their noble enemies. It is significant that the nobility invested time and financial resources into their disputes with individuals from the Third Estate. This chapter has argued that the shift away from deference was felt by Languedoc's *petite noblesse* and that they turned to both violence and the law to defend their position in the traditional social hierarchy.

The final chapter explored the impact of the quest for office-holding on the social landscape of Languedocian communities. The lives and experiences of office-holders in France's complex legal, state, and municipal jurisdictions have long been overlooked in scholars' preference for institutionally-based state histories. This chapter builds on recent scholarship which has begun to explore the private interests which shaped the attitudes and practices of office-holders. Crucially, this chapter has argued that we should not correlate contemporary concepts of notability with rigid hierarchies of honour. Rather, notability was relative, and who might attain it or pursue it depended on the specific geographic and political contexts of each community. The first section examines the disputes which occurred between office-holders. The section argues that office-holders' public and private identities were closely interlinked in the early modern period. The status that office afforded its holder provided opportunities for the pursuit

of private interests. Consequently, competition for such positions was fierce and contentions developed between office-holders who sought to advance their influence within their communities. The *sacs* demonstrate that this competition was exacerbated by royal policies concerning the creation and suppression of royal office. Office-holders, keen to defend their often tenuous status within their local communities, used violent means to humiliate their social inferiors. The second section explored the broader social implications of office-holding in Languedocian communities. Contentions arising between office-holders and the community as a result of the function of office are well documented in the scholarship. This chapter has argued that, in Languedoc, contentions between office-holders and non-office holders more commonly arose as a result of contemporary perceptions of authority, complicated by the potential that office had to subvert local social hierarchies. Ultimately, the chapter has shown that, in order to understand how competition for notability and authority was experienced, and how it impacted on social cohesion within communities, we must place incidents of violence involving office-holders within the context of local power structures.

The scope of this thesis was limited by several compounding factors. First, it must be noted that this project began in the Autumn of 2019, with plans to conduct archival research through the summer of 2020 necessarily reshaped by the Covid-19 pandemic. Less time in the archives required a reconsideration of the quantity of material I would be able to access and process in the remaining years of the project. The original sample size of 320 cases, or 20% of the incidents of violence brought before the *parlement* between 1680 and 1720, was reduced to 200 cases. This necessitated a refinement of the project's aims. However, the richness of the source material has meant that even with a smaller sample, this thesis has been able to make several important contributions to our understanding of dispute and violence in early modern Languedoc.

The value of the *sacs* lies in their abundance, and in the variety of documents that they can contain. But this abundance and variety is also the collection's greatest deterrent. The dossiers present challenges of access and legibility. The palaeographic variety included in the documents alone has discouraged many researchers from accessing the cases.¹¹ They also present significant challenges of organisation and

¹¹ Alfred Soman, 'The Parlement of Paris and the Great Witch Hunt (1565-1640),' *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 9, no. 2 (1978): 32.

comprehension. In the process of being inventoried, the documents from each case have been removed from their *sac* and placed alongside it in a cardboard folder. As a result, I found that the contents of the *sacs* were often disordered and the process of re-ordering the case material chronologically took considerable time.

This thesis opens significant possibilities for future research. I sought to cover as much ground as possible in my investigation of the *sacs*, and I contend that my focus on the four different social groups has provided key insights into the diverse ways in which the monarchy's policies impacted social cohesion in the localities. However, there is much that I could not cover in this thesis, and many topics which I could only allude to in my analysis of the cases. It is my hope that this thesis stands as a testament to pursuing social histories through the records of the *parlement* of Toulouse in spite of these challenges. They are a rich and valuable source, and consequently, this thesis only scratches the surface of the histories contained within sub-series 2B.

Throughout the thesis, I argue that Languedocian disputants adopted diverse and complicated strategies to vanquish their enemies. The methods most clearly visible to the reader of the cases is the use of violence, and of the criminal courts. However, throughout the cases we see snippets of alternative mechanisms at play. The 1711 dispute, discussed in Chapter One, between Jeanne d'Arrolis and Domenge Barbé turned violent after the failed mediation of the local *curé*.¹² The three *sacs* pertaining to the 1699 dispute between Louise de Soubies, Jacquette de Gelet and Marie and Marguerite Laporte include reference to a property dispute between the parties.¹³ The outcome of this civil suit engendered the disputants' violent treatment of each other. The 1701 dispute between demoiselle Anne de Thomas and sieur Jean Trémouille originated in Trémouille's civil dispute with his daughter.¹⁴ The 1688 dispute between maître Antoine Lugol, royal notary, and Jean Iches, blacksmith, occurred as a result of litigation between Lugol and Iches' brother.¹⁵ The list goes on.

What these cases tell us is that litigation was a normal part of early modern Languedocians' lives. This was true for both men and women. Examining the cases brought before the *parlement* opens a window onto the varied ways in which disputants

¹² AD. H-G, 2B 7959

¹³ AD. H-G, 2B 6441; 7057; 7242.

¹⁴ AD. H-G, 2B 6034.

¹⁵ AD. H-G, 2B 7358.

engaged with the courts in the pursuit of their enmities. However, there is only so much that can be gleaned from the *parlement's* records alone. Where possible, I have consulted notarial and parish records to enrich our understanding of the human stories represented in the cases. However, given the time constraints of the project, my use of these records was not systematic. Consistent sampling of these records alongside those of the *parlement* would undoubtedly tell us more about the relationships between disputants and the factors which underpinned their enmities.

But there would also be significant value in sampling the records of, for example, church courts and courts of first instance. As scholars have argued, the cases brought before courts of first instance far outweigh the number of cases brought before the appellate courts. Future researchers might look to map litigation brought before the *parlement* back to the courts of first instance in which the cases originated. But they might also look to local sources of mediation in notarial records, and the records of the church courts, in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how disputants engaged with the courts and pursued their enmities.

The starting point of this project was the identification of a potential spike in violence in the *parlement's* criminal records. The thesis sought to understand why rates of litigation, and rates of violence, fluctuated in societies over time. I contend that, through the analysis of two hundred of these cases, this thesis has achieved this aim. The records of the *parlement* make clear that rates of violence, linked to individuals' anxieties concerning their place within local social hierarchies, increased in Languedoc at the turn of the eighteenth century as a result of the social, economic, and political pressures that royal policies placed on communities. These tensions were felt across the socio-economic hierarchy, and across genders. Violence was legitimated as individuals sought to defend their personal and familial interests in the face of competition for, and transgressions of, authority from individuals within their communities. But this thesis has also developed an understanding of the human experience of dispute in early modern Languedoc. The *sacs à procès* reveal a rich picture of Languedoc's social landscape. They provide insights into how friends and foes interacted with one another, what expectations individuals held regarding their own positions in society, and how it might have felt to have lived in a state of enmity at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Appendix One

This appendix contains summaries of the two hundred criminal cases examined throughout this thesis. A brief explanation of the categories and information included is necessary. The ‘Code’ refers to the call number for each of the cases, as allocated by the Archives départementales de la Haute-Garonne. ‘Date’ refers to the date of the incident itself, rather than the date that the litigation began on. In all of the cases, the suit was initiated within one week of the incident, but the majority were initiated on the same or next day. The ‘Location’ refers to the location of the incident, rather than the jurisdiction in which the incident took place, or the jurisdiction of the court where the suit was originally filed. My focus is on the social history of dispute, rather than the legal history. The geographical and spatial aspects of these incidents play an important part in my analysis of the disputes. Consequently, I believe it to be necessary to include details relating to the physical location of the disputes. ‘Plaintiffs/ Defendant’ refers to the primary litigants listed in the case. The ‘Summary’ for each case is a very brief overview of the primary facts of the case, designed to be used as a guide for future investigations, rather than a comprehensive survey of the contents of the case. ‘Chapter’ details which of the chapter’s sample each case belongs to. It also includes information of any linked cases that have been identified by myself or by the archivists in Toulouse.

Code	Date	Location	Plaintiff / Defendant	Summary	Chapter
2B 301	5-6pm, Saturday 5 July 1710	Marcillac-Vallon (Aveyron)	Sieur Etienne Delort, 20. Apprentice Merchant Chandelier	Confrontation over Delort playing a game - status - Mazars stated that Delort was not rich enough to play. Mazars beat Delort with a baton.	4. Notability
			Noble Pierre de Mazars, écuyer, 22.		
2B 1224	15 November 1680	Saint Géry (Lot)	Noble Pierre Bouscot, clerc tonsuré	De Gironde asked de Bouscot for alms in the churchyard. Bouscot told him he had none to give. Conflicting claims as to who hit first - de Gironde said to hit Bouscot with his hat, and then with his sword. Bouscot fled into the church, bleeding from a head wound.	2. Clergy
			Noble Pierre de Lacroix de Gironde		Linked case: 2B 21918

2B 1229	17 March - September 1686	Parish church, Durenque (Aveyron)	Pierre Mallie, marchand / Marie Mallie, 12, daughter	Mallie's daughter was attacked by the defendants in the church. Multiple suits back and forth; at the root of the dispute is a debt issue - Chevalier owed money to Mallie but refused to pay. Mallie had pursued the debt through the courts. The defendants attacked the plaintiff and his family in response.	1. Women
			Isabeau Creponne / Denis Chevalier, husband / Antoine Chevalier, son		Linked cases: 2B 1209; 1221
2B 1232	4-5pm, 30 April 1680	Rue Fourcher, Montauban (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Noble Jean de Viscose de la Cour, sieur de Maleville	Bertellier sought out de Viscose in the street, and provoked a confrontation. Bertellier advised de Viscose to move along; he then attempted to hit de Viscose with his baton.	4. Notability
			Maître Pierre Bertellier, lawyer		Linked case: 2B 1273
2B 1260	10-11pm, 29 August 1680	In the street, Peyrusse (Auvergne)	Maître Simon Garrigues for: François Theron, royal bailiff	Theron was beaten with batons at nighttime. He shouted for help, witnesses found him bloodied on the floor. Austray's brother attempted to bribe witnesses to leave Antoine out of their statements.	4. Notability
			Jean Cambolas, bourgeois / Antoine Austray, praticien		
2B 1405	9am, May 1684	Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Marie Vitrié, wife of Arnaud Calmettes, maître fournisseur	Complaint not included - information from witness testimony. Vitrié and another woman were outside widow Daubian's shop. The defendant told the women to withdraw. They argue and Daubian took a baton and hit Vitrié's friend over the head, causing her to bleed.	1. Women
			Guillaume Daubian, son of widow Daubian, marchande		
2B 1406	7am, Monday 5 March 1685	Château de Verdaïch, Saint-Quirc (Ariège)	Jean Roger II de Foix Marquis de Foix, seigneur and baron of La Gardiolles	The defendants were hunting in the marquis' woods. Servants informed chevalier de la Mothe who investigated. He found the defendants, who mocked his attempts to dissuade them from hunting. They threatened the marquis. Later the same day, the defendants arrived at the	3. Nobility
			Lissac and sons Labatut and le Chevalier / François d'Orbesson / and		

			others	château, and fired at domestics, wounding one.	
2B 1408	1 November 1682, All Saints' Day	Parish church, Saint-Beauzile (Tarn)	Maître Jean Vedeille, pbre & curé	Multiple issues between the adversaries. Vedeille had a suit against the community for the presbiteral house, of which Bonnefons was in charge. Tensions between the litigants from their working relationship. Confrontation over decoration of the altar during mass - Bonnefons threatened the curé in front of parishioners.	2. Clergy
			Maître sieur Etienne Bonnefons, praticien, marguillier		
2B 1410	1pm, 6 January 1685	House of Marie Peireigne, hostess, Valentine (Haute-Garonne)	Maître Dominique Seillan, lawyer, substitut procureur du Roi / Sieur de Cassaigne, consul	The plaintiffs were collecting a fine of 10 liards from Peireigne, hostess. The defendants intervened - d'Aurensan believed the fine was too high, and offered to pay on Peireigne's behalf. This was rejected, and the defendants took swords in hand, attacked the plaintiffs and seized the cassette holding the money.	4. Notability
			Nobles Roger de St Paul, sieur d'Aurensan, maire & lieutenant de police / Alexandre de Giscaro, sieur de Tarasté		
2B 1453	Morning, 2 August 1681	Nailloux (Haute-Garonne)	Sieur Claude de Bosc, bourgeois, Montgeard	Threats exchanged following a dispute over payment for wine. Some days later, Caussidieres sought out de Bosc, sword in hand. Insults and provocation of a duel.	4. Notability
			Sieur Jean François Caussidieres, Montgeard		Linked cases: 2B 2351; 15251
2B 1461	12 October 1681	Auzielle (Haute-Garonne)	Demoiselle Marie de Besset, daughter of late Pierre Besset, marchand, 20	The Faure brothers attacked de Besset and her sister in their garden. Bernard hit de Besset with the barrel of his rifle. When de Besset's elderly mother intervened, they attacked her - they hit her over the head and knocked her to the ground.	1. Women
			Bernard Faure, 18 / Pierre Faure, brother		
2B 1464	June 1682	Sumène (Gard)	Jean Massane,	De Sumène had a long	3. Nobility

			controleur des exploits	history of filing suits against his inhabitants to reduce their privileges. The community elected Massane as syndic to defend them; in revenge, de Sumène attacked Massane.	
			Baron de Sumène, Jean François du Fesc, conseiller cour des aides.		
2B 1465	6am, 25 March 1682	Rue Saint Martin, Aspet (Haute-Garonne)	Fabien Dedieu, bailiff, 32	Dedieu informed Toussan of the consulary election results - the judge dismissed Toussan's candidates and elected Roger Bouery, merchant, instead. Toussan seized Dedieu by the collar and imprisoned him.	4. Notability
			Jean Toussan, premier consul		
2B 2031	1 December 1685	Château de Françon (Haute-Garonne)	Maître Bernard Abadie, priest, Le Fousseret / Arnaud Martres, sergent	Martres was commissioned to seize property from the vicomte following litigation with Abadie. De Villa, along with four other women who were at the château, attacked the officials with metal bars and prevented the seizure of goods.	1. Women
			Jeanne de Villa, wife of Paul Bonnefort, agent for sieur vicomte de Labatut		
2B 2032	13-16 August 1685 (ongoing in 1704)	Masseube (Gers)	Maître Jean Bianne, avocat	Bianne pleaded a case against Lacassaigne for his client sieur Mathieu Vidou. Lacassaigne was angered, and shouted that Bianne should be ashamed to speak against him. He hit Bianne with his baton, and later the same day fired his pistol at Bianne on the road to Saissan. He was arrested, but consuls Lacoste and Viguelles broke him out of prison.	4. Notability
			Jean Annet Lacassaigne, praticien		
2B 2037	6am, 16 June 1683	Ceint d'Eau (Lot)	Jean Laborie, merchant / bourgeois	Land ownership dispute. Laborie mowed the hay in a field. De Bellet and her children, including de Gimel, priest, attacked Laborie in the field - they pulled his hair and caused him to bleed.	2. Clergy
			Anne de Bellet, widow of noble Bernard de Gimel, 60		Linked case: 2B 2115

			& Noble Jean de Gimel, priest, 26		
2B 2105	11pm, 24 July 1717	Figeac (Lot)	Sieur Raymond Delpon, bourgeois	Ongoing dispute between the parties. Arson of the plaintiffs three grain and animal barns - all destroyed. Publication of a monitoire.	4. Notability
			Guillaume Tauran / Jean Timiers (dit Gajol), laboureurs		
2B 2106	5pm, Sunday 4 September 1695	Montblanc (Hérault)	Catherine Roumiere, widow of Pierre Bras	Roumiere reportedly had a dispute with Causal's mother-in-law. Aiguesviver beat Roumiere with batons multiple times. On 4 September, Roumiere was in the street - she was beaten by Julien, Causal and Aiguesiver who hit her with batons. She was knocked to the ground, bleeding, and the men then dragged her to prison where she was kept overnight.	1. Women
			Maître Bernard Julien, conseiller du Roi, maire, 55 / Jean Aiguesiver, tailleur / Jean Baptiste Causal, boucher		
2B 2107	5 April 1695	Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Jean Le Brun, maître tapissier	Lafiche was formerly Le Brun's apprentice. At the end of the apprenticeship, Le Brun helped Lafiche and Cartex establish their own establishment. Despite this, the defendants treated him badly because he passed commissions on to other upholsterers. In revenge, Cartex attacked Le Brun in the street, and ripped his cravat and wig.	1. Women
			Marguerite Cartex, wife of Jean Lafiche, maître tapissier, rue Perchepinte		
2B 2110	July 1680	Château de Longuetille, Saint-Léger (Lot-et-Garonne)	Marguerite Dupuy, widow of noble Jacob de Bridiers, seigneur de Vilemore, Lamothe etc. 60	Dupuy filed a suit against her son, who had stolen harvest and grains from her property. He had also attacked her inhabitants. The dispute seems to emerge from an issue of inheritance.	3. Nobility
			Noble Antoine Bridiers, sieur de Mauvesin		

2B 2120	27 May 1683	Cahuzac-sur-Vère (Tarn)	Sieur Louis Séguier, praticien au palais	The defendant provoked a confrontation by knocking items belonging to the plaintiff from the hands of Demoiselle de Jonquiere. The following morning, the defendant beat the plaintiff with batons while in the jardin du Fontanes.	4. Notability
			Sieur Guillaume de Fauclamouse de Boisredon		
2B 2123	18 September 1685	Rocamadour (Lot)	Guillaume Vacquié, bourgeois. Married to Antoinette Guiraudet	Guiraudet came with others to expel Vacquié from the house in which he lives. They used force and violence. They took off the doors and kicked him into the garden. Vacquié moved his family to a smaller house; when they arrived they were met by a soldier who had been stationed there by Guiraudet to prevent Vacquié from entering the house.	2. Clergy
			Maître Pierre Guiraudet, priest and chanoine.		
2B 2156	10pm, 19 October 1681	La - Salvetat - sur - Agout (Hérault)	Procureur	The procureur juridictionnel filed a suit against both adversaries for fighting a duel.	4. Notability
			Sieur Henri Reynaud de Serajac / Sieur de Garrigues de la Devèze		
2B 2181	1698	Mas En Gelis, Cabanès (Tarn)	Jacques Bressoles	Dispute emerged from land damage caused by pasturing animals. Moulriers and his family attacked Bressoles in the fields; countersuits filed, and both sides presented surgeon reports.	1. Women
			Michel Moulriers, Marc Moulriers and Jeanne (son and wife of Michel)		
2B 2221	May 1694	Rue Perchepinte, Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Jean-Pierre de Giral, marchand / Marguerite Verzian, wife	The plaintiffs were insulted and attacked by their chambermaid on their wedding day. Also,	1. Women

			Françoise Merville, domestic	accusations of theft. Merville accused de Giral of assault and battery in the house.	
2B 2225	1691	Caupenne d'Armagnac (Gers)	Maître Guillaume Goudin, prêtre, chanoine, syndic.	As syndic, the plaintiff brought lawsuits against Donat for debts. These were found to be false. Goudin also filed suits against the defendants for violence. Counter-suits.	4. Notability
			Sieur Jean Jacques Donat / Sieur Jean Pierre Pichot du Bousquau, bourgeois		
2B 2256	6 August 1682	Montesquieu (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Guillaume Sarret, paysan, 88 / Pierre Sarret, son	De Régis sent her métayer to kill one of the plaintiff's mares. Sarret filed a suit against de Régis' métayer. In revenge, de Régis claimed the mare had damaged her property. Both parties appealed to different courts and Sarret was held in prison for 27 days.	1. Women
			Demoiselle Marie de Régis, widow of noble Raymond du Goût, sieur de la Roquette		
2B 2275	September 1693	Montauban (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Sieur Jean Durban, bourgeois, 60	Cavailles was commissioned to sequester grain for Dame Anne de Carrie. Durban disputed the amount of grain taken, when he came to retrieve the excess amount taken, Cavailles and his family attacked Durban and his daughter. Jacob C punched Durban in the face.	4. Notability
			Jean Cavailles (dit. Reveillac), 50 / Jacob, father and son. "Pauvres laboureurs"		
2B 2287	Evening, June 1699 (investigation ongoing in 1713)	Quintignac (Lozère)	Pierre Malavieille, paysan	Murder of Malavieille - before his death, the plaintiff informed the vicaire that after dining with his brother Jean at the house of Pierre Bounal, they were approached by Du Mazel who attacked Jean with a rifle butt. Pierre defended his brother and in the process he was kicked in the stomach so hard that he vomited. He died from his	3. Nobility
			Charles du Mazel, sieur de Quintinhac, eldest son of Sieur d'Usel, seigneur.		Linked case: 2B 2294

				injuries.	
2B 2291	After Easter, March 1697	Tarbes (Hautes-Pyrénées)	Sieur Jean Pierre Larrei, bourgeois, consul.	Dispute originated in debate over placement of the 'petit marché' - normally located in Place de Saint Jean, some wanted to move it to Place de Maubourguet. During the debate, de Serignan seized Larrei by the cravat and attempted to drag him to prison.	4. Notability
			Maîtres de Fournets, Serignan, Turon - all officers of the sénéchaussée		
2B 2305	11 November 1681, Saint Martin's Day	Vacquiers (Haute-Garonne)	Maître Pierre Rocquier de Castelfort, écuyer, on behalf of his sons maîtres Bernard and Jean, écoliers.	The two boys claim to have been publicly beaten by Rouziers. The defendant claims that he saw the boys beating another Vacquiers resident with their swords. He intervened, and they turned on him. Witnesses report Rouziers beating the boys around the head and shoulders with a baton.	3. Nobility
			Louis Rouziers, travailleur		
2B 2309	May 1685	Clermont-l'Hérault (Hérault)	Pierre Boyer, greffier of the ordinary court	Case brought by demoiselle Marie Angerline, mother of Boyer, on his behalf. Boyer and Laurens were involved in a case between two residents of nearby Nébian. Laurens attacked Boyer in retaliation for his involvement.	4. Notability
			Maître Louis Laurens, viguier / Antoine Laurans, cousin		
2B 2314	Sunday 5 July 1682	Place publique - Saint-Ybars (Ariège)	Jean Paul Dufau, premier consul	De Fantillou and the other consuls disputed Dufau's election to the premier position. They appealed to overturn the election, when this appeal was rejected, de Fantillou beat Dufau in the square.	4. Notability
			Jean Banquels de Fantillou, third consul		
2B 2346	1 February 1682	On the road between Marcorignan and Narbonne (Aude)	Sieur Joseph Martin, bourgeois	De Cazalèdes attempted to get Martin to conduct some affairs on his behalf. Martin refused; he was not a resident of Marcorignan and therefore did not have to. De	4. Notability
			Noble Henri de Cazalèdes (dit La		

			Primo)	Cazalèdes attacked Martin with pistols and batons.	
2B 2356	5 September 1685	Blansac (Ariège)	Marie du Prat, wife of maître Germain Bernadet	Family dispute. Du Prat was collecting potatoes. She was attacked by her brother-in-law and his wife who threw stones at her. Neighbours intervened but she was badly wounded and lost a significant quantity of blood. Du Prat claimed the attack was revenge for a suit she had pending in the parlement against Bernadet.	1. Women
			Fabien Bernadet, laboureur / Catherine de Balondrade, wife		
2B 2357	7pm, Saturday 17 June 1684	Sommières (Gard)	Demoiselle Jeanne Marque, daughter of late Guillaume, marchand, 38	Bousanquet attacked Marque outside his home; he punched her on the head and slapped her. This attack was in revenge for Marque's treatment of the defendant's cousin who had filed a suit against the plaintiff for violence and insults.	1. Women
			Sieur maître Jean Bousanquet, lawyer in parlement, 30		
2B 2362	9 September 1685	Saint-Martin d'Oydes (Ariège)	Nicolas Bergaud, laboureur, Saint-Martin	Bergaud was returning from the mill at Bonnac carrying flour on his mare. He took a share to Jean Lagarrigue who told him to take some grapes from his vineyard as payment. This he did; as he left he was met by Daliot who beat him with batons for theft.	4. Notability
			Maître Guillaume Daliot, consul of Lescousse		
2B 2367	12 July 1682	Masseube (Gers)	Noble Pierre d'Ibos de Talzac	D'Ibos visited the defendant at his château. They left for Masseube together. D'Ibos realised he had lost some items at the château. Saint Victor was insulted by the implication of theft and shot d'Ibos in the stomach. Before his death, d'Ibos took a room in Masseube where the consuls took his statement. He explained the events but did not want to lodge a complaint. Mention	3. Nobility
			Sieur de Saint Victor, son of sieur de Savignac, noble. Resident of château of Serre.		

				of amity.	
2B 2414	28 December 1695, Holy Innocents' Day	Near the church, Bagnères-de-Bigorre (Hautes-Pyrénées)	Sieur Pierre Cortade, bourgeois	D'Ancla fils attacked Cortade in the road - he held him against a table and beat his head against it. D'Ancla, père, intervened and slapped Cortade twice. Cortade was left bloodied.	4. Notability
			Sieurs Marcel d'Ancla, consul / Pierre d'Ancla, son		
2B 2418	1pm, 22 March 1685	Montpellier (Hérault)	Maître Bezac, substitut procureur du Roi, for Maître Roquefort, concierge of viguerie	Jurisdictional dispute between the two courts. Viguerie investigated a credit issue between Suzanne d'Assau and Françoise Pioche. d'Assau was arrested - she appealed to the sénéchaussée - Valescure broke her out of prison, Roquefort was injured in the process.	4. Notability
			Maître Valescure, conseiller, sénéchaussée		
2B 2419	July 1698	Fields, Quartier Montaudran, Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Marthe Laboubée, paysan	Partial case. Dispute and violence during harvest; Poussan attacked Laboubée. Several others join in, and Laboubée is seriously injured.	1. Women
			Jeanne Poussan & Jeanne Vincent, métayères		
2B 2436	1680	Salasc (Hérault)	Demoiselle Catherine Duguiés, widow of Guillaume de Salasc / Jean Salasc, son	Feud between the two families stemming from the 1650s. Amplified by legal proceedings in 1679 brought by J. Salasc against P. Forest for water usage. The Forests sought revenge and murdered J. Salasc. Case continued in the 1680s by Duguiés who obtained a death sentence for J. J. Forest and his son.	1. Women
			Claire de Guillem, wife of Jean Jacques Forest, royal notary / Pierre Forest, son.		
2B 2441	10am, Tuesday 27 February 1685	In the street, Les Junies (Lot)	Guillaume Gibert, royal notary, Les Broutous, 55	The baron had on many occasions sought to find and attack Gibert. On 27 Feb, he publicly attacked Gibert in the square - the attack was instigated by Gibert's disputed failure to follow proper greeting conventions - lack of respect. The baron threatened to kill Gibert, bit	3. Nobility
			Noble François de		Linked

			Beaumont, baron of Les Junies, 25	him on the nose and punched him multiple times on the face and body. Onlookers prevented further violence. There was a debt dispute between the two.	cases: 2B 2792; 5025
2B 2462	Easter, May 1685	Gimont (Gers)	Domenge Sagansan, widow of Pierre Estangoy, 60 / Marie Sagansan, daughter	Family dispute resulting in murder of Marie. Long history of Raulin attacking Domenge. The plaintiffs had eaten some herb soup - both became ill, vomiting through the night. Marie died. Witnesses report Raulin asking for cantharides at the apothecary.	1. Women
			Catherine Raulin, wife of Antoine Estangoy, tailleur d'habits		
2B 2539	7am, 28 November 1697	Lauzerte (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Maître Jean Mousset, huissier, 30	Plaintiff and other officials charged with moving prisoner Barthelemi Aunac. They were met at the prisons by a crowd of 100 people, including the defendant. The plaintiff was told his attempt was feeble - he was threatened and mistreated and made to release Aunac.	4. Notability
			Sieur de Calverie, procureur du roi, mayor of Montcuq		
2B 2541	30 January 1695	Lodging house, Saint-Jean- du-Gardonnenque (Gard)	David Pages, ménager	Pages confronted Vialat about Vialat's role in some affairs he was conducting for Pages. Vialat kicked him and slapped him for his disrespect.	4. Notability
			Maître Paul Vialat, docteur, avocat and royal notary, 33.		
2B 2562	10pm, 5 March 1685	Logis in the faubourg Château du Montréal (Aude)	Antoine Fabré, consul	The defendant was causing disorder at the logis, waving around a horseradish shaped like a male member in front of ladies. Fabre intervened - Plauzolles attacked Fabre and pulled out his hair. Background dispute between Fabre and Plauzolles' kin following the consular election.	4. Notability
			Pierre Plauzolles, voiturier		

2B 2563	2pm, 3 August 1684	Castelnau-Montratier (Lot)	Raymond Vertut, marchand / Marguerite de Noyrit, wife, pregnant	Vertut went for a meal at Courdresse's establishment. There he saw the defendants playing a game. He approached, but they attacked. Craissac stabbed him with a table knife. Neighbours told de Noyrit of the attack; she arrived at Courdresse's and intervened; the defendants kicked her stomach - she was 6 months pregnant.	1. Women
			Antoine Craissac, praticien / Pierre Courdresse, hoste		Linked case: 2B 3464
2B 2567	6 August 1685	La Fauga (Haute-Garonne)	Dame Anne Depatheu, wife of noble François de Reynes, écuyer	Depatheu ordered the harvest collection from her property in La Fauga. The defendants disputed her ownership of the hay - she defended her property but they shoved her and attacked her métayere.	1. Women
			Sieur Barrau / sieur Saint Paul, chirurgien / others		
2B 2569	5 February 1683	Saint-Clar-de-Lomagne (Gers)	Arnaude Poumejean, daughter of Françoise Dulaur, widow, paysan, 18	Poumejean was guarding sheep in a field belonging to Carrefour, bourgeois. De Capdeville hit her multiple times and said that she would pay and that he would teach her not to put sheep to pasture in the area.	3. Nobility
			Noble Charles de Capdeville, sieur de Ponsan and de Larié,		
2B 2589	27 August 1684	Villemur-sur-Tarn (Hautes-Pyrénées)	Pierre Mellines, merchant	Partial case - mainly appeal documents. Mellines had been kicked and punched by the Neyronis brothers without any pretext. He was left bed bound.	4. Notability
			Maître Jean Paul Neyronis, lawyer / Guillaume Neyronis, brothers		
2B 2590	28 July 1684	Le Puy (Haute-Loire)	Maître Vidal Gasaignon, greffier, for Jeanne Savial, wife	Partial case. The defendants attacked Savial and her servant in the street with batons. They were both badly injured.	1. Women
			André Benoît, huissier / Marie Robert, wife		

2B 2757	October 1685	Parisot (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Cécile Souliere, wife of Antoine Aussol, laboureur, métayer, 39, pregnant	Souliere was guarding a herd of sheep on land belonging to sieur Rolland. Bouniel claimed she called him a jerk; he attacked her with a baton. Bouniel was chastised by onlookers; he bragged that the plaintiffs were too poor to pursue justice. Souliere was bed bound for three weeks - she had a miscarriage and died as a result of the attack.	1. Women
			Guillaume Bouniel, 73		
2B 2772	8pm, 6 October 1681	Bellegarde-Sainte Marie (Haute-Garonne)	Arnaud Lote, laboureur, 65	De Martigny was Lote's master - he had attempted to get some mules that he shared with de Martigny. De Martigny assaulted Lote and threatened to shoot Lote with his pistol - the pistol failed to fire. Lote turned the pistol into the greffe with his complaint.	4. Notability
			Maître François de Martigny, lawyer in parlement		
2B 2776	3pm, 18 October 1685	Manciet (Gers)	Maître Foix Couargues, royal notary	Dupuy, merchant of Manciet, obtained a sentence against Couargues. Couargues appealed the sentence, but Dupuy sent the Broques brothers, 'self-called archers' to collect on the sentence. He confronted the brothers who refused to show him their commission, and then beat him.	4. Notability
			Broques brothers, archers		
2B 2779	30 November 1685	Nailloux (Haute-Garonne)	Maître Jean Tauriac, receveur de sel (Villefranche) 37	The defendants owed 67 livres to Tauriac. He requested payment in the street. They insulted him and punched him several times. After Tauriac filed criminal proceedings against the defendants, Massol stabbed two of Tauriac's horses.	1. Women
			Guillaume Massol, lawyer, 69, Marguerite de Barre, 47		

2B 2781	Afternoon, 27 September 1686	Alès (Gard)	Maître Guillaume Blanc, law student, son of monsieur Jean Blanc, judge	Blanc claimed de Saunier had harboured a hatred for him from a young age. Multiple incidents over 10 years. In September 1686, de Saunier ordered his employees to attack Blanc. They beat him and attempted to take him to prison. He escaped. Links the incident to pending litigation between his father and de Saunier.	4. Notability
			Maître Louis de Saunier, sieur de St Auban, judge of appeals		
2B 2787	9pm, Wednesday 26 December 1685	Pissepourcel (Lot)	Antoine Marre, praticien / Jean de Goulfie, wife of Guillaume Sabrié, 24 / Catherine de Druille, mother	Ongoing dispute involving multiple parties. Cantiac was seen stealing from Marre's house - Marre confronted Cantiac who fled. He later returned with a pistol and fired at Marre. Sac includes a complaint from 1682 - de Goulfie was attacked by Cantiac in the town square - he punched her multiple times and left her covered in blood.	1. Women
			Jean Cantiac, vigneron, 45 / Gabrielle de Sabrie, wife, 35		
2B 2798	11am, Sunday 29 July 1685	Place publique, Saint-Sernin, near Ferrat (Aveyron)	Louis Clusel, bachelier en droit, Montclar	Miramet was heard loudly disputing Clusel's claims concerning a case he had with Miramet's beau-frere. Publicly called him a liar. When Clusel defended himself, Miramet attacked. Links to an arson committed on Clusel's barn and house.	4. Notability
			Pierre Miramet		
2B 2800	27 October 1680	Caylus (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Marie de Jean, widow of Jean Faure Flouret	Murder of de Jean - she was pregnant by Cavaillé. She had tried to get him to honour the marriage agreement, instead he murdered her and fled. Knife wounds to head. House on fire with her inside.	1. Women
			Jean Cavaillé de Brave, laboureur & Jean Servières (dit. Clavel), tailor		
2B 2858	5pm 23 April 1700	Hamlet La Teularie, near	Sieur Pierre Geste, son of Jean François	The defendants attacked Geste in a copse belonging	1. Women

		Mauvezin (Gers)	Geste, premier consul of Mauvezin	to his aunt while he was guarding a herd of cows. Calac hit Geste with a baton over the head and shoulders - they disputed the ownership of the land. Calac also filed a suit against Geste.	
			Marie Calac, widow of Blaise St Martin, 65 / Marie Olivier, 25, niece		
2B 2873	12pm, Monday 23 July 1685	Place publique, Vailhourles (Aveyron)	Maître Antoine Barrau, lawyer, sénéchaussée, judge of Vailhourles	Lourines had a suit against sieur Latour, Barrau's kin. Lourines and others came to collect on the sentence - Latour was not present so they asked Barrau to unlock Latour's door. He refused - Lourines threatened to fire a pistol at him and strangled him until his face changed colour.	4. Notability
			Guillaume Lourines, leather merchant, Villefranche de Rouergue, 50		
2B 2895	Night time, 1685	Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Laurens Laforgue, marchand	Partial case - Laforgue was attacked and seriously wounded by the defendants at night time. Premeditated.	1. Women
			Jean Sicard / Jeanne Calvet, wife		
2B 3101	24 March 1681	Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Jean Amiel, merchant, son of maître Michel Amiel, 25	Amiel was dining at a logis. Four people entered with swords and attacked Amiel. His friends were held at sword point, Amiel was beaten first with the flat of the sword, then with the edge. He lived long enough to file the complaint. Died 7 April. His father continued the suit on his behalf.	4. Notability
			Maître Jean Antoine Dumas, son of maître Bernard Dumas, lawyer in parlement, Gaillac.		
2B 3183	1716	Béziers (Hérault)	Henry Mayneau, master potter & Jeanne Roque, widow of Ivan Mayneau (mother)	Dispute over the upcoming election for provost of the potters' guild - Pailhes wants the position, Mayneau opposes. The dispute escalates from oral disagreement to physical violence, involving female family members.	1. Women
			Pierre Pailhes, potter & Marie Pailhes (daughter)		
2B 3218	1695	Mas de Laborie,	Jean Férié, métayer	Ongoing dispute from the	1. Women

		Montlédier (Tarn)	Louis Azemat, laboureur, tisserand / Marique Pauquette, wife / François, son	1670s. Férié was insulted by Azemat while working; Azemat's wife and son got involved and they collectively attacked Férié.	
2B 3226	8pm, 10 May 1716	Near the Toulouse Gate, Carcassonne (Aude)	Sieur Arnaud Carrouset, marchand droguiste, 37	Carrouset was with Genie, consul, and Alquier, merchant draper. They met Vidal, who mentioned an industrial complaint he had filed. Carrouset asked Vidal if he had informed anyone, to which Vidal took offence. He insulted Carrouset, used the informal 'tu' and punched and kicked him.	4. Notability
			Sieur Jean Baptiste Vidal, marchand and collecteur.		
2B 5000	August 1699	Bagnols-sur-Ceze (Gard)	Demoiselle Anne Rosselle, widow of Sieur Simon Tendil, bourgeois, 80	Rosselle obtained a sentence from the parlement against de Sibert. She went to collect the fine owed to her, but de Sibert used his influence to prevent notaries or sergeants aiding her collection. She presented the sentence herself, and de Sibert took this as a sign of disrespect; he had her arrested and detained.	1. Women
			Noble Charles de Sibert, seigneur de Montières, baron de Cornillon, viguier/maire of Bagnols		
2B 5025	Early 1685	Les Junies (Lot)	Noble François de Beaumont, seigneur and baron Les Junies, 35	De Beaumont's countersuit to Gibert's suit. Gibert stabbed de Beaumont. The seigneur obtained an arrest warrant, and Gibert attempted to avoid punishment - fled arrest, and feigned being too ill to go to prison.	4. Notability
			Maître Guillaume Gibert, notary, Goujounac		
2B 5090	11am, Sunday 6 September 1683	Grazac (Haute-Loire)	Noble Pierre Besson, sieur de la Rochette, maire of Grazac, 29	Besson made his bid for mayor but the money had not been transferred. Despite this, he acted as mayor, and checked weights etc at Sabateyron's. The defendants attacked him, using batons and knives. In countersuits, the defendants disputed the plaintiff's noble status. They claimed that	3. Nobility
			Jean Garnier, dit Sabateyron, host, 30 / and others		Linked case: civil - 2B 3206

				Besson attacked them the same day in revenge.	
2B 5198	8pm, 27 June 1687	Cardailiac (Lot)	Jacques Murat, bourgeois, 40	On the terrace of a friend's house, Cellier approached Murat's group, under the pretext of asking a question. He and his brother then attacked Murat, leaving him bleeding from the face.	4. Notability
			Paul Cellier, sieur d'Autabel / Louis Cellier (brother)		Linked case: 2B 5267
2B 5281	Morning, 14 May 1687	Rue du Fourbastard, Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Maître François Faramond, priest and curé of Miramon	The defendants waited outside the house of Faramond's brother, where Faramond was staying. As Faramond exited, they insulted him and put their hands to their swords. They continued to pursue the curé throughout the day, threatening to kill him. Previous issue between Rit and Faramond relating to Rit's conduct.	2. Clergy
			Noble Henri de Morie, sieur de la Calmise / Michel Rit (dit l'Allemand), valet, 27		
2B 5356	3pm, 3 July 1692	Thoiras, near Saint Jean du Gard (Gard)	Sieur Jean Viala, premier consul	Viala was collecting taxes. Stopped at a residence and invited to drink with Velais and sieur Teisseire. Velais and Teisseire began to argue over money. Viala intervened and asked if they had a procès between them. He advised them to agree in order to avoid costs. Velais took offence to his intervention, insulted Viala and physically attacked him.	4. Notability
			Pierre Velais, Barre-des-Cévennes		
2B 5362	17 April 1691	Madiran (Haute-Pyrénées)	Pierre Ducasse, capitaine de la garde bourgeoisie	Ducasse was elected as captain of the bourgeois guard. De Mieussens disputed the election and claimed he had been elected instead. He sought to embarrass and attack Ducasse on multiple occasions. While Ducasse had the guard on parade, de Mieussens and his family attacked Ducasse, beat him and knocked him to the ground. The defendant then	3. Nobility
			Gabriel de Mieussens de Cauhadet / Antoine de Mieussens de la Parade, father / Gaspard and Guy de Mieussens de Mondique, uncle and		

			cousin	took Ducasse's place at the head of the parade.	
2B 5363	20 April 1689	Montauban (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Maître Louis de Cahusac, lieutenant principal, sénéchaussée	Chambert targeted Cahusac's professional reputation without reason or pretext - in his forty years of service, he had never seen an officer of his age treated so badly. Chambert then physically attacked Cahusac.	4. Notability
			Sieur Chambert, lieutenant assesseur criminel,		
2B 5370	2am, 7 January 1698	Château Saint-Orens (Gers)	Alexandre de Bérail, seigneur of Saint-Orens	The château was attacked at night by 20 individuals, led by the defendant. They set fire to the roof and broke tiling and doors. The dispute appears to be rooted in property disputes.	3. Nobility
			Jean de Miramon, seigneur of Aignan, 45 / and others		Linked case 2B 7277
2B 5454	Wednesday 11 February 1699	Saint-Julien-de-Peyrolas (Gard)	Sieur Joseph Blanc, conseiller du Roi, mayor, 42	Was dining at Charmande's logis after a baptism. Blanc stabled his horse and asked it to be fed hay. Dispute with Pierre C over the cost of hay. Pierre attacked Blanc with a stone, took his wig and threw it to the floor.	4. Notability
			Anne Charmande, widow, hostess, 60 /and her children		
2B 5549	12pm, 16 June 1690	Lodging house (sign of Saint Jean), Albi (Tarn)	Marie de Malese, wife of Geraud Saliege, host & Marie Roumegoux, widow of Pierre Malezes, butcher (daughter)	Dispute over wine during the fair. De Malese didn't have any glass bottles of wine left because it was so busy. De Fonvielle became enraged when she offered him an earthen pot of wine instead - he broke an empty bottle across her head and attacked multiple people.	1. Women
			Raymond de Fonvielle, valet of sieur d'Escarlhan		
2B 5556	11 January 1692	La Théoule (Ardèche)	Claude LaBeouf, son of Jean, laboureur, La Théoule	Murder of Claude LaBoeuf during a seizure of goods (a foal) from Jean LaBoeuf at the request of sieur d'Uthol. Claude was attacked with sword blows. Stabbed in the thigh, piercing the vena cava - attacked even after he fell to the ground.	4. Notability
			Jean Gaucherand, sergeant, Pradelles, 60 / Claude Marion, valet and bailiff / Jacques Allari		

2B 5590	9am, 12 April 1688	Cahors (Lot)	Charles Cabrespine, légiste, University of Cahors, Aurillac	Murder of Cabrespine; information comes from Gourlat. Gourlat, Cabrespine, and other students lodged in Cahors - multiple contentious interactions between the two. Gourlat claims self defence after being attacked in the street - swords used.	4. Notability
			Guillaume Gourlat, sieur de la Vegrine, légiste, University of Cahors, Aurillac		
2B 5645	1689	Rue Montgaillard, Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Guillaumette Rey, daughter of Antoine Rey, servant, 19	Cladel attacked Rey in the street with batons. Rey's father was a servant of a lawyer in the parlement. Countersuits - Cladel claimed Rey attacked him.	1. Women
			Antoine Cladel, praticien, notary, in parlement		
2B 5658	Saturday 28 January - 10 March 1696	Street / House / Church, Narbonne (Aude)	Maître Guillaume Fabre, juge royal, lieutenant criminel en chef, Narbonne	Fabre investigated a theft committed by de Cazaledes' tenants. De Cazaledes confronted Fabre about a public show of disrespect to him; he attacked Fabre who fled across a rooftop. De Cazaledes followed Fabre to the prisons, to Fabre's house, and eventually confronted him in church. Physical assault and insults.	4. Notability
			Noble Jean-André Lamerie de Cazaledes, major régiment de Rouergue.		
2B 5738	12pm, 28 July 1694	Espéraza (Aude)	Jean Pierre de Martin, conseiller du Roi, châtelain de Fanjeaux, juge.	The defendants attended the notification of an act made by Captier, merchant, to de Martin while de Martin was dining with Espezel, praticien. They attacked Captier. The defendants intervened and were arrested for their part - de Martin accuses them of assassination.	4. Notability
			Geraud Sabatier / Jean Sabartes, teinturier, 45		
2B 5785	November 1698	Concots (Lot)	Jacques Bach, maître menuisier / Claire de Ganilh, wife / Etienne Bach, son	Bach rented a bed to la Garrigue. At the end of the term, he requested the return of the bed. This request was ignored, despite multiple requests intervention from mediators etc. Bach eventually attempted to retrieve the	2. Clergy
			Maître Jean la Garrigue, priest and		

			vicaire of Concots, 46	bed himself, la Garrigue attacked him and his family with fists and a hunting knife.	
2B 5793	1691	Bordes (Haute-Pyrénées)	Jean Barbasan, regent, premier consul, 47 / Jean Abbadie, collecteur, 33	Barbasan acted as main forte during a tax collection at the defendants' property. The defendants armed themselves to defend their property - de Marcassus hit both men over the head - she knocked Abbadie out, and knocked Barbasan to the ground.	1. Women
			Jean du Faur Pourrat / Marie de Marcassus, wife		
2B 5794	2 April 1692	Montpellier (Hérault)	Etienne Ferrière, marchand	Ferrière had a debt dispute with Jean de Baudan, tresorier de France. He obtained support from the parlement and the bourse to reclaim the debt. During the attempted reclamation, Jean's brother and mother, the defendants, attacked Ferrière and the archers aiding the collection. They were threatened and punched and fled without collecting the debt.	3. Nobility
			Sieur Jacques de Baudan, capitain des cheveux légers, 27 / Dame Françoise de la Vère, 48		
2B 5798	17 September 1705	Le Crucifix, near Ferrières (Lot)	Jeanne Soulie, wife of Simon Basset, host	Demeaux's horse was sequestered for the dixieme. Basset was the collector, and the horse was kept at the plaintiff's house. Demeaux attempted to reclaim his horse - broke the door with an axe and attacked Soulie.	1. Women
			Maître Jean Demeaux, maître chirurgien		
2B 5824	August 1691	Gourdon (Lot)	Guy Maury, medical student, son of Pons Maury, notary	Maury and Tastes had dined together. Maury left and promenaded with female companions, including Françoise Chatelombe. They drank to her health and went to a garden to eat strawberries. They met others, walked together, and Chatelombe disappeared. Maury found her eating strawberries with Tastes.	4. Notability
			Jean Tastes, notary, son of Guillaume, notary		

				Tastes had been to the cabaret and was a bit 'heated' - he threatened the group. Maury tried to calm him, but Tastes attacked him.	
2B 5909	9am, 4 November 1698	Gaillac (Tarn)	Sieur Bernard Bautier, merchant	Bautier sets out long term enmity between the two. Fabre had attacked and insulted him multiple times. In Nov, Fabre whipped Bautier across the face in the street after Bautier had attempted to purchase wine.	4. Notability
			Joseph Fabre, merchant, 42		
2B 5933	September 1690	Laguepie (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Antoine and Jeanne Taniers, poor peasants	Partial case. Dispute begins in the 1680s. Treisac had previously beaten the plaintiffs, leaving them close to death. He also killed a number of their sheep. The plaintiffs pursued their suit against Treisac's widow.	1. Women
			Anne de Petit, widow of Jean Treisac, merchant		
2B 5948	July 1688	Montpellier (Hérault)	Sieur de Massannes	Actually relates to a duel from the 1670s - both men deceased by 1688 appeal. De Massannes died in the duel. Massannes' second was sieur de la Clotte. 1688 appeal by Maître Jean de Brun, conseiller, sénéchaussée in Nîmes, for the acquittal of his brother's memory.	4. Notability
			Sieur de Roussas		
2B 5965	20 May 1694	Aramon / Villeneuve- les-Avignon (Gard)	Maître Jean Damour, priest, religieux of the order of St Benoît	The mayor and consuls of Aramon obtained a decree to arrest Damour - this was based on false information and malice. They captured him and took him to prisons in Nîmes - as a religieux he obtained a transfer to the officialité prisons. During the transfer, Damour was attacked by the officials from Aramon - they locked him in a room and gagged him so he couldn't speak, and threatened to kill him.	2. Clergy
			Sieur de Laudun, mayor / consuls of Aramon		

2B 5975	November 1698	Caussade (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Demoiselle Jeanne de Prevost / Sieur Jean Pierre del Fau, bourgeois	Dispute over rent and payment; the plaintiffs rented an apartment in the defendants' house. The defendants believe the plaintiffs stayed beyond their contract end. They attacked the plaintiffs when they did not move out. Use of swords against both plaintiffs.	1. Women
			Sieur Gaspard Castelbon, lawyer in parlement, 27 / Demoiselle Jeanne de Pecholier		Linked case: 2B 5624
2B 6026	January 1701	Joyeuse (Ardeche)	Maître Joseph Gascon, docteur en droit	Partial case. Durieu had beaten Gascon with batons. Gascon obtained a sentence from the sénéchaussee - banishment and fine. Gascon requested to make an effigy which he displayed in the square. Durieu ignored the sentence and mocked the effigy and the courts.	4. Notability
			Louis Durieu		
2B 6030	7pm, 29 June 1701	Saint Romain, Puycornet (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Sieur maître Marc Antoine Martin, procureur juridictionnel	Martin was walking in the barony of Puycornet. Outside Duvergue's house, he saw Duvergue and others who were discussing a pending case in the ordinary court. The two litigants were present. Martin advised them to find a friend to mediate to avoid costs. Duvergue became enraged and attacked Martin.	4. Notability
			Pierre Duvergue, hoste		
2B 6034	Morning, 1 February 1701	Grain market, Béziers (Hérault)	Demoiselle Anne de Thomas, 48, wife of sieur Jean Maternis, merchant, bourgeois	De Thomas was slapped by Trémouille in the marketplace. Incident linked to suit between Trémouille and his daughter; she had stayed with de Thomas after fleeing her home and filing a suit against her father.	1. Women
			Sieur Jean Trémouille, bourgeois		
2B 6052	10 August 1700	Cessenon-sur-Orb (Hérault)	Sieur Jean Guiraud, bourgeois	Mainly appeal documentation, little information about the original incident / investigation. Pailhes beat Guiraud, with the help of his children and the named	4. Notability
			Joseph Louis de Pailhes, sieur de		

			Viravel	Sipion.	
2B 6053	April 1697	Pardiac (Gers)	Maître Jean Dantin Mauleon, royal notary	Murder of the plaintiff by Lasserre and his son and daughter. Jacques was sentenced in contumace, but Paul and Françoise were released; Dantin's brother appealed the release in 1698. The murder occurred following a debt dispute.	1. Women Linked case: 2B 7331
			Sieur Paul Lasserre / Jacques and Françoise Lasserre (children)		
2B 6058	10am, 29 June & 8am, 30 June 1695	In the street, Montoulieu (Aude)	Demoiselle Jeanne de Mallos, wife of maître François Bessier, huissier in parlement	De Mallos was alerted by her daughter that Dides had been slandering her. She confronted Dides, who called her a whore and threatened to beat her. Onlookers intervened. The next day, Dides attacked de Mallos in a garden - kicks and slaps.	1. Women
			Jean François Dides, praticien, 21		
2B 6073	1693	Belpech (Aude)	Jean François de Bonnell / Pierre Ruth / François Castanet (all consuls)	Confrontation at an assembly convened to deliberate the duties put on the inhabitants of Belpech by the Bishop of Mirepoix. Delpuy interrupted the proceedings though he should not have been present. He argued he was syndic, this was disputed, and he was asked to leave. He attacked Bonnell and others, supported by some in attendance.	4. Notability
			Guillaume Delpuy, son of Jean François Delpuy		
2B 6080	3 May 1694, Feast of the Holy Cross	Aucazein (Ariège)	Noble Jean Louis de Soulan d'Agert, for Noble Marc Antoine de Que de Moncaup	Lapeyre murdered de Moncaup in his home with a knife. She admitted the murder; claimed self defence. She visited de Moncaup's house to receive a loan he had promised. He attempted to rape her; she stabbed him in the throat.	3. Nobility
			Marie Lapeyre, widow of Isaac Dupuy, laboureur, of Illartain, 30		
2B 6100	28 July 1695	Lagardelle-sur- Lèze (Haute- Garonne)	Jean Petit Assié	After litigation between maître Timotie, baker, and maître Gabriele, Assié was commissioned to sequester goods from Timotie, as per	4. Notability

			Sieur Jean Antoine de Colomies, mayor	the sentence. Colomies disrupted the collection and threatened Assié with pistols. Rumour that he fired the pistol.	
2B 6191	8pm, 4 September 1684	Rabastens (Tarn)	Maître Jean Clauzade, avocat in the parlement, 27	Clauzade was dining with friends. He was confronted, without pretext, by Roques who quarrelled with him. Clauzade told Roques to take a walk - Roques beat him across the face, leaving him bloodied.	4. Notability
			François Roques, bourgeois, 23		
2B 6204	8pm, 8 December 1683	Escatalens (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Maître Sans de Margastaud, curé	Murder of the curé - shot in the head after leaving the Lacaze residence. He had been dining with Bertrand and others. Witnesses claim that twenty years prior, de Margastaud and Lacaze had been in a legal dispute, and Lacaze had requested his sons avenge him.	2. Clergy
			Jean Lacaze (dit LaPujade), écolier / Maître Bertrand Lacaze, lawyer, father		
2B 6374	14 October 1703	Marseillan (Hérault)	Maître Jean Massre, mayor	At the meeting of the general council, sieur Rigaud was deputised to deliver thanks from the commune to the bishop of Agde for countering the stationing of soldiers in Marseillan. Rigaud declined the nomination, which enraged Clerc. Massre told him not to shout, which angered Clerc further.	4. Notability
			Etienne Clerc, bourgeois, 68		
2B 6413	7pm, 4 May 1708	Limoux (Aude)	Demoiselle Catherine d'Aoustene, widow of Louis Salva, bourgeois	D'Aoustene was insulted and attacked by Gellis and her daughters and sisters when she passed by Gellis' house. They scratched and kicked her. One sister claimed that d'Aoustene attacked them when another family member coughed and spat on the floor near d'Aoustene.	1. Women
			Marguerite Gellis, wife of François Bouissou, marchand		

2B 6441	5pm, 26 October 1699	Bagnères-de-Bigorre (Haute-Pyrénées)	Demoiselle Louise de Soubies, daughter of late maître Bertrand Soubies, notary and lawyer	The defendants attacked and attempted to strangle de Soubies when she intervened in their confrontation with their stepmother. De Soubies was an ally of the stepmother. The violence between the sisters and their stepmother emerged from an inheritance dispute. Multiple suits were brought between the three parties.	1. Women
			Marie and Marguerite Laporte, sisters, daughters of late Jean Laporte, baker		Linked cases: 2B 7057; 7242
2B 6450	11am, 6 February 1701	Couderque's house, Villemagne (Aude)	Maître François Pairoles, viguier	Pairolles provided main force during the attempted arrest of Isabeau Couderque for 'mauvaise vie'. The defendant attacked the plaintiff with a knife; Isabeau also attacked with an axe. Multiple family members prevented the arrest.	1. Women
			Jeanne Couderque, widow of Pierre Babau / Isabeau (daughter) / multiple family members		
2B 6455	20 November 1701	La Calmette (Gard)	Noble Guillaume de Tinellis de Castellet, co-seigneur of La Calmette	Dispute originates over de Tinellis' building of a wall with crenellations. The defendant and his mother filed a suit to get rid of the crenellations. This was rejected, and they instead attacked him. The defendant hit de Tinellis with the edge of his sword, causing a large gash to de Tinellis' face.	3. Nobility
			Noble Isaac d'Ardouin, co-seigneur of La Calmette		
2B 6486	5pm, 2 March 1707	Place des Ormeaux, Castres (Tarn)	Sieur Jacques Oules, marchand tinturier, 33	Children threw stones at Oules' house from the riverside. Oules asked them to stop and threatened to inform their fathers. The children continued, and Epeyronels' son threw stones at Oules. Oules went to confront Epeyronels, but instead of receiving justice, Epeyronels punched Oules and hit him with his sword.	4. Notability
			Louis Escande, sieur d'Epeyronels, conseiller du Roi, 45		

2B 6524	9pm, Monday 24 March 1706	Montech (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Jean Cala, dit Callat, tisserand, 25	The Orriel brothers were involved in a confrontation with the named Mespoulat, leaving Mespoulat injured. Cala intervened and scolded the brothers. The next day, Cala was lured to the city gates, where Geraud Orriel was with Jean Sudre. Sudre fired a pistol at Cala. Cala was thrown to the ground and was able to tell a priest who shot him, but was unable to say anything else.	4. Notability
			Geraud Orriel / Baltazar Orriel / Jean Sudre, bourgeois		
2B 6548	7pm and 10pm, 1 May 1702	Place Marcadieu, Isle Jourdain (Gers)	Maître Antoine Depie, notary and procureur, sénéchaussée	Aubiges confronted Depie while he was promenading with Aubige's sister. Depie warned Aubiges that his behaviour was reckless. Later Depie was attacked outside the town hall by three men. They beat him with metal bars - witnesses report seeing Aubiges fleeing the scene.	4. Notability
			Maître Jean Aubiges, lawyer in parlement		
2B 6567	9pm, 17 March 1707	Villefranche-de-Rouergue (Aveyron)	Sieur Guillaume Marie, marchand Orfèvre, 40	Fournié threatened Marie at his boutique. Marie hid inside. After 30 minutes, Marie exited the shop; Fournié attacked him with a baton while wearing a disguise. Fournié's family joined in the attack. Marie believed the attack was rooted in some words the two adversaries had had two years previously.	4. Notability
			Antoine Fournié, marchand boutonniér, 37		
2B 6594	Evening, 2 April 1697	Saint Izaiere (Aveyron)	Maître Pierre Carriere, notary	Carriere explained that the bishop's officials living at the château abused and threatened the residents of Saint Izaiere. On 2 April, Boscas and Gossé attacked Carriere with batons and swords while he was attending to business at the château.	4. Notability
			François Boscas, marchand / Gossé, valet - both officials of the Bishop of Vabre		
2B 6600	Midnight, 24 July 1701	Hères (Haute-Pyrénées)	Sieur Bertrand Vialles, chirurgien	The defendants attacked Vialles while walking home	1. Women

			Ramond de Bertaud, master blacksmith & Marguerite Montardon (wife)	one night. They beat him with wooden rakes and iron spikes, piercing his thigh, and left him gravely injured.	
2B 6627	Sunday 31 December 1702	Nîmes (Gard)	Simon Troubas, marchand, 58	Troubas sold wine from his house. A group of workers drank together, then fought over who should pay. The brawl broke Troubas' property - he told them to pay for the damages. They attacked him, scratched at his face and ripped out his hair. They left without paying, and stole items including Troubas' hat.	4. Notability
			Pierre Agard, dit Provençal / Rouers brothers / Pierre Combes		
2B 6628	10am, 4 January 1704	Place Saint George, Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Sieur Jean Balac, marchand	Officials entered Balac's house and threw his property out the window. He asked them their purpose - they seized him by the throat and dragged him into the street, and to the town hall. He was taken without his hat. The officials also beat Balac's mother.	4. Notability
			Unnamed officials - sénéchaussée		
2B 6634	21 September 1703	Rebaillou (Ariège)	Ester Dumas, widow of Moïse Desplat / young sons Jean and Paul	Dumas' son had been attacked by François. When she confronted him, he attacked her and pushed her into a ditch. His mother and siblings aided the attack. Dumas was called a witch. Bouregue claimed Dumas had first hit her young son, instigating the quarrel.	1. Women
			Jeanne Bouregue, wife of Pierre Fauroux, brasier / François, 24, Jean, 8, Catherine (children)		
2B 6645	25 April 1701	Pamiers (Ariège)	Maître Armand Violet, lieutenant général criminel, sénéchaussée	During the course of a murder investigation, Violet required access to documents from the greffe. Benech refused access, stating that the documents could not be removed, as per the custom. Violet attempted to force the matter, and Benech attacked him with a spit.	4. Notability
			Maître Philippe Jacques Benech, greffier au sénéchal, 33		
2B 6656	2pm, 15	Les Vans	Sieur Jacques	Ongoing dispute originated	4. Notability

	November 1701	(Ardeche)	Contelle, praticien, Petit Paris, Montselgues Maître Jacques Borrelly, notary	in August 1701, linked to Contelle's role in litigation against the defendant. Bourrelly was imprisoned - at his release, Contelle saw Bourrelly at the prisons. Contelle threatened Borrelly, who insulted him and hit him with a baton.	
2B 6658	11am, 22 June 1702	The prisons, Gourdon (Lot)	Maître Jean Dupuy, procureur du Roi, sénéchaussée André Molinier, praticien, son of Simon Molinier, procureur in the ordinary court	A jurisdictional dispute at the centre of a prison break. Dupuy attempted to stop the prison break, headed by Molinier - he advised Molinier that his actions were not wise. Molinier seized Dupuy and attempted to strangle him.	4. Notability
2B 6661	2am, 26 December 1703, Feast of Saint Etienne	In the street, Varen (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Demoiselle Jeanne d'Audry, wife of sieur Pierre Montaigne, lawyer in parlement, 22 / Anne Caminade, servant Antoine Ricous, praticien, son of Maître François Ricous, notary	Caminade had been sent to buy candles - she was attacked by Ricous who attempted to solicit her. Montaigne intervened, and Ricous stabbed him. D'Audry intervened and Ricous shoved her to the ground - she was 7 months pregnant and miscarried as a result.	1. Women
2B 6675	1 January 1707	Mas Escalavès, Saint-Clar (Gers)	Anne Feuges, wife of Jean Faubin, brassier Françoise Martin, widow of Raymond Dubarri / Marie, daughter	Dispute between neighbours. Little information, but Feuges claimed the defendants harboured a mortal hatred against her for many years. They beat her with stones on her head.	1. Women
2B 6709	February 1702	Castelnau (Hérault)	Jean Cros, premier huissier, sénéchaussée Montpellier Antoine Audibert, sergent, prévôté	Mainly appeal documents concerning costs from a process relating to a professional dispute between the two, during which Cros was accused of violence. No account of the original dispute.	4. Notability
2B 6743	14 October 1701	Nîmes (Gard)	Noble Charles Chrestien Frederic de Bournimb, from	Mattieu had rented a room in the plaintiff's house. This was organised by Mazel, and	3. Nobility

			Potsdam - resident of Nîmes and married to Nîmes native Demoiselle Magdelaine Mazel, 38	the agreement was for two years. After one year, de Bournimb terminated the contract. From then, Mattieu had quarrelled with de Bournimb, and attacked him multiple times. On 14 October, she beat him with a large stick in his office. Mattieu claimed that de Bournimb terminated the contract because of her involvement in his marital issues.	
			Anne Mattieu (dit Lagarde), widow of Etienne Martin, artisan, 45		
2B 6758	1703	Lavaur (Tarn)	Jean-François Pinhol, priest	Family dispute - the plaintiff and defendants are brothers. The priest accused his brothers of physically attacking him - this was denied, and they filed a countersuit.	2. Clergy
			Jean Pinhol / Pierre Pinhol		
2B 6780	15 September 1706	Viozan (Gers)	Thomas Marre, bailiff	Following litigation between the defendants and Jean Pourcet, laboureur, Marre was commissioned to collect money owed by the defendants. Marie agreed to pay but failed to do so. Marre returned to collect the debt but was attacked by the defendants - they knocked him to the ground with metal bars and left him bed bound. The defendants claimed that Marre attempted to sexually abuse them and injure their honour.	1. Women
			Lucie Campistron, daughter of Marie Cazaux, 20 / Bernarde Cazaux, widow / Jeanne Marie Campistron, daughter of Bernarde, 18		
2B 6848	9am, late July 1706	In the street, Pailhès (Ariège)	Marie Gouzie, widow of Antoine Campagne / Jean (son)	The defendants attacked the plaintiffs with stones and threatened to kill them. Marie was left bedbound for three weeks. Dispute linked to an incident involving Campagne when he was consul in 1701.	1. Women
			Louise & Anne Jaurès (sisters) / Antoinette & Anne Commenge (sisters)		
2B 6863	21 April 1703	Place du Marchédial, Cayres (Haute-Loire)	Maître Jean Bonnet, fermier at the métairie Le Rouzet.	Mainly appeal documents - Ongoing from 1690s. Bonnet claims to have been	2. Clergy

			Noble sieur Charles de Mialet, seigneur of Costaros / Etienne Dumas, priest	assaulted and insulted by the defendants during the cattle fair in Cayres. Debt issue between de Mialet and Bonnet.	Linked cases: 2B 287; 6033
2B 6886	4pm, 25 August 1704	Rue des Capelans (now Rue des Prêtres) Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Jean Pierre Bira, bourgeois, Saverdun (Ariège)	Caverie pursued Bira through the streets and beat him with a sword near the cloisters of Les Carmes. Bira parried the blows with his hand and was badly injured. Bira seems to have had a dispute with de Caverie's associate who he was visiting in Toulouse.	3. Nobility
			Noble Charles Eustache de Caverie, écuyer, Saverdun (Ariège), 37		
2B 6977	Evening, 30 March 1701	Place de la Prière, Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Pierre Cassaignes, charretier / Paule Ferrere, wife	Only appeal documents. The defendants publicly attacked the plaintiffs. Later the same evening, they sought the plaintiffs out at their home to further mistreat them.	1. Women
			Richard Pellegrin, maître charretier / Gabrielle Prunaigue, wife		
2B 6996	11pm, 1 December 1699	Grand Rue du Vigan, Albi (Tarn)	Dame Françoise de Balagnier, widow of noble Pierre de Reynes, écuyer, for her son, Raymond de Reynes	Individuals knocked at de Reynes house and asked for the plaintiff's son. He went outside with the visitors. The plaintiff went to bed but was awoken by servants - her son was at the door wounded and covered in blood; de Bouzinac had attacked him with a sword. De Reynes killed him in self defence. The dispute seems to have originated over singing and insults in the street.	3. Nobility
			Jean Antoine de Bouzinac, eldest son of dame de Bouzinac, widow of Jean Antoine de Bouzinac, lawyer in the parlement.		
2B 7016	2pm, 2 October 1701	Boussens (Haute-Garonne)	Maître Jacques Freche, vicaire of Mauzac, resident of Boussens	Freche, who also trafficked wool, had stabled some of his flock with the defendants. When he went to retrieve them, Saux was not in. Pegot asked him to return later. Freche agreed, but when he returned, Saux was still not present. He attempted to take his sheep from the stables and Pegot	2. Clergy
			Guillaume Saux / Marie Pegot, 60, wife		

				attacked him.	
2B 7089	3pm, Sunday 27 March 1701	Métayage de la Boissière, Saint- Pons (Hérault)	Joseph Cauquil, paysan, 50 / Marie Crost, 40, pregnant	Previous litigation for defamation and dispute over land ownership - Crost attacked in the field in question - the Mecouire siblings beat her and stood on her stomach - potential miscarriage.	1. Women
			Laurens Bouissierre / Marie Mecouire, wife of Laurens, 30/ Jean Mecouire, 28, brother		
2B 7092	8pm, Saturday 12 August 1702	Limoux (Aude)	Maître Jean Four, conseiller, sénéchaussée	Dispute in the butcher shop; the plaintiff's son was negotiating the cost of meat. Four intervened and was attacked by the defendants who loudly mocked and dishonoured Four. Debt issue. Four was wounded in multiple places and forced to leave.	1. Women
			Georges André, butcher / Françoise Moulis, wife		
2B 7117	26 July 1702	Saint-Rome-de- Tarn (Aveyron), Feast Day of Saint Anne	Antoine Calvet, second consul	Maurin was harvesting lentils on a feast day. Calvet informed him he should cease in respect for the feast day - Maurin beat Calvet with a fork. Maurin claimed he had permission to work from the curé, due to the 'inconsistency of the season'.	4. Notability
			Maître Antoine Maurin, praticien, 35		
2B 7149	December 1701	Aigues-Mortes (Gard)	Demoiselle de Guion, wife of sieur André Dussol / sieur Guion, father	Partial case - violence against the plaintiffs originated from a theft dispute. Labrosse was arrested, but used his alliance with sieur Jacques, judge, to have sieur Guion arrested. He died in prison - potential poisoning.	1. Women
			Louis de Fourneaux, sieur de Labrosse, Montpellier / and others		
2B 7176	10 June - 1pm, 15 June 1700, Feast Day	Sorèze (Tarn)	Demoiselle Marie de Grimail, wife of sieur Abraam Blaquière, bourgeois, 60	Multiple incidents. De Druzac attacked de Grimail in the street. She seized the plaintiff by the hair and hit her in the face. De Druzac had previously defamed de Grimail's niece - claimed she was unwed and pregnant. Despite this, the defendant filed a suit	1. Women
			Demoiselle Marquise Bonvilar de Druzac, daughter of late noble		

			Nicolas de Bonvilar, 30	against the plaintiff and obtained a sentence against her.	
2B 7211	2pm, 7 August 1702	Place Mercadial, Graulhet (Tarn)	Noble Alexandre Galliot de Crussol d'Uzès, comte d'Amboise, seigneur and baron of Graulhet, resident of Château de Crins, 58	During the fair, de Crussol warned fair goers not to hunt on his land without his permission. He was attacked by Besse, who he called a 'soi-disant' bourgeois and consul. Besse seized de Crussol by the collar and hit him on the stomach with a drumstick. He pulled a knife from his pocket but was prevented from committing further violence by onlookers. Besse claimed he was attacked by de Crussol because he had filed litigation against him and his estate.	3. Nobility
			Sieur Jean Besse, premier consul, marchand and bourgeois, 42		
2B 7239	7pm, 30 August 1699	Rodez (Aveyron)	Maître Antoine de Moly, conseiller du Roi, trésorier de France (Montauban)	Dispute originated over who had the right to the higher pavement. De Moly was walking in the street, and de Laure challenged his right to the pavement. De Moly attempted to calm the situation, but de Laure pushed him into the street and punched him on the face and head.	4. Notability
			Sieur Antoine de Laure, conseiller du Roi, lieutenant principal, sénéchaussée		
2B 7243	9pm, Saturday 23 May 1699	Narbonne (Aude)	François Costes, Lezignan	Debt dispute - Costes travelled to Narbonne to request repayment. Brazier and his wife attacked Costes with a metal bar. They knocked him to the ground and left him bleeding from the head and mouth.	4. Notability
			Jean Brazier, bailiff		
2B 7265	April 1695	Puntous (Hautes-Pyrénées)	Domenge Ribes, midwife	Partial case - Ribes was murdered by numerous men from Puntous (12 stab wounds). They had previously filed a suit against her for witchcraft. The court dismissed this and Ribes was released. The men then murdered her.	1. Women
			Pierre Lataste / Abbadie / Monlong / and others		

2B 7316	25 June 1711	Near the Capitol, Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Noble Jean de Carrière, écuyer, conseiller du Roi, juge mage, lieutenant général, sénéchaussée, for his son noble Jean Paul de Carrière, 12	Bonnet was accused of beating the young de Carrière with a large cane. Bonnet claimed that de Carrière had stolen his property; he had retrieved the property and slapped the boy on the head. The plaintiff's servant informed Bonnet that de Carrière had requested to speak with him. Bonnet apologised for slapping the plaintiff's son. De Carrière arrested Bonnet and transported him to prison.	3. Nobility
			Sieur Dominique Bonnet, marchand, Bordeaux, 49		
2B 7350	21 August 1688	Roquefort - sur - Garonne (Haute-Garonne)	Maître Pierre Turbide, curé and procureur for the religieuses at St Gaudens, 70	Saint Salvi attacked Turbide in the street. She insulted him and tried to hit him on the head with a rock. Dispute stemmed from Turbide's revenge on the couple after their role in a trial against him. They claimed he took their belongings as payments to the religieuses, but they did not owe anything and had the accounts to prove it.	2. Clergy
			Jean Turbide (dit Mondin), tisserand, 50 / Cécile Saint Salvi, 40, wife		
2B 7358	26 March 1688	Lalbenque (Lot)	Maître Antoine Lugol, royal notary	Iches attacked Lugol as he was returning home and told him to give him money. Lugol explained he didn't have any. Iches pulled him from his horse and hit him multiple times with a baton. The force of the blows broke the baton. Lugol explained that he had previously had a dispute with Iches' brother - Iches sought revenge.	4. Notability
			Jean Iches, maréchal		
2B 7402	17 April 1710	Rue du Canton, Bonnac (Ariège)	Maître Bernard Moubinous, procureur, sénéchaussée, 42	Property and inheritance dispute - ownership of a garden. The plaintiff chopped down part of a lilac tree. The defendant took the pruned branches and insulted the plaintiff. She claimed he beat her with a baton.	1. Women
			Magdelaine Dugabe, wife of sieur Raymond Faure, 40		

2B 7405	5am, 7 November 1710	Narbonne (Aude)	Sieur Joseph Reissolles, marchand, 41	Reissolles visited his shop which was being built. He saw Cathala urinating near the threshold of his shop. He reproached Cathala for his actions - Cathala replied that he did not urinate on the merchandise. Reissolles took Cathala's hat and threw it onto the ground, enraging Cathala who was joined by his children. They beat Reissolles with batons and stones. Cathala claimed there was an ongoing enmity between the two.	4. Notability
			Jacques Cathala, voiturier, 60 / Marguerite Cathala, 16, daughter / other family members		Linked case: 2B 7600
2B 7416	10pm, 18 October 1704	Agde (Hérault)	Antoine Jouery, marchand, 22	Jouery delivered some letters and walked past Pellier's house. Pellier insulted him from his doorstep before attacking Jouery with a baton, knocking his hat and wig to the ground. The two were separated, and Pellier sequestered Jouery's hat. Jouery's father took him away from the scene.	4. Notability
			Charles Pellier, lawyer, 43		Linked cases: 2B 7417; 7418
2B 7421	5am, 12 September 1706	Outside de Rouelle's house, Villenouvel (Haute-Garonne)	Marie de Rouelle, wife of Jacques Vallette, Montauban, 35, pregnant	For over a year, the defendant and her family insulted and defamed de Rouelle. On 11 September, Martel hit the plaintiff on the face. The next day, Martel and her father attacked de Rouelle in the street with a stick and a hammer. De Rouelle was 8 months pregnant and lost the child as a result of the attack.	1. Women
			Antoinette Martel, daughter of Jean, cordonnier		
2B 7430	9pm, 19 December 1701	D'Eup (Haute-Garonne)	Sieur Pierre Daunis, marchand, Boulogne	Following litigation that Daunis had brought against the inhabitants of the Aran valley, Daunis obtained a decree from the parlement (4,000 livres fine) - he organised a group to collect this money. On the way, they stopped at a tavern to	4. Notability
			Sieur Pierre Boussac, marchand, consul of		

			St B�at / and others	drink. There they were ambushed by individuals from St B�at, who fired pistols at them. An archer was wounded.	
2B 7490	12pm 3 August 1697	Town square, Nailloux (Haute-Garonne)	Dame Marguerite de Ruze de Baulin, wife of noble Bernard de Saint Michel de Goudin, seigneur	Multiple incidents between the parties; on 3 August confrontation erupted from Faure's intervention in de Baulin's conversation with sieur d'Issus, who she believed had taken her servant. Later the same day, the defendants insulted the plaintiff and her children in the town square - called the children little turkeys and attacked their governess.	1. Women
			Joseph Faure, bourgeois, 46 / demoiselle Anne de Cornus, wife of ma�tre Jacques Delmas, mayor, lawyer, 44 / Gabriel d'Austry, cur�		Some overlap with litigants 2B 7491.
2B 7491	10 February 1695	Nailloux (Haute-Garonne)	Demoiselle Anne de Cornus / noble Pierre du Faure d'Encaus, 16 / sieur Etienne d'Austry, 40 / demoiselle Fran�oise d'Otisser, 26	Multiple parties and incidents involved. De Ruze attacked d'Otisser in the street - she slapped her across the face, and Fourbis kicked her in the stomach. She was 3 months pregnant and miscarried as a result. Faure filed a suit against Saint Michel and his chambermaid who he claimed threatened him with a pistol; she fired a shot but missed.	1. Women
			Dame Marguerite de Ruze de Baulin, wife of noble Bernard de Saint Michel de Goudin, seigneur / Abb� Fourbis, parant		Some overlap with litigants 2B 7490
2B 7499	January 1686	Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Jeanne Barege / Fran�oise Lamothe, daughter	Debt issue - Barege had lent Amiel money. The defendants attacked the plaintiff when she asked for repayment. They also insulted Lamothe's sexual honour.	1. Women
			Antoinette Amiel, wife of Fran�ois Sevres, blacksmith / Jean Sevres, son		
2B 7614	5pm, 4 October 1705	Nailloux (Haute-Garonne)	Guillaume Beleste, bailiff, 45	Beleste was instructed to deliver a notice from the conseil priv� du Roi to Cailla, the recent purchaser of the seigneurie of Nailloux. He delivered the notice to	3. Nobility

			Sieur Jean Cailla, seigneur of Nailloux, 54 / Demoiselle Gabrielle de Claparède, 38, wife	Cailla's servant and signed that he had spoken to the seigneur. Beleste was then summoned to the château where Cailla and Claparede attacked him - he was dragged by his hair and beaten with batons and fists.	Linked case: 2B 7618
2B 7618	4 October 1705	Nailloux (Haute-Garonne)	Demoiselle Gabrielle de Claparède, wife of sieur Jean Cailla, seigneur of Nailloux, 38	De Claparède attempted to chastise Beleste for lying. Instead of respecting her position of authority, and the fact that she was pregnant, he disrespected her and attacked her - punched and kicked her.	1. Women
			Guillaume Beleste, bailiff, 45		
2B 7635	18 April 1697	Les Vans (Ardeche)	Noble Louis de Plantier de Montvert	De Plantier saw the Lavie's exiting a vineyard which belonged to sieur Andre Riviere, carrying grapes. He chastised them for stealing - they attacked him and threw rocks at him. He was knocked to the ground, where they continued to beat him. They left him for dead.	3. Nobility
			Pierre Lavie, cardeur / Marie Lavie, sister / Anne Reyne, widow of Jacques Lavie, marchand, mother		
2B 7677	1694	Town square, Carcassonne (Aude)	Pierre Alquier, merchant from Toulouse, 40	Alquier bought grain in the town square. He spent 9 livres 5 sols. Daniel wanted to buy the same grain and when the vendor refused to sell to her, she became enraged. She insulted Alquier and slapped him across the face.	1. Women
			Paule Daniel, widow of Germain Beteille, master baker, 55		
2B 7720	October 1685	Montpellier (Hérault)	Demoiselle Antoinette Alluc, wife of Pierre Peras, marchand, 38	No physical violence - defamation. Soldiers were stationed at Alluc's house - accusation that husband was protestant and had fled. She converted.	1. Women
			Messire Pujol, conseiller du Roi		
2B 7732	1688	Montpellier (Hérault)	Sieur maître Louis de Massanes, conseiller du Roi, cour des Comptes	Only appeal documents - Massanes had been 'assassiné' by Roussas. Massanes' uncle filed a suit	4. Notability

			Sieur maître Jean de Brun, sieur de Roussas, conseiller, sénéchaussée Nîmes	against Roussas, obtained a death sentence and 10,000 livres fine. Roussas fled. Appeal documents relate to Roussas' brother's attempt to overturn the sentence - inheritance interests.	
2B 7737	10am, Saturday 21 October 1682, market day	Place publique (hôtel de ville?), Saint-Affrique (Aveyron)	Sieur Jean Coste, law student, 22	Coste was attacked in the middle of the market by Galtiers, his brother Isaac, and their cousin Lamothe. They threw Costes to the ground and beat him with canes. Coste was unable to take the case to the local court because of Galtiers' father. During Isaac's hearing, he mentioned a game he had played with Coste, and Pierre's belief that Coste owed Isaac money.	4. Notability
			Pierre Galtiers, son of sieur de Montagnol, judge of Saint-Affrique, theology student, 18		
2B 7758	24 July 1713	Pavie (Gers)	Maître Claude Segrestan, royal notary	Dispute emerged from Segrestan's request for de Lanoux to pay certain costs to the religieuses at Saint Joseph of Pavie following litigation. De Lanoux attacked Segrestan with the pommel of his sword when he dined with the religieuses - he only stopped when the vicaire Molere got in between them.	3. Nobility
			Noble Bertrand Joseph d'Escorneboeuf, seigneur de Lanoux, Château d'Avezan		
2B 7782	7pm, 11 May 1710	In the street, Carcassonne (Aude)	Claire Brugaillos, servant, widow of Jean Gil, tisserand	Dispute emerged from contention between Gil and Huc when Gil was valet consulaire and Huc was consul in 1709. Huc beat Brugaillos with a cane in the street - he left her wounded on the floor. Attacked her again later the same day. Also, a contention between Brugaillos and Huc's wife from 1709.	1. Women
			Sieur Raymond Huc, bourgeois, 24		
2B 7813	22 November - 27 November	Endoufielle (Gers)	Bernarde Suran, widow of François l'Abadeus, maître	Debt dispute - the defendants owed money to Suran's late husband. They	1. Women

	1688		chirurgien, 42	refused to pay; Suran sought help from the authorities. In revenge, Martin publicly mocked Suran. Later that week, the defendants attacked Suran as she was leaving the parish church.	
			Anne Martin, wife of Jean François, surgeon / Marie Baissie, 22		
2B 7814	8am, Monday 5 May 1688	Peyrusse-Grande (Gers)	Demoiselle Geralde Delont, 65, on behalf of her husband maître Raymond Dufour, praticien and lawyer, 80	Dufour was kidnapped and arrested while visiting the métayarie of Arrenautz to see to the affairs and establishment of the new curé in the area. The curé seems to be Dufour's son, maître Joseph Dufour. During the abduction, Dufour was beaten and led away on a donkey.	4. Notability
			Sieur Baron de Montcourneil / maître Laffargue, notary		
2B 7839	10am, 15 October 1704	Najac (Aveyron)	Antoine Puechberty, previous lawyer in viguerie of Najac	The viguerie investigated an incident in which François Martin, priest, was attacked by Antoine la Garrigue. The officers were required to recuse themselves; Puechberty was commissioned to deliver the judgement. The Barres' brothers attacked Puechberty and attempted to take over the assembly	2. Clergy
			Maître Pierre Barres, curé and maire of Najac / Maître Bernard Barres d'Audiguier, lieutenant in the viguerie, 43		
2B 7869	8 October 1684	Andrest (Hautes-Pyrénées)	Paul Duprat / Guillaume Laban, consuls	Tax collection - the defendants attacked the plaintiffs with swords and batons, despite being warned not to oppose the collection.	1. Women
			Jean Figarol, bourgeois / Domenge Ducor / Jeannette de Nanthonnet		
2B 7884	23 August 1705	Rue du Fourbastard, Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Jeanne Cazettes, wife of Henri Malory, maître tailleur d'habits, 32	Cazettes refused to testify at Salles' request during the investigation into a neighbour's murder. This angered Salles, who sought revenge. Salles attacked Cazettes in the street with batons.	1. Women
			Antoinette Salles, wife of Saint Chaumon, carter		Linked case: 2B 7883
2B 7910	7am, 1 March 1688	Béziers (Hérault)	Demoiselle Claire d'Herail, widow of	D'Herail found that someone had plastered human	1. Women

			Cabannes, maître apothicaire, 26	excrement on her shop floor and on her apron. She discussed this with de Basset who stated that she wouldn't use such tactics - she would get her son to avenge her. Later the same day, sieur Puech attacked the plaintiff at her shop.	
			Sieur Puech, bourgeois / demoiselle de Basset, mother		
2B 7914	23 December 1686	Nîmes (Gard)	Maître Jacques Teissonniers, lawyer / Charles Demissols, law student.	Ongoing dispute between Channac and Teissonniers' father - 'inimitié'. Teissonnier was walking with friends (inc. Demissols) near Channac's house. Some youths knocked on Channac's door before running away, and Channac thought it was Teissonniers. He and his family exited the house and chased the men with axes. Channac hit Teissonniers and took his and his friends' swords.	4. Notability
			Jean Channac, procureur, sénéchaussée / and his children		Linked case: 2B 5633
2B 7916	February 1688	Sausсенac (Tarn)	Jean de Lautrec, greffier, Energues	Partial case - mainly appeal documents. The defendants had been in litigation with maître Valentin Lacombe, curé of Lentin. Following de Lautrec's role in this litigation, the defendants attacked the plaintiff.	1. Women
			Jean Maynaud / Marie Raffanelle, wife		
2B 7942	5pm, 30 October 1686	Pergain-Taillac (Gers)	François du Faur, sieur de Molas, 60	Toulon and others confronted du Faur in a cabaret. They carried swords and pistols. Du Faur exited onto the street; the defendants pursued him. They insulted him; he defended himself stating that he was an homme d'honneur, and highlighting Toulon's youth. Toulon threatened du Faur with his pistol, before attacking him with his sword - wounded on the hand and face.	4. Notability
			Toulon de Balle / Laterre / and others		

2B 7956	Evening, 16-19 March 1711	La Barthe de Neste (Haute-Pyrénées)	Sieur Forcade, vicaire	Labroquere had issues with many parishioners, and often threatened Forcade. On 19 March, he broke into Forcade's house, carrying a horse whip and wearing a sword. He attempted to whip the vicaire.	2. Clergy
			Pierre Labroquere		
2B 7958	15 April 1711	Puisserguier (Hérault)	Sieur Jean Cazalous, premier consul, 50	Cazalous attended the funeral of the previous consul. Garrigenque had hung laundry to dry on tombstones. Cazalous asked her to move them; she refused, pushed him and insulted him. Garrigenque was pregnant, so Cazalous left without reciprocating.	1. Women
			Marguerite Garrigenque, wife of Jacques Guillaumon, pasteur, Puisserguier		
2B 7959	11 April 1711	Arrodets-ez-Angles (Hautes-Pyrénées)	Jeanne d'Arrolis	Dispute over ownership of a tomb. The curé confirmed Barbé as the owner. D'Arrolis did not accept this and continued to pray at the tomb. Barbé attacked d'Arrolis at the tomb after mass; she kicked her and punched her in the stomach.	1. Women
			Domenge Barbé, 20		
2B 7982	June 1711	Saint- Aunix-Lengros (Gers)	Marie Broqua, wife of Pierre le Beron, daughter of Pierre Broqua, bailiff	Broqua was attacked and tortured by the defendant. Linked to a previous incident from 1689 involving Pierre Broqua and Poumadere, tax collector. Attacked by de Riviere, Poumadere was left gravely wounded in the street.	1. Women
			Noble Olivier de Riviere, seigneur and baron of Engros, 60 / Arnaud Abadie, valet, 28		
2B 7987	18 August 1708	Labastide d'Armagnac (Landes)	Noble Isaac Lacroix, seigneur of Pedeluq	The defendant and her son had long sought to attack the plaintiff. They discussed their plans publicly. On 18 August, Jean Lacroix attacked the plaintiff on the bridge in Labastide. He used a sword and hit him so violently that the blade broke. The plaintiff was gravely injured and left for dead.	3. Nobility
			Demoiselle Jeanne Ducos, widow of sieur Israel Lacroix, maître apothicaire, son of plaintiff / Jean Lacroix, son		

2B 8004	Evening, November 1687	In the street, Béziers (Hérault)	Demoiselle Jeanne de Prats, wife of maître Guillaume de Viales, procureur, 44	Puech insulted de Prats multiple times; escalated to threats of violence over a series of months which were confirmed by witnesses. Puech denied this and claimed he believed the plaintiff to be a woman of honour.	1. Women
			Jean Puech, bourgeois, 27		
2B 8011	October 1687	Sénérgues (Aveyron)	Maître Jean Vacquier, royal notary	Mainly appeal documents - little relating to original incident. De Guiraud beat Vacquier with batons. De Guiraud claimed Vacquier led a debauched life and had impregnated a woman that lived with him and his wife.	3. Nobility
			Noble Jean de Guirard de Montarnal, seigneur de Sénérgues		
2B 10483	20 September 1700	Rue des Blanchers, Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Sieur Jean Guillauman, marchand blancher / Sieur Antoine Gay, marchand. Both from St-Hippolyte-du-Fort	The plaintiffs were waiting for some merchandise. They were confronted over the merchandise by Pons. He did not greet them, and there was no pretext for the confrontation. Pons hit Guillauman on the head and shoulders with a baton. He then beat Gay with a cane.	4. Notability
			Sieur Pons, marchand tanneur, Carcassonne		
2B 12375	8am, 3 September 1700	In the street, Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)	Jaquette de Cuq, wife of François Lespinasse, pregnant	De Cuq requested repayment of a debt from Rodos. He refused the payment and kicked and punched her. Astier joined in; de Cuq was left seriously injured.	1. Women
			Sieur Jean Astier, host, 41 / Rodos, chartier, Carcassonne		
2B 13132	26 June 1717	Layrac (Lot-et-Garonne)	Guillem Massac, sergeant (ordinary court)	Massac delivered a notice to de Guillem, notifying him of his removal from the office of judge. De Guillem demanded to see the commission, but Massac only had the notice of dismissal with him. Massac told de Guillem where he could see the notice of commission, but de Guillem called him a liar and attacked him. He punched and kicked him in the street.	3. Nobility
			Noble Pierre de Guillem, mayor, judge & Sieur Etienne Chollet		

2B 13163	1pm, 19 April 1705	Béziers (Hérault)	Monsieur maître Louis de Tinaryd, procureur du Roi, sénéchaussée	De Tinaryd and de Guibal disagreed on the appointment of new officials to the sénéchaussée. After some discussion, de Guibal became enraged and insulted de Tinaryd. He threatened the plaintiff and pushed him multiple times on his stomach. De Tinaryd warned him that he would regret the insults, at which de Guibal took his sword in hand and attempted to hit de Tinaryd. He was prevented by onlookers.	4. Notability
			Maître François Guillaume de Guibal, lawyer in parlement, 26, son of maître de Guibal, jugemage		
2B 13702	11pm, 21 June 1715	Le Puy (Haute- Loire)	Vidal Joussons / Benoît Joussons, brothers from Senejol	The plaintiffs were in Le Puy for their brother's wedding. They dined at their lodgings, where they were attacked by Reynier and two others. The plaintiffs were injured and then dragged to the prisons. Money was stolen from them.	4. Notability
			Pierre Reynier, huissier, sénéchaussée		
2B 13746	8pm, 31 October 1714	Narbonne (Aude)	Esprit Maturin Rigaud, royal notary, 56	Dispute about grain. The two parties are connected through marriage. Rigaud was shot by Jean Torches while he was dining at widow Raymond's house - Torches fired three shots, leaving Rigaud bedbound. Jean Torches fled Narbonne - his father is interrogated.	4. Notability
			Sieur Pierre Gabriel Torches / Sieur Jean Torches, son		
2B 13799	3pm, 1 June 1711	Fabrègues (Hérault)	Marie Campla, daughter of Jean, paysan	Campla was working in the fields when Pagès approached and spoke inappropriately. She tried to leave but he would not let her. He insulted her and hit her with a weapon on her head and body. He left her bleeding on the floor. Pagès claimed that Campla was stealing from de Chaumont and that she attacked him.	1. Women
			Sieur François Pagès, homme d'affairs for comte de Chaumont, 47		

2B 13808	2pm, Wednesday 28 October 1711	Langlade (Gard)	Maître Pierre Poudevigne, greffier en chef, maréchaussée of Nîmes	Poudevigne was visiting friends in Langlade. Prade sought him out and told him to follow him to attend to Prade's business. Poudevigne replied he had no business with Prade. Prade insulted Poudevigne, and when Poudevigne chastised him, Prade hit the plaintiff with his cane. He also beats Poudevigne on the head with stones.	4. Notability
			Maître Jean Prade, procureur, sénéchaussée, Nîmes		
2B 13816	4pm, 10 September 1701	Saint-Chinian (Hérault)	Bernard Philipou, 38 / Antoine Louvrier, marchand, 50, uncle	Lacombe entered Philipou's garden and asked for some wormwood; he was informed there wasn't any. Lacombe ignored Philipou and located the plant. Philipou remarked that he must have been in the garden before. The suggestion of theft angered Lacombe and he hit Philipou. Philipou was later attacked by Saint Julia - he was left 'demi-mort'.	4. Notability
			Monsieur de Lacombe / Sieur Saint Julia		
2B 13819	December 1701	Saint-Hippolyte (Tarn-et-Garonne)	Demoiselle Marguerite Audemar, daughter of sieur Pierre Audemar, maître chirurgien and apothicaire	Bastide invited Audemar into her house to play games. There she insulted and attacked Audemar - punched her in the face. Onlookers intervened. Audemar's father filed the suit on his young daughter's behalf.	1. Women
			Jeanne Bastide, lemonade vendor		
2B 14739	9pm, 10 July 1715	Montpellier (Hérault)	Sieur Salamon Gimberne, bourgeois / Maître Jean Gimberne, lawyer, 20, son	Jean Gimberne was with friends in the road. He stood behind demoiselle de Castelbon - la Rose' wife, who was sitting on a chair. La Rose was angered by Gimberne's familiarity with his wife and slapped him. In his complaint, Salamon Gimberne emphasised the size difference between his son and la Rose - la Rose was 'robust' whereas his son was thin.	4. Notability
			Maître Jean François la Rose, procureur, cour des aides		

2B 14963	4 February 1681	Aubenas (Ardeche)	Noble Arnaud Béraud de Lange, écuyer	D'Antraigues visited Aubenas and stayed at the house of Puech, judge. Demoiselle de Puech, wife of the judge, had an ongoing dispute with Madame Benoît, Béraud's sister. D'Antraigues sought revenge - he attempted to attack Béraud while he was dining. Later the same night, d'Antraigues stabbed Béraud with his sword in the street.	3. Nobility
			Sieur Frederic de Launay, baron d'Antraigues, Protestant, 23 / François Joseph Puech, lawyer, Catholic, 20 / Claude Champagne, Catholic, 21		
2B 22266	Sunday 29 September 1709	La Canourgue (Lozère)	Maître Vital Chabert, bailiff	Chabert was involved in an investigation into the murder of Jean Preget. Preget accused Sauvant de St Laurens of the crime before he died. Nogaret was St Laurens' kinsman - he confronted Chabert about St Laurens' innocence, and attacked him for continuing the investigation.	4. Notability
			Jacques Nogaret, lawyer		
2B 22270	Evening, 14 April / Morning, 15 April 1709	Narbonne (Aude)	Demoiselle Isabeau Sabatier, marchande, 36	Sabatier removed a group of children from her shop for being noisy. Bonnafons, the mother of one of the children, attacked Sabatier in retaliation. The next morning, the two women met in the street; Bonnafons insulted Sabatier before kicking and hitting her.	1. Women
			Demoiselle Anne Bonnafons, widow of sieur Arnaud Caranoue, marchand, 46 / François Caumon, son, 20		
2B 22562	September 1684	Tillac (Gers)	Noble Paul de la Serre, écuyer	Dispute emerged over land damage caused by la Serre's escaped horses. D'Abadie sequestered the horses and refused to negotiate for their release. La Serre spoke to d'Abadie's wife about the issue and was shot in the face by d'Abadie from a bedroom window. La Serre lost the use of one eye. There was a previous incident in which la Serre had publicly beaten one of d'Abadie's servants.	3. Nobility
			Noble Emmanuel d'Abadie, seigneur of Mongardin		

2B 22563	2pm, 26 December 1682	Fronton (Haute- Garonne)	Maître Jean Gayral, notary and greffier	Gayral was required to provide access to the greffe at the town hall. The consuls prevented him from entering. Led by Gayral, they beat the plaintiff, and threw him from the town hall. The investigation reveals that Gayral had a suit against the community - the consuls etc refused him entrance because the consular election was taking place.	4. Notability
			Sieur Jean Gayral, premier consul, bourgeois, 45 / and others		
2B 23198	25 September 1683	Château d'Espas (Gers)	Maître Jean Dubordieu, regent	Dubordieu went to collect on a sentence he had obtained against de Bourrouillan. At the château, the defendant kept Dubordieu waiting, pretending to look for money. She sent for support from the village, and multiple people arrived and attacked the plaintiff - rifle shots and punches.	1. Women
			Dame Françoise de Bourrouillan, widow of noble Jean de Burosse, seigneur and baron d'Espas		
2B 23204	6pm, Sunday 14 March 1683	Péret (Hérault)	Maître Guillaume Causse, lieutenant in the Péret court, former consul	In 1681 when Causse was consul, he was attacked by Arnail's wife. He filed a suit against her. In 1683, Arnail's wife was compelled to attend the court. As revenge, Arnail waited for Causse in the street; he beat Causse with a baton.	4. Notability
			Jacques Arnail, bourgeois, 37		
2B 23207	1686	Saint-Ybars (Ariège)	Maître Bernard Francazal, notary and greffier	Previous incident - Gros accused of attacking Paule de Dufau. She obtained a decree and sentence from the consuls. Gros appealed - he employed Francazal to aid the appeal. Francazal obliged and then pursued the costs from Gros. Gros refused to pay, and so Francazal obtained an act for the sequestration of property. Gros attacked Francazal - beat him with a rake.	4. Notability
			Raymond Gros		

2B 23318	1pm, 27 February 1680	Tournay en Nébouzan (Hautes-Pyrénées)	Bernard Marcassus, bailiff for the abbot of Escaladieu	Marcassus was attacked in the middle of the market at Tournay. He was beaten with batons and sword pommels. The defendants threatened to kill Marcassus to teach him not to seize their property.	4. Notability
			Dominique Palat, seigneur of Peyraub / Jacques Palat, brother / Marc and Jean Causier		
2B 23326	February 1680	Lanta (Haute- Garonne)	Antoinette Corme, wife of Etienne Roche	Roquier beat Corme with a baton while she was on her land in Lanta. The attack left her bed bound and unable to support herself. While bed bound, Roquier and others took lentils from her land.	1. Women
			Jean Roquier, bourgeois		
2B 23593	3pm, Sunday 23 July 1719	Métayage de Peyrié, near Montauban (Tarn- et-Garonne)	Noble Thomas d'Escorbiac, sieur de Villieres / Paranques, wife of Birou, métayer	The defendants were hunting on d'Escorbiac's land. Paranques told them they had no right to hunt on the noble's land; they attacked her with rifle butts and stabbed her hand, leaving her badly injured. They also proferred multiple insults against d'Escorbiac.	1. Women
			Jacob Petit Pradal, perruquier / his nephew		

Notes on the Text and Abbreviations

Note on the text:

Original spelling and punctuation are retained in quotations taken from the sacs.

However, I have modernised place names and the names of people, where possible, for the purposes of clarity. All translations are my own.

Abbreviations:

AD - - - Archives Départementales

AN - - - Archives Nationales

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