ABSTRACT

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the royal power further strengthened the system it inherited over the book and printing world and gradually reduced the number of printers in the cities, Paris as in the provinces and very quickly, he only had recourse to the services of its appointed printers, to print official documents produced by his administration. In Grenoble, the humble Petit family, nevertheless managed to succeed and establish a singular and surprising dynasty of printers-bookSELLers, whose different members stand out for their unique enduring career among their peers, their business lasted for almost 80 years alongside the largest Grenoble dynamics in the middle, until the third generation put an end to it by refusing to take over the family business. The aim of this study was therefore to retrace the lives of the members of this dynasty, their career and their interactions with the printing industry at significantly different ages and periods.

INTRODUCTION

Let us confine our attention on the birth and the affirmations of the Petit family, who, despite an unfavourable environment for the development of new independent businesses, managed to establish a new dynasty of printers-bookSELLers in Grenoble between the end of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century. The preliminary work on the printers of Grenoble allowed me to learn more about the origins of the Petit family and the conditions which enabled them to reach the coveted title of Master Printer of the city of Grenoble. This family has lacked a very particular background. Jacques Petit, founding father of this young dynasty in 1680, because of his family origins, seemed trapped in the world of printing and yet, after brief studies in Lyon, he returned a few years later to Grenoble, his hometown, and managed to gain acceptance as a printer in the city’s service after only a year. Dedicating part of his work to the Parliament of Grenoble, this proximity to the highest authorities of the city thus made it possible to erect a certain authority for the dynasty.

Thus, it is the singularity of the journey of this humble dynasty of printers from Grenoble, from its establishment to its disappearance that makes it interesting and unique. Although compared to other families who had the same or even more appearances on the print production scene was relatively brief and understated, their history is nonetheless fascinating to study and recount. Also, our questioning focused not only on the unusual journey of the Petit family, from Jacques to Pierre-Antoine Petit, within the world of the printing-bookSELLers, their interactions with it, but also on its place within the literature, since, as mentioned earlier, the Petit family’s entry into printing was established in a particular way. We therefore tried to open up the profile of the Devocien son, who, within an already unique family, is also distinguished by his character and his background. All this with the final aim of narrating the problems which is the key to what the potency of the Petit dynasty was, as well for the small family, as for the city of Grenoble. To this end, we will first use the origins and the establishment of this dynasty in Grenoble, then the life and careers of the printers through the Petit family to finally conclude on the future of the dynasty through the narratives of inheritance and transmission.

RESULTS

To succeed in this study, the Petit family’s work and activity had to be compared to the impact of their actions and provide answers to the questions surrounding the creation and fate of the dynasty of the Little Press, which has been almost completely forgotten. Basing our study not only on the printed documents produced by the Petit family, the study of the establishment and the careers of this family within the Grenoble printing industry in the 17th and 18th centuries, it also questions the identity of the Petit family and the challenges they faced as independent printers in the city, and is embracing social anxiety.

An important step was to document the career graphs against Mathieu Petit by different families of printers in the hope of taking the best path laid down by the Petit family. At the same time, we were, as far as possible, to turn to the Petit family genealogies, from the family archives and moreover, to reconstruct the diaries and correspondence charting all the complexities and challenges of obtaining the monopoly of printing, the relationship established with the mayor and the scribes of the city of Grenoble, the Petit family’s relationships with other printers and the Paulin family from Grenoble, and to analyze their own features. The Petit family’s history is captured in the Gazette through the correspondence that the Petit family had with the mayor of Grenoble, and the Petit brothers’ correspondence with other printers in the city of Grenoble, who, through the study and the Petit family’s reputation in the city, and the wealth of information. Essentially, the Petit family’s departure from Grenoble, and to clarify the Petit family’s role and to reach the coveted title of Master Printer of the city of Grenoble.

In this study, we sought to place this dynasty in a more global context, the family of printers of Grenoble in the 17th and 18th centuries, in order to better understand the challenges and the establishment of the Petit family, we also sought to understand the political tensions, especially during the transmission of this dynasty, as well as the Petit family’s difficulties and the conditions which enabled them to reach the coveted title of Master Printer of the city of Grenoble. At the end of our study, the various fields and aspects explored have enabled us to highlight several problems, and to provide answers to the questions surrounding the course and fate of this dynasty of the Petit family. This study made it possible to bring out the strange, at once economical and political, of the complexity of actors which were specific to their profession.

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REFERENCES

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MATERIALS AND METHOD

For this study, we mainly turn on the collections of various sources, in my correspondence. However, I would not want to find out, that reports, and of course a material bibliography provided. The main archives conserved the Departmental Archives of Isere, where a wealth of information about the Petit family is kept.

The investigation of the correspondence, with the Petit family and their laymen, and the Petit family from Grenoble, through the study of the Petit family, made it possible to bring out the strange, at once economical and political, of the complexity of actors which were specific to their profession.