

CHAPTER SEVEN

GENDER

The purpose of this chapter is to enable you to determine the sex of any individual named in a christening or marriage entry.

Most of the time, the sex can be determined using the first given name. However, there are many names which can be either male or female and, therefore, other factors must be considered to establish the gender of the individual.

The gender of an individual many times positions them in a proper relationship to other people named in an entry.

Phrases Denoting Gender

If the sex of an individual cannot be determined from the first given name, other words in the entry which carry gender can be used. The most common words that indicate a person's sex are listed below. Notice that verbs which end in *ee* refer to females; those that end with consonants or one *e* usually refer to males.

fil	son
fil	daughter
un enfant	male child
une enfant	female child
né	(male) child
née	(female) child
jumeau	twin (male)
jumelle	twin (female)
jumeaux	twins (masculine)
jumelles	twins (feminine)
veuf	widower
veuve	widow
garçon	unmarried boy
mademoiselle	unmarried young woman
marié	married man
mariée	married woman

The following phrases refer to females:

Ma légitime
my wife

fille légitime de . . .
legitimate daughter of . . .

une enfant légitime
legitimate child

fille de Marie Thérèse et de pere inconnu
daughter of Marie Therese and father unknown

d'autre part Natalie Beaudoin, age de vingt cinq ans
the other part Natalie Beaudoin, age 25 years

et de Françoise Belot née a Housseville
and of Françoise Belot, born in Housseville

et Josephine Didier age de cinquante sept ans, son épouse
and Josephine Didier age 57 years, his wife

The following phrases refer to males:

le fils de Pierre
the son of Pierre

un enfant né le troisieme jour de . . .
a child born the 3rd day of . . .

un enfant du sexe masculin.
a child of the masculine sex.

donné le prénom de Jean
given the name of Jean

fil légitime de Marcelle Collet.
legitimate son of Marcelle Collet.

le fils illegitime de Marie Picot et de pere inconnu.

illegitimate son of Marie Picot and of (a) father unknown.

Occasionally, you will find a scribe who was careless or inconsistent, either with spelling the names or with denoting the gender. He may have written—

“baptisé le fils de Jean et Marie et . . .
baptized the son of Jean and Marie and

donnée le nom de sa mere, Marie:
and given the name of his mother, Marie

Here the scribe recorded a son but gives a feminine name.

The verb (donnée) indicates that the child is a female. In such cases, consider all the evidence, and use your common sense to arrive at a conclusion. The predominant consideration should be the child’s first given name.

In the given example, the child is most likely a girl, and the scribe probably was not aware of the mistake.

Marginal Notations

Another aid in determining the sex is the marginal notation. Some scribes wrote the first given name of each child christened, in the margin beside their corresponding entry.

In marriage entries, the marginal notation often includes the given name(s) of the bride as well as the groom. Sometimes a scribe would write a more complete name in the margin. For example, a scribe may have written in the entry **baptisé Thérèse fille de . . .**, and in the margin written **Marie Thérèse**. This additional name helps many times to clarify the sex of the individual. In another instance, the entry may contain only the name **Arsene**, which can be either sex. In the margin, however, the scribe adds **Jean (Arsene)**, which would indicate the person was a male.

Self-evaluation

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On a separate sheet of paper, determine the gender of the person in each phrase below and enter either **M** for male or **F** for female.

1. Marie Gabrielle, fille legitime de Henri Grillot . . .
2. et donnée le nom de Angélique . . .
3. Lisette Labard, son épouse . . .
4. et pour parrain, René Mircourt . . .
5. Yvette, née le premier jour de Mai . . .
6. Connu par le nom Thomas . . .
7. Claude Arne le père nourricier de la . . .
8. et sa jumelle Pernette . . .
9. Philippe Ollier, le beau-père de la dite enfant . . .
10. Chrétien Savigny, le maire de ce village . . .

Please check your responses with the answers in Appendix C.