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THE WAR AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CULTURAL IDENTITY IN A “PORT OF PONANT” THROUGH FAMILY PAPERS

TOUSSAINT BONVOISIN, LE HAVRE, THE REVOLUTIONARY WARS
AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CULTURAL IDENTITY
(1793-1804)

ÉRIC SAUNIER

Université du Havre

My paper aims at showing the interest and the relevance of a research based on the study of family papers and, more generally, on private writings to analyze the influence of wars in the cultural evolution of ports of Ponant. What is the effect of a war in the construction or affirmation of the cultural identity of a port? How can private papers reflect this phenomenon? To answer these two questions, the approach I propose to adopt is first to try to assess the influence of war with the example of the French Revolutionary Wars through the private papers left by a simple merchant, Toussaint Bonvoisin, who wrote over five thousand manuscripts collected in four books written between May 1791 and 1814 about the French Revolution [SAUNIER 2011 : 177-189] for the instruction of his seven children, and especially his four sons.¹

To understand my suggestion, it is important to consider the urgency to catch up on the backwardness of the French Historic research about Maritime and Port History concerning work on cultural identity questions. This awareness prompted a reflection about the relevance of a typical Atlantic city united by common behaviours suggested by the new orientations of French historiography [SAUPIN], which have been influenced by Atlantic History [MARZAGALLI 17-31] for ten years. Our idea is to propose a critical approach showing the cultural way of thinking of each port considering the dependence on regional conditions. To do so, we naturally use quantitative approaches about social or cultural groups (migrants

¹ Louis-Toussaint (born in 1785), Benjamin (born en 1788), Armand (born in 1791) and Victor (born in 1795, when Toussaint Bonvoisin was writing his *Précis*).

[SAUNIER 2006 : 205-217], slave merchants [SAUNIER 2010 : 41-69] ...) but also family papers which are perhaps, as we intend to show, the best way to approach the outlines of a cultural way of thinking.

Before presenting the contributions of Toussaint Bonvoisin's two principal books, *Précis* and *History of Le Havre*, we must first insist on the particular interest of a study of Le Havre and the Bonvoisin papers from the view raised by the two above-mentioned questions. As regards the first point—examining the case of Le Havre—there are four particular reasons which give an interest to private papers written by an “ordinary” inhabitant of Le Havre.

The first one is due to the importance of the port of Le Havre at the end of the 18th century. On this point, we should keep in mind that this small town (20 000 inhabitants) was economically the third French colonial port. Since 1740, the “economic miracle” had grown in this town with the success of the West Indian trade and the ability of Havrese to play an important commercial role in the redistribution of North European productions. In this way, Le Havre was also the second port for the Slave Trade just before the French Revolution.

A second reason is that Le Havre was characterised, despite its recent foundation (1517), by the existence of a deeply-rooted cultural identity. The main evidence of this cultural identity was probably the influence of the spirit of the Catholic Reform in the mentalities of Le Havre inhabitants owing to the importance of the role of this “border city” at the beginning of the French wars of religion which broke out at the time of the foundation of the city [GASTINNE]. The threat of Protestantism and the dramatic events connected to the proximity of the Kingdom of England led the Catholics to the necessity, during the second half of the 16th century, to win back the city with the spirit of the Catholic Reform which was often looked upon with suspicion in the French Kingdom.

A second element of this cultural identity was the strong patriotism which characterised the inhabitants of Le Havre following that religious event. From 1560 onward, the latter considered that they were a sort of shield against the influence of Protestant countries, notably England and the United Provinces. Obviously, the permanent wars between the French Monarchy and the English Monarchy from the War of the Grand Alliance (1689-1697) until the end of the 18th century, all the more so in the context of economic and colonial competition between the two leading states in Europe (we must understand that Le Havre was the “advanced point of the French Atlantic system”) strengthened this feeling which can be called Le Havre

inhabitants' patriotism. This cultural phenomenon was also reinforced by the original relation developed between Le Havre and the French Royal State, owing to the conditions of the birth of Le Havre (we should bear in mind that the foundation was a royal decision) and the port's difficult development between 1517 and 1740. These difficulties led the French monarchy to give Le Havre regular decisive assistance and, from this point of view, we must say that the relation developed between Le Havre and the Monarchy was very different from the relations developed between La Rochelle or Bordeaux, archetypes of Maritime Republics opposed to the Monarchy.

The third and last benefit in considering Le Havre is the historiographic situation of studies concerning that Port. Indeed there lies a striking contrast between the fact that Le Havre was concerned by the phenomenon of the wars during the first three centuries of its history and the lack of studies about the cultural consequences of these wars. On the one hand, Le Havre was—more than many French towns and even many ports—regularly directly concerned by wars. From its foundation in 1517 to the revolutionary wars, the port was not only mobilised in the war against England but the city was also the direct victim of its attacks. So, after the dramatic Siege of the city in 1560-1562 finalised by the Treaty of Hampton Court (Richmond) signed on 22 September 1562, the bombings in 1694, which definitively ruined the prosperity of Dieppe and took place in Le Havre during the crisis of the cod trade, strongly struck the spirits of the memorialists, like the terrible bombings in 1759 during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) or, from a different point of view, the interruption of the economy during the War of American Independence. On the other hand, it should be noticed that historical studies are never interested in the question of the impact of wars on the mentalities in Le Havre. Surely, the histories of Le Havre mention the phenomenon of the wars but they deal with the question of its political or economic consequences, except in the case of the Second World War, but especially from a cinematographic or very specific approach.²

The research on the impact of Revolutionary Wars which is the subject of my work is a very good example of this situation. Indeed, the social, economic and political consequences of these wars in Le Havre are well known. Politically, the consequences of the Revolutionary War in a town which was

² Regarding the cinematographic approach of Le Havre bombings, I would like especially to mention *Table Rase* (directed by Christian Zarifian). For new perspectives about researches on this theme, it is necessary to stress the interest of « Normandie 1944 », a programme that is to begin in September 2014.

just opposite England explain the presence in Le Havre of an opinion marked even among the craftsmen by a very moderate Jacobinism. The domination of the Modérés in Le Havre Club des Jacobins [LEMARCHAND 355-379], the success of the merchants in containing the political radicalism in the popular society only in the working-class suburb of Ingouville [MERRIMAN], the exceptional capacity of Le Havre (compared to the attitude of Bordeaux, Nantes...) to accept the authority of the Convention during the Federalism crisis in Spring 1793 contribute to build an original political attitude. Economically and socially speaking, we also know that the consequences of the Revolutionary Wars, which accelerated the Saint-Domingue crisis where the colonial trade interests of Le Havre merchants were concentrated and which prompted a very dramatic Continental Blockade, accelerated the decline of the “City of the merchants” and helped the conversion of the port through the cotton industry allowing Le Havre to become the French Liverpool during the second half of the 19th century. But what was the consequence of the wars for the evolution of the cultural identity of the City or, to put it another way, in the representation of their city by its own citizens?

To this question, the family papers written by a simple haberdasher, Toussaint Bonvoisin—notably the two main books, *Précis de la Révolution française. Respec du aux Rois*, written between the September massacre and the beginning of General Bonaparte’s government (the book was ended in January 1803), and what we refer to as *Histoire du Havre* [BONVOISIN], written after the interruption of the previous book—really provide us with some answers. The reason is due to the numerous advantages of these papers.

The first interest of these papers is ascribable to their author’s professional identity. Socially, Toussaint Bonvoisin is of great interest because he was a very ordinary Le Havre merchant. Born in this port in 1741, at the time of the economic miracle, he was, like many merchants who worked in the city during the reign of Louis XVI, the son of a recently-arrived migrant. Engaged in the colonial trade, he was also one of these numerous merchants who benefited from the prosperity without building as big a fortune as the great merchants who were always the subject of historiographic works, most of which are characterised by their interest in the most important merchants in the port. For this reason, this type of testimony proves very useful.

It is even more interesting in so far as this testimony reveals the deep preoccupation of an ordinary Le Havre merchant. We know, thanks in particular to Alan Forrest [FORREST 131-155], that because of the nature of

the archives, the largest number of studies during the revolutionary period concern the economic activity of the merchants and it is invaluable to have at one's disposal an insight into the merchants' private feelings. The main writing (*Précis*) is only a book for the instruction of Toussaint Bonvoisin's four sons, built on the model of Bossuet's *Instruction À Monseigneur Le Dauphin* or Fénelon's *Télémaque*. Thanks to this book, we discover a merchant's innermost secrets and cultural habits during the French Revolution. Such an opportunity is exceptional.

The Bonvoisin papers are also interesting because the archives are particularly voluminous. The first writing (*Précis*) is 4094-page long. The reason for this surprising length is the trauma experienced by Toussaint Bonvoisin. As a Catholic and a monarchist, he considered the French Revolution and the death of the King as a complete destruction. He felt it necessary to describe this destruction to his children accurately and didactically. For Bonvoisin, writing was also a means of resisting the crisis. Indeed, with the Terror and de-Christianisation, he started to write what happened day after day because it was a means of protecting himself by writing his own reflections and the information copied from the newspapers. The *Précis* eventually comprises 44 books of 96 pages.

This description of the book contents reveals another interesting point: the two writings have genuine cultural intentions and they particularly concern the study of this city's identity. In fact *The Histoire du Havre* is clearly an essay intended to define the original place of a town. The *Précis* also sets great store by local information because the author wanted to share the voice of a local contemporary of the French Revolution, marked by the social peace in the city.

This interest is reinforced by the fact the papers were written for religious reasons. Horrified by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, Toussaint Bonvoisin wanted to insist on the spiritual transgression of the Revolution. After the Terror, he suggested a reflection on the political destiny of France. As a legalist accepting the different Constitutions, he decided to use the *Précis* to think for himself and his sons about the best government for France. But the declaration of War in February 1793, the bombings in Le Havre between 1796 and 1798, and the Napoleonic epic in Italy could not leave Bonvoisin cold. Indeed the wars invade the paper to a point that he loses rationality, forgets religious considerations and displays attitudes testifying how and to what extent the War can affect cultural identity.

The first important contribution of these private papers is to show that the war is a means of revealing the cultural foundations of the patriotic expression which crops up at the first opportunity. Viewed from this angle, the *Précis* is the most interesting paper because we can clearly observe not only the surprising support given by Toussaint Bonvoisin to the Convention but also the weight of the cultural opposition to the political and religious culture of the United Kingdom built along two centuries during which Le Havre was a Maritime frontier separating the two countries.

In the *Précis*, an enormous book in which 70% were written during the four years between 1 February 1793 and the Treaty of Campoformio, the emergence of the European war does not appear in Toussaint Bonvoisin's mind as a surprise. However, this question was not his main concern and he felt no interest in this cause in the first parts of his book written between October 1792 and January 1793. The war between Revolutionary France and the Austro-Prussian armies and the beginning of the war against the European Coalition was just a tragedy because he was a pacific Christian accepting Saint-Paul's point of view about the City. It was also one of the actions of Providence eager to punish French society which had had the impudence to contest absolutism and which, for this reason, was morally ruined. The emergence of a specific opinion about the war in Toussaint Bonvoisin's writing was however very slow. Indeed, when the war was declared on 1 February, Bonvoisin was still bemoaning the death of Louis XVI. This attitude prolonged his writing habits during the previous three months. During the war between the Convention and the Austro-Prussian coalition, all the developments of the *Précis* were also concerned with the attacks against the representation of the King. 20 June leading up to 10 August was notably the incentive to write a lament very similar to the lines written in February 1793, when the trauma of the regicide overwhelmed Toussaint Bonvoisin. Eventually, in the two parts of the story written between the end of Louis XVI's trial and April 1793, we can read sixty pages of laments, a copy of the King's statement written while he was imprisoned at the Temple's tower and only a few allusions to the first fights. It was with the mobilisation of the port of Le Havre, in April, that the war was introduced in the *Précis*, along with Toussaint's worries about his eldest son, Louis, who had gone to Gosport with refractory priests of Le Havre in December 1792. From April 1793 until May 1798, the war gradually acquired importance in the *Précis*. As proof of it, we can say that, as he had done for the religious transgression during the Terror or to show the dangers of the revival of Jacobinism from the fall of Robespierre (July 1794) to the conspiracy of the Equals led by Babeuf (April 1796), Toussaint began to use

the newspapers—moderate regional newspapers during the Terror and especially royalist newspapers which were very numerous in Rouen during the Directoire—to select the most important events [SAUNIER 2013 : 136-155]. What resulted from this work with newspapers and Bonvoisin's own thoughts is particularly enlightening not only as regards the expression of Bonvoisin's patriotic opinion but also with a view to explaining the foundations of a cultural identity marked by a deep patriotism. Indeed we can observe the expression of a blazing patriotism between April 1793 and August 1793, and then a true strategy to convince Havrese to refuse to accept the counterrevolution and the war in the Vendée because of converging interests between the political movement and the interest of the United Kingdom in which the religious and political were directly responsible for the French Revolution.

Before developing this point, we must first note that Toussaint Bonvoisin's patriotic attitude is itself a real sign of how strong patriotism was in Le Havre. As a matter of fact Bonvoisin, who felt a true nostalgia for the reign of Louis XVI and who appreciated the rule of England because it was a refuge for his son and for his friends who could practice their religion, was entitled to hesitate to show excessive patriotism. Yet that was the feeling expressed by Toussaint Bonvoisin from April 1793, with the subtlety entailed by the contradiction between the radical condemnation the Convention policy required and the wish to do his patriotic duty, this was also a means of showing his own awareness of the historical stakes concerning the evolution of Le Havre

This awareness was perceptible, from April 1793 to August 1793, in the fact that his attention was above all concerned with the mobilisation of maritime ports and the fights of the French navy. It was the sign that, when the war started to invade his writing, this question was inevitably tied to the issue of the destiny of Le Havre which implied that patriotism must be the only possible attitude. From April to August 1793, we can observe the expression of a blazing patriotism in Toussaint Bonvoisin's neutrality when he speaks of the dramatic military events during spring and summer 1793. While Bonvoisin was very critical of the political situation, he only presented the facts of the war and mobilisation, without any negative judgment.

Paradoxically, it was in the context of the beginning of de-Christianisation, despite the growing hatred due to the imminence of the Constitution of 24 June 1793, that a second stage was reached. The explosions of anger about the transgressive act of the Jacobins, such as hanging an inscription on the

frontispiece of Saint-André des Arts in November 1793 led Toussaint Bonvoisin to begin to vent ideological criticism against the responsibility of the English culture in the activation of the cultural and political violence of the French Revolution. In a thought in which he began to pay tribute to the writings of Edward Young (well-known in France thanks to Pierre Le Tourneur's translations)³ operating a distinction between the conception of Reason for the adepts of the decadal cult and Christian conceptions, the evocation of the author of *Nights Thoughts* led Toussaint Bonvoisin, because the author was English and Protestant, to a violent condemnation of the example given by the attitude of Parliament during the 16th century and iconoclasm during the civil wars at the beginning of the French religious crisis and revolutionary violence. For this denunciation, he notably used references from the *Journal of William Dowsing*⁴ that he had read. As well as Bonvoisin's interest in English culture, we must observe, as regards the evolution of his interest in the question of the war and the related question of patriotism, that his strategy was clever. Showing the responsibility of English political and religious culture in the birth of the French Revolution at the climax of revolutionary destructions, he tried to introduce a sort of pedagogy to prevent the idea, for the Havrese and perhaps for himself, of hoping for the enemy's victory in order to stop the disasters caused by the Revolution. To strengthen the preventions against these temptations, revolutionary celebrations also became a privileged support. Indeed, we must observe, in the context of a text carefully and minutely describing the revolutionary celebrations organised in Le Havre, the evolution of the use of the latter to show the necessity of being a patriot. The description of revolutionary celebrations in Le Havre were indeed traditionally used by Bonvoisin to show the subversion of revolutionary culture, notably in the religious field. In this regard the *Précis* notably offered edifying descriptions of the Celebration of "freedom martyrs" Lepeletier de Saint-Fargeau and Marat, the Cult of Reason and the Cult of the Supreme Being [Appendix 1]. But two celebrations are an exception to the rule and prove most enlightening for our purpose: the celebration organised on the occasion of

³ Published by Edward Young in 1742, *Nights Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* was translated into French by Pierre Le Tourneur in 1769 and was immediately successful in France.

⁴ William Dowsing (1596-1688) was appointed in 1643 as "Commissioner for the destruction of monuments of idolatry and superstition" in Suffolk. Dowsing carried out his work in 1643-44 by visiting over 250 churches, removing or defacing items; during this period he left a journal recording much of what he did, listing what he destroyed in each church and chapel: *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia during the English Civil War*.

the recapture from the British of the port of Toulon in December 1793, and then the Celebration of Pavillon National [Appendix 2], organised by Jean-Bon Saint-André in May 1794. The former was really intended to show the inhabitants of Le Havre that the attitude of the inhabitants of Toulon set a very bad example for them. He notably insisted on the union of Le Havre inhabitants and American citizens present in the port to refuse a similar attitude and the delight of the Havrese to advocate a contrary attitude.

Moreover, described between the Cult of Reason and the Cult of the Supreme Being, the Celebration of National Pavillon is for us a crucial turning-point for the expression of a cultural attitude which has come down from an old legalist attitude taking roots in the relationship developed between Le Havre and the State. While the Cult of Reason and the Cult of the Supreme Being [Appendix 1], organised just before and just after the Celebration of National Pavillon [Appendix 2], occasioned the most terrible condemnations of the French Revolution, this Celebration was a true call to patriotism which implied saying nothing about the political problems. Even the representation of the “représentant en mission”, who was usually for Toussaint a sort of embodiment of the Devil, was presented positively.

We must also say that Toussaint Bonvoisin’s expression of his patriotism did not prevent him from insisting on the responsibility of the Revolutionary French Government in the activation of the wars. The phenomenon was very clear during the Directoire. Hoping peace was possible, notably before the coup d’état of 18 Fructidor an V (5 September 1797), Bonvoisin considered the attitude of the French Government as the only reason for the continuation of the war. The aggressive attitude of the French government, before a religious attitude during the Second Directoire (September 1797-November 1799), was even the motive for his support to the Royalist political forces and we can consider the force of this feeling of anger in the attention Bonvoisin paid to the pacific manifestations coming from the United Kingdom. We are particularly interested in the copy of the speech Lord Lansdowne delivered in favour of peace in 1794, completely rewritten by Bonvoisin⁵ as a kind of complaint against the attitude of the French government which rejected the policy of openness. But this sensibility did

⁵ Lord Lansdowne was one of the most liberal Foxite Whigs. When the Portland Whigs joined Pitt’s government in 1794, he was also one of the principal politicians defending pacific positions, notably in a glorious speech delivered at the House of Lords on 17 February 1794. Lansdowne’s position became more difficult as the revolution in France was getting increasingly violent. Lansdowne’s arguments against the war came to be seen as increasingly ‘unpatriotic’ and Lansdowne finally retired in 1802.

not lead Bonvoisin, in the context of permanent fights off Le Havre between 1796 and 1798 and of the bombings of the city from May 1798, to question the necessity to be a patriot.

The reality of Bonvoisin's preserving a patriotic attitude and his awareness that it was necessary to maintain some prevention against "anglophilia" are perceptible in the way he was attentive to the mutiny led by sailor Parker during summer 1798. The analysis offered by Bonvoisin is especially a condemnation of the revolutionary tendencies in England by denouncing social trouble in the English Navy. It was for Bonvoisin a means of showing that the situation in the United Kingdom at the end of the 18th century was as subversive as it had been during the 18th-century civil wars. At that time, Bonvoisin's state of mind was moreover characterised by a high degree of patriotism. This patriotism was so strong that, in the second part of 1798, Bonvoisin forgot French political questions and changed his accustomed way of writing. Whereas he used to give news of life in Le Havre at the end of each month, it was now impossible for him to wait until the end of each month, as he had been doing since October 1793, to write about events that had happened in Le Havre during the month in question. Eventually, the history of Le Havre during the French Revolution in showing the mobilisation of the population who feared a possible English landing, became similar, despite the political rupture lived by the author, to the view of the Memorialists who wrote about the history of Le Havre before the Revolution [CHABANNES], the bombings of 1798 being exactly described in the same way as the bombings of 1759 or 1694. We think that this phenomenon is undoubtedly the best proof that the war is a favorable time to affirm the cultural identity of a port which is built through the impacts of many successive events. It is also evidence of the value of private papers to study this process.

But the cultural identity of Le Havre was not only characterised by the patriotic feeling aroused by the influence of the specific relation with the Royal state since the foundation of the town in 1517. The cultural identity of Le Havre was also made of a solid attachment to the Catholicism that revolutionary wars had reinforced.

From this point of view, it is the second important book by Toussaint Bonvoisin, *Histoire du Havre*, which is the more interesting. We can easily account for this interest with a quick presentation of the conditions in which this book was written, the last manuscript left by Bonvoisin, a manuscript that death apparently prevented him from completing and publishing. In

fact, *History of Le Havre* corresponds to Bonvoisin's first writing project. It was only the trauma of the Regicide and of the Terror that led Bonvoisin to stop this project and begin the *Précis*. At the beginning of the Revolution, Toussaint Bonvoisin had begun to write a history of Le Havre in taking part in a collective writing work. The aim was to write a History of Le Havre for Le Havre inhabitants, notably the elite, in the context of a collective work which was managed by Guillaume Anfray, a clever clergyman and a friend of Toussaint's who went to Gosport in September 1792. The exact function of Bonvoisin was to submit some notes about high personalities of Le Havre to enable Guillaume Anfray to write a series of edifying portraits in the style of Plutarch's *Vies Parallèles* to show the genius of Le Havre inhabitants [ANFRAY]. When he stopped the *Précis* in January 1803, Toussaint Bonvoisin wanted to write a synthesis using these notes and the principal episodes written in the *Précis*. The objective of the book, ending the History of Le Havre on 2 August 1804, was to teach the inhabitants of Le Havre the history of their city and especially the meaning of the Revolution.

Now, the interest of this text, a sort of testimony in which the author—because he was fascinated by the Augustinian and Bossuet's theology of History—showed his acceptance of the Providential view which was also the view of the author of the City of God, is to present clearly a religious vision of the mission given to the town of Le Havre, a town with a specific sensibility that the Revolution, because of its destructions and subversions, reinforced. Indeed, the author announced without restraint that the dramatic events in Le Havre during the French wars of religion had built a Catholic sensibility which transformed Le Havre, its clergymen and its inhabitants into a sort of model of piety characterised by the influence of the Spirit of the Council of Trent. In this perspective, the French Revolution had a precise function. It was to reveal, facing a paroxysmal crisis, the strength and solidity of the Catholicism of Le Havre inhabitants which was still strong at the end of the 18th century thanks to the influence of an educated clergy. With patriotism, there emerged the cultural phenomenon that we call the Catholicity of Le Havre, also due to the border's position.

In the cultural identity of Le Havre clearly revealed by the war, we must insist on the importance of the relation developed between Le Havre and England. The reason is, with the successive wars and the rise of the economic competition between the two monarchies, the fear of the spirit of English Protestantism which shaped a feeling marked by a strong Catholicism which explained the violence of Toussaint Bonvoisin's attacks against the Constitutional Oath and de-Christianisation. This fear of English influence notably emerged in a text written in May 1791 to denounce the

Constitutional Oath imposed on clergymen and to explain his hatred of the New Clergy elected in May. In this text, *Sentiments d'un bon patriote*, which is a sort of introduction to the *Précis*, we notably observe that, when Toussaint Bonvoisin began his learned demonstration of the inanity of the four points of the Constitutional Oath rejected by Pope Benedict XIV in April 1791, evoking the fourth and final condemned point, the Freedom of conscience granted to clergymen, it was John Wycliffe who was pointed out as being the one to blame. In a context in which we know that Luther, Calvin and particularly the Jansenists were most frequently accused, it is really interesting to note that it was John Wycliffe who was accused of being the Father of the heresy which paved the way for the revolutionary spiritual subversion.

We must conclude our development by pointing out that this testimony has also clearly confirmed the importance of the proximity of England in the feeling of the existence of a cultural identity, despite revolutions or destructions. In his history, Toussaint Bonvoisin indeed showed the revolutionary wars sent by God as being the third stage in the foundation of Le Havre. Even more than the foundational decision in 1517, the first stage in the creation of the city was the revival that followed the English Siege of 1561-1562, the second one was the real prosperity beginning after the English attack of 1759 and the third and last stage was the Revival of the City beginning with the Peace of Amiens (March 1802). Such a view is particularly significant both as regards the existence of a cultural identity and the part played by wars to account for this identity.

In conclusion, two observations should be made regarding the exceptional wealth of these family papers. First the importance of the power of wars to reveal the cultural identity of a port should be emphasised. As a crisis, war is a privileged time to prompt the inhabitants of a town to show, *nolens volens*, their attachment to their own city. In showing their attachment, it should be noted that they also lay the foundations for this feeling. But a question arises. During the time of the expression of this feeling, what is the part of the construction or of the affirmation contained in the war if we are willing to consider this event as a cultural phenomenon? This is unquestionably something that should be explored. To this end, and that is the second conclusion, it is high time we mobilised the egodocuments [DUPRAT & SAUNIER] available to try to show how valuable they are. At a moment when we can observe that these egodocuments are often used to

show the mentality of professional or social groups, the time has come for us to mobilise these archives for a reflection about the cultural identity of towns and especially of ports.

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Appendix 1

Précis de la Révolution relativement à Louis 16. Respec du aux Rois et aux puissances » (XVI ; 45/62)

Fête de l'Être Suprême à Paris, le 10 juin 1794

« Voilà donc la grande feste des français établie sur les débris de la vraie religion ; il faut savoir comment elle se célèbre pour ne pas gémir sur la

dépravation des mœurs, sur la licence des peuples ; liberté, on peut même dire l'effronterie des femmes et des filles, des jeunes libertins, des danses des chants de cannibales, voilà tout l'apanage de cette feste ; nous entrerons dans le détail de ce que nous avons vu lorsque nous rendrons cette feste qui s'est solennisée au Havre.

La Convention semble avoir choisi par une damnable politique le saint jour de Pentecoste pour décréter la solennité d'une feste à l'Être Suprême afin de détruire dans l'esprit du peuple un reste de religion pour ses grandes festes. Pour l'étourdir ; elle lui présente sous le voile d'une fausse reconnaissance de la divinité un enchaînement de cérémonie extérieure mêlée de divin et du profane, une fête toute païenne. Cette Convention nationale détruit ou défend tout extérieur de religion quelconque tandis qu'elle-même décrète règles et arrête toutes les cérémonies de sa fausse et impie religion ; elle a renversé les festes des mystères de Jésus Christ, les festes des saints pour en établir à la raison, à la liberté, à la patrie &. Elle prescrit l'honneur des saints martyrs pour le déférer aux martyrs de la Liberté, à un Marat, un Peletier. Ah quelle abomination

Ô mon Dieu les impies ont détruit votre sainte religion. Ils se jouent, ils insultent à vos décrets éternels et voilà que sous votre nom même dont ils osent couvrir leur infâme politique, ils prétendent vous honorer par une feste solennelle pour étourdir le peuple. Ils ont choisi, ô mon Dieu, le jour de votre triomphe, par la descente du saint-esprit dans le cœur de vos apôtres ; le jour de l'établissement de la Loi nouvelle ; la formation de votre église, de votre sainte religion, pour la détruire et la renverser de fond en comble. Mais ô mon Dieu laisseres vous périr vos fidèles serviteurs, ceux qui vous sont restés toujours attachés ; ils souffrent la persécution pour votre cause ; privés de leur secours spirituels, ils n'en sont pas moins observateurs de votre loi. Ils se reposent donc entre vos bras adorables, surs de votre secours et de votre assistance. Ils n'oublient pas vos dernières paroles lorsque vous quittâtes la Terre pour vous élever dans les cieux. Voilà que je suis avec vous jusqu'à la consommation des siècles.

L'impie insulte à notre misère apparente. IL demande où est leur Dieu qui les abandonne ? Le royaume de Jésus Christ n'est pas de ce monde. Je l'ai déjà dit plusieurs fois. Dieu permet que l'impie prospère quelquefois et cette prospérité est le comble de sa perte. Elle le jette d'erreur en erreur, d'abîme en abîme. Elle le porte à l'endurcissement de cœur et enfin à l'aveuglement jusqu'à dire en lui-même : « il n'y a pas de Dieu, ou s'il croit encore à un Dieu, c'est pour mépriser à sa religion, critiquer ou insulter ses ministres. Oui s'écrie-t-il ! La religion n'est que d'invention humaine. Elle est de l'intérêt des prêtres ; Dieu, l'Être Suprême désavoue cette fausse religion. Sa religion, dit la Convention nationale, est la Vertu, son temple est l'Univers,

ses festes la joye d'un peuple immense qui célèbre ses bienfaits. C'est ainsi que raisonnent les philosophes impies de nos jours, nos législateurs. C'est ainsi qu'on instruit et qu'on abuse le peuple. Ils portent même l'audace jusqu'à se prévaloir des prospérités de leurs armes et des bienfaits de la Providence. Voyez disent-ils au peuple, voyez combien le Ciel vous favorise depuis que vous avez secoué le joug du fanatisme et de l'erreur ; depuis que vous avez chassé vos prêtres et que vous vous êtes défaits de cette fausse religion. C'est depuis que vous avez cessé vos processions et vos prières faites par vos jongleurs que le Ciel vous donne d'abondantes récoltes, que toute la nature semble déployer ses bienfaits et faire naître ces tems heureux ou la saison étoit beaucoup plus précocée. Nos succès, la prospérité de nos armes n'est due qu'à notre dévouement pour la chose publique, pour la patrie et pour la liberté qui n'est qu'une émanation de l'Être Suprême. Oui. Je sais que l'impie prospère quelquefois, qu'il réussit dans ses desseins, qu'il paroît élevé comme le cèdre du Liban et qu'il semble insulter le Ciel par une église orgueilleuse qu'il ne croit tenir que de lui-même. C'est un aman qui abuse ... mais attendez son élévation va lui creuser elle-même son précipice, la main du Seigneur l'arrachera bientôt de dessus la terre et le bruit de sa chute retentira par tout l'Univers. La fin de l'impie est presque toujours sans honneur ; tôt ou tard, il faut que cet édifice d'orgueil et d'injustice s'écroule : la honte et les malheurs vont succéder ici bas à la gloire de ses prospérités et de ses succès ; on le verra peut être traîner une vieillese triste et déshonorée ; il finira par l'ignominie ; Dieu aura son tour, la gloire de l'impie ne descendra pas avec lui dans le tombeau. Si son nom vit après lui, ce ne sera que pour être en exécration dans l'histoire des siècles à venir. Repasses sur les siècles qui nous ont précédés, comme disoit un autre Pierre, juif à ses enfants, et vous verrez que le seigneur a toujours souffré sur terre ces orgueilleux et en a fait sécher les racines que la prospérité des impies n'a jamais passé à leurs descendants. O Religion sainte ! Vous qui fesiez le bonheur des Français et la consolation de nos pères, qu'êtes-vous devenu. Chassés proscrits de ce royaume ; les impies renversent vos autels, chassent vos ministres, dispersent vos fidèles : l'abomination est le lieu saint, et sous le prétexte d'adorer l'Être Suprême, motifs plus politiques que sincères, ils renversent l'ordre de ses conseils éternels, les lois et les maximes de l'église sainte. Oui nous osons le dire avec vérité, ces festes, cette reconnaissance de l'Être Suprême par le peuple français, décrété par la Convention nationale, n'est rien moins qu'un motif de politique pour laisser au peuple une ombre de croyance et pour se soustraire elle-même aux reproches de son impie despotisme en sauvant les apparences du vice et de la tyrannie

Ô mes concitoyens, vous fidèles observateurs des maximes et des lois du Seigneur, combattons généreusement pour la foy, mais combattre suivant les maximes de Jésus christ avec les armes de la prière, en souffrant avec patience et résignation les persécutions des impies. Ranimons de plus en plus notre foy, méditons souvent notre sainte religion, écoutons parler sur ce sujet l'immortel Massillon, évêque de Clermont

« La Religion est la fin de tous les desseins de Dieu sur la terre. Tout ce qu'il a fait ici bas, il ne l'a fait que pour elle. Tout doit servir l'agrandissement de ce royaume de Jésus Christ. Les vertus et les vices, les grands et le peuple, les bons et les mauvais succès, l'abondance ou les calamités publiques, l'élévation ou la décadence des empires, tout enfin dans l'ordre des conseils éternels doit coopérer à la formation et à l'accroissement de cette sainte Jérusalem. Les tyrans l'ont parfois par les persécutions, les fidèles la perpétuent par la charité, les incrédules, les philosophes impies et les libertins l'éprouvent et l'affermissent par les scandales. Les justes sont les témoins de sa foi, les pasteurs les dépositaires de doctrine, les princes et les puissants les protecteurs de sa vérité.

L'intérêt du culte se trouve mêlé avec celui de l'état ; il importe au souverain de maintenir les dehors auguste de la religion et la vérité de sa doctrine qui soutiennent eux-mêmes le trône et d'accoutumer à rendre à Dieu et à l'église le respect et la soumission qui leur sont dûs, de peur qu'ils ne lui refusent ensuite à lui-même. Les troubles de l'église ne sont jamais loin de ceux de l'état. On ne respecte guère le joug des puissans quand on est parvenu à secouer le joug de la foy et l'hérésie a beau se laver de cette opprobre, elle a partout allumé le feu de la sédition, elle est née dans la révolte en ébranlant les fondements de la foy. Elle a ébranlé le trône et les empires et partout en formant des sectateurs, elle a formé des rebelles.

Elle a beau dire que les persécutions des Princes leur mirent en main les armes d'une juste défense, l'église n'opposa jamais aux persécuteurs que la patience et la fermeté. Sa foy fut le seul glaive avec lequel elle vainquit les tirants. Ce ne fut pas en répandant le sang de ses ennemis qu'elle multiplie ses disciples ; le sang de ses martyrs tout seuls fut la semence de ses fidèles ; ses premiers docteurs ne furent pas envoyer dans l'univers comme des lions pour porter partout le meurtre et le carnage, mais comme des agneaux pour être eux-mêmes égorgés. Ils prouvèrent non en combattant mais en mourant pour la foy la vérité de leur mission. On devoit les traîner devant les Rois pour y être jugés comme des criminels et non pour y paraître les armes à la main et les forcer de leur être favorables. Ils respectoient le spectre dans des mains même profanes et idolâtres et ils auroient cru des hommes et détruire l'œuvre de Dieu en recourant pour l'établir à des ressources humaines.

Quelle honte pour la Religion ! Les plus grands hommes du paganisme respectoient la leur. Ils ne parloient qu'avec respect des superstitions de l'idolatrie, dont ils connoissoient la puérité et l'extravagance. Ils pensoient avec les sages et ils n'osoient parlé que comme le peuple. Ils n'auroient XXX leur réputation et leur lumière insulte tout haut un culte si insensé mais que la majesté des lois de l'empire et l'ancienneté rendoit respectable. Et Socrate lui-même, l'homme de la Grèce, ce premier philosophe du monde si estimé de tous les siècles et qui devoit être si cher au sien perd la vie par un arrêt public d'Athènes pour avoir parlé avec moins de circonspection de ces dieux bizarres auxquels les cityens doivent moins de respect et d'honneur qu'à lui-même.

Et parmi nous le Dieu du Ciel et de la terre est insulté hautement sans que le zèle public se réveille ! Et sous l'empire même de la foy, des hommes vils et ignorans font des dérisions publiques d'une doctrine descendue des lieux et on applaudit à l'impiété ! Et dans un royaume où le titre de chrétiens honore nos rois, l'incrédulité impunie devient même un titre d'honneur pour des sujets. Les vaines idoles auroient eu le ministère public pour vengeur contre les savans et les sages, et le seul Dieu véritable ne l'auroit pas contre les libertins et les insensés » ? Je lis que le monde se vante et surtout vos philosophes d'un phantôme d'honneur et de probité indépendant de la religion. Il croit qu'on peut être fidèle aux hommes sans être fidèle à Dieu, être orné de toutes les vertus que demande la société ça c'est ce que l'on nous chante tous les jours le religion du Cœur... sans savoir celles qu'exige l'Évangile et en un mot estre honnête homme sans estre chrétien. *

Dieu a permis et même suscité de tout tems de ces esprits ambitieux de ces caractères turbulents audacieux de ces philosophes impies pour ts audacieux de ces philosophes impies pour servir à sa vengeance quand il a voulu punir les royaumes de leur dissolution.

Voyez dit l'écriture comme ils ont paru sur la terre ces génies supérieurs, mais ambitieux et inquiets, nés pour faire mouvoir les ressorts des Etats et des Empires et ébranler l'univers entier ? les peuples et les rois sont devenus les jouets de leur ambition et de leurs intrigues : les dissensions civiles et les malheurs domestiques ont été les théâtres lugubres où ont brillé leur grand talens.

Malheur au siècle qui donne naissance à ces hommes détestables, à ces esprits vastes mais inquiets et turbulens ; qui ont pour changer le face entière d'une nation jalouse de ces droits, de faire rendre des hommages que leurs concitoyens disputent même à leurs Rois ; renverses le Trosne ; et donne à l'univers le spectacle d'un souverain dont la couronne ne peut mettre la teste sacrée à couvert de l'arrêt inoui qui le condame à la perdre. esprits extraordinaires, capables de tout soutenir hors le repos ; qui tournent

sans cesse autour du pivot même qui les fixe et qui les attachent ; et qui semblable à samson sans être animés de son esprit, aiment encore mieux ébranler l'édifice et être écrasés sous ses ruines que de ne pas s'agiter et faire usage de leurs talens et de leur force.

Malhuer donc au siècle qui produit des ces hommes rares et merveilleux ! chaque nation a eu la dessus ses leçons et ses exemples.

Venges l'honneur de la Religion, ô mon Dieu, dont nos illustres ancêtres ont été les dépositaires et l'ont affermie dans ce royaume par leurs instructions et leurs exemples ; la terre est encore teinte de leurs sueurs et de leur sang qu'ils ont versé pour la soutenir. Renversez les complots des méchants, détruisez les impies, les blasphémateurs, confondez les malheureux philosophes, rétablissez au plutost la paix dans notre malheureux royaume affin qu'après nous avoir purifiés dans vos desseins adorables et avoir rétabli votre sainte eglise ; nous puissions chanter avec joye les cantiques de sion dans votre temple saint ».

Appendix 2

Précis de la Révolution relativement à Louis 16. Respec du aux Rois et aux puissances »

Faits particuliers arrivé au Havre (XV ; 87/90)

Fête du 20 décadi 30 Floréal

ou Fête de l'inauguration du Nouveau Pavillon National

« On avait déposé une frégate de 30 canons dans le milieu du bassin neuf ornée de guirlande et de verdure et d'un arbre de la liberté. Sur le pont entouré d'un trophée d'arbres pavoisé dans toutes ces parties, ponts et bancs. Tout autre bâtiment était retiré en arrière de cette frégate, de sorte qu'elle était isolée. Un chemin de chaque côté conduisait à son bord, chaque côté de ces chemins était fermé par des gardes fous et tendus en toile blanche. Toutes les gardes nationales furent sur pied dès le grand matin. On avait battu l'appel ainsi que les troupes de ligne. Ces différents corps furent passés en haie dans la grande rue, dans le marché et dans le Bassin neuf. Le cortège de la cérémonie s'assemble au Palais, place du marché ; la municipalité, le comité de salut public, le corps de la marine, de l'artillerie, du génie, la société populaire, le tribunal de paix, de justice et du commerce, toutes les différentes classes d'ouvriers des travaux de la marine de la

République, un groupe de jeunes femmes vêtues en blanc avec des ceintures bouclées embellissaient ce cortège. Nos amis furent aussi de la fête, anglo-américains, suédois et danois, chaque nation portait son pavillon. C'était une assemblée de frères. Le cortège se porta en ordre de marche rue du Bassin neuf et de là à la frégate. La surprise fut énorme et le plus beau coup d'œil que l'on puisse voir frappa tous les spectateurs. Ce fut au moment que le représentant du peuple Pomme qui était ici eut à monter à bord et mettre le pied dans la frégate qu'à l'instant il se développa et partit une immense quantité de fleurs de toutes les couleurs et de toutes les nations qui furent mis à toutes les verges, aux mats & aux cris de vive la République, vive la montagne furent rendus par tous ceux à bord de cette frégate et de tous les marins qui remplissèrent toutes les hunes, les vergues et les mâts. Ces cris furent portés jusqu'à terre et répétés par un peuple immense qui bordait chaque côté du Bassin.

Le représentant du peuple prononça un discours sur le motif de la fête qui fut applaudi par les cris ordinaires et à l'instant on hisse le grand pavillon national en poupe, au même instant on fit une décharge de batterie que l'on avait disposé sur un côté du bassin et qui furent suivis de toutes les batteries en général. Ensuite un groupe de comédiennes montées sur le bateau chantèrent La Marseillaise et La Carmagnole. De là le cortège sortit du bord de la frégate et se rendit sur le Perrey où on avait planté un mât de par la Place de la fédération. Arrivé là, le représentant fit encore un discours. Après quoi les cris de Vive la République, Vive la Montagne se firent entendre dans tous les airs ; aussitôt on hissa le Pavillon national et au même moment toutes les batteries firent plusieurs salves mais ce qui fera l'attention et charmes des spectateurs, ce fut une frégate et quelques autres bâtiments de guerre qui étaient sur la rade qui firent un feu de combat de tous leurs... Ainsi se termina cette fête de l'inauguration du Pavillon national décrété par la Convention nationale. Avant, les trois couleurs étaient distribués, la bande rouge la 1^{ère}, la bleue la 2^{ème} et la Blanche la 3^{ème} au lieu que suivant le décret, c'est la bande bleue du côté du mât qui est la 1^{ère}, la blanche la 2^{ème} et la Rouge la 3^{ème}. A côté est dessiné le pavillon.