Women and Gender in the Early Modern World

Series Editors:
Allyson Poska, The University of Mary Washington, USA
Abby Zanger

The study of women and gender offers some of the most vital and innovative challenges to current scholarship on the early modern period. For more than a decade now, Women and Gender in the Early Modern World has served as a forum for presenting fresh ideas and original approaches to the field. Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary in scope, this Ashgate book series strives to reach beyond geographical limitations to explore the experiences of early modern women and the nature of gender in Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa. We welcome proposals for both single-author volumes and edited collections which expand and develop this continually evolving field of study.

Titles in the series include:

Early Modern Women in the Low Countries
Feminizing Sources and Interpretations of the Past
Susan Broomhall and Jennifer Spinks

The Ideas of Man and Woman in Renaissance France
Print, Rhetoric, and Law
Lyndan Warner

Masculinity and Marian Efficacy in Shakespeare’s England
Ruben Espinosa

Guardianship, Gender, and the Nobility in Early Modern Spain
Grace E. Coolidge

Governing Masculinities in the Early Modern Period
Regulating Selves and Others

SUSAN BROO MHALL
University of Western Australia

and

JACQUELINE VAN GENT
University of Western Australia

ASHGATE
List of Illustrations

4.1 Attributed to François Despraz, Military hybrid male; fol. 5r, Les Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel ..., Paris, Richard Breton, 1565. Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

4.2 Attributed to François Despraz, Egg-head hybrid male; fol. 16r, Les Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel ..., Paris, Richard Breton, 1565. Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

4.3 Attributed to François Despraz, Fork-holding hybrid male; fol. 31r, Les Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel ..., Paris, Richard Breton, 1565. Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

4.4 Attributed to François Despraz, Elderly hybrid male; fol. 34v, Les Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel ..., Paris, Richard Breton, 1565. Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

4.5 (and detail) Pieter van der Heyden after Pieter Bruegel, The Seven Deadly Sins: Luxuria, engraving, 1558, Department of Prints and Drawings, the British Museum, inventory number AN62773601. © Trustees of the British Museum.

4.6 Attributed to François Despraz, Wheeled hybrid male; fol. 33v, Les Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel ..., Paris, Richard Breton, 1565. Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

4.7 (and detail) Pieter van der Heyden after Pieter Bruegel, The Seven Deadly Sins: Gula, engraving, 1558, Department of Prints and Drawings, the British Museum, inventory number AN62097001. © Trustees of the British Museum.

4.8 (and detail) Alain du Hameel, St Christopher, engraving, c. 1500 (seventeenth-century impression), Department of Prints and Drawings, the British Museum, inventory number AN60129001. © Trustees of the British Museum.

4.9 Hans Weiditz, Winebag and wheelbarrow, woodcut, 1530s, Department of Prints and Drawings, the British Museum, inventory number AN93036001. © Trustees of the British Museum.
Notes on Contributors

David G. Barrie is lecturer in British history at The University of Western Australia. His research interests include crime and punishment in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scotland, urban history, and the history of leisure and recreation. He is author of Police in the Age of Improvement: Police Development and the Civic Tradition in Scotland, 1775–1865 (Willan 2008). He has recently published in the British Journal of Criminology, Urban History, Crime, History, & Societies/Crime, History, and Societies; the Scottish Historical Review, and Scottish Archives. With Susan Broomhall, he has edited A History of Police and Masculinities, 1700–2010 (Roulsete 2011) and is writing a monograph, Police Courts: Crime, Control, and Community in Scotland, c. 1800–1892.

Susan Broomhall is Winthrop Professor in early modern history at The University of Western Australia. Her research focuses on cultural history and social experiences of women, gender, and masculinity in early modern Europe, especially France, the Low Countries, and more recently England and Scotland. She has recently completed (with Jennifer Spinks) Early Modern Women in the Low Countries: Feminizing Sources and Interpretations of the Past (Ashgate 2011) and edited (with David G. Barrie) A History of Police and Masculinities, 1700–2010 (Roulsete 2011). She is currently writing a monograph entitled Gender, Power, and Identity in the Early Modern Nassau Family with Jacqueline Van Gent as part of an Australian Research Council grant, and Police Courts: Crime, Control, and Community in Scotland, c. 1800–1892 with David G. Barrie.

Lisa Keane Elliott is a doctoral candidate at The University of Western Australia, where she is a research assistant and working on her doctoral thesis concerning the Paris Hôtel-Dieu in the sixteenth century, due for completion in mid-2011.

E.J. Kent is a Research Fellow in the School of Historical Studies at the University of Melbourne, Australia. She researches in the area of witchcraft and gender in early modern England and New England. Her recent publications are an essay exploring the case of the witch Anne Bodenham, which appeared in Brandt, Duffy, and Mackinnon (eds), Hearing Places (Cambridge Scholars 2007), and another exploring the case of the witch Susan Swapper, which appeared in Cassidy-Welch and Sherlock (eds), Practices of Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe (Brepols 2008). Dr Kent is currently finalising a book on male witches titled Cases of Male Witchcraft in Early Modern England and New England, 1560–1700 (Brepols forthcoming). Future projects include a book on the Salem witch hunt, and work on early modern men and violence.
drinking, and blasphemy, was defined by its rejection of the supposedly sober and bourgeois model of the master printers. Yet, in sixteenth-century Venice, as the city’s rulers battened the hatchets against the ‘infection’ of heresy, and cracked down on disorderly and ungodly words and deeds, the man who wished to rise to a position of authority did well to suppress the unruly urges in his workers, and in himself.

Working on the fault line between the worlds of literature and commerce, a printer had to be very skillful to move between competing and sometimes conflicting models of authoritative masculine behaviour. But in these in-between spaces there were many ways open to negotiate and advance his position. He who wished to become a success in the printing trade could bolster his authority by winning the acclaim of scholars and bibliophiles or by marrying strategically within the trade, both important contributing factors to the success of Aldo Manuzio. Making money undeniably brought with it respect and authority, and the possibility to distance oneself from the mechanical side of the trade and move ever closer in lifestyle and status to the political elite of the city. Ultimately, the famously stable three-tiered social system of Venice (patricians, citizens, popolani) offered numerous avenues for a man newly-arrived to move within this hierarchy and make a comfortable place for himself. If he could never hope to participate himself in the government of the city, there were a number of other spaces in which to exert authority and gain power, a variety of strategies and tools he could adopt.

In rewriting the rules of early modern society, however, the instrument over which the printer presided was potentially the most powerful of all. As many contemporaries recognized, the expansion of printing promised (or threatened, depending on one’s perspective) to open up literacy and access to information, knowledge, and expression to social groups previously excluded from them, like women and lower-class men. Popular printed manuals and encyclopaedias started to appear, which decoded the arena of social and professional life for a wide audience. The public sphere began to open up to admit the voices of commentators from outside the political and literary elite. The press reinforced and extended the pan-European network of scholarly connections that was the Republic of Letters. In this virtual realm, printers might claim a position as leaders or governors, even if in the real Republic of Venice they remained among the popolani, the governed. At least before the implementation of widespread print censorship towards the end of the sixteenth century, the press allowed more diverse and contradictory models of authority and masculine conduct to be publicized, discussed, and compared.

15 Cowan, “‘Not Carrying Out the Vile and Mechanical Arts’”, p. 39.
16 See G.W. McClure, The Culture of Profession in Late Renaissance Italy (Toronto, 2004); F. De Vivo, Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics (Oxford, 2007).

Chapter 3
Jean Martin, Governor of the Grand Bureau des Pauvres, on Charity and the Civic Duty of Governing Men in Paris, c. 1580
Lisa Keane Elliott

On 5 November 1544, the Parlement of Paris ordered the establishment of a Grand Bureau des Pauvres to manage the administration and distribution of poor-relief services in Paris, an institution similar in function to the Aumône Générale in Lyon. The management of the Grand Bureau fell to 32 notable persons who ‘must humbly accept the said office of the poor … [and] to have treatment and care of the poor of this city’, ensuring the equitable distribution of alms within the districts of Paris. Unfortunately, our knowledge of the early years of the Grand Bureau is limited due to the lack of extant sources. Even the year of the institution’s establishment seems to be a source of confusion, with some historians placing it in 1530, although the consensus is for 5 November 1544. Historians Léon Calen, Marcel Fosseyx, and Jean Imbert have postulated that the Grand Bureau was destroyed in several fires in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The documentation that does exist reveals little behind the intentions for its establishment and governance in those early years. Efforts have been made by scholars to piece together a picture of the Grand Bureau’s early years from the fragments that remain. Guérin, Registres des délibérations, tome 3, pp. 45–7. See also L. Calen, Grand Bureau des Pauvres de Paris au XVIIIe Siècle (Paris, 1904); K.E. Gager, Blood Ties and Fictive Ties: Adoption and Family Life in Early Modern France (Princeton, 1996), pp. 110–11; J. Imbert, Le droit hospitalier de l’ancien régime (Paris, 1993); T.J. McHugh, Hospital Politics in Seventeenth-Century France: The Crown, Urban Elites, and the Poor (Aldershot, 2007).
Bureau was established to provide institutional support for the position of the Commissaire des Pauvres and consolidate Parisian poor-relief services within the existing administrative framework of the city. A treatise published in 1580 and composed by Jean Martin not only gives an invaluable and detailed description of the structure and function of the Grand Bureau in the late sixteenth century, it also provides insight into the attitudes of the civic elite towards poverty, the poor, and, particularly, the charitable act. Martin’s under-utilized treatise will be the nucleus of this chapter’s exploration of the concept of masculine governing authority in relation to the French poor-relief services and the charitable act in late-sixteenth-century Paris.

As far as can be determined from the meagre extant sources, the intention behind Parliament’s establishment of the Grand Bureau in 1544 was to form a centralized institution to manage and oversee all the city’s poor-relief services and work in conjunction with Paris’s town council, the Bureau de la Ville, in its efforts to assert and maintain control over the increasing number of paupers in Paris. In 1577, a mere 33 years after its establishment, the Parliament of Paris ordered a major reform of the Grand Bureau. The manner in which Martin styled and presented his treatise suggests that the Grand Bureau remained an unfamiliar component of the administrative, and charitable, landscape of Paris. He describes how ‘several [ignorant] mutineers’ were thwarting the Grand Bureau’s officers in the course of their duties. In fact, several years earlier in 1551, the Grand Bureau was the subject of a parliamentary commission, during the course of which it was found that in the five years the institution had been operating the number of registered paupers had tripled. Rather than making inroads in reducing Paris’s pauper population, the Grand Bureau was seen as an impediment to government and local policy, its inefficient managers and general ineffectiveness seen only as encouragements to the dishonest and ‘underserving’ poor to persist in their social and moral degeneracy.

Included in Jean Martin’s treatise is a document that was presented to the Parliament of Paris in 1577 and in which the results of the recent reform of the Grand Bureau des Pauvres as outlined in great detail. Martin’s reform of Grand Bureau was managed by an elected board of 16 governors, known as commissaires honoraires, six of whom were from within the Parliament of Paris, one from the Chambre des Comptes (the Treasury), two from the chapters of Notre-Dame or Sainte-Chapelle, three priests from Paris’s Faculty of Theology, and four parliamentary lawyers. In addition, these commissaires honoraires were assisted by ‘sixteen other notable persons such as nobles, royal officers, merchants and bourgeoisie of all estates’, each one responsible for one of the 16 quartiers (districts) of the city, registering the ‘deserving’ poor and administering or organizing whatever poor relief was required, from medical services to a couple of sous for the purchase of bread. The commissaires honoraires were responsible for managing this great undertaking, ensuring that the over-stretched relief services were used for the relief of the honest poor; that is, hardworking journeymen and their families, the aged, women, and children, for whom infirmity, helplessness, and periods of unemployment could mean starvation and homelessness. Over the course of the sixteenth century, there was a noticeable change in the rhetoric associated with poverty and charity, an attitude that can be traced to the assumption of the administrative charity and poor relief by French municipal authorities from the Church. The municipal authorities became increasingly concerned that the Church, in addition to its suspected, and in some cases proven, mismanagement or misuse of charitable funds, had been too indiscriminate in its almsgiving, which only encouraged the poor in their begging and idling ways. The rhetoric of the municipal authorities depicted certain groups of paupers, generally male, as ‘underserving’ poor whose work-shy and dishonest natures necessitated systems of effective control and policing to prevent them from accessing the inadequate charitable resources depriving the honest poor of much needed and deserved assistance. Given the nature of Martin’s treatise and in light of the Grand Bureau’s supposed bad beginning, Martin’s work can be seen as an active endeavour to alter the opinion of his readers towards the institution.

This chapter will explore how Martin, in his treatise La Police et Règlement du Grand Bureau des Pauvres de la ville et faubourgs de Paris, negotiated his way through the complex hierarchy of Parisian civic governance to establish his own authority through which he was empowered to convey to his readers the legitimacy of the Grand Bureau in Paris and establish it as a worthy vehicle through which Paris’s governing men could carry out their Christian charitable obligations.

---

5 Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross, p. 20.
6 J. Martin, La Police et Règlement du Grand Bureau des Pauvres de la ville et faubourgs de Paris. Avec un petit traité de l’Aumône tiré des Saintes écritures, tant du vieil que du nouveau Testament, et autorités des Saints Docteurs. Aux citoyens de Paris (Paris, 1580), pp. 1-1v and 3v-4v. (Indicating page numbers for Martin’s treatise has been problematic due to the inconsistent numbering of the published manuscript. I have labelled the reverse side of pages as ‘v’ for easy reference. For quotations from pages without a number, I have given an indication of where they lie within the text.)
8 These concerns were not exclusive to the sixteenth century, although it was in this century that the secular authorities made decisive efforts to obtain control of poor relief from the Church. M. Mollat, The Poor in the Middle Ages: An Essay in Social History, trans. A. Goldhammer (New Haven, 1986), pp. 152-3, 281-3.
Jean Martin and the Grand Bureau: Negotiating and Legitimizing Authority

Who was Jean Martin and what authority did he have within the administrative framework of Paris? Who are these ‘citizens of Paris’ to whom he addresses his treatise? What masculine authorities does he draw upon, or borrow, to address his readers on their civic responsibilities and religious obligations towards the Grand Bureau and its ‘deserving’ poor? How and why is religion used in Martin’s treatise, and how does he, a secular man, establish a religious authority? How does Martin position the Grand Bureau within the official municipal framework of Paris?

Frustratingly, little is known of the treatise’s author, Jean Martin, other than what he shares with his readers. Martin introduces himself as a ‘public prosecutor in the Court of Parliament’ and as having for ‘15 or 16 years, attended the Grand Bureau of this great city’, although he does not specify in what capacity. However, this biographical information is sufficient to establish that, by virtue of his position within the Parliament of Paris, Martin was a governed male and, as we shall see, based on his position within the Parliament of Paris, possibly a governing male within the Grand Bureau des Pauvres. The Parliament of Paris was the ultimate judicial and political organisation for France, responsible not just for safeguarding law and order for King and country, but also with civic responsibilities for Paris itself. Amongst some of its responsibilities, the Parliament of Paris was responsible for provisioning the city, regulating prices, organising poor-relief collections, supervising the guilds, hospitals, and prisons, and intervening in the municipal administration and financial affairs of the Bureaux de la Ville when necessary for the continued good governance of the city. From an organisational point of view, Parliament was divided into six chambers. The Gens du Roi were made up of the Procureur Général, Avocat Général and their assistants (prosecutors, solicitors, and clerks) and were answerable directly to the King, as was the Grand Chambre, which was presided over by the First President. The other chambers were Chambre de la Marée, Chambre des Vocations, Requêtes, Enquêtes, and Tournelle, with a pool of court clerks, solicitors, barristers, and notaries servicing the Grand Chambre and the Tournelle. Parliamentary prosecutors, or solicitors, served under the direction of the Procureur Général, who was responsible for upholding the civil and criminal laws of the country. A parliamentary prosecutor held a level of authority in keeping with the many barristers, clerks, and notaries

10 Martin, La Police et Réglement du grand Bureau, 1st Epistle and 3rd Epistle.

and prudent' or 'good Governors and virtuous characters.' Given that charity was traditionally associated with women, particularly from the more affluent noble, elite, and middling classes, Martin's treatise could be seen as an endeavour to establish a legitimate space for governing men within the realm of charity. By means of his treatise, Martin demonstrates how his readers, the 'citizens of Paris', can incorporate the religious obligation of charity (towards the Grand Bureau in particular) into their civic responsibilities.

In their focus on masculinity, gender theorists have recognized variations of masculinity and masculinities that are 'divergent, often competing and above all ... changing'. Betina van Hoven and Kathrin Horschelmann point out that masculinity and masculinities are concepts 'that rightly evoke a complexity' and, as historians, we need to stop thinking about them as static. The complex nature of governing masculinities is much evident in Martin's treatise as we witness his endeavour to negotiate his authority within the existing secular and religious hierarchies in order to lend credence to himself and to the subject of his treatise, the Grand Bureau. Martin seeks to address his readers from his position as an experienced secular governor and parliamentarian, but also to negotiate a position as a religious scholar with some knowledge of the Christian's duty of charity. This is one of the reasons why Martin's treatise is an excellent case study for such a topic. Martin has to undertake a series of complex negotiations across different levels of not one but two hierarchies, secular and religious, to establish himself as an experienced and learned champion for the Grand Bureau. One of the techniques he employs in his endeavour is the humility topos or affected-modesty technique that was in popular use among authors until the eighteenth century. The humility topos enabled authors to apologize for their boldness in addressing their readers on a topic to which their own experience may not have been equal. They presented their work as a humble endeavour 'roughly executed', to use Martin's description of his own treatise, but undertaken with the purest motives, for which they humbly beg their readers' forgiveness and indulgence. Martin uses this technique

17 Martin, La Police et Règlement du grand bureau, pp. 33, 38.

as a starting point from which to demonstrate his awareness of his subordinate position in relation to many of his readers so as not to alienate their attention from his treatise and undermine his efforts to inspire and encourage their civically-mindedness and Christian virtue. In his three introductory epistles or 'humble salutes' to his readers, Martin claims himself where appropriate as a subordinate or peer to his readers. He clearly signals that his intended readership, the 'citizens of Paris', were largely his superiors not only through his obvious 'humble salute' in the opening epistles, but also, quite simply, by directly addressing his epistles to his intended readers.

The first three parts of his treatise are in the form of epistles in which Martin endeavours to justify the nature and purpose of his treatise to his readers. The first and third epistles are addressed to fellows among the secular elite, while the second epistle is addressed to the highest religious authority in France. Martin's first epistle is addressed to fellow prosecutors and his superiors in the parliamentary chamber of the Gens de Roi, particularly the Procureur Général. He seeks not only to establish his own expertise (borne of his status as a 'Procureur in the Court of Parliament' and his experience as a governor of the Grand Bureau) but also to obtain his readers' indulgence and their attention to the treatise, including that of France's second-highest secular authority (after the King).

Sirs, the prosecutors, and the Procureur Général of the King, Jean Martin Procureur in the Court of Parliament, gives humble Salute. Sirs, having these 15 to 16 years ... frequented the Grand Bureau des pauvres of this great city ... My Lords, who can see better than me the charity of some noblemen, so noble and bourgeois, than others ... and who continue to donate their property to [the poor] members of Jesus Christ. And others too have cooled it seems in their proper charity ... and they do nothing remotely Christian. Martin establishes his position as a parliamentary prosecutor and draws upon his own experience as a long-standing governor with the Grand Bureau, firming up his own professional credentials in order to qualify his address to his peers and superiors. However, Martin downplays the assertion of his own authority with a 'humble salute', acknowledging the superior professional status of the addressers, and follows this with a careful compliment to the noblemen whose charitable actions his position has privileged him to witness. However, this compliment, like others to follow, is not directed specifically at the noblemen of his address. Martin adopts a generic form of address referring to 'some noblemen', instead of, for example, 'you noblemen' or 'noblemen' in general, which allows his readers to dissociate themselves from those others who come under criticism for their failures as civic leaders and Christians. In a way, through this indirect rebuke, Martin employs the humility topos on behalf of his readers, awarding them the same privilege of disassociation that, as the author, he can employ for himself. It is a display of deference and respect to his readers to keep them on side.
Martin's first epistle is a deft negotiation between establishing his own authority and demonstrating acts of subordination in order not to offend those of superior professional rank to his own.

Martin employs a similar technique of flattery in his third epistle to his fellow commissaires of the Grand Bureau. He explains to his colleagues that he is using his knowledge of the inner workings of the Grand Bureau for the benefit of the "citizens of Paris" and that his treatise, therefore, is not intended as a lecture to them on their roles and responsibilities. Martin assures his colleagues he wishes only to demonstrate how the Grand Bureau's 'Christian' officers perform their 'virtuous' duties with 'dexterity' for the good of the 'poor members of God' and the health of the city; that is, how they play their part as citizens within this institution. He compliments his fellow commissaires and assures them he was 'encouraged' to publish the Grand Bureau's ordinance by the excellent example of their 'exercise of this virtue of Charity', not only to inspire the 'citizens of Paris ... to be more inclined and prompt with the exercise of their Charity' but also as an inspiration for the entire kingdom of France.  

I thought to very humbly beg you betters and authorities, that continuing as your zealous servant accustomed by your most prudent Council that is this Bureau, be always ruled and governed for the good of the poor, so that by this they be always maintained and sustained in this so famous governance ... [so] that other cities and provinces of the Kingdom, without great relief projects, can take [it] as an example ... [to] assist their poor.  

Martin justifies addressing his superiors and equals on the basis of his own position, and within the treatise negotiates different levels and kinds of authority for himself to add weight to his views and engage their support for the Grand Bureau.

In his second epistle to 'Master Philip Huart, Doctor Regent in the Faculty of Theology', Martin shows how he has cultivated religious knowledge which is sanctioned by the head of France's highest religious authority. In doing so, Martin establishes a commanding position from which to address his readers on religious issues, specifically those relating to charity. The Faculty of Theology was the guardian of French Roman Catholicism, 'the most authoritative theology faculty in Latin Christendom', charged with the protection of the Roman Catholic doctrines, rituals, and beliefs. The Doctor Regent was the head of the Faculty.  

Receiving the support of the Faculty buttressed the religious side of Martin's endeavour. Martin offers his 'humble salute' to Master Huart and emphasizes the purity of his intention to demonstrate to his readers that 'there is nothing easier than the exercise of our Christian religion' — a fact, he claims, has been revealed to him during his long years of religious instruction.  

[Without having regard of my roughness and ignorance, thinking only of benefiting the public, I am induced and emboldened to compile and outline this ... rubric of authority ... by form of exhortations addressed to the Parisian people, for this in no way provokes the exercise of this so perfect charity toward the poor members of God, whom you can see and contemplate in such great numbers in this Parisian city: so much that it has not been possible to be able to provide without providence [and] I say also generosly, of those who have the charge and handling of it.  

To Master Huart, Martin conveys an awareness that it is not his 'vocation to handle the Holy Letters, and still less to polish [them]'; however, his 'imbecility' has been improved through the religious instruction he has received over the course of '16 or 18 years' and he therefore requests he be allowed to fulfil his 'perpetual obligation' to God and the Church through his treatise and to promote 'this virtue of Charity' to his readers. Martin's efforts were successful, judging from the certificate following the epistles issued by 'G. Rose' and 'P. Huart' of the Faculty of Theology, permitting him to use religious exhortations to 'instruct' his readers on the 'worthy and good' subject of charity.  

Martin's opening epistles are important to establish a connection with his superior and fellow governing men. He not only shores up his secular influence as a parliamentary prosecutor and governor of the Grand Bureau but also seeks borrowed authority from France's pre-eminent spiritual arbiters at the Faculty of Theology to address matters 'not being [his] vocation'. The order of the epistles reflects the hierarchy of the men Martin addresses — the Procureur Général of Parliament, the Doctor Regent of the Faculty of Theology, and lastly, Martin's fellows in the Parliament and the Grand Bureau. He uses the epistles to assure his superiors of his respect and to highlight his own subordinate position in some areas, yet does not undermine the legitimacy of his own experience and influence as an institutional office-holder. As a result, his mission to demonstrate the worthiness of the Grand Bureau as a recipient of the charitable benevolence of the 'citizens of Paris' is secured by virtue of his own governing and learned authorities.

---

23 Martin, La Police et Règlement du grand Bureau, 3rd Epistle.
24 Ibid., p. D.
26 Martin, La Police et Règlement du grand Bureau, p. 40.
27 Ibid., 2nd Epistle.
28 *We the undersigned Doctors of the Holy Theology Faculty of Paris, certify to have seen this present treatise on the Police of poor, established in the city of Paris, with the exhortations for Charity ... and find us there nothing contrary with the Catholic faith and determinations of our Holy Mother the Apostolic Catholic and Roman Church, and is thus worthy and good be clarified for the instruction of the people*. Ibid., p. iv. This statement is dated 13 May 1576.
Jean Martin on the Civic Responsibility of the Governing Man

Part four consists of Martin’s parliamentary paper, ‘The policing of the poor in the city and suburbs of Paris’, which was presented to the Parliament of Paris in 1577 following the reform of the Grand Bureau. In this document, Martin outlines in great detail the structure and function of the Grand Bureau in the wake of these reforms. While Martin opens part 4 of his treatise with another ‘humble salute’ to his superiors and fellows, it is here that he draws upon the authority he has earned in his position as a commissaire honoraire of the Grand Bureau in the promotion of the institution and its officers, and levels criticisms at those men who ignore their responsibilities as governing men by failing to support the Grand Bureau. His authoritative voice is derived from the knowledge he has obtained of its inner workings during his tenure therein. As stated earlier, Martin indicates that the governors (commissaires honoraires) of the Grand Bureau are elected from within the municipal hierarchy of Paris and the position is one which may yield professional rewards, but is undertaken ‘without wages or profit’ and ‘for the grace of God’ alone. The governors meet twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays, for one to two hours, after midday… to attend to the process and affairs of the poor, pooling the alms, making decisions on their distribution, following up on legacies and donations to the poor and overseeing the implementation of relevant royal and parliamentary edicts. By demonstrating his experience and knowledge of the inner workings of the Grand Bureau, Martin establishes his specialist credentials, and thus his authority as a governing man. In addition, it is likely that Martin is endeavouring to demonstrate to his superior and fellow governing men that the publication of his treatise, like his role in the Grand Bureau, is undertaken by the pure desire to promote the cause and legitimacy of the institution that he serves voluntarily and without reward.

Martin does not completely abandon the humility of his earlier approach now that his credentials have been established. The following excerpt is a perfect illustration of Martin’s creative negotiation between his position as a subordinate to his professional superiors and as an experienced governor of the Grand Bureau, addressing both those with no experience of the Grand Bureau and its function and his fellow Grand Bureau governors and officers. He deftly moves from governing male to governed male in his attempt to engage and retain support for the Grand Bureau while not alienating his readership with the criticisms that he regrets must be expressed. Firstly, Martin praises the work of the ‘good men’ of the Grand Bureau who serve ‘for two years without wages or profit [and] by the grace of God’, and with humility and deference to his fellow citizens, promises not to be too ‘tedious’ in his endeavours to summarize their good work.

[The capture, imprisonment … and correction of all those who are found to be beggars in Paris, because it is championed by the King and the aforementioned Court (Parliament) that all people who beg there on pain of the whip, for the inconvenience of plague and other diseases which will be able to occur; and that several belistres and cagnardiers by pretense and disguise of diseases take

---

39 Ibid., p. 3v.
40 Ibid., p. 2v.
alms from the true poor. ... Still there are several mutineers, ignorant of the labours of the aforesaid police force, who sometime endeavour to prevent the Sergeants from carrying out the capture of the aforementiond bellesirs, and are the cause of the disorder that one can see: so much that it is championed by the King and Court of the people, on [pain of] custodial sentence and corporal punishment, to prevent the Sergeants and Officers of the police force, and are thus charged to help them make the captures and imprisonments for the good of the true poor and public health.  

Behind Martin’s condemnation lies the authority of an experienced and knowledgeable government official, working in accordance with official municipal policy and with the license of the Parliament of Paris. Despite humbly allowing his readers to dissociate themselves from criticism by the generic inference of ‘several [ignorant] mutineers’, he is still sufficiently empowered to condemn those who act against their sovereign and fellow citizens serving ‘by the grace of God’ for the ‘poor members of God’ and the order and safety of Paris. Martin warns that it matters not what position these ‘several [ignorant] mutineers’ occupy in society for as citizens of Paris they are obligated to obey the laws of their King and support his officers in maintaining the good governance of his city for all his subjects: in this case the poor, who were in need of governing; the officers of the Grand Bureau whose governing position required support from the ‘citizens of Paris’; and ‘several [ignorant] mutineers’ who needed a reminder of their civic responsibilities as citizens towards their sovereign and his subjects.  

Martin takes great care to reassure his readers that the Grand Bureau operates in accordance with the rules of Parisian municipal authorities and that supporting it is one way to carry out their civic responsibilities. The Grand Bureau labours to assist the deserving pauvres honnestes (amiable poor) and ensures its resources are used solely for their benefit. Martin lends weight to his assurance by employing official municipal rhetoric to emphasize that these shame-faced poor receive alms from the Grand Bureau only ‘according to whether their poverty and needs were known’. 

[The] Commissaires for the district [are sent] to visit the poor and their goods, in their rooms, to find out succinctly from three or four neighbours of their poverty, number and charge of children ... and if it has been sometime that they have been resident in Paris. [...] The Commissaire submits his report verbally or in writing to the Grand Bureau the following day ... and if it is due ... the poor are put at alms on a certain sum and alms per week for a certain time or always, as the Commissaires recognize that they deserve.  

Martin continually uses his position to demonstrate to his readers — the potential Grand Bureau supporters and benefactors — the importance and relevance of the institution within the governing framework of Paris. Again, he assures his readers that the Grand Bureau operates in line with the municipal authorities to curtail the anti-social activities of those deemed ‘incorrigible and unworthy of charity’. When seen in conjunction with the following extract from the 1516 registers of the Bureau de la Ville, it is clear that Martin employs the familiar language of male governance to consolidate his authority and the legitimacy of the Grand Bureau as a regulating institution.

[Vagrants] are to be fed and housed, but also chained up by the body and feet ... ; to be housed close to the site of the public works so as not to waste time getting there. ... They are normally put to ditch digging, but as the waters are still high they are to be put to cleaning rubbish from the streets instead.  

The term pauvres valeuses primarily applied to men who were physically capable of work, but who were seen as preferring to live the life of the rascal, idling thief whose unholy existence robbed the honest poor of their alms and undermined the social and moral order of the city.  

France’s governing men saw it as part of their civic responsibility to protect their city from the corrupting influence of the unemployed and unruly vagrant poor, who were perceived to be roaming the country in great numbers. They had to control the vagrants, a term which generally implied young, single, male paupers. Mirroring the ordinance of the Bureau de la Ville quoted above, Martin assures his readers that the Grand Bureau’s officers, like other local authorities, ensure that all those identified as pauvres valeuses are referred to the town council where they are employed and enlisted by the Police chiefs of the poor ... with ditch digging, [building] fortifications, ramparts and public works of the aforesaid city at the expense of the city ... and each paid daily by ordinance of the Provosts of the Merchants and Magistrates of Paris, according to want and command of the King and his Parliament of Paris, more to prevent that such idle people do not beg and devote themselves to stealing ... and to keep them from begging.  

Martin’s own experience in the Parliament familiarized him with the language and processes of government, which he uses in his detailed outline of the Grand Bureau’s structure and function. The business of the Grand Bureau, he says, ‘is carried out by the good political order of the elected ministers in the government’.

33 Martin, La Police et Règlement du grand Bureau, p. 6.  
35 Martin, La Police et Règlement du grand Bureau, p. 9.  
37 See Mollat, The Poor in the Middle Ages, ch. 12; Geremek, Poverty, ch. 4.  
38 Mollat, The Poor in the Middle Ages, pp. 247, 290, 295.  
40 Martin, La Police et Règlement du grand Bureau, pp. 18–9.  
41 Jean Martin, Governor of the Grand Bureau des Pauvres
administration and governance. Part 4 had been composed for presentation to Parliament, which conferred upon Martin an authority from the highest secular power in France. His professional experience as a parliamentary prosecutor and Grand Bureau commissaire honoraire enabled Martin to place the Grand Bureau within the governing framework of the city, thus offering the ‘citizens of Paris’ his professional assurance that their active support of the Grand Bureau would not be in violation of their civic responsibilities as citizens of Paris.

The Grand Bureau of 1577 was similar in design and function to other French municipal institutions, with a mission — to control the pauper population of Paris — in line with official parliamentary and civic policy. In light of the criticisms levelled at the Grand Bureau in the years immediately after its establishment, Martin’s treatise seeks to demonstrate that the Grand Bureau is securely run by experienced secular and religious governors, who have volunteered their time and professionalism with the intent of fulfilling their civic responsibilities with “dexterity ... for the grace of God” and the benefit of “the poor members of God”. By inclusion of the reform document, Martin hoped to inspire his readers to support the Grand Bureau by offering funds, participating in its management, or, most likely, recognizing the institution as a worthy and legitimate component of the administrative landscape of Paris.

Charity and the Christian Governing Man’s Religious Obligations

In the last three parts of his treatise, Martin endeavours to promote the value of the ‘faithful Christian virtue of charity’. The generation of such towards the Grand Bureau is the ultimate goal behind the publication of his treatise. Having established the official nature of the governance of the Grand Bureau in part 4, in the latter half of his treatise Martin demonstrates how being a good citizen requires not only performing one’s civic duties but also one’s Christian duties, and that far from being mutually exclusive, these roles go hand in hand. Drawing upon the religious authority conferred upon him by Doctor Regent Huart and Master Rose of the Faculty of Theology, having established the knowledge he obtained after years of dedicated study, Martin illustrates his treatise with examples of Christian leaders who successfully combined their civic responsibilities and Christian obligations and performed regular acts of charity. However, Martin’s suggestion throughout this part of his treatise is that the lack of charity in ‘some noblemen’, ‘the Church’, and ‘rich men’ derives from avarice rather than any sense of divided obligations. Martin is drawing upon the concern of the French Catholic reformists that the avarice of many Christians was leading to the neglect of God’s poor. As we shall see, Martin employs the method of instruction favoured by Catholic reformist preachers — that is, to instruct by example — to encourage Christian charity, in this case, towards the poor of the Grand Bureau.

Martin opens the religious section of his treatise with a poem, Charité Malade aux Riches Terriens (Ailing Charity among the Wealthy), in which ‘your humble sister Charity’ laments the deficiency of charity in France. ‘Charity sleeps, one does not give anything’, she cries. By opening the religious half of his treatise with a poem, Martin is able to use the potential affect of the poetic form to arouse the religious sensibilities of and ‘faithful charity’ in his superior and fellow governing men. The poem marks a shift from the secular, administrative discourse of the first half of the treatise to the more emotive religious tone of the second half in which ideals of Christian leaders, both from the religious and secular realms, are offered as inspiration to Martin’s readers. In the poem, Charity bemoans that in ‘days of old’ men acted charitably, but not now. Now not only is ‘the Church slow with charitable works’ but nobles are also living avaricious lives and neglecting their Christian duty towards the poor.

Avarice is my mortal enemy
Who without cessation holds so many people, alas!
In its subtle inevitable snares.
Avarice is the mother of all controversies,
Destruction of the various nations:
Avarice is the source of all evils,
Making war with human animals ...
Leave avarice and its enticing vices
Which will make the Christian church
Revoke a little old charity.
... Simple, miserable people,
Change your hearts, become charitable.

The poem depicts noble and bourgeois men leading their city into war and poverty due to their avaricious lifestyles and a Church that preaches charity but fails to lead by example. Given that at the time of publication France was in the throes of religious civil war, Martin is taking the opportunity to advocate a course of peaceful demonstration of one’s Catholicism. He advocates a ‘charity is mightier than the sword’ solution to demonstrating one’s allegiance to the true faith.

Such rhetoric was not uncommon in late-sixteenth-century France. In a 1577 speech, the Duke of Montpensier lamented that the state in which the French poor found themselves after years of religious conflict was one that could only be

41 Ibid., p. 19.
42 Ibid., p. 39.
relieved ‘by means of peace’. Peace, he said, was ‘the only remedy and best cure I know of for the evil that has spread all over France’.46 The Duke and Duchess of Nevers employed a similar rhetoric in presenting their charitable foundation for 60 poor girls. They desired that in ‘these times so turbulent and full of heresies, divisions and impurity’, their foundation of ‘good and Holy intent’ would be a peaceful means of lighting heresy by promoting the true ‘Catholic Apostolic and Roman religion’ amongst all those involved, from the administrators to the recipients of their ‘perfection of Christian charity’.47

The commencement of part 6, the Traite de l'Aumone (Treatise on Alms), continues with the gloomy rhetoric of France as ‘this dark world where not only aviricious noble, rich, and churchmen neglect the poor, but “scoundrels and robbers lurk in shadows, floods and other calamities impoverish the cities and people are consumed by lust and embroiled in peril’, their actions unchecked by civic and religious authorities.48

[It] will be well to say that our God is to preserve in this Kingdom of France and more especially in this town of Paris, for continual alms and more virtuous works by the good government of this most creditable police force of this Grand Bureau des Pauvres, true school of charity, by which I desire that these people so callous and intolerant toward the poor in times past that they do not profit so much in Christian charity.49

Could Martin be suggesting that this neglect on the part of his superior and fellow governing men has forced him, an urban, middle-class, bourgeois professional, to speak out on the issue on behalf of the Grand Bureau and its poor? Such accusations were not new and had been levelled at the Church and the French elite throughout the sixteenth century.50 Martin echoes these accusations and calls upon

47 Martin, La Police et Règlement du grand Bureau, p. 33 (paraphrased).
49 Geremek, Poverty, pp. 17–18, 147; Mollat, The Poor in the Middle Ages, pp. 255, 268. In his extensive research on the Paris Hôtel-Dieu, Coysevox illustrates how abuses by the religious and secular governors and staff of the hospital led not only to major reform in 1505, but further reforms throughout the century. Coysevox, L’Hôtel-Dieu de Paris au Moyen-Âge, pp. 40, 180–81.
50 Martin, La Police et Règlement du grand Bureau, 33v.
51 Ibid., p. 39v (my emphasis).
52 Ibid., pp. 38v–39, 43.
53 Ibid., pp. 37, 40.
like a strong lance against our enemy'; that is, being faithful and charitable are the
greatest tools of a true Christian governor.

Throughout part 6, Martin salds the language of religion with the language of
governance, positioning his fellow Christian governing men as soldiers standing
side by side, doing battle against poverty, social disorder, and heresy by means
of charity rather than war. Moreover, never forgetting his primary endeavour to
encourage charity to the Grand Bureau, his fellow officers, those ‘good and honest’
men, are positioned as willing and able to assist in the fight against poverty and
correctly employ the charity of faithful Christian ‘citizens of Paris’ towards only
those worthy and deserving of their benefaction. As he states in his introduction to
part 6, Martin relies on examples to illustrate the virtue of charity, and he does not
neglect to remind his readers where these examples come from. These examples
come not from Martin but from the ‘holy word of God’ and have been entrusted to
him, whose religious education enables him to share with his superior and fellow
governing men the ‘many good and holy laws and ordinances’ of the ultimate
religious authority, God himself, to reawaken and inspire their true, and charitable,
Christianity.54

Jean Martin’s treatise was targeted at the male ‘citizens of Paris’ from whom he
sought support to establish the Grand Bureau, a then unfamiliar institution, as
a legitimate and professionally managed part of the administrative and charitable
landscape of Paris. He signified his intention within the title of his work, which he
addressed to the ‘citizens of Paris’ and went further in his opening epistles to target
his readership specifically within the secular and religious authorities of Paris,
that is, to his superior and fellow governing men. Gender theory conceptualizes
masculine authority as complex and diverse, and coming equipped with a toolbox
containing various discourses, skills, and resources for men to use to negotiate
their position within the professional, social, and, in Martin’s case, religious
hierarchies of their world. Martin used many of these tools to gain the support
of his superior and fellow governing men for Paris’s Grand Bureau. He adopted
a tone of humility that implied an acknowledgement on his part of the inferiority
of his position in relation to many of his readers and a ‘humble’ apology for the
potential over-reaching assertions he had to make in order to present an effective
defence of the Grand Bureau and its officers. At the same time, his ‘humble salute’
was also part of his endeavour to establish authoritative credentials for his treatise,
a formal compliment to his readers through which he sought their acquiescence to
his assertion of his own professional authority and experience; for ‘who can see
better than I … [who has] attended the Grand Bureau des Pauvres of this great city
for the last 15 to 16 years’ of the cooling of the charity towards the poor of the city
and the lack of cooperation with the Grand Bureau in its efforts to control and aid
the city’s poor.55 His decision to include the paper he composed and presented to
Parliament in 1577 is evidence of his desire not only to address the leading men of

54 Ibid., p. 44v.
55 Ibid., 1st Epistle (paraphrasing Martin).
56 Ibid., 2nd Epistle.
57 Ibid., p. 23v (the page is labelled 13 in the manuscript).
58 Ibid., 2nd Epistle.