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Ten geleide

Het zal u niet zijn ontgaan, koning Willem-Alexander heeft een baard. Wat aanvankelijk een vakantiebaard leek, blijkt een blijvertje. Als we de gemiddelde Twitteraar mogen geloven valt de #koningsbaard in de smaak. Ook op Facebook heeft de baard succes. De pagina ‘Zonder baard, geen koning’ heeft al meer dan 50.000 volgers. Net als de baard van de koning, heeft ook dit nummer van *Virtus* een oranjetintje. Zo kunt u in het artikel van Els Witte – een vervolg op haar bijdrage aan *Virtus* 2018 – lezen over de orangistische contrabeweging die ontstond na de Belgische afscheiding van het Verenigd Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in 1830. Een groep edelen vormde een actieve, militante vleugel van het orangistische verzet in België. Frans Willem Lantink bespreekt in zijn korte bijdrage een aantal recent verschenen biografieën van bekende leden uit het huis Oranje-Nassau. Volgens Lantink blijven deze wat te veel hangen in nationale discoursen en ontbreekt het vergelijkende, internationale perspectief.

7

Sinds een jaar of tien biedt *Virtus* wél steeds nadrukkelijker een internationaal perspectief op de geschiedenis van de adel. In dit nummer schrijft de Amerikaanse historica Mary Robinson over de band tussen twee adellijke neven uit Frankrijk. De één was hartstochtelijk aanhanger van Napoleon, de ander toonde zijn loyaliteit aan restauratiemonarch Lodewijk XVIII door een meute Parijzenaren op te hitsen om een standbeeld van de kleine generaal neer te halen. Marie Steinrud illustreert verschillen tussen adellijk en burgerlijk machts- en statusvertoon aan de hand van de materiele cultuur van industriële ijzersmeders in het Zweedse Västmanland rond 1800.

Een ander thema dat in meerdere artikelen terugkomt in dit jaarboek is de adellijke vrouw. Zo schrijft de Nijmeegse hoogleraar Johan Oosterman in *Object in Context* over het bijzondere gebedenboek van Maria van Gelre, waar hij jarenlang onderzoek naar deed. Evelyn Ligtenberg besteedt aandacht aan ongehuwde, adellijke vrouwen: op basis van een schat aan archiefbronnen concludeert zij dat deze vrouwen niet moeten worden beschouwd als ‘oude vrijsters’. Zij droegen in belangrijke mate bij aan het beschermen en vergroten van de familie-eer. Thomas Kullmann analyseert de gedragsnormen voor hofdames op basis van Engelse Renaissance-gedichten.

Dat edelen het niet altijd even nauw namen met geschreven en ongeschreven regels, blijkt uit het artikel van Michel Hoenderboom over een rechtszaak uit de jaren 1720 tussen Gerrit Burchard van Rechteren en de Raad van State. Deze juridische strijd laat zien hoe dun de scheidslijn was tussen vriendendienst en corruptie in de Republiek der Nederlanden. Conrad Gietman schrijft over de drang van negentiende-eeuwse notabelen om zich te onderscheiden door middel van indrukwekkende stambomen.

Het afgelopen jaar werden wij, tot slot, onverwacht geconfronteerd met een treurig feit. Op 11 juli 2019 overleed Jan Wigger, gewaardeerde bestuurslid van de Werkgroep Adelsgeschiedenis. Sinds 2006 was Jan penningmeester van de Werkgroep, in het dagelijks leven werkte hij op het Historisch Centrum Overijssel te Zwolle. Jan was bij uitstek kenner van de adel in Overijssel en omstreken. Zijn inzet en goedlachse karakter zullen worden gemist.

Mary K. Robinson

Houses divided?

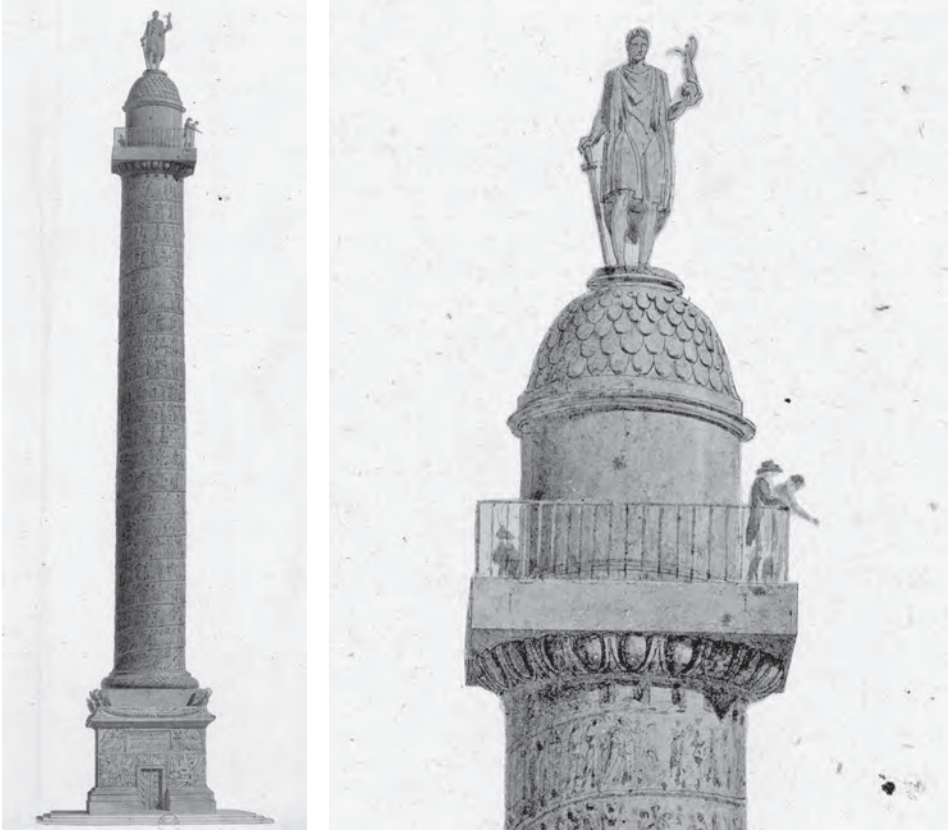
Noble familial and class connections during the Age of Revolution and Napoleon

9

As Napoleon prepared to leave for Elba in 1814, his young *aide-de-camp*, Anatole de Montesquiou-Fezensac, begged to join in his emperor's exile. For the young officer, serving the imperial monarch equated to performing his duty for his country, and without his sovereign to serve, his country had no meaning. 'Sire,' he said, 'I do not know France without you.' Napoleon refused his request. Montesquiou had his whole life ahead of him, and he had a young family. The deposed emperor could not let him throw away his future with exile. Yet, in his willingness to share his liege's fate, Montesquiou illustrated, as he had done on the battlefield, his devotion to Napoleon.¹

Only a month earlier, Sosthènes de La Rochefoucauld, another young Frenchman, publicly displayed his own sentiments toward his chosen sovereign. An active campaigner for the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in France, he sought some way to demonstrate, dramatically and very publicly, his loyalty to the Bourbons and his hatred for the previous regime. On 31 March 1814, he found his opportunity. Sosthènes incited a Parisian mob to welcome the returning Louis XVIII by pulling down the statue of Napoleon from atop the Colonne Vendôme. 'Prove that you no longer want to be governed by the man who has made so much blood spill, and who has made a pedestal with the cadavers of your children! To the Place Vendôme!,' he harangued his listeners. The crowd responded in kind and marched toward the Paris landmark. Climbing

1 A. de Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution, l'empire, la restauration et le règne de Louis-Philippe*, ed. R. Burnand (Paris, 1961) 335-336.



The Colonne Vendôme with Napoleon's statue (see detail) before the attempted iconoclasm of 1814 (pen and ink drawing, Jean-François-Joseph Leconte, 1810-1814; collection Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, RESERVE FOL-VE-53 (H))

to the top of the stairs inside the column, some of the people tied ropes around the statue and threw the ends down to the mob below. Pulling on the rope, the crowd attempted to extricate the statue in a symbolic toppling of the Napoleonic regime. The enterprise met with no success, and the crowd eventually dispersed when the occupying Russian garrison appeared on the scene. By encouraging this riot, the young La Rochefoucauld hoped to participate in the replacement of the imperial regime with what he viewed as the legitimate monarch, even if only by a symbolic dislodgement.²

2 L.F.S. de La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires de M. de La Rochefoucauld, duc de Doudeauville* (15 vols.; Paris, 1861), V, 465-467; J. Bertaut, *Le Faubourg Saint-Germain sous l'Empire et la Restauration* (Paris, 1949) 104.

That two, young men should seek to prove their devotion to their chosen sovereigns does not seem striking. Both bore names of illustrious noble French families who boasted centuries of service to the throne, whoever currently occupied it. Their youthful sense of valor and honor may also explain their extreme measures of loyalty: exile and iconoclasm. But, perhaps what is surprising is their relationship as first cousins, only three years apart in age. They had grown up together and at times lived in the same household. At some point in their youth, these two men, so similar in age and upbringing, diverged dramatically in their political allegiances. Did these political differences turn cousin against cousin?

Previous historical studies have delved into the responses of French nobles to cataclysmic political and social changes. Carolyn Chappell Lougee, for instance, described the reaction of a French Protestant noble family to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), which made them unwelcome in their homeland.³ Raymond Mentzer also examined the lives of members of a Huguenot French family, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁴ Both argued that these families, like most nobles facing difficult circumstances at various times in history, developed strategies for preserving their ancestral wealth and status. Yet, similar analyses of individual families during the crises of the French Revolution and Napoleonic regimes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries seems sparse.⁵

11

William Doyle addressed the fate of the nobility in France during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in France, but he concentrated on the relationship of the noble class as a whole to the government rather than looking at interactions within their own ranks.⁶ Jean Tulard offered some examples of interpersonal relationships among the elite in his work on the nobility of the Napoleonic regime, but like Natalie Petiteau and Philip Mansel, he focused mainly on Napoleon's creation of a new elite and his efforts to integrate the old nobility with his new social order.⁷ For the most part, little research has addressed how the French Revolution and First Empire affected pre-existing bonds of kinship among the nobility at the familial level. Yet, this could be the litmus test of the era's far-reaching attempts at social and political change. Could these watershed events rend long-standing connections between noble elites?

3 C. Lougee, *Facing the Revocation: Huguenot families, faith, and the king's will* (Oxford, 2016).

4 R.A. Mentzer, *Blood and belief: family survival and confessional identity among the provincial Huguenot nobility* (West Lafayette, 1994).

5 For a comprehensive study of German, Russian, and British nobility during the nineteenth century, see D. Lieven, *The Aristocracy in Europe, 1815-1914* (New York, 1992).

6 W. Doyle, *Aristocracy and its enemies in the Age of Revolution* (Oxford, 2009).

7 J. Tulard, *Napoléon et la noblesse d'Empire* (Paris, 1986); P. Mansel, *The court of France: 1789-1830* (Cambridge, 1988); P. Mansel, *The eagle in splendour* (London, 2015); N. Petiteau, 'The nobility of the Empire and the elite groups of the nineteenth century: a successful fusion'; <https://www.napoleon.org/en/history-of-the-two-empires/articles/the-nobility-of-the-empire-and-the-elite-groups-of-the-19th-century-a-successful-fusion/> (accessed 15 Nov. 2019).

Matthew Rendle's research on the Russian nobility after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 suggests that this was not the case. Tracing noble Russian families and their kinship connections from 1917 through the 1920s led him to conclude that times of stress created stronger bonds, regardless of political differences. He further demonstrated how nobles' relationships with one another helped them maintain their cultural identities and at times even saved their lives.⁸ By observing the connection between two French noble families as they faced the events of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the present article suggests that what Rendle discovered for Russian aristocrats in 1917 also held true for French nobles in similar circumstances. Despite their differences, Anatole, Sosthènes, and their families maintained a close bond throughout the Revolution (1789-1804), the reign of Napoleon (1804-1814/1815), and even the Restoration (1814-1830). The Montesquiou and La Rochefoucauld even used their positions of influence during the various regimes to benefit each other and their fellow nobles. An examination of the lives of these two men and their relatives reveals how noble familial connections and class allegiances could still eclipse any other competing identities.

12

The La Rochefoucaulds and the Montesquiou during the French Revolution

Sosthènes de La Rochefoucauld and Anatole de Montesquiou-Fezensac grew up together as the sons of prominent *ancien régime* noble families. Connected by blood through their mothers and socially by their fathers who hunted and attended *salons* together, the two cousins played together as children and grew up in similar households.⁹ Both families benefited from their distinguished pedigrees and the political and social privileges that came with their names. As Sosthènes proudly described in his memoirs, the La Rochefoucaulds had a long history of service to France and its monarchs.¹⁰ The Montesquiou claimed that their lineage traced back to Clovis, a detail which Anatole's grandfather was fond of mentioning to his acquaintances.¹¹ The names of La Rochefoucauld and Montesquiou appeared on the lists of those allowed to be presented at court, and as members of the highest nobility both families owned extensive country estates as well as Parisian townhomes.¹² Members of both families also enjoyed the company

8 M. Rendle, 'Family, kinship and Revolution: the Russian nobility, 1917-23', *Family and Community History*, 8 (2005) 35-47.

9 For the mothers' history, see J. de Lavernet, *Dans la tourmente une femme forte: Augustine de La Rochefoucauld, duchesse de Doudeauville, 1764-1849* (Paris, 2010); *Life of Madame de La Rochefoucauld, Duchesse of Doudeauville, foundress of the Society of Nazareth*, trans. F.C. Hoey (London, 1878); De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 341-383; De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, I, 87-88, 90; V, 502.

10 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, V, 351-392.

11 A. de Tilly, *Mémoires du comte Alexandre de Tilly pour servir à l'histoire des mœurs de la fin du XVIII^e siècle* (2 vols.; Paris, 1929), II, 282.

12 P. Goubert, *The Ancien Régime: French society 1600-1750*, trans. S. Cox (New York, 1969) 161. For infor-

of the highest Parisian society. Anatole's father had a position at the Versailles court as first equerry to the comte de Provence (the future Louis XVIII).¹³ Evidence of the Montesquiou's relationship with the royal family can be found in one of Anatole's earliest childhood memories. He recalled that one day he was walking with his maid through the Tuileries garden when Queen Marie-Antoinette walked up and embraced him saying, 'Anatole, you are quite handsome, you tell that to your mother on my behalf'.¹⁴

The French Revolution brought catastrophic changes, and even as young children Sosthènes and Anatole encountered the violence of the era. Both witnessed violent riots in the streets and watched family members go to prison or even the guillotine.¹⁵ The Revolution also represented the first major split in the political views of the two families. The La Rochefoucauld parents stalwartly refused to countenance the revolutionary regime. Sosthènes' father, the duc de Doudeauville, initially critical of nobles who straightaway fled France, eventually decided to leave as well and join the army of *émigrés* organized by the prince de Condé on France's eastern border.¹⁶ Sosthènes and his mother remained behind in Paris. As the Revolution moved into the Reign of Terror (1793-1794), the duchesse de Doudeauville entrusted her son to tutors thinking that he would be safer with them than with his noble relatives. Her feelings seemed justified as shortly after Sosthènes' departure, the female members of the La Rochefoucaulds were put under house arrest.¹⁷

On the other side of the political divide, Anatole's grandfather, Anne-Pierre de Montesquiou-Fezensac, enlisted in the revolutionary army and assumed command of the French *Armée du Midi* which invaded Savoy in 1792. Anatole's father, Elizabeth-Pierre de Montesquiou-Fezensac, a more cautious supporter of the new constitutional monarchy, received the appointment of ambassador to the court of the elector of Saxony in April of 1791.¹⁸ After living in Dresden for a little over a year, the Montesquiou returned to France during the Terror, but they insisted that they did not belong on the list of *émigrés*. When accused of being such by a local government official, Elizabeth-Pierre vigorously protested to the contrary, and eventually the family received certificates verifying their status as *non-émigrés*.¹⁹ In spite of this, Anatole's

mation on presentation at court and the lists of those who could receive this honor, see: F. Bluche, *Les Honneurs de la cour* (Paris, 1958; republished 2000).

13 A. de Montesquiou-Fezensac, *La Maison de Montesquiou Fezensac depuis la fin de l'ancien régime* (Paris, 1962) 31.

14 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 1; J.F. Solnon, *La Cour de France* (Paris, 1987) 436; D. Roche, *The culture of clothing: dress and fashion in the Ancien Régime*, trans. J. Birrell, (Cambridge, 1996) 191.

15 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 2, 22-31; De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, V, 489-498.

16 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, II, 7; V, 405. The first two volumes of Sosthènes' memoirs are his father's memoirs which the elder La Rochefoucauld dictated to his son.

17 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, V, 489-492.

18 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, II, 60; De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution* 6, 9.

19 Archives départementales de Seine-et-Marne, Dammarie-lès-Lys [ADSEM], no. 969 F 4, Certificat ordon-

parents still spent several months in a provincial prison.²⁰ While the La Rochefoucaulds chose complete resistance to the revolutionary government, the Montesquiou seemed to find some merit in it and willingly served in it until the Reign of Terror.

Once the Terror ended, the Montesquiou, like many remaining nobles, tried to live in obscurity on one of their remaining estates. Eventually, they moved back to a large house in Paris during the Directory (1795-1799), but they continued to stay out of politics.²¹ The La Rochefoucaulds also seemed to travel unencumbered between their country estate and a house in Paris. During this time, Anatole's mother sent him to live with her sister so that he and Sosthènes could be educated together by an Abbé Duval.²² Anatole described his tutor as 'very active in the legitimist [pro-Bourbon restoration] party', yet despite these overt political leanings, Anatole reminisced fondly about the abbé.²³ The differences in attitudes toward the Revolution did not seem to prejudice either family against the other. The La Rochefoucaulds did not seem to hesitate in welcoming the grandson of a revolutionary general into their home. Likewise, the Montesquiou must have felt secure in their social and legal position to the extent that they did not fear fraternizing with the household of a known *émigré* nor worry about their son being educated by an outspoken royalist. Their relationship to each other and their desire to provide their sons with the best education seemed to surpass any misgivings regarding their political views.

14

As both young men entered society, they frequented the same events and houses. Anatole described spending his Sunday evenings at the various noble Parisian residences, including that of the La Rochefoucaulds. He also attended parties in the faubourg Saint-Germain, the hotbed for noble, royalist activism during the Directory and the reign of Napoleon. There, he and his cousin Sosthènes mingled with the remnant offspring of Versailles courtiers such as the Noailles and the Sullys.²⁴ The Montesquiou also entertained noble royalists such as their cousin, Abbé François-Xavier-Marc-Antoine de Montesquiou, who would later serve in the restoration government of Louis XVIII.²⁵ However, no record appears to indicate that either the La Rochefoucaulds or the Montesquiou associated with Jacobins, republicans – aside from Anatole's grandfather – or the rising military class during the Directory and the early Consulate (1799-1804). Rather, both families only socialized with those whom they perceived as members of their class. This seems to suggest that for old nobles, lineage still outweighed political orientation.

né par l'article premier de la loi du 15 mars 1793, 12 Aug. 1793; De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 11-16.

20 ADSEM, L 1556, Comité de surveillance La Ferté Gaucher An II; De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 23-35.

21 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 38; Mansel, *The eagle in splendour*, 82.

22 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, V, 497; De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 66.

23 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 68.

24 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, 65.

25 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, 70.