



Lavinia Maddaluno

«*Faire participer le publique de la bonté de la dite eau*».  
*Negotiating urban waters in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Marseille*

In 1700, two bourgeois men living in the city of Marseille wrote a request to the Provence superintendent of justice in order to confirm the water concessions (*concessions d'eau*) which had been granted to their ancestors a few generations earlier<sup>1</sup>. These two figures found themselves in a juridical conundrum, being the main users of a water source, a well named “puit de la pouseraque”, whose water had been assessed as fresh and abundant by an institutional visit organised by the city councillors (*Échevins*) of the city of Marseille in an undefined moment in time<sup>2</sup>. Sieurs Jean Malaval and Pierre Romieu, these were the names of the two members of the public, or *particuliers*, used the water of this special well not only for the purpose of drinking, but also to irrigate their gardens. These shared one of the sides and were situated outside the city walls, very close to the public aqueduct, north-east of the city, and to the hospital of the *pauvres convalescents*, founded in 1654 and part of a sort of network of hospitals (some extremely specialised) which began to appear in Marseille since the Middle Ages:

Il y a eu de tout temps un gran puis appelé pouséraque dont l'usage est commun avec le d. S.<sup>r</sup> Romieu de la quelle leurs rentiers ont accostume de se servir tant pour leur boire que pour leur arrossage de d. jardins et comme l'eau est extremement freche et la source assez abondante M.<sup>m</sup> les echevins de cette ville auroient trouvé à propos pour l'utilité

<sup>1</sup> Archives Municipales de Marseille (henceforth AMM), DD 281, page with no number. This paper was developed thanks to and during a postdoctoral fellowship on the project Star 2017 linea 1 *Dealing with collective interests in Early Modern Europe. A comparative analysis of urban water supplies administration in Southern Italy and France, 17th-18th centuries* (PI Prof. Diego Carnevale), with funds from the Compagnia di S. Paolo together with the Istituto Banco di Napoli and the Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II. I wish to thank my then P.I., Diego Carnevale, my colleague Gaia Bruno, Giorgio Riello as well as the archivists of the Archives Municipales de Marseille.

<sup>2</sup> AMM, DD281, page with no number.

publique il y a quelques années de deriver l'eau de la dite pouseraque & la conduire par des canaux sous-térain pour grossier les fontaines qui roiuillissent a la place neufve, à l'hostel de la ville, et la place des vivaux & faire participer le publique de la bonté de la dite eau & comme les canaux on est acheves, les dites S.<sup>rs</sup> Echevins avant que combler la dite pouseraque avroient jugé ressonable suivant la promesse verballe que leurs devanciers avoient faite aux d. Srs Mallaval & Romieu de leur remplacer de l'eau une quantité suffisante pour l'arrossage de leurs jardins & leur usage afin de les indemniser aucunement de la dite pouseraque et des canaux du dite Sieur Mallaval servant à la conduite de l'eau [...]<sup>3</sup>.

As we can read from this document transcription, the problem with the well “puit de la pouseraque” and its two main users, Malaval and Romieu, had to do with the fact that the city councillors had declared it of public relevance, that is, of public utility (*utilité publique*). The city councillors had arranged to have its water redirected, through underground channels, to increase the water in the fountains which were at the centre of some of the main squares of Marseille, such as La Place Neuf, l'Hotel de Ville, and the Place de Vivaux. The reason the city councillors had given to the two main users of this source was that they had to share the water of the well with the people of Marseille, or, as they claimed, *faire participer le publique de la bonté de la dite eau*. However, the city councillors had also judged reasonable the verbal promise which was made by their predecessors to Malaval and Romieu, to indemnify them for the loss which came from deviating water from the well to the public aqueduct of Marseille<sup>4</sup>. Broadly speaking, this indenisation meant that the water of the well was recognised as public and “commun” rather than private. Juridically, the term “commun” bore plenty of implications, indicating the properties of a good – in this case water – a legislation limiting its private use, at the same time echoing the existence of a system of institutions in charge of its distribution to the community.<sup>5</sup> The decision of the

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> For a view on indemnisation practices at the time, see J. Puget, « Détruire pour embellir. Pratiques d'estimation et d'indemnisation des propriétés urbaines à Marseille dans la seconde moitié du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle », *Histoire & Mesure*, 28, n°1 (2013), p. 11-44.

<sup>5</sup> M. Fioravanti, E.I.Mineo, L. Nivarra, *Dai beni comuni al comune. Diritto, Stato e storia*, in «Storia del Pensiero Politico», 1, 2016, pp. 107-108. On commons, see D. Cristoferi *Da usi civici a beni comuni: gli studi sulla proprietà collettiva nella medievistica e modernistica italiana e le principali tendenze storiografiche internazionali*, in «Studi Storici», 57, 3, 2016, pp. 577-604, and *La gestione delle risorse collettive. Italia settentrionale, secoli XII-XVIII*, ed. G. Alfani and R. Rao,

City Council to compensate Malaval and Romieu for their loss was ratified by a Royal judge and read as the following: «the water of the well *pouseraque* would belong to the community of the city of Marseille for the foreseeable future and perpetually»<sup>6</sup>.

According to Roman and French customary law, water generated from a private source would “become” public when crossing public lands, both in urban and rural areas<sup>7</sup>. More specifically, water would become public under many circumstances, when giving shape to small streams crossing public areas or, more prosaically, when it was not possible to establish with juridical certainty whether it was private and, finally, when it served the needs of city inhabitants. However, the fact that water responded to the demands of city inhabitants was not enough to make it freely accessible to everyone, but rather subjected it to further restrictions, which – in Marseille – were ultimately in the hands of the City Council. The case of Malaval and Romieu illustrates very well this process in which water coming from a private source turned public, depending on where it flowed and on the spaces it crossed.

The case also tells us of the practice of water concession, which allowed individuals to purchase specific quantities of water for a fee or, as it sometimes seems to be the case in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Marseille, in exchange for the maintenance of the pipes of the fountain, well, or source from which the water originated. Concessions were of course not exclusively related to the distribution of water: as Xavier Bezançon points out, concessions would be progressively given for various activities, such as transport, the management of infrastructures, mines, the drying of marshes, and even tax collection since the XIII century<sup>8</sup>. Concessions in

Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2012, pp. 7-14. Even though this book focuses on Italy, it encompasses questions which are common to other European contexts. On the Roman Law origins of the question of commons, see G. Grosso, *Corso di diritto romano. Le cose. Con una «nota di lettura» di Filippo Gallo*, in «Rivista di Diritto Romano», 1, 2001, pp. 1-137.

<sup>6</sup> AMM, DD 281, page with no number.

<sup>7</sup> J. Teissier-Rolland, *Histoire des eaux de Nîmes et de l'aqueduc romain du Gard*, Tome 4, Partie 1, Vanves, Hachette, 2021 (original edition 1842-1854), pp.137-138. Teissier Rolland claims that «l'eau publique est celle dont la propriété n'appartient à personne et don't l'usage est commune à tous; il est indifférent qu'elle naisse dans un fond public ou de propriété privée: on ne considère que les lieux q'elle parcourt». Teissier-Rolland, *Histoire des eaux*, cit., p. 137.

<sup>8</sup> B. Xavier, *Une approche historique du partenariat public-privé*, in «Revue d'économie financière», 5, 1, 1995, p. 28. The question regarding the practice of the concession can also be inscribed in the broader debates on property rights in the early modern period. see P. Fournier,

general, as much as *concessions d'eau*, were not irrevocable: the state, in the form of local or central authorities in charge of granting them, could decide to modify the conditions through which the concession had been originally issued and sometimes, as in the case of Malaval and Romieu, had to revoke it and provide the grantees with an indemnification.<sup>9</sup> However, the revocation of Malaval's and Romieu's concession was not isolated and can be inscribed into a broader wave of revocations operated by the City Council of Marseille in 1700. This was mostly due, as we will see, to the need to rethink water distribution in the urban space following a year of extreme drought (*sécheresse*).

However, water distribution in Marseille had also strong political connotations, as it is testified by a much earlier (1609) report commissioned by the Consuls of Marseille and aimed at applying a 1599 judgement (*arrêt*) issued by the Court of the Parliament of Provence. Following years of social unrest and the constitution of a five-year long Republic led by Charles de Casaulx (connected with the Ligue Catholique), the judgement attempted to establish new forms of urban surveillance by making a survey of all the water users, verifying whether they had the right titles and permission to access water and, in the negative case, closing or even breaking their pipes.<sup>10</sup> Controlling water users and usages was a way to maintain control on the polity, and on the moral economy of a city which had just come out of years of political and religious instability<sup>11</sup>.

In addition to the impact of political and environmental factors on the water redistribution policies adopted by the City Council, we also have to keep in mind the role played by the growth of manufacturing in Marseille. As obvious as it may sound, manufacturing production, and the production of textiles in

*Les leçons d'une hydro-histoire : quelques pistes de réflexion*, in «Siècles», 42, 2016, pp. 8-9. On the moving categories of private and public in relation to the social and political uses of water; see also L. Mocarelli, *L'acqua. Per la storia economica di una risorsa contesa*, in «Studi Storici Luigi Simeoni», 61, 2011, pp. 81-93.

<sup>9</sup> J.-M. Pardessus, *Traité de servitudes ou services fonciers*, Paris, Nève, 1838, pp. 177-178. Even though Pardessus writes during the Napoleonic period (his *Traité* was originally published in 1806), thus articulating the contemporary shift of legal discourse towards the public, his text still represents a good source to enquire into the genealogy of the legal framework concerning the uses of water(s) in early modern France (of particular use are his references to the persistence of Roman law in France).

<sup>10</sup> AC Marseille DD 274.

<sup>11</sup> See W. Kaiser, *Marseille au temps des troubles, 1559-1596. Morphologie sociale et luttes de faction*, Paris, EHESS, 1993.

particular, could not develop without substantial quantities of water and this was of course a crucial issue in the decades following Louis XIV and Jean-Baptiste Colbert's project for the relaunch of Marseille as the main French port trading with the Mediterranean and the Ottoman Empire<sup>12</sup>. This project was of course part of a much broader 17<sup>th</sup>-century mercantilist agenda. Between the 1640s and the 1660s, France endeavoured to expand its commerce through colonial enterprises and a revitalisation of manufacturing industries, in order to strengthen its capacity to import precious metals for coinage<sup>13</sup>. The problem of water scarcity in the Mediterranean city thus sheds light on this historical phase of the French Monarchy, at the same time revealing social, political, institutional and economic hierarchies of power<sup>14</sup>.

This clearly emerges from debates concerning how to employ the water of the river Huveaune, for example by privileging its use in the urban rather than the rural areas, or yet for manufacturing rather than agricultural purposes. These debates date back at least to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and highlight how practices of water negotiation were long lasting<sup>15</sup>. Very frequent and constant throughout the early modern period are also documents which testify to the importance of wisely managing water to generate energy to put in motion mills for grain production; these documents shed light not only on the conflicts between the urban centre of Marseille and its rural peripheries, whose inhabitants often asked to deviate the water of river channels for irrigation purposes, but also between monastic and religious orders and city institutions<sup>16</sup>. In a 1683 ordinance, the city councillors

<sup>12</sup> See J.T. Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce. Marseille and the Early Modern Mediterranean*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2011, pp. 4 ff, especially for Colbert's support for commercial expansion and how this was coupled with the attempt to please critiques of luxury trade and commerce of manufactures as morally corrupt. On the imaginary of Marseille as a commercial city, see M. Roncayolo, *L'imaginaire de Marseille. Port, ville, pôle*, Marseille, Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Marseille, 1990.

<sup>13</sup> Y. Charbit, *Les colonies françaises au XVII<sup>ème</sup> siècle : mercantilisme et enjeux impérialistes européens*, in «Revue européenne des migrations internationales», 22, 1, 2006, pp. 183-199.

<sup>14</sup> L. Mocarrelli, *L'acqua*, cit.

<sup>15</sup> *Délibération du Conseil Municipal, relative aux propriétaires riverains de l'Huveaune et de Jarret qui en détournent les eaux* (copy), 13 August 1473, AMM, DD 271; see also *Délibération du Conseil Municipal de l'Huveaune et de Jarret qui en détournent les eaux* (copy), 12 August 1477, AMM, DD271.

<sup>16</sup> The folder DD271 (AMM) contains copies of various deliberations and ordinances of the Conseil de Ville and the Échevins on this subject. For example, the ordinance of 10 August 1670, which forbade individuals from watering their lands with exception made for twenty-four

decided to establish control on flour production by banning retailing; the reason advanced for this measure was that water scarcity already impacted the functioning of public mills as well as of the mills of the St Victor Abbey (which notably produced flour for the King), so there was no space left for individual initiatives, which in any case often gave rise to abuses<sup>17</sup>.

Needless to say, water had many purposes, as it appears from the many appeals against the revocations operated by the Conseil de Ville in 1700; it was used to water the plants of those who had a garden, as in the case of the widow of the doctor of the Royal Navy and Marseille's Royal Hospital, Madame Brunet, who candidly asked the Conseil de Ville to inherit her husband's water concession in order to take care of a little medicinal garden, a request which she justified as responding to a public utility and advantage<sup>18</sup>; water was also used, perhaps less surprisingly, as a source of energy in many manufacturing productions. For example, it was key in the making of white wax, as it is evidenced by a document which consists in the presentation of water concessions by Antoine Quillet, merchant and owner of «the most important factory for wax whitening in the entire Kingdom»<sup>19</sup>. Taking over a store which was originally a production of confectionery, Quillet claimed that his production of white wax was useful to the public and particularly to the commerce of the city, which was not far from the truth, given that wax had been increasingly used in the process of dyeing textiles in Europe in the second quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>20</sup>. In this

hours between Saturday and Sunday. The reason given was «l'extreme nécessité qu'il y a des eaux pour server aux moulins à blé, pour la subsistance des habitants».

<sup>17</sup> *Ordonnance*, 18 March 1683, AMM, DD 300.

<sup>18</sup> AMM, DD 281, page with no number. On Mr Brunet and his medical authority, especially in assessing remedies for the cure of the poor; see the contemporary collection by the agronomist G. Kolloët-Kebrat, *Remede universel pour les pauvres gens, pour leur bestiaux, et leurs volailles*, Paris, Veuve Denis Langlois, 1680 (8<sup>th</sup> edition), p. 32. On charity and medical practices, see the collections of essays by J.P. Gutton, *Pauvreté, cultures et ordre social. Recueil d'articles*, Lyon, LARHRA, 2006, pp.131 ff.

<sup>19</sup> AMM, DD 281, page with no number.

<sup>20</sup> AMM, DD 281, page with no number. See G. Riello, *The Globalisation of Cotton Textiles. Indian Cottons, Europe and the Atlantic World. 1600-1850*, in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles. 1200-1850*, eds. G. Riello and P. Parthasarathi, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 279-280. On the commercial nature of Marseille as a city, see C. Carrière, *Négociants marseillais au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (2 vol.), Marseille, Institut historique de Provence Economies Modernes et Contemporaines, 1973. On textile production in Marseille and *indiennage* especially, see O. Raveux, *À la façon du Levant et de Perse: Marseille et la naissance de l'indiennage*

connection, we should add that water was also central to tanneries as we can see from a contemporary plea of a certain Jean Ferry, merchant and tanner, to the city councillors, to receive permission to draw water from the city's public aqueduct<sup>21</sup>. These examples of water concession bring to the fore the main theme of this contribution, that is the social negotiations at stake in the management of the urban and public provision of water, and how several actors, through different forms of expertise, attempted to influence administration and distribution patterns<sup>22</sup>.

But what can the revocation of water concessions tell us about how the imperatives of public and individual interests were negotiated in the management of water? This contribution will present some preliminary findings based on the study of some documents held in the Archives Municipales of Marseille. The first section will provide some context regarding Marseille as a commercial city negotiating between local and royal power in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The second section will describe where water came from in the Mediterranean city, and the third section will focus on who was taking care of the water provisioning system, in terms of both institutional and practical management. The contribution will mostly rely on a series of documents produced by central authorities, such as royal edicts forcing the declaration and payment of water concessions by individuals, as well as municipal institutions such as the resolution of the City Council to appoint more than one fountaineer and engage members of the public in the urban management of waters. This contribution will also rely on the pleas of locals to have their concessions confirmed by the City Council in 1700, in order to highlight their motives and drives. Overall, it will explore some of the complex dynamics which underlined the practice of the water concession in 17<sup>th</sup> century Marseille, and enquire into the social and economic hierarchies and cultures of power at a time of economic and urban expansion.

*européen (1648-1689)*, in «Rives méditerranéennes», n. 29, 2008, pp. 37-51. On the flourishing manufacturing industry in Marseille, see O. Raveux, *Innovation et transferts de technologie dans l'industrie textile européenne du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle : l'exemple de l'indiennage à Marseille*, in C. Bouneau and Y. Lung (ed.), *Les dynamiques des systèmes d'innovation : logiques sectorielles et espaces de l'innovation*, Bordeaux, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme d'Aquitaine, 2009, pp. 103-116.

<sup>21</sup> AMM, DD 281, page with no number.

<sup>22</sup> K. Davids, *Public Services in Early Modern European Towns: An Agenda for Further Research*, in «Journal of Urban History», 36, 3, 2010, pp. 386-392.



### 1. *Drought and power centralisation*

In the second part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Marseille was a rich, multicultural and commercial city. Louis XII and XIII had promoted a restructuring of the quays of the city's large port, and built a shipyard to host galleons. Marseille became one of the maritime military and economic strongholds of the French Kingdom. The rise to power of Louis XIV and his subsequent administrative reforms pushed towards an increased centralisation that brought the Monarchy to exert a better control on the maritime city, peaking during Colbert's mercantilist policies. It was at the time of Colbert and by issuing letter patents (*lettres patentes*) in June 1666 that Louis XIV ordered the expansion (*agrandissement*) of the city, which was initially received with hostility by municipal authorities and which nevertheless resulted in an enlargement of Marseille toward East<sup>23</sup>. Only three years later, in 1669, Colbert decided that Marseille would become, at all effects, a free port, open to trade manufactures with the Levant. This measure was followed by the creation of a chartered company; this should have facilitated the export of French manufactures such as woollens and paper, thus revitalising internal manufacturing production through a system of restrictive duties which were imposed on non-French ships, or – as Corey Tazzara has argued – on French ships which had stopped in other ports in Spain or Italy on their way to France<sup>24</sup>. Colbert's decision was in part a reaction to the creation of free ports at Villefranche, Leghorn, Genoa, Barcelona and Nice between the 1650s and the 1660s, a fact which had deprived Marseille of part of its commercial networks

<sup>23</sup> See B. Hénin, *L'agrandissement de Marseille (1666-1690). Un compromis entre les aspirations monarchiques et les habitudes locales*, in «Annales du Midi. Revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale», 98, 173, 1986, pp. 7-22 and F. Tavernier, *La Vie quotidienne à Marseille, de Louis XIV à Louis-Philippe*, Paris, Hachette, 1973, pp. 34-35. On the urban transformation of Marseille in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, see J. Konvitz, *Grandeur in French city planning under Louis XIV. Rochefort and Marseille*, in «Journal of urban history», November 1975, pp. 3-42.

<sup>24</sup> On the relationship between Marseille and the free-port of Leghorn, see G. Calafat, *Livorno e la Camera di commercio di Marsiglia nel XVII secolo: Consoli francesi, agenti e riscossione del cottimo*, in A. Addobbati and M. Aglietti (ed.), *La città delle nazioni. Livorno e i limiti del cosmopolitismo (1566-1834)*, Pisa, Pisa University Press, 2016, pp. 237-276. On the Leghorn free port and free ports in general, see C. Tazzara, *The Free Port of Livorno and the Transformation of the Mediterranean World. 1574-1790*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 238. See also L. Demigny, *Escales, échelles et ports francs au Moyen Âge et aux temps modernes*, in «Recueil de la Société Jean Bodin pour l'histoire comparative de institutions», 34, 1974, pp. 521-566.

with the Near East<sup>25</sup>. Marseille had a vibrant and international community of merchants, especially Jews, Turks and Armenians<sup>26</sup>. These could naturalise by marrying into a Marseille family, owning a property of some importance, or working in Marseille for a minimum of twelve years<sup>27</sup>.

However, the presence of foreign merchants created discontent in the local institutions of Marseille. The city councillors, who represented the city's ruling elite, saw Jews and Armenians as a threat to the development of local commerce, especially in that some of them would trade foreign silk into France, at a moment in time when France was developing its own production of the precious textile. Significant to highlight the suspicion that locals had against foreigners is an ordinance dating from 1686 and signed by the Intendant de Justice, Police et Finance in Provence, Thomas Alexandre Morant, which forbade the citizens of Marseille from insulting and throwing stones against Genoese silk artisans, employed in the Royal silk factory. Some of them were apparently so scared of being mistreated that they would not even leave their homes<sup>28</sup>. Despite the opposition and hostility of locals, the fact that Marseille had become a free port, where imports and exports were not subject to custom duties and where imported raw materials would be used by local industries, helped the economic development of the city and of course encouraged demographic expansion, with the city reaching a population of 45,000 in 1600, a figure which results increased of 30,000 more in 1700<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> J. Horn, *Economic Development in Early Modern France: The Privilege of Liberty, 1650-1820*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 134. On the vocation of Marseille as a centre for manufacturing, see G. Buti, *La naissance de la fonction industrielle du port de Marseille, 1650-1830*, in X. Daumalin, N. Girard, O. Raveux (ed.), *Du savon à la Puce. L'industrie marseillaise du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle à nos jours*, Marseille, Jeanne Laffitte, 2003, pp. 17-117. See also Buti, *La traite des blés et la construction de l'espace portuaire de Marseille (XVII<sup>e</sup> -XVIII<sup>e</sup> s.)*, in B. Marin and C. Virlovet (ed.) *Nourrir les cités de Méditerranée. Antiquité-Temps modernes*, Paris-Aix-en-Provence, Maisonneuve & Larose – MMSH, 2003, pp. 769-799.

<sup>26</sup> On Armenians see I. Baghdianz McCabe, *Opportunity and Legislation: How Armenians Entered Trade in Three Mediterranean Ports*, in V.N. Zakharov, G. Harlaftis and O. Katsiardi-Hering (ed.), *Merchant Colonies in the Early Modern Period*, London-New York, Routledge, 2012, pp. 61-84.

<sup>27</sup> See J.T. Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce*, cit., pp. 97-98. On Marseille's vibrant cultural and mercantile life through the figure of the collector Nicolas Fabri de Peiresc in the early XVII century, see P.N. Miller, *Peiresc's Mediterranean World*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2015.

<sup>28</sup> AMM, 1BB252, page with no number.

<sup>29</sup> S. Kettering, *French Society (1589-1715)*, London, Routledge, 2001, pp. 49-50.

The main institution which governed Marseille in the Ancien Régime was the City Council, composed by 300 representatives at the top of which sat the Consuls, the captains for each neighbourhood of Marseille, the notaries, the intendant of the port and the treasurers of the city and port<sup>30</sup>. In 1660, Louis XIV decided to abolish the figure of the Consul and replaced it with that of the city councillor (*Échevin*), created on the example of the city councillor in the French capital, Paris. He reformed the entire municipal government of Marseille, establishing a City Council of 60 rather than 300 members, headed by four city councillors. These were chosen by the City Council among the more influential dealers, merchants or bourgeois families of the city of Marseille<sup>31</sup>. Even though the intention of Louis XIV was to weaken local noble elites, the members of which put a strain on his attempts at administrative centralisation, on the basis of their traditionally acquired power, these reforms did not yield the expected outcome. As Michel Vergé-Franceschi has argued, very little changed in the transition between Consuls and city councillors, simply because both these figures came from the same ennobled families, who represented Marseille's mercantile elite, torn between commercial expansion and the military protection of the city<sup>32</sup>. The city councillors played an important role in choosing the members of the Chamber of Commerce, and Conseil de Ville, and supervising local police activities. They also had the power to propose new regulations and legislation, in the form of ordinances and laws, thus exerting legislative power and sometimes overlapping with the Court and the Judges of Police on the domain of executive and judicial power, to speed up the management of the city. These changes in the administration of Marseille, oriented towards a tighter centralisation, were of course in continuity with Louis XIII's creation, in the 1630s, of the figure of the *Intendant de Justice Police et Finance*, a representative of Royal Power who was in charge, in Provence as well as in other areas of the Kingdom, of regulating finances, prosecuting tax offenders and disciplining uncooperative officials, as Sharon Kettering has highlighted<sup>33</sup>. The City

<sup>30</sup> F.X. Emmanuelli, *Vivre à Marseille sous l'Ancien Régime*, Paris, Perrin, 1999.

<sup>31</sup> S. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 84.

<sup>32</sup> M. Vergé-Franceschi, *Les Consuls et les Échevins dans les villes portuaires en France* in J.P. Poussou (ed.), *Les sociétés urbaines au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Angleterre, France, Espagne*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de la Sorbonne, 2007, pp. 103-106.

<sup>33</sup> S. Kettering, *Judicial Politics and Urban Revolt in Seventeenth-Century France: The Parlement of Aix, 1629-1659*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2015, pp. 81-109. On the figure of the

Council was also the central municipal institution regulating the management of water in Marseille. It was this institution to receive, approve or reject petitions regarding water uses and concessions from a variety of social actors who lived in the city and its surroundings. Also, it was the City Council to appoint the fountaineer (*fontainier*), an individual in charge of the maintenance of the entire water provisioning system in the French city. But where did the water come from in Marseille, and how was it distributed in the urban area?

## 2. *The origin of water in Marseille*

A few years before the 1700 wave of revocations of water concessions, in 1694, Marseille and the surrounding areas had gone through a severe drought. This environmental event brought to the attention of the city councillors the problem of water provisioning. Water was not enough, and the city was constantly expanding. Even a decade before, in 1682, the city councillors had to issue an ordinance to force all those individuals who had access to water through fountains or pipes connected to the main aqueduct, to present their concessions, and threatened them to break their pipes, lock their fountains and impede their access to water sources if they had not done so<sup>34</sup>. However, this was only the beginning. As argued by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century historian Louis Mery, probably the first scholar to explore the archival material in the city archives of Marseille, from 1694 onwards there was a rise in petitions from individuals who wanted to confirm the water concessions obtained in the past decades in Marseille<sup>35</sup>. Since these petitions became impossible to manage by the city councillors and the City Council alone, the city councillors themselves asked for the intervention of central and royal authorities, and more specifically of the *Intendant de Justice, Police et Finance* in Provence, Cardin Le Bret. Nominated Intendant by Colbert

intendant, see also A. Michel, *Genèse de l'institution des intendants*, in «Journal des savants», 3-4, 1982, pp. 283-317.

<sup>34</sup> *Ordonnance des Échevins contre ceux qui contrairement aux arrêts des 9 Décembre 1599, 27 juillet 1612 et 19 Mars 1616 ont usurpé les eaux publiques, & prescrit aux possesseurs de justifier de leur titres*, 20 July 1682, AMM, DD272.

<sup>35</sup> L. Mery and F. Guindon, *Histoire analytique et chronologique des actes et des délibérations du corps et du conseil de la municipalité de Marseille depuis le X<sup>ème</sup> siècle jusqu'à nos jours*, Marseille, Feissat et Demonchy, 1847, pp. 305-306.

in 1699, Lebret had to take care of the restoration and conservation of the fountains of Marseille<sup>36</sup>. One year later, the city councillors entrusted Lebret with the task of applying the *lettre royale* of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1700, according to which all grantees were stripped of their water concessions and forced to present the official documentation which showed evidence of their acquired rights. Even when this documentation was provided, it was still the city councillors – pending the approval of the Intendant de Provence – who had to confirm whether to grant the concession again or not. Of course, this situation of tension between central and local authorities, public and private interests, generated conflicts<sup>37</sup>.

As Patrick Fournier and Dominique Massounie have pointed out, Marseille, unlike Paris, did not have a river going through its urban centre but rather little streams, often running underground. This meant that substantial quantities of water had to be derived from the city outskirts, if not from the surrounding rural areas, more specifically from the river Huveaune and its affluent Jarret, or directly from water sources and their underground channels<sup>38</sup>. The Mediterranean city had an aqueduct and fountains since the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and archaeologist Michel Clerc had accounted for more than 4.000 wells in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, giving us an idea of the extension of the network of underground water channels in the urban area. The aqueduct could not, however, serve the entire city, but only a small part of it, as it is visible from a later document, dating 1766, in which one of the fountaineers of Marseille lists all the grantees of the central part of the city, which today is about one kilometre from the old port; although this document would suggest a concentration in the use of water, earlier documents from the 17<sup>th</sup> century tell us that the city was relatively well served of water. A report commissioned by the City Council in 1682 reveals that there were 173 fountains covering the urban area of Marseille<sup>39</sup>. These fountains provided water not only to individuals and religious orders, but also to commercial activities, and textile

<sup>36</sup> *Arrêt du Conseil d'Etat, par lequel l'Intendant de justice est commis pour le soin et rétablissement des fontaines publiques de Marseille*, 1 November 1699 (copy), AMM, DD272.

<sup>37</sup> Even though it addresses an earlier period, on the tradition of civil litigations in Marseille, see D. Lord Smail, *The Consumption of Justice: emotions, publicity, and legal culture in Marseille, 1264-1423*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2003.

<sup>38</sup> P. Fournier and D. Massounie, *Eau et salubrité dans le Midi de la France à l'époque moderne*, in «Siècles», 14, 2001, <http://journals.openedition.org/siecles/3220> (consulted 23/01/2023).

<sup>39</sup> *Estat des fontaines publiques particulières quy coulent dans la ville de Marseille en nombre de 173*, 13 February 1682, AMM, DD277.

dyeing factories in particular. The report, which was written by a fountaineer named Chaulier – and on whom I will focus in the last part of this contribution – also reveals how water was distributed, giving us a sense of how many fountains were dedicated to some activities rather than to others.

As mentioned, water coming from the Huveaune was not enough, since it would lose power the further away from the river. The issue, however, was not just a technical one, namely how to draw and channel water from these various places, rivers and sources, but also how to keep it clean and drinkable. According to 17<sup>th</sup>-century sources, and especially the *Histoire de Marseille* by Antoine de Ruffi, erudite and member of the *Sénéchaussée* of Marseille, water in Marseille was sandy and often noxious for human consumption, mostly because of the waste derived from manufacturing processes as well as grain production, which was dumped into the river and would thus reach the city and contaminate the water of its fountains. For this reason, between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Marseille had organised various settling tanks<sup>40</sup>. These reservoirs were not only used to remove impurities, but also to collect and redistribute water. Reservoirs or cisterns, as they were called in Marseille, were usually situated in proximity of some underground water channel, as was the case with the Rue Senac, located in the city centre, relatively close to the port, where underground water was redirected to be collected in a water tank<sup>41</sup>. This is not a peculiarity of Marseille, but rather reflects a broader practice which was in place in other early modern cities, such as Milan, Venice and Paris<sup>42</sup>. It was based on the idea, which was also voiced by the French doctor Joseph Duchesne, that filtering water was the only way to make it drinkable in an urban context<sup>43</sup>. The management of water provisioning relied on a system of multiple forms of expertise embodied in actors who negotiated between local and central administrations. The next section will focus precisely on some of the actors taking care of water provisioning in 17<sup>th</sup>-century

<sup>40</sup> A. de Ruffi, *Histoire de la Ville de Marseille*, Marseille, Henri Martel, 1642, p. 423.

<sup>41</sup> Please note that this road was called Rue Senac in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. G. Rambert, *Marseille, la formation d'une grande cité moderne. Étude de géographie urbaine*, Marseille, Société Anonyme du Sémaphore de Marseille, 1934, p. 80.

<sup>42</sup> See D. Gentilcore, *From "Vilest Beverage" to "Universal Medicine": Drinking Water in Printed Regimens and Health Guides, 1450-1750*, in «Social History of Medicine», 33, 3, 2020, pp. 683-703.

<sup>43</sup> J. Duchesne, *Le pourtraict de la sante'. Ou' est au vif represente' e la reigle universelle et particuliere de bien sainement et longuement vivre*, Paris, Claude Morel, 1620, pp. 237, 239. Referenced in D. Gentilcore, *From « Vilest Beverage »*, cit., p. 15. On water quality in a later period, see also F. Graber, *La qualité de l'eau à Paris, 1760-1820*, in «Entreprise et histoire», 50, 1, 2008, pp. 119-133.

Marseille. It will use primary sources such as contracts, royal edicts and a register of water concession to lay the foundations for a preliminary enquiry on who had access to water and how in the city of Marseille.

### 3. *Being a fountaineer in Marseille*

In 17th-century dictionaries, the term *fontainier* stood for «celui qui a soin des eaux des fontaines», and *fontaine* was defined as «eau vive qui sort de terre» and a «corps d'architecture qui sert pour l'écoulement, pour l'ornement, pour les jets d'eau d'une fontaine»<sup>44</sup>. But what did it mean to take care of waters and fountains? The *fontainier* was charged with finding water sources, and to effectively distribute water in the urban area, while architects and engineers would take care of the decorative, visible part of aqueducts, fountains and cisterns<sup>45</sup>. *Fontaniers*, otherwise said *plombiers*, since they originally sold lead, were artisans organised in *communautés*, who had to undergo an apprenticeship of four years, after which they were required to present a masterpiece to the *communauté's* jury (*juries*)<sup>46</sup>. As Chiara Santini has argued, on the basis of Le Chevalier de Cerfvol's *L'Art du plombier et du fontainier* (1773), France had two types of fountaineers: those who engaged in works of public utility, such as aqueducts, public fountains and the maintenance of water pipes, and those who dealt with the more aesthetic fountains in gardens and palaces, this category being exemplified by the Francini family (17<sup>th</sup> century), behind most of the reorganisation of the waterworks in Versailles under Louis XIV<sup>47</sup>. These two types of fountaineers had similar forms

<sup>44</sup> See P. Richelet, *Dictionnaire françois contenant les mots et les choses, plusieurs nouvelles remarques sur la langue françoise*, Genève, J.H. Widerhold, 1680 and *Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie françoise dédiée au roy*, Paris, Veuve de J. B. Coignard & J. B. Coignard, 1694. Quoted in C. Santini, *Les artistes de l'eau. Fontainiers à Versailles au Grand Siècle* in «Projets de paysage», 3, 2009, <http://journals.openedition.org/paysage/26343> (consulted 23/01/2023).

<sup>45</sup> D. Massounie and H. Chambon, *L'eau à boire. Aqueducs, châteaux d'Eau, fontaines et machines hydrauliques dans la ville moderne au XVIII siècle*, in L. Hilaire-Pérez, D. Massounie and V. Serna (ed.), *Archives, objets et images des constructions de l'eau du Moyen Âge à l'ère industrielle. Cahiers d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences*, Paris, ENS Éditions, 2002, pp. 299-300.

<sup>46</sup> See the voice "plombier" in J. Savary, *Dictionnaire Universel de Commerce*, Paris, Chez la Veuve Estienne et Fils, 1741, p. 885.

<sup>47</sup> See Le Chevalier de Cerfvol, *L'Art du plombier et du fontainier*, Paris, Louis-François Delatour, 1773, p. IX, quoted in C. Santini, *Les artistes de l'eau*, cit.

of expertise, but of course their applications, from the provisioning of individuals or small businesses, to the building of decorative fountains in the main squares of Marseille, symbols of status and power, largely differed.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, it was the City Council who appointed the city's main fountaineer, someone who would be entrusted with the maintenance (*entretien*) and fixing (*reparation*) of the water pipes for the entire city of Marseille. For example, in October 1660, the Ville de Marseille signed a contract of this sort with a certain François Pascal, a bourgeois, for the maintenance of the aqueduct and fountains<sup>48</sup>. Pascal took over another individual, Etienne Fernard, a carpenter (*maçon*), of doubtful honesty, at least by reading the document in question, who accused him of negligence, and of having left the pipes to break, thus impeding « l'utilise publique » of water. From reading the document, we know that it had been a series of *particuliers*, or members of the public, who had brought to the attention of the institutions, and of the city councillors in particular, the malpractice of Fernard. The type of contract Fernard had signed usually lasted for fifteen years, but it is clear from the document that almost none of them lasted this long, for one reason or another, usually malpractice or lack of competence, or because the task was too much to attend for one person alone. Not attending properly to these tasks jeopardised water provisioning in the city of Marseille, that resulted not only in difficulties for individuals to access water for basic purposes, such as drinking and personal hygiene, but also for businesses which constituted the core of the economic production of the city. More specifically, Pascal had been entrusted with the «ordinary water distribution» (*distribution ordinaire du jour*), the cleaning of reservoirs, and the maintenance of a series of fountains, among which those of the Hôtel du Roy, Hôtel de Ville and the *prise* of the hospital, a pipe which connected the central hospital to the general aqueduct<sup>49</sup>. These were not casual buildings, rather representing some of the central *loci* for the management of an early modern French city, instantiating Royal and Municipal power, as well as public health practices in an urban area<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> *Contrat passé entre la ville & le sr François Pascal pour l'entretien des aqueducs & des fontaines moyennant 400 f. l'année*, 27 October 1660, AMM, DD284.

<sup>49</sup> *Contrat passé entre la ville & le sieur François Pascal pour l'entretien des aqueducs & des fontaines moyennant 400 f. l'année*, 27 October 1660, AMM, DD284.

<sup>50</sup> On public buildings as representations of power in Marseille, see G. Antonini-Fournier, *Rédire la ville en carte, une mise en ordre du territoire ? Vues et plans de Barcelone, Gênes et Marseille du XVII<sup>e</sup> à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in «Liame» [online], 24, 2012 (consulted 24/01/2023).



Precisely because of the difficulty of relying on local institutions exclusively, the city councillors not rarely sold sections of public streets to individuals, asking them and their successors to take care of the maintenance of the water pipes underground in order to ensure the effectiveness of water distribution<sup>51</sup>. As hinted earlier in this contribution, Marseille was going through a significant demographic growth and urban expansion in the second part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and, similarly to other European cities, such as Naples, for example, the changes in the legislation and organisation regarding water provisioning reflected this trend<sup>52</sup>. First of all, Louis XIV had issued an edict in October 1694 forcing all members of the public as well as religious orders to declare any quantity of water which had been deviated from rivers for their private use, and pay the proper amount of taxes<sup>53</sup>. This edict was not just about water- or it was formally about water but reflected a broader question, that of the political control of the King on the Mediterranean city, as well as of public revenue and taxation, at a time when conflicts between the imperatives of centralisation and the preservation of local identities and autonomies ensued. Of course, the edict was not specifically addressed to the city of Marseille- however, in November, a request and an order to have the October edict fully applied were advanced by Nicolas Hamelin, who was in charge of collecting the taxes derived from its application in the Provence district<sup>54</sup>. Both request and order were addressed to the Superintendent of Provence, who had the task of controlling that those members of the public who had deviated and used water coming from the Canal de Craponne, a water channel which was created in the 1550s, and used for the irrigation of the large dry plains of the surrounding of Marseille, paid a fair amount in taxes for the use of said water.

<sup>51</sup> *Vente par la ville à Honoré Graille de deux portions du vieux chemin près les reformès, sous la condition que l'acheteur & ses successeurs y laisserons passer les conduites des eaux et qu'il souffrirons les reparations à faire aux aqueducs* (copy), 18 September 1681, AMM, DD284.

<sup>52</sup> On how demographic and geographical expansion exerted a propulsive role on Naples' institutions, especially with regard to water provisioning, see G. Bruno, *Vivere a Napoli nel XVIII secolo. Gli atti del Tribunale della Fortificazione, Acqua e Mattonata*, in «Società e Storia», 162, 4, 2018, pp. 689-721.

<sup>53</sup> *Edit du Roi qui ordonne que toutes les communautez regulieres & seculieres, même les particuliers qui ont detourné des eaux des rivieres navigables, sources et fontaines publiques, sans la permission de sa Majesté, payeront les sommes ausquelles ils seront taxes au Conseil pour estre confirmez à l'avenir dans la possession et jouissance desdites eaux*, October 1694, AMM, CC57.

<sup>54</sup> *Eaux. À Monseigneur Le Premier President Intendant*, 27 November 1694, AMM, CC57.

Besides the Canal de Craponne, the Superintendent had also to monitor how water derived from navigable as well as non-navigable channels such as streams, sources, and fountains in the all territory of Provence was distributed and used according to the juridical institute of concession. As classic accounts of water-related legislation tell us, the “problem” with Marseille as well as Provence in general was that concessions were originally free of charge, and that technically individuals did not pay for the use of water but rather for the maintenance of the infrastructures for its distribution. This particularity stemmed from the old feudal legislation- in its turn relying on Roman Law- according to which individuals could use water coming from streams and rivers for free<sup>55</sup>. The complex history of water concessions was also reflected in the practices of data collection of 17<sup>th</sup>-century fountaineers, who usually compiled a list of grantees without mentioning the price they had to pay for their concession, but only the quantity of water, measured in *deniers* and *liards*. Such practice changed later, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the *Conseil d’Etat* would publish a judgment to fix the price of water concessions and annual *redevance* for the use of public aqueduct and fountains<sup>56</sup>. Of course, the combination of environmental factors and of the drought in particular, which appears as a constant element in a considerable part of the documentation regarding water in Marseille and Provence in the early modern period, as well as the demographic expansion of the city, pushed to rethink broadly how water was negotiated between institutions and individual actors at a local and central level. In terms of organisational changes, in 1695 the city councillors discussed with the Intendant of Justice about entrusting two individuals (rather than one) with the supervision of the water provisioning system of Marseille, that is, the aqueduct and fountains<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> See A. Lucarelli, *La nature juridique de l’eau entre bien public et bien commun*, in «Annuaire des Collectivités Locales», 30, 2010, pp. 87-98. For a classic 19<sup>th</sup>-century account of water legislation in France, see J. Dubreuil, *Analyse raisonnée de la législation sur les eaux. Par M. Joseph Dubreuil... pour servir de suite à ses «Observations sur quelques coutumes de Provence, Aix, Aubin*, 1843, pp. 294-295.

<sup>56</sup> *Arrêt du Conseil d’Etat qui fixe le prix de la concession et de la redevance annuelle pour la jouissance des eaux de l’Acqueduc public pour les fontaines des particuliers*, 25 May 1766 (copy), AMM, DD 272.

<sup>57</sup> AMM, DD284, loose page.

Joseph Chaulier chargé du soin et entretien des fontaines de la ville ne peut pas luy seul fournir à cet employ et mettre de l'eau à suffisance aux dites fontaines sous a la fois lors que le cas le requiert attendu l'agrandissement de la ville de quoy le public en souffre un notable préjudice [...] nous maire Échevins de cette ville de Marseille après en avoir conféré avec M. l'Intendant de justice avons nommé [...] sous le bon plaisir du Conseil Benoît Sevaud M<sup>e</sup> maçon de cette ville pour avoir le soin des fontaines de la ville sous les ordres du dit Chaulier<sup>58</sup>.

What this statement tells us is that the then fountaineer, Joseph Chaulier, in charge of maintenance of water pipes could not continue to attend to his task alone, because of the enlargement of the city, which would make it complicated to supervise water provisioning in the entire urban space<sup>59</sup>. For this reason, after consultation, the city councillors decided to nominate a second individual, master carpenter (*maitre maçon*) Benoît Sevaud, who would still take orders from Chaulier. It is from Chaulier that we get a rich report, dating from 1682, which tells us that 173 public fountains existed in Marseille at that time. The report was commissioned by the city councillors, and it gives us a perfect or at least reliable picture not only of the network of water provisioning in Marseille, but also of who or what institution or shop or small business had access to water<sup>60</sup>. According to this report, 54 fountains were situated in various roads or squares in Marseille, 37 being used by religious orders, while the remaining ones were for traders and merchants. More specifically, 29 fountains were dedicated to the tanners, twenty-three to the dyers, ten to the soap makers, nine to other factories (these included a sugar refinery, but also a laundry service), five to the hosiers, and six for the parc for the service of the King, that included a bakery and a hospital. Finally, one fountain was intended for the exclusive use of the King's physician<sup>61</sup>.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Chaulier is defined as such in a note written by the city councillors which confirms Chaulier's survey of the condition of fountains in the city of Marseille (see footnote below). Even though it is not the main purpose of this paper, an analysis of the terminology used to indicate those figures who took care of the water provisioning system would be appropriate, in order to understand the various domains of expertise at play in the management of water in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Marseille.

<sup>60</sup> AMM, DD277, *List of fountains compiled by fountaineer Chaulier on request of the city councillors*, 13<sup>th</sup> February 1682.

<sup>61</sup> *Estat des fontaines publiques & particulieres quy coulent dans la ville de Marseille en nombre de 173*, 13<sup>th</sup> February 1682, AMM, DD277.

Chaulier's report does not simply allow us to glimpse into the geographical distribution of water in Marseille, rather also reflecting a broader process, that of the increasing presence of the state – and its institutional instantiations – in the management of natural resources. The fact that Chaulier's report was written for a specific audience, the city councillors, also reveals the intersection between hydraulic knowledge and expertise (and expert fountaineer) on the one hand, and the production of information which would have facilitated the administrative decisions taken by the Conseil de Ville with regard to the distribution of water.

In addition to this report, Chaulier also produced another document, for its own, rather than the city councillors' use, that is a sketchy notebook, in broken French, which he probably wrote while examining the water provisioning system of Marseille on site<sup>62</sup>. This document is a flow of names of individuals and religious orders, and describes how each of these individuals got water from the public aqueduct, situated in the northern-eastern part of the city, and from the stream Jarret<sup>63</sup>. Even though Chaulier's description says very little of the technicalities regarding the complex network of water intakes, conduits (*bourneaux*) fountains, water taps and reservoirs which pervaded Marseille, it is important because it reveals the social identities (and sometimes the names) of those who had access to water through the institute of water concessions. This network mostly connected religious orders one to another, but also served public squares (there are mentions of public fountains), as well as members of the public, usually notable figures in the social context of Marseille. Chaulier in fact mentions a Coronel, a Lieutenant Admiral and a Captain de Galères, the Intendant of Justice, or important businesses, such as the gunpowder refinery, and Monsieur Joseph Fabre, the director of the Royal silk factory, founded in 1692, and a series of tanners, all located around the Porte D'Aix, north to the old town, where they could access water through the same water conduit which connected all their businesses. Following Chaulier's notebook, we also know that in the same area were located doctors and apothecaries who accessed water through fountains or water taps, while others had access to cisterns<sup>64</sup>.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Estat des fontaines et cisternes qui ont dans la ville donné par Chaulier, fontanier*, 19 December 1694, AMM, DD277.

<sup>64</sup> For example, we know that water taps were settled in the houses of various *Monsieurs* in the Canebiere area, where there seemed to be a water source, probably underground, from which water arrived to the *magasins du Roi*.

#### 4. Conclusion

In an unsigned and undated, likely late 17<sup>th</sup> century, reply to a petition advanced by the St Victor Abbey to gain access to water to irrigate their lands in the outskirts of Marseille, the unknown author, probably a member of the Conseil de Ville, wrote that the city of Marseille would “be ruined” if the use of water were conceded for the purpose of irrigation. The author actually went one step further, claiming that not only Marseille would be ruined, but the whole “public” of the Kingdom would be damaged by this wrong distribution policy<sup>65</sup>. He closed the document claiming that «toute la grandeur et la richesse de Marseille ne consiste que du seul commerce quelle fait dans le Levant ou elle porte aux gloire [...] la connaissance du nom françois elle ne fait ce commerce que par le moyen de ses manufactures». In conclusion, the author pointed out that Marseille’s identity was that of a commercial city, and as such it had to adapt its water provisioning strategies and choices, so as to fit the Royal mercantilist agenda. Chaulier’s report and account tell us about this.

Even though it is harder to retrieve anything detailed in technical terms from Chaulier’s documents, nor the documents tell us how water was in fact used, they still give us a sense of how the distribution of water reflected social hierarchies in the city of Marseille. In particular, Chaulier’s documents highlight the centrality of specific manufacturing productions in the Mediterranean city in the 1680s. As we can infer from the fountaineer’s report, religious orders seemed to play a major role in making water distribution effective and efficient. Convents and monasteries, as well as public squares are in fact described as “knots” in a water network which covered different areas of the city and brought together different social functions. From the dyers to tanners, from the apothecaries to the silversmiths, from physicians to butchers, Chaulier tells us of the importance that water played in the economy of Marseille at a time of great expansion, demographic, urban and commercial. If the northern part of the city (the current Vielle Ville, on the left side of the bay of Marseille) was characterised

<sup>65</sup> AMM, DD302, page without number. The author of this document is likely from de la Faluère family, whose members had representative roles (of *intendant*) in Bretagne throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and dealt with the transit of merchandise from Bretagne to Marseille, where French commodities were shipped to the Levant. On the various inflection of the concept of public good in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Marseille, see J. Takeda, *French Absolutism, Marseillais Civic Humanism, and the Languages of Public Good*, in «The Historical Journal», vol. 49, n° 3, 2006, pp. 707-734.