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ARTICULATING THE GRID OF INHERITANCE: THE ACCUMULATION  
AND TRANSMISSION OF WEALTH IN PEASANT SAVOY 1561-1792

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by

D.J. Siddle

Abstract

The lineaments of peasant inheritance in Savoy are identified and a model of inheritance strategies is presented. Analysis of both agnatic and affinal inheritance activity, of inter vivos land transfer and of other sales, loans and exchanges make it possible to explore the workings of a system which is integrated by backward and forward linkages of debt and obligation sometimes extending over four generations. A new approach to the cyclical movement of property and wealth accumulation in peasant society is suggested.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The nature of peasant society in Europe during the long process of what may be called, depending on prejudice, 'the penetration of capitalism' or 'increasing involvement in the market economy', still remains obscure. Three main interpretations compete in the attempt to find an adequate basis for generalisation. The oldest draws on an arcadian Rousseau-esque vision of the 'merrie peasant', living in a small society regulated by its own internal mechanisms designed to equalise the distribution of surpluses in a homogeneous, unstratified community. It is with this tradition that we can associate the more recent and influential view of the peasantry as an 'awk-

ward class' (Shanin, 1972) in which differences of wealth certainly occurred but were regulated by the uneven hand of disease, demographic imbalances and the consumer-worker dynamics of the domestic cycle (Chayanov, 1966; Goody, 1976). In such formulations the long term dynamic equilibrium of social mobility is articulated through a system of partible inheritance which ensured property re-distribution within three or four generations at most. Finally, there is the alternative Marxist-Leninist perspective (Lenin, 1974) which is of a peasantry already differentiated into rich and poor by the processes of feudal and pre-capitalist modes of production and further divided into yeoman (Kulak) farmers and proletarian wage labourers by the universal development of capitalism (Cox, 1981; Harrison, 1977).

Historians of the family are drawn into the web of this debate because they rely heavily on similar data sources, namely those many taxation census registers which divide village populations into 'households'. In the northern parts of lowland Europe the co-incidence between such registrations and the nuclear family households, which dominate in areas of partible inheritance and high familial mobility, may cause no pause for re-evaluation theories concerning the peasantry or current assumptions about the nature of family life. In some parts of Southern and Upland Europe, however, important differences in demographic regime seem to be associated with very different forms of household structure, with impartible inheritance and with a range of social and economic responses clearly distinguishable from those of Eastern England and the North European plain (Goubert, 1972; Hajnal, 1965, 1983; Laslett, 1977, 1983; D. Smith, 1977).

It may well be that an enriched understanding of inheritance practices will provide the key which unlocks the door to a richer perception of differences in peasant class formation in Europe. There is clearly a value in making the effort to achieve an over-view of European inheritance systems. But

despite valuable pioneering work to draw attention to the significance of property devolution in peasant society (Goody, Thirsk, Thompson, 1976), there are considerable problems in reaching this goal. But premature attempts to fit grids over peasant societies at a national scale lead towards conclusions which can limit rather than extend our understanding of family structure and inheritance. For example in an attempt to generalise concerning the nature of the complex variations in inheritance practice in France Le Roy Ladurie (1976, 68-9) comes to the following conclusion:

"... We now have a grid that fits over the apparent chaos of French customs ... around two opposite poles, that of genealogical consanguinity and that of alliance through marriage, antinomic solutions take shape at both extremes of the continuum of the possibilities; thus egalitarianism and lineage favouring egoism contrast with the right to advantage heirs for the benefit of community and household."

Even those social scientists who are not so overtly structuralist in intent have sought in this way to distinguish between systems in this way. Societies have been characterised by either partible or by impartible inheritance, by composite or nuclear family households, by lateral or lineal, agnatic or uterine successions. This urge to dichotomise sometimes provides the basis for lively academic controversy, but fails completely to do full justice to the richness of strategies which peasant families employ to enlarge, rationalise, exploit and ensure the transmission of their property. Definitions and classifications based on such dichotomies may divert attention from the study of a much more complex interplay of risk avoidance strategies which are deployed by peasants as they adjust to the rhythms of the domestic cycle, the need to balance labour and resources, the politics of the community and the vicissitudes of political economic and demographic change at a larger scale. Here we stress that it is the dynamic tensions between all these forces that is played out in inheritance

arrangements. This is the case whether these are sanctified by unwritten custom or given the firmer legality of common law as codified and administered by notaries and justices. The objective is always the same: to find a balance between centrifugal and centripetal pressures, what Goody (1976:2, 28) has called "the contradictory pulls towards the equal treatment of offspring ... and the preservation of the estate".

Perhaps one of the main reasons for this slide into the safety of general theory is that few scholars have found the historical evidence to approach the detailed study of inheritance strategies as they develop over a long period, not merely through several generations. Only from a fairly comprehensive set of records can one approach the more interesting questions of how shorter term decisions are cast in the mould of longer term strategies and how both are controlled by the interpenetrative strands of what Giddens has called the Schutzian durée of activity, the temporality of Dasein and Braudel's longue durée (Giddens, 1981, 20-21).

To what extent do different families deliberately adjust their fertility to take account of differential land availability? How are the within family sex imbalances accommodated when they occur? Is there any overt attempt to increase the size of a patrimony to meet the needs of a growing lineage? How significant are the earnings of migrant labour? Are some families conspicuously more successful in fertility, succession and land management than others and in this way do they then establish something close to peasant dynasties? If so, what does this mean in terms of the theories of peasant class formation which depend on the definition of a peasant household as a discrete nucleic entity, largely isolated in space and time.

Work in such one area of Southern-Upland Europe - the pre-alpine area of Savoie - makes it possible to further advance the view of a peasant society which differs substantially from

the alternatives presented above. It is a view which draws attention to the spatial differentiation in peasant systems. In this area which combines the private ownership of land, mixed farming, and a well defined framework for inter vivos and post mortem transfers of land, property and capital, the usual interchanges of family and market-place are sophisticated by a subtle interaction between statutory and customary laws which are mediated by the ever present notary.

In this alpine region, it will be argued, nuclear, complex, stem or joint families were merely 'nested' parts of broader structures of horizontally and longitudinally defined kinship relationships which make any theory drawn from the simple building block of the nuclear (or stem) family and its domestic cycle a misleading oversimplification. It is here that distinctions between partible and impartible, stem and nuclear, pale before lineage structures articulated by debt and marriage, lease and loan relationships which link members of lineages with others from the same and other 'family name' gens<sup>1</sup>.

In this paper the evidence for these assertions is examined for two 'household' taxation documents, the gabelle de sel (1561) and the Cadastre Sarde of 1730-38 (Jones & Siddle 1982). From either registration, viewed on its own, it would be quite possible to identify yet another example of an equalising peasant society to support the first of the alternative theories presented above (McGuire and Netting, 1982). It will be argued that this view is misleading and that by looking at lineages and 'family-name' gens it is possible to form a much clearer picture of a society in which 'cyclical mobility', of the kind identified by Shanin (1972), only continued for as long as it was necessary for powerful gens who gained monopolistic access to the resources of the environment and probably also to the best opportunities for short and long distance worker migration. It is the families of these gens, whose position as leading owners of property was consolidated bet-

ween the mid-sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries and whose position thereafter remained little changed. If this is the case then it is a structure in which class formation (if so it be) is articulated by family and gens formation.

#### Taxation registers of Peasant Household 1561

In his excellent review of the sixteenth century notarial registers of Savoie, Perrouse (1914) presents, almost gratuitously, a unique description of the peasant 'household' and its domestic architecture at the time of the first great gabelle de sel of 1561.

".....maison composée de trois ou quatre pièces; ne pouvait pas suffire au logement de la famille constituée... comprenant des frères indivis, des oncles et des neveux, voire des cousins, chacun avec son ménage. C'est pourquoi ces dynasties rurales se construisaient, les unes à côté des autres et par exemple sur la même cour, et en aussi grand nombre qu'elles comptaient de ménages, des petites maisons économiquement bâties. Chacune de ces petites habitations ou 'membres' de maison, ou 'carrés', avait pour partie principale un poêle, ou chambre à feu, autour duquel on créait ingénieusement de la place par un système de 'loges' et 'galeries'." (Perrouse, 1914, 400)

It is the accuracy of such a description and by implication the gens hypothesis outlined above, which is in question when one comes face to face with a gabelle de sel listing in which every individual feu is listed under each family head as a quite separate economic unit.

This registration provides a primary source for an assessment of the character of peasant society in Savoie in a period when population had reached its post-plague maximum (Jones, 1983). The 1561 gabelle was one of the first comprehensive and reliable population censuses of any European state. Each record

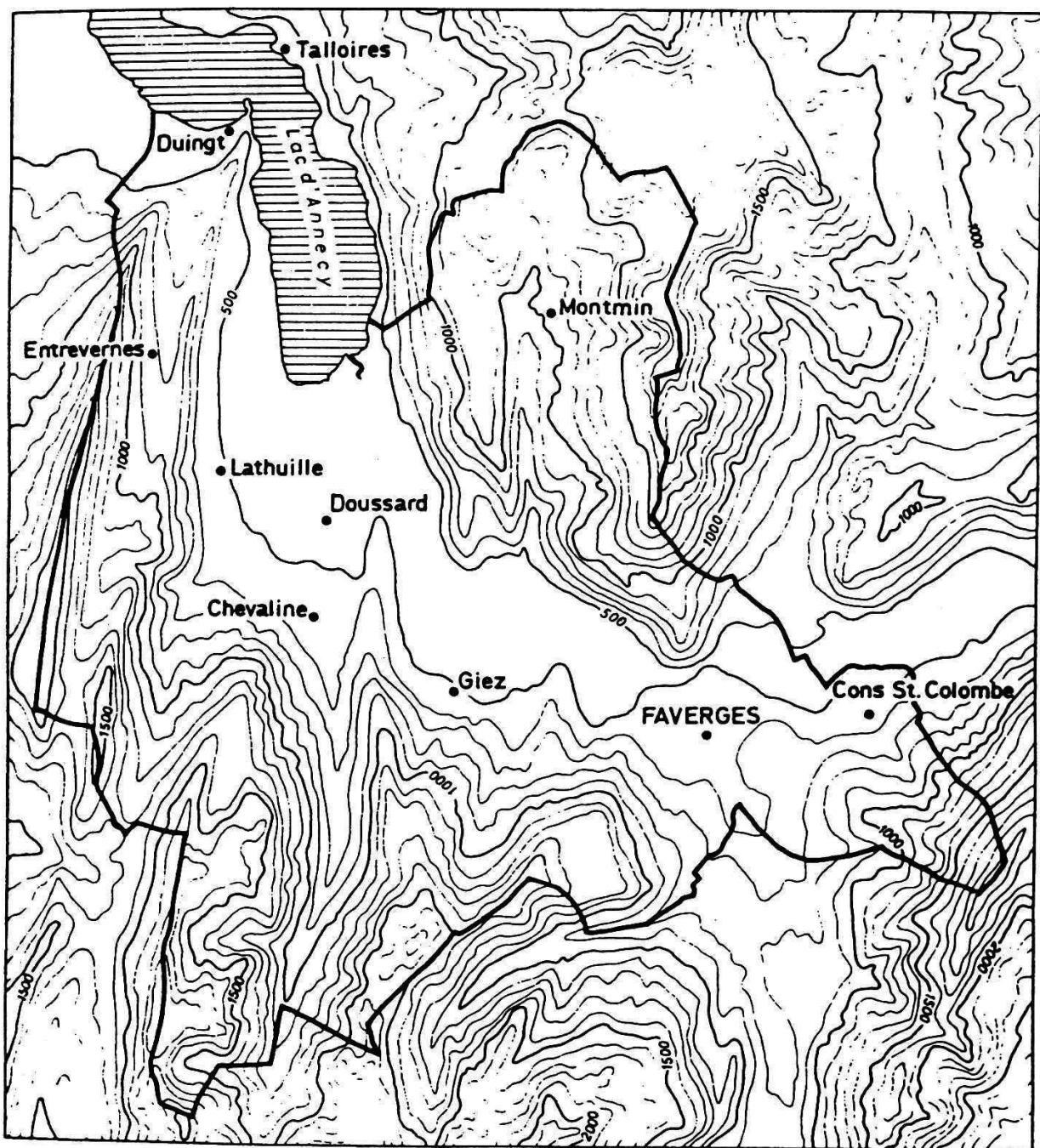


Figure 1

provides an identification of the head of the household and his lineage: a listing family by family of all members of each 'household' and their inter relationships; the children under the age of five years (who were exempted from the tax); an indication as to the status of the family by occupation and whether or not it was too poor to be taxed; the kind and number of their animals taking salt (horses, oxen, bulls, cows, heifers, steers, calves, rams, ewes, lambs, goats and kids).

Registers have been transcribed for seven parishes of the Annecy Lake Basin (Fig. 1) but here we focus on two upland (Montmin and Entrevernes) and two lowland parishes (Giez and Lathuille). Indices were derived to allow some assessment of the correlation between the sizes of individual feu and their animal wealth. Titow (1966) provides an index based on bovine animals or livestock units (LU) and Slicher van Bath (1963) gives a slightly more refined index based on a wider range of stock or animal units (AU). To these a third measure of labour based on standard man days per animal unit (SMD) is drawn from Franklin (1969). Against these alternative indices one can range first the crude numerical strength of the family taxation unit, or alternatively an estimation of its labour capacity in standard labour units (SLU). Here Franklin has drawn on Chayanov to assess the man-power of the unit in terms of age and sex. A male or female of more than 19 years is maximised and the index is then adjusted to the age of the younger offspring<sup>2</sup>. The recording of the ages of the youngest children (under 5) allowed some fair estimation of the stage in the domestic cycle when related to number and age of children and the norms of birth-spacing and child mortality at this time (Jones, 1984). A sample of these calculations is presented in Table 1.

First it is necessary to establish as closely as possible that the number and type of animals can be regarded as an accurate measure of relative wealth in these communities. Empirical

## 1561 Gabelle de sel - Montmin

ILLARD

Family Name	House- hold type	No in Hse	Laslett Class	Adult Child Ratio	Est. S.L.V.	V	Mg	A N I M A L S			C	G	8	Estimated S.M.D (animals)
								Mz	Ve	C				
94 Rogre	F	3	3a	-	2.6	2		1					4	25.3
95 Rogre	Fr	9	4c--5d	.67	5.1	4	1	2	1				10	58.0
96 Chevil	Fe	2	2a	-	1.6	-	-				3		2	16.4
97 Brachet	F/Fr	14	5d	.71	8.0	8	2	3	1				22	112.4
98 Arthens	Fr/Fe	6	4c	-	5.2	2	1	1	1				8	34.1
99 Quidset	Fr	8	4c	.63	5.7			1	1				1+4	8.5
100 Vassal	F	4	3b	.50	2.8	1		1	1				4	17.8
101 du Noyer	Fe	3	3d	-	2.6	2		2					7	29.9
102 Vausellin	F	4	3b	.50	1.5	1	1		1				3	18.1
103 Vausellin	F	8	3b	.75	3.1		1		1				4	8.8
104 Vausellin	Fe	4	3b	.50	1.4	1							4	12.8
105 Vausellin	Fe	4	3b	.50	1.4			1					2	4.9
106 Vausellin	F	3	3b	.33	2.8	2				1			3	27.1
107 Vausellin	Fe	3	3b	.33	1.4		1		1				3	8.1
108 Vausellin	Fe	7	3b	.71	2.3	1	2	1					6	23.7
109 Vausellin	Fe	8	3b	.75	2.3	1							3	12.1
110 Arthens	Fe	7	5e	.57	3.8	5	2	1	1				3	64.1
<b>Totals</b>			<b>97</b>		<b>53.6</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>			<b>93</b>	

LE BOIS

Family Name	House- hold type	No in Hse	Laslett Class	Adult Child Ratio	Est. S.L.V.	V	Mg	A N I M A L S			C	G	8	Estimated S.M.D (animals)
								Mz	Ve	C				
111 Lambert	Fe	6	5b	.50	2.4	2	4	1	-	-			8	42.1
112 Sussillion	Fe	8	4b	.60	3.3	2		1					5	26.0
113 Sussillion	F	5	3b	.60	3.8	2		1	1				6	29.2
114 Du Boys	Fe	4	3b	.50	2.6	3	2		1				6	43.7
115 Lambert	F	2	2a	-	1.8	1							2	11.4
116 Valet	Fr	7	5d	.25	4.0	3		1	1				9	41.3
117 Valet	Fr	9	5d	.67	4.4	3	1	1					5	39.5
118 Valet	Fe	4	3b	.50	1.5	1	1						2	14.9
119 Valet	F	6	4c	.67	2.5	2	1						3+1	26.3
120 Lambert	F	3	3b	.33	2.3	1		1					4	15.3
121 Du Boys	F	7	3b	.71	2.3	2	3		1				5	36.5
122 Sussillion	F	6	3b	.67	2.1	2	1		1				5	29.5
123 Sussillion	F	3	4c	-	2.8	1	1		1				6	19.2
124 Ragre	Fe	7	4c	.57	4.4	5	2	2	1	4			6	88.7
125 Pwehan	F	3	4a	.33	1.4	1		1					1	13.2
126 Sussillion	F	5	3b	.60	1.5	2							4	22.8
127 Rogre	F	3	3e	.33	2.3	2		1						22.5
128 Sussillion	F	4	5b	.25	3.6	2			1				6	26.7
129 Sussillion	Fr/FE	10	5d	.60	3.8	4	5	1	1				10	72.0
130 Brachet	Fe	3	3b	.33	1.4	2			1				6	26.7
131 Valet	Fe	4	3d	.75	1.7	1	1	2	1				6	25.2
<b>Totals</b>		<b>106</b>			<b>55.0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>			<b>106</b>	<b>672.7</b>

Household type	Standard Man Days (SMD)			Standard Labour Units		
	V = Vache	= 10.0 = cow		Age	6 - 8	= 0.1
Fe = 'fils de fue'	Mg = Mogre	= 3.5 = steer			9 - 12	= 0.3
F = Famille de	Mz = Mozon	= 3.5 = heifffer			12 - 15	= 0.5
Fr = Frereche	Ve = Veau	= 2.5 = (veal) calf			16 - 20	= 0.8
	C1 = Chevre	= 5.0 = goat			19 +	= 0.9
	C2 = Chevroot	= 2.0 = kids				
	B = Brebis	= 0.7 = sheep				

Table 1

evidence certainly suggests that there is such a relationship and Savoyard historians have been happy to identify peasant 'classes' using bovine animals as an index of wealth (Devos, 1979). Correlation co-efficients were calculated to establish the relationship between size of taxation unit (feu) and animal units, livestock units and standard man day equivalents for the two mountain and two lowland parishes. These were then accumulated to each 'family name' group. Although slightly lower in the lowland parishes (Lathuille and Giez) than the mountain parishes (Montmin and Entrevernes), the correlation between crude family size whether presented by feu or by what we may assume to be gens were significant at over 99.9 % (Table 2) and crude family size reflects the nature of a largely subsistent society where the number of animals was also closely related to the land available for forage crops to sustain flocks through a long winter of stall-feeding. In this period of maximum population it seems likely that maximum stocking rates were maintained and that there is therefore a close correlation between animals and the total land area available for each family. Wealth in animals can therefore reasonably be taken for wealth in land - especially in a society where almost every fraction of the ecosystem was allocated to private use, and 'community' rough pastures were of relatively minor significance. Given this high degree of association it is possible to approach the question of social stratification with more assurance.

Lorenz curves, the product of cumulative frequency percentages, will indicate a level of deviation from a straight line of perfect equality. If the (feu) taxation units of the documents are taken at face value the curves produced for each parish in the study area approximate very closely to a straight line, much more closely than any other of the (admittedly rather few) comparable studies (McGuire and Netting, 1982).

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Product moment correlation co-efficient for wealth in livestock and family size for (i) gens and (ii) feu

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A.U. = Annual units (Titow op.cit.)      Land  
 1 Bovine or equine unit      =      1.0      Area of land necessary to support  
 1 Sheep or goat      =      0.25      L.U.s (Slicher van Bath. op.cit.)

L.U. = Livestock Units (Slicher van Bath op.cit)

1 full grown bovine	=	10
1 heiffer/steer	=	3.5
1 horse	=	6.6
sheep/goat	=	1.0

S.M.D.

see Table 1

	(i)AU	LU	SMD	LAND	(ii)AU	LU	SMD	LAND
Montmin	.918	.899	.890	.904	.630	.582	.574	.615
Entreverne	.890	.901	.880	.896	.592	.659	.616	.627
Giez	.919	.889	.917	.896	.749	.722	.704	.734
Lathuille	.702	.747	.693	.736	.766	.778	.779	.746

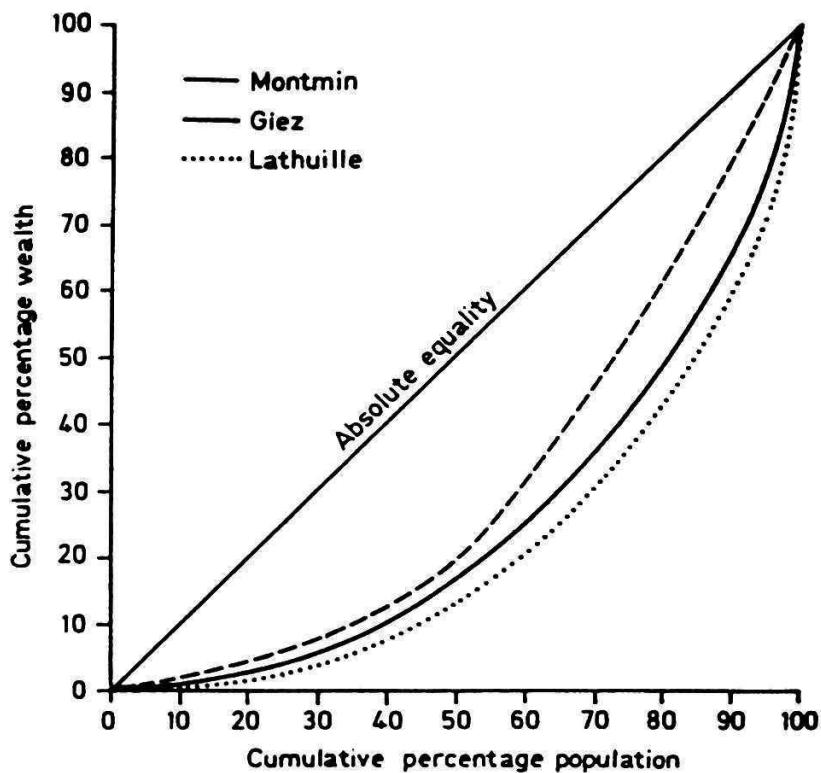
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Table 2

On this evidence Savoyard peasants were either much more equal than any other society so far analysed in this way or the taxation census document is totally misleading. It is appropriate, therefore, to the alternative hypothesis that families were living and working in very close proximity to their immediate kinsmen and likely to be combining their economic strengths (and shielding the weaker feu in their gens). What is more, the names of each parish appear to be highly spatially discrete<sup>3</sup>. At this date each parish was already characterized by its own gens who do not yet appear in many neighbouring parishes. It seems legitimate therefore to group the entries together in gens for the purpose of comparative analysis.

Having made this adjustment the effect on the cumulative

RELATIVE ECONOMIC STRATIFICATION  
UPLAND AND LOWLAND PARISHES, 1561



RELATIVE ECONOMIC STRATIFICATION  
MONTMIN, 1561-1730

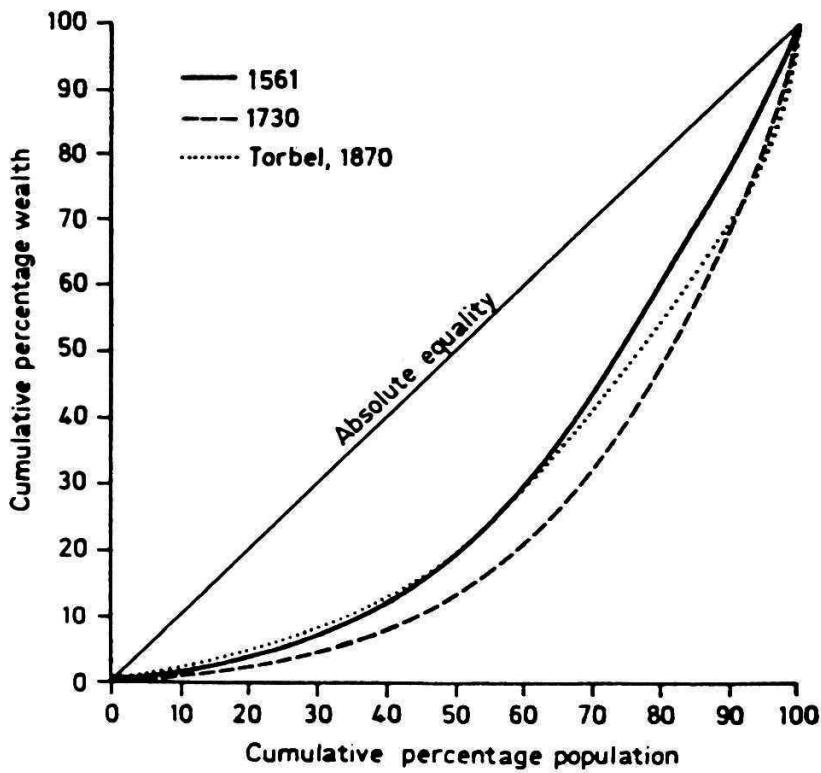


Figure 2

frequency distributions is marked (Fig. 2). Although stratification is still low, comparing well with similarly stratified societies for which data has been analysed, it is a good deal higher than 'household' analysis would suggest. After this it comes as no surprise to note that the rank ordering by family-name identifies in the top quartile all the main gens whose lineages survive to the present day (Table 3, and Jones, 1984).

Table 3: Montmin Gens Ranking by Wealth, 1561 and 1730

<u>1561</u>	<u>1730</u>
1. Maniglier	1. Rulland
2. Rulland	2. Brachet
3. Brachet	3. Maniglier
4. Suscillon	4. Suscillon
5. Vausselin	5. Valet
6. Valet	6. Coutin
7. Coutin	7. Gardier
8. Dunoyer	8. Comte
9. Poncet	9. Dunoyer
10. Rogre	10. Barril
11. Gardier	11. Aretan
12. Raghire	12. Vausselin
13. Collomb (Comte)	13. Neyret
14. Arethans	14. Beruard
15. Favre	15. Vertier
16. Peron	16. Frachard
17. Adoomir	17. Grandis
18. Chevour	18. Peron
19. Lambert	19. Poncet
20. Pujehun	20. Chevour
21. Dubois	
22. Bulgare	
23. Raume	
24. Vassal	
25. Alayx	
26. Gurom	

From this evidence, we can begin to assert with growing confidence that there was a much higher level of economic and social co-operation between members of the gens than the taxation census at first reveals. Further evidence in support of this argument is provided by carrying out two further correlations. If instead of taking the crude figure of population per feu and per gens we identify the Standard Labour Units available to each unit, the proposition outlined above comes into sharper relief. Spearman rank correlation indices for samples from each parish population reveal extremely low correlations between number of animals and the labour units apparently available for their management and by implication the cultivation and management of the land on which they depend. If the evidence of the documents is taken at face value (by feu) there is no significant relationship at all between the labour and land. As soon as the individual feu are accumulated into 'family name' gens, however, correlations are highly significant (Table 4).

Table 4: Spearman Rank Correlations

	ii)feu	iii)gens
Montmin	.31	.96
Entreverne	.26	.88
Giez	.60	.84
Lathuille	.77	.79

Co-efficients - (Standard man Days (Animals)  
and Standard Labour Units) 1961

- i) feu = insignificant correlation (at less than 90 %)
- ii) gens = Significant correlation at 99 % and above

### Social Stratification and 'Gens' formation in the mid Eighteenth Century

Between 1561 and the land tax registration of 1730, population declined and niches were opened in the human ecology of peasant Savoie (Jones, 1984). It is reasonable to expect that there would be a level of social mobility during this period. What is revealed is that the downward mobility of some gens, which is certainly apparent, is marked not by the emergence of new demographically (and economically) significant lineages, but by consolidation of the leading families first in their core settlements and their extension to fill the gaps in neighbouring communities (Table 3).

The great cadastral registrations of the eighteenth century, the Cadastre Sarde (1730) produced a tax on each parcel of land in the kingdom of Savoie to replace the salt tax as the basis for the abstraction of surplus. The full history of this monumental exercise, which was eventually to form the template for the French cadastres of the nineteenth century, is still to be written (Bruchet 1906; Guichonnet, 1955; Vayssierre, 1981). What is certain is that if the 1561 registration provides a baseline for measuring social stratification at the high point of rural population settlement, then the cadastre gives a clear indication of conditions in a period when the plagues of the seventeenth century and the ravages of the Little Ice Age had complemented the impact of foreign occupation and a rising tide of worker migrants to give this area its lowest resident population, a situation from which it did not recover until the nineteenth century.

The fine grading of land (in three categories for each land use class) and precise indication of use, yields and ownership, gives a clear picture of peasant wealth in any commune of the kingdom.

A listing of the total size of holdings by family name gens gives an opportunity to compare the extent of stratification

with that of 1561 (Table 3). For Montmin there is certainly some evidence of social and economic mobility in the disappearance (Rogre, Adoormir, Ragmire) or virtual elimination (Poncets and Chevanas) of some gens who were well established in 1561 and the appearance of three new families (the Berruards, Neyrets and Barrils). The Lorenz curve shows that there has been further movement towards some form of stratification (Fig. 2) with a significant proportion of commune land already in the hands of the ten long surviving gens who were well established in 1561 and have dominated the commune's subsequent demographic and social history. It would seem that the decline in population had created niches which were filled by stronger, long surviving gens, whether based in Montmin or elsewhere in neighbouring lowland communes. In 1561 the long surviving gens whose names appear in the commune records for the four hundred years, controlled 51 % of the subsistence wealth of the parish. By 1730 this had risen to 79 %.

It is also clear that new opportunities for widening the economic base of the communities had been taken. Younger sons served in foreign regiments, travelled as peddlars and street traders and eventually as merchants and shopkeepers in the growing towns of Lyon and Paris<sup>4</sup>. Inventories and dowry listings<sup>5</sup> show the extent of the penetration of the market economy even at a time when the rural way of life had otherwise changed very little. The evidence for the mechanisms by which this developing consolidation of the strongest gens took place is only to be found in the detailed documentary record. Attention is therefore directed to the ways in which the ménages and patrilines of the successful gens managed their affairs - to the structure and strategy of accumulation, co-operation and transmission of property and rights. Through the day books of land transaction (journaliers) and the notarial tabellions one could measure the transmission of wealth in a wide variety of inter-vivos and post-mortem arrangements from 1730 until the present day. Clearly the labour of such a task would be enormous even for the eighteenth century. Here we concentrate

on the six decades covered by the cadastre and journaliers of the village of Montmin, a large upland commune with five constituent villages, east of Lake Annecy (Fig. 3).

Family Household, ménage, lignage and gens in Montmin 1730-1790

The cadastre sarde records not only the lands but the owners of each house and building in the villages of the community. Parish registers give an opportunity to people the houses. The journaliers of the cadastral record identify the daily land transactions. These are sometimes repeated in the tabellions of the notary, who also meticulously copied out practically every other social contract and economic dealing worthy of the name. Together they help us to fill out a picture of social and economic life and to assess the significance of compromises between the independence of the family (at 'nuclear' 'joint' or 'stem' stages) and the security and obligations of membership of a lineage set and a gens, often with more than thirty members<sup>6</sup>. Through these documents it is possible to establish the structures of flexible 'impartible partibility' which embraces both the need to maintain an undivided inheritance for as long as possible with the need to cater for ambition for self fulfilment. It was through the mechanism of notarial record that co-residence (or virtual co-residence) and 'shared' ownership actually worked, in circumstances where elsewhere, it has often been argued, dissent and sub-division usually produced fission.

The vast size of the notarial registers and the journaliers of the cadastre are a testimony to the complex and subtle social, economic and spatial ingenuity of this open system of management, in which each small parcel was graded for land use and then for quality. Above all this was a system of sensitive complexity. First, land holding was not restricted to an autocratic patriarch. A father may hold the reins of the patrimony when important decisions were made but land was held by other individuals in their own right and most frequently it

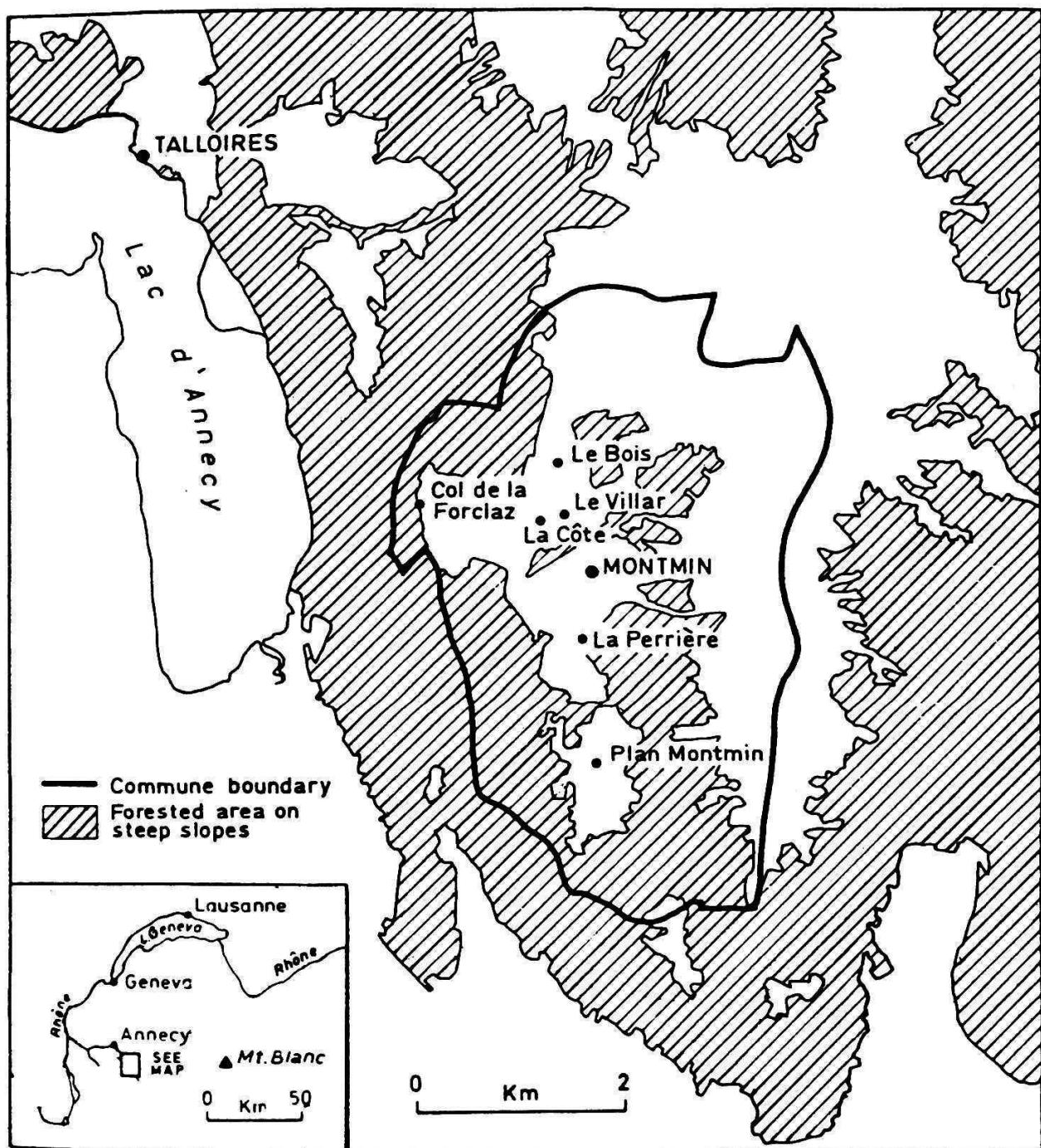


Figure 3

was held as a member of differently constituted, but overlapping, sets of kinsmen. Brothers held land with brothers and with cousins; husbands 'shared' land with wives; sisters shared with brothers and sisters; uncles shared with nephews. At any time an individual may be a member of two or three overlapping sets as well as owning his own land. Secondly, there was an active market in land. Land parcels, owned either personally or collectively, could be sold, pledged, rented out, exchanged or, in some cases, used as a portion in a marriage alliance. In other words, land had a use value but it was also a valuable, almost fluid, capital asset to be traded as security like shares in a stock market<sup>7</sup>. Such activity was, possibly, carefully managed by the powerful agents of the gens - the chefs des familles whose main objective was to retain and build a patrimony, in circumstances where many transactions were hedged by cross currents of shared commitment (Cholley, 1925). The notarial records indicate the strength of the written bond which allowed their wishes to be carried through two or more generations by testaments and declarations<sup>8</sup>.

In these circumstances a chef had a broad responsibility to organise the joint work of the unit, to take a major role in legal transactions - the sale, purchase or exchange of property and goods, the paying of taxes the settling of disputes and decisions regarding broader family strategies. As far as possible he would attempt by these strategies to accumulate and spatially rationalise land holdings so that the land of the patrimony was in as good or better shape at the end of his stewardship as it was at the beginning. He would also try to ensure that the debts and obligations which tied his family to others, through loans, marriage contracts and rental arrangements, were balanced by equivalent bonds which tied other families to his own<sup>8</sup>. This set of longer term bonds provide insurance policies of obligation which often extended over half a century or more (Appendix 2). What is more, he would employ a notary to record his transactions, certainly on every

occasion which could involve the patrimony. Copies of these agreements were usually stored in a deed box with a key which was kept by the chef and provided valuable evidence if an inventory of the property was made necessary by a sudden death (Appendix 2). Obviously the main aim of the chef de famille in Savoy was to pass on an inheritance to his heirs and to secure the marriages of his daughters, but one feature which emerges from study of transmission arrangements is that, except in particular circumstances, patrimony is inherited indivis. This rule applies whether the chef died intestate or not. In most cases the testaments merely make for a tidy transmission where there was likely to be any doubt and to ensure the rights of women (the pension of a wife and the dots for daughters or granddaughters)<sup>9</sup>. It was in this way that women inherited property which they were able either to amalgamate with their husbands' lands<sup>10</sup> or to pass on to sons or daughters<sup>11</sup> or in some cases to sisters<sup>12</sup> in their own right.

Frequently the chef was literate, at least to the extent of being able to sign a name at the end of registrations in the journalier<sup>13</sup>, the organiser of siblings who may set off to seek their fortune in Lyon or Paris, promising to make provision for the household from their wages<sup>14</sup>. If there is some liquid capital, from sale of land or produce or from dowries and legacies, a brother may join the church<sup>15</sup>. If daughters predominate or inherit exclusively then they will use their land as a means of acquiring a husband. Often, however, even after this process two or sometimes three brothers were left to manage their affairs together and to decide who could marry and have the chance of carrying forward the main patrimony.

As a means of avoiding or ameliorating this situation chefs de famille sometimes made wills specifying heirs in a kind of modified preciput. Here the attempt was made to favour one heir by allocating half the patrimony to him with the rest to remain indivis between other sons. There were a number of variants of this. Sometimes an uncle may favour a nephew

rather than his siblings<sup>16</sup>. In some cases cousins were involved in complicated arrangements which allowed the least subdivision of property<sup>17</sup>. On occasions a grandfather will identify a grandson for preciput share<sup>18</sup> and thereby prevent serious subdivision for two further generations.

Women and their brothers-in-law often played an important part in delaying or avoiding partition between heirs often for three or more generations even for a family which was growing rapidly. Often a chef died before his heirs were old enough to coinherit. The surviving wife was almost invariably appointed as guardian (tutrice)<sup>19</sup>. She managed the economy, buying and selling land and stock on behalf of her offspring until they were old enough to take over responsibility. Sometimes she managed the undivided inheritance of her husband with her brother-in-law, sometimes he took over some of the functions of guardian for a period of time<sup>20</sup>. This of course was particularly important if minors were left without both parents.

I have argued above that the open land-market meant that, at one and the same time, a chef might hold some land which he inherited conjointly with his brothers or cousins and some land which had come to him in his own right - through inheritance, through marriage or through purchase<sup>21</sup>. There is a strong sense that in the complicated circumstances when land was officially divided, there was often a putative rather than real division. Perhaps the agreement merely specified the fraction of the estate which, though it may continue to be managed conjointly by uncles, brothers and cousins, could, if necessary and after consultations, be traded by the owner specified in the partage agreement? If this is so then partage merely indicated the interest which others had in this arrangement if it actually takes place. It was above all a commitment to consultation<sup>22</sup>.

By far the most compelling indication of this mode of operation is the very few partages which were registered and the

fewer still which were clearly 'non-amiable'<sup>22</sup>. Many families thus managed by these various mechanisms, to avoid partages for long periods. Frequently they were deferred until the moment when cousins were not bonded by a surviving uncle or when the uncle decided it was right to allow the nephews the independent status which marriage conferred. Demographic accidents and the careful management of marriage opportunities combined to make these complicated and notarially expensive events relatively rare. For the seven villages and hamlets of the commune of Montmin with (at any one time) approximately 80 chefs maintaining 'households' within sets of co-inheriting relatives, there were 177 transmission agreements recorded in the journalier between 1738 and 1792. 68 (38 %) identify a single heir as either chef of co-inheriting siblings or as the only surviving heir, 58 (33 %) are recorded as divided inheritances between siblings, cousins or uncles and nephews. 10 (6 %) are widows acting as guardians (tutrices) for minors who inherit indivis. Of the 4500 individual entries in the journalier in this period only 41 (less than 1 %) record partages agreements. Of these 19 (71 %) represent partitions between cousins or between uncles, nephews and cousins. Only 9% take place between brothers and the remaining 6 % were the produce of uterine successions.

#### Towards a typology of inheritance

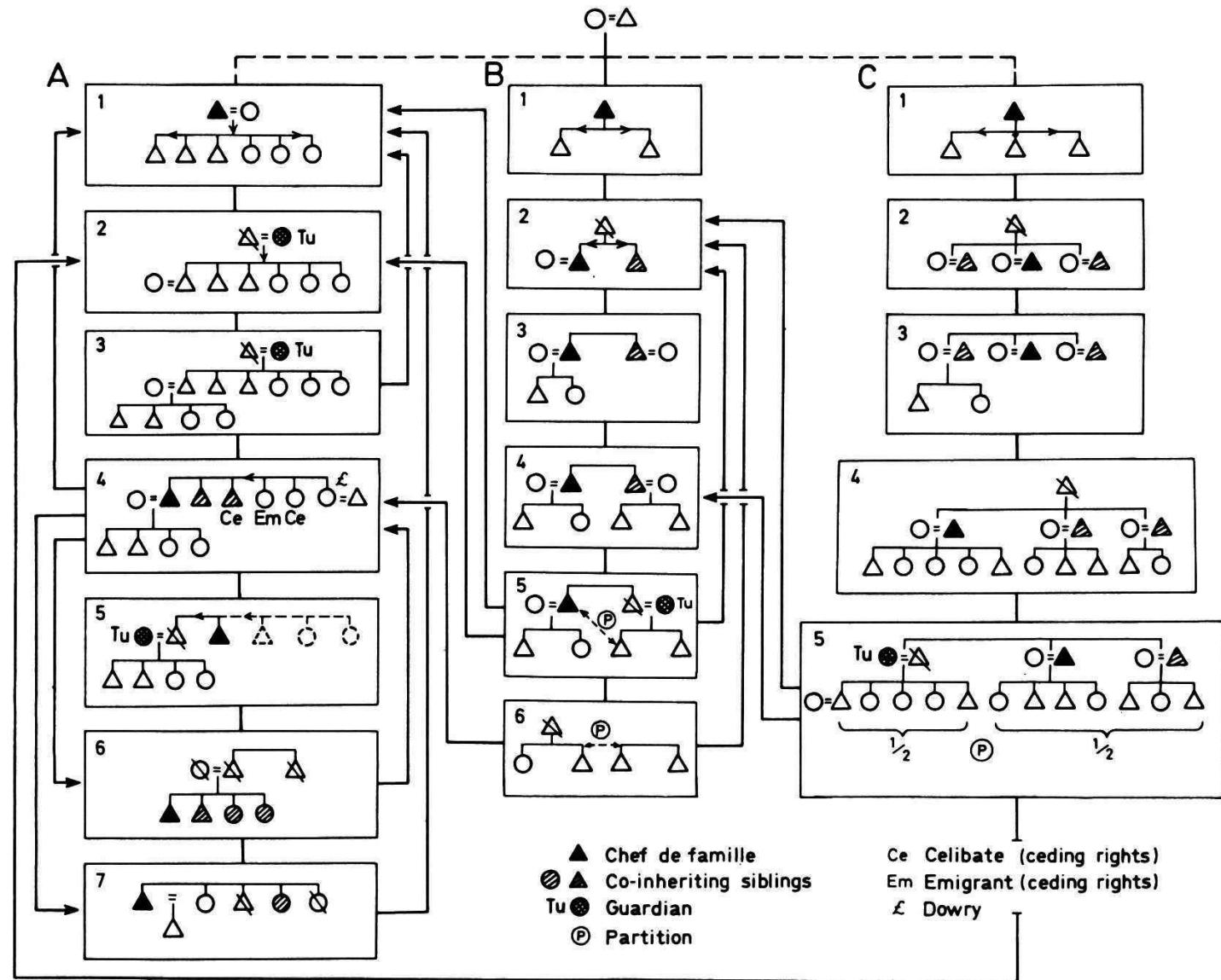
What conclusions can one draw from this evidence? In general it seems that there are three main transmission sequences and that these are all based on the principle of delayed or putative partition, the produce of careful management of economic, social and political resources. Broadly these sequences are defined by the interactive variables of family fertility and land availability. These parameters varied over time for families and the community as a whole and over space between families according to previous success in developing a resource base through judicious marriages, land purchases and exchanges. As far as possible families seem to have provided themselves with inheritance structures which corresponded to

Figure 4

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# SAVOYARD INHERITANCE STRATEGIES

## IDEALISED TRANSMISSION PROCESSES IN THREE GENERATION CYCLES



the wealth and status of their lineage in the community and that these structures remained relatively constant over a long period.

For the purposes of deriving a viable typology of these complex processes (Fig. 4) we 'break into' the cycle of a putative wealthy peasant family with three co-inheriting sons (A, B and C). Inter-relative links between this family and others in the segmentary lineage are not pursued; nor are the possible links between the cousins of the cohorts identified in the diagram. Its main purpose is to allow us to follow the progressions of inheritance strategy as they commonly appear in the documentary sources.

From inspection of the diagram it will be evident that each sequence represents a strategy reflecting differing levels of opportunity for unilineal, bilineal or trilineal development depending on the relative economic strength of the family or on its fertility or both. Events in each cycle are traced through a period of approximately seventy to a hundred years, picking out decennial stages (1-7) and allowing for feedback which prolongs the cycle in the direction of uni-lineal succession - the most frequent produce of long term transmission.

Uni-lineal successions (Type A) occur in circumstances where there was land for only a single heir to marry and reproduce or where only male survived to adulthood. The role of the widow as tutrice (guardian) was often crucial in this succession, especially when the family was large and decisions must be made about the roles of un-married co-inheriting siblings. Three strategies were employed. Some remained as celibates in the same household (A2-3), where they continued to contribute to farm economy. Some emigrated (A4) usually to either Lyon or Paris to earn and perhaps to remit from their urban wages to increase the family wealth, perhaps allowing further siblings to marry as well. Technically a family might maintain an uni-lineal steady state with progression to earlier or later

stages in the model. But wise land purchases and good marriages with remitted earnings could enable a family to move from uni-lineal to bi-lineal succession (B1-6).

In the sequence developed in the model, son B allows both his sons to marry (B2-3) and it must be assumed that there was enough land and stock for this to take place. It must have been the aim of all chefs and tutrices to do this. For this structure provided the security for an individual family of having two inter-dependent cohorts of cousins and the possibility of developing an intricate network of obligations and ties of co-ownership (B5-6), which could be further extended by reciprocal marriage alliances between lineages<sup>23</sup>. If this was not the case the structure would revert to an uni-lineal cycle at B5-6. The richest lineages managed to maintain as many as three or sometimes four marriages within a male sibling set, though this state was naturally the least stable both demographically and economically and the tri-lineal sequence identified here is thus characterised (C1-5) with the potential for movement into the bi-lineal or uni-lineal succession as common outcome as soon as the tri-lineal stage is formed (C5). It will be clear from the diagram that the flexibility of such a model is implied. Families respond to changing fortunes by moving from one strategy to another to avoid the ultimate damage of a fragmented inheritance or to increase the options for successful increase in the lineage. It may also be evident that these are arrangements which lie on the surface of inheritance process.

#### The mechanism of transmission: individual lineages

Beneath this level is an intricate pattern of behaviour which only detailed examination of individual lineages within a gens can reveal. Any attempt to use single records to break into the continuities of such a system is like taking a sample of running in order to assess the properties of a stream. Yet only the strategies of individual families can illuminate the way in which transmission allowed the development of patrimony

## SUSCILLON - FIVE MÉNAGES, 1537-53

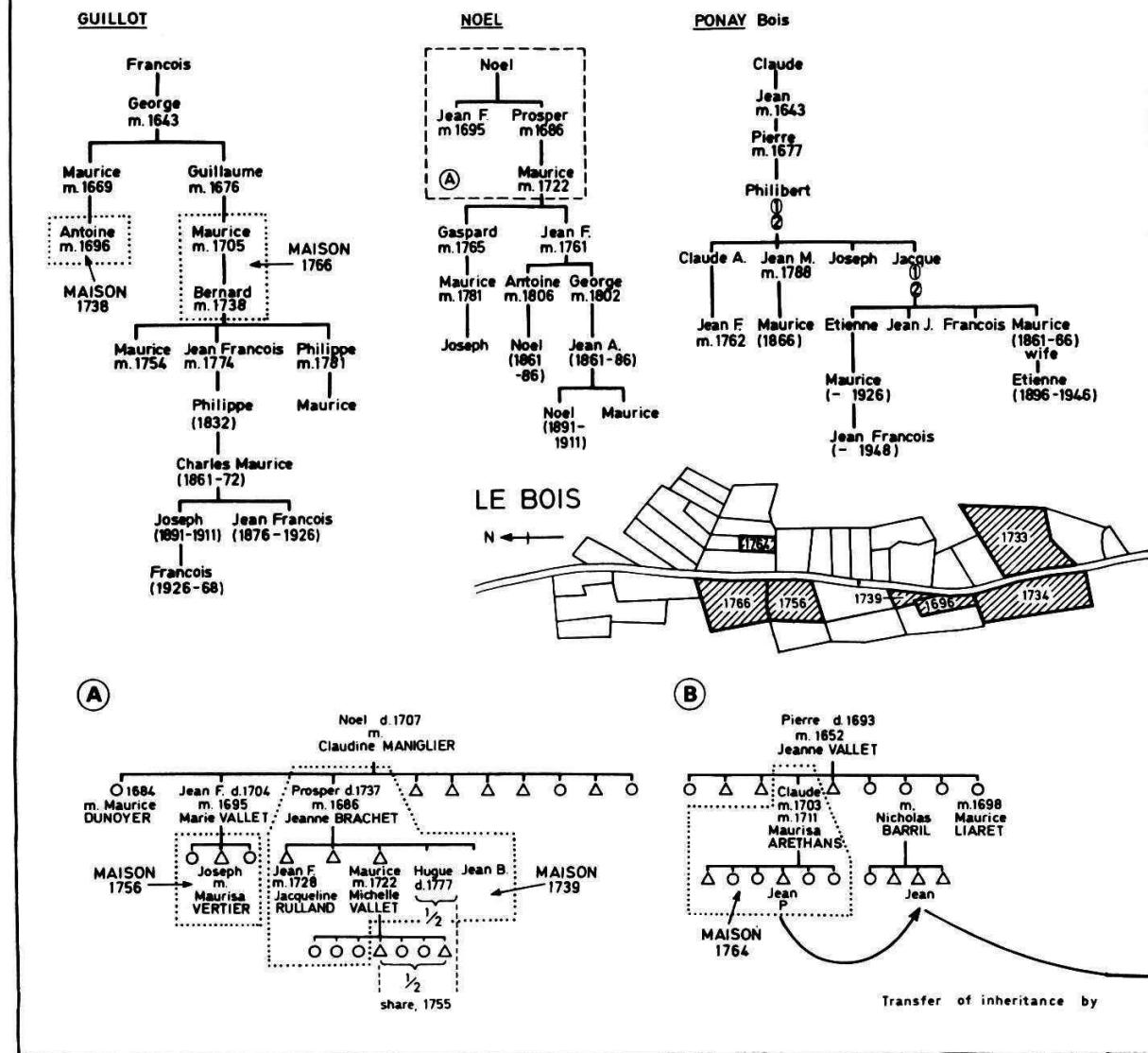
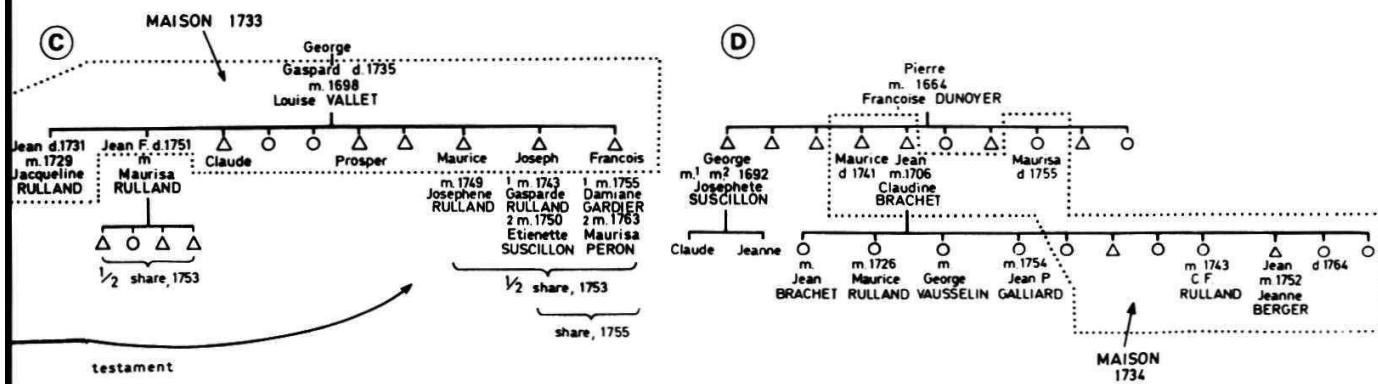
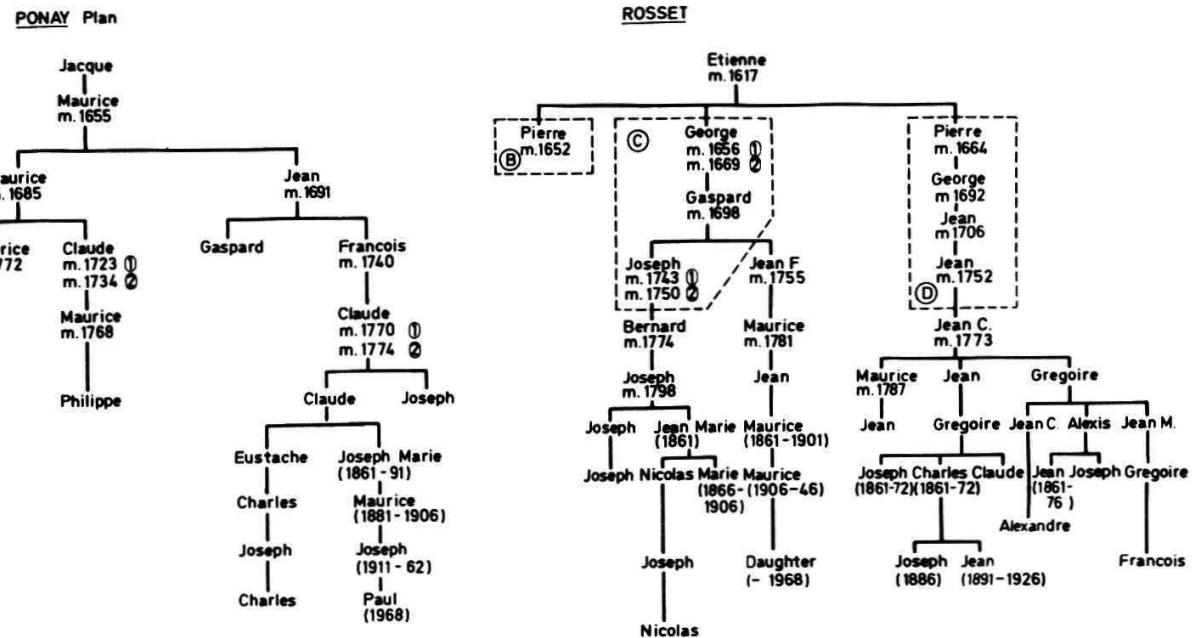


Figure 5



and the contribution that these strategies made to lineage formation.

The Suscillions represent one of the oldest 'settler' families in Montmin. They are one of the two main interlocked, continuous and spatially discrete lignages which developed in the hamlets of Le Bois, Villard and La Cote in the commune of Montmin.

The family was well established in these settlements in the fourteenth century and in 1561 they comprised six 'households' in the census return of the gabelle de sel<sup>24</sup> (Table 1). Their collective wealth in animals at this time placed them third in rank order of the ten well defined continuous lineages in the Montmin settlements. In the cadastral registration of 1732 their lands consisted in 73 hectares, which constituted 9.2 % of the total area of privately owned land in the commune as a whole. At this time the Suscillions occupied eight houses and parish registers reveal that there were five main strands in the family (Fig. 5). Family reconstitution (Jones, 1984) adds substance to these listings and allows us to people the houses listed in the document under the names of chefs.

Labour unit accumulations (making due allowance for mortality and migrations) clearly demonstrate how different this social and economic system is when compared with those of Chayanov's formulation and from any subsequent reworking of this principle to fit other economies which assume the departure of the eldest children at the age of nineteen. There is every indication here of a relationship between successful lineage development and economic viability.

It would be tedious to present an analysis of all the complicated structural developments re-constructed from parish registers and the cadastral documents for each branch of this lineage (see Appendix 3). For the purpose of illuminating the processes involved, attention is directed only to two lineages

- the 'François' lineage occupying house numbers 1738, 1739, 1756 in the Cadastre de Montmin and the 'Rosset' lineage in houses 1732, 1733, 1734 (Figs. 6 & 7).

#### Prosper and Hugue Suscillion (1680-1768)

When Prosper made his will in 1722 he left clear instructions that the four sons present in the commune at this time (Jean François, Maurice, Hugue and Jean Baptiste) "ne pourrant pré-céder à partages" and that any one wishing to do so should cede his portion to the others<sup>25</sup>. Two sons married before his death in 1737 (Stage B3 in the model). However, only one married son and one unmarried son remained in the household to share the patrimony, (A4) Maurice (who married) and Hugue (who remained single), both subsequently noted in the journalier as Prosper's sole co-inheriteurs<sup>26</sup>. Maurice married Michelle Valet in 1722 and had seven children two of whom were sons (Jean François and Gaspard) who were nine years and one month respectively in 1741 when their father suddenly died. Michelle Valet-Suscillion was appointed legal guardian of her two co-inheriting sons<sup>27</sup> who now shared the undivided patrimony with their surviving uncle Hugue (Stage A5). Before further development in the patrimonial cycle could take place, even though inheritance was to follow normal practice of remaining technically undivided, an assessment of the property was deemed necessary. This full inventory of the house, its fixed and moveable assets and its lands and its animals provides a principal starting point for a full re-construction of the fortunes of the family, aided by the carefully listed contents of a deed box containing well over a hundred legal papers following the family fortunes through the previous hundred years (Appendix 2).

Through this listing we can see Prosper marrying and acquiring land to develop his patrimony; building his domain by careful management of sales and purchases and cessions and loans and property both in Montmin and (for his vineyards) in the neighbouring lowland communes; acquiring property from the monastic

house Talloire (1692 and 1710); buying up land of those who were leaving the commune; transacting business with his neighbours and in local market towns and most significantly making a putative partage arrangement with his nephew Joseph in 1725. From the listing of his lands and the nature of his property we have a clear picture of the inheritance Prosper left to Maurice and his brother Hugue. After years of careful management the total estate contained 43.25 journals de Savoie (13.01 hectares) representing 18 % of the land held by Suscillions of Montmin (248.75 journals de Savoie = 73.3 hectares).

From the extremely detailed inventory of his goods (Appendix 2) it is also clear that Maurice Suscillion had skills as a carpenter to supplement his living as a peasant land owner; that significantly he had something more than basic skills in literacy; that his dwelling (No. 1739) contained a large kitchen-dwelling room, a main kitchen-bedroom (poêle) with two beds, two further rooms above the kitchen where Hugue, his brother had his bed and where a 'servant' (Maurisa Vallet) also had her bed. Above the poêle was to be found the family food store and the tools of Maurice Suscillion's trade. In a stable 'several paces from the dwelling' are to be found a brood mare, 6 milk cows and a heiffer, two young oxen and five sheep. The stores of food in the house and the wine in the cellar near the jointly held vineyards in Montbogon, three kilometres away in the valley, give a clear indication of a satisfactory subsistence with surplus to spend on a few luxuries (two pistols and a few books).

Although a full analysis of inventories is still in progress, comparison suggests that this was in fact taken on its own and this might be regarded as a moderately aisé peasant family with a little room for luxury. Nevertheless, if this branch of patrimony was to be maintained at its present level it seemed to demand a strategy of fertility curtailment. In fact, Hugue remained single. Maurice had two sons, Jean François and Gaspard and when he died in 1741 Hugue took over technical

Figure 6

## FRANCOIS SUSCILLION

NAME	HOUSE	AGE	CHAMP			SUB TOTAL			PRE			SUB TOTAL		SUB TOTAL		BOIS		BRUS-SAIL-		PATU-RAGE		SUB TEPPE		SUB TOTAL		TOTAL								
			1	2	3	1-3	1	2	3	1-3	CH+PR	1	2	3	1-3	CH+PR	1	2	3	1-3	CH+PR	1	2	3	1-3	CH+PR	1	2						
Prosper & Maurice	1739	66	Ha	.445	1.216	1.47	3.131	1.13	1.36	3.29	5.78	8.91	1.65	0.62	0.6	2.87	11.78																	
			Parcels	6	16	23	45	12	16	22	50	95	16	13	13	42	137	51.92%																
			X	.071	.076	.064	.070	.094	.085	.149	.116	.093	.103	.047	.145	.068	.085																	
Hugue	1739	26	Ha	.174	.205	0.87	1.24	0.76	0.46	0.71	1.93	3.17	.12	.20	.19	.051	3.68																	
			Parcels	3	5	13	21	1	2	7	10	31	3	8	5	16	47	16.21%																
			X	.156	.041	.066	.059	.076	.023	.010	.193	.102	.043	.025	.03	.032	.0.078																	
Joseph	1756	31	Ha	-	.517	.904	1.42	0.22	.482	1.41	2.11	3.53	.17	.28	.28	.0.73	4.26																	
			Parcels	-	8	13	21	4	6	12	22	43	2	2	2	6	49	18.78%																
			X	-	.064	.069	.068	.055	.080	.117	.0.096	.0.082	.087	.140	.140	.0.122	.086																	
Antoine	1738	31	Ha	.091	.562	.593	1.25	.040	.167	.996	1.20	2.45	.26	.178	.083	.0.52	2.97																	
			Parcels	2	6	7	15	1	4	9	14	29	3	2	2	7	36	13.09%																
			X	.045	.094	.084	.083	.04	.04	.112	.0.08	.084	.094	.089	.04	.074	.083																	
TOTAL			Ha	.71	2.50	3.83	7.04	2.15	2.46	6.41	11.02	18.06	2.20	1.28	1.15	4.63	22.69																	
Parcels				11	35	56	102	18	28	50	96	198	24	25	22	71	269	100%																
X				.065	.071	.068	.069	.119	.088	.130	.115	.091	.092	.05	.52	.065	.084																	

Figure 6

management of the estate<sup>28</sup>. This involved a number of deals to rationalise land holding with other branches of the Suscillion gens; with the consorts and coheriteurs of Jean François Suscillion, with Bernard and with Gaspard<sup>29</sup>. Finally, on the first day of 1768, a 'partage' was reported between Hugue and his two nephews, now aged thirty six and twenty seven<sup>30</sup>. It is possible to compare the estate at this date with the one inherited in 1741. In the allocation we can identify the significance of previous arrangements and exchanges with feu Gaspard's, whose property parcels are often shared with the feu Prosper Suscillions, via Joseph (the nephew of Prosper and the son of Gaspard). In effect this was an agreement to absorb the many parts of Prosper Suscillion's inheritance under the charge of the (literate) Jean François on behalf of his illiterate (younger?) brother. Despite two apparent partages (in 1725 and 1768) arrangements led to a situation in which we can observe lands which remained with some few rationalisations in the same lineage structure for over 100 years despite what appear to be two major 'rearrangements' of ownerships.

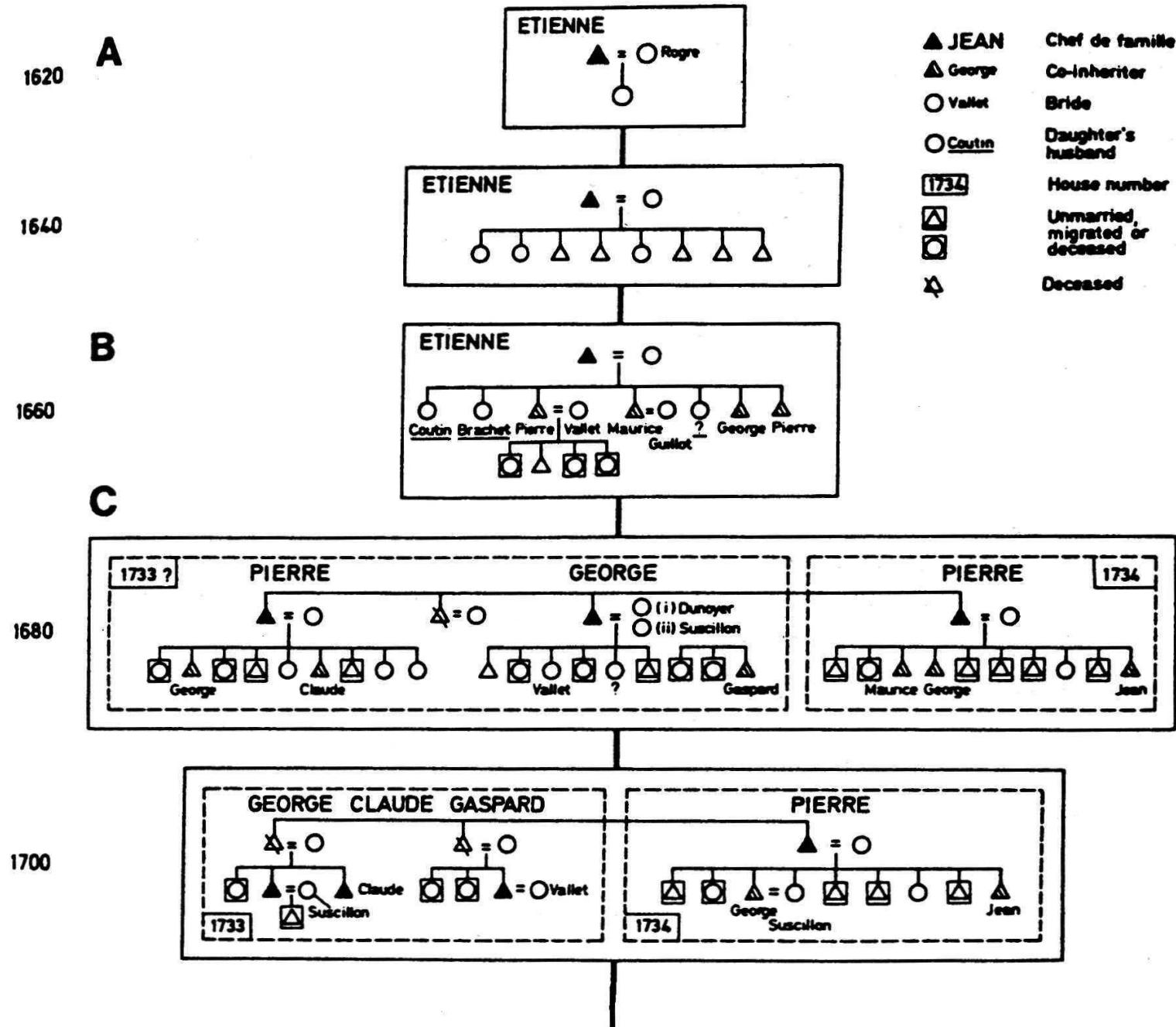
#### Gaspard ('Rosset') Suscillion (1675-1735)

Gaspard inherited his share of the Etienne 'Rosset' patrimony in 1698 when he married Louise Valet at the age of 12 (Fig. 7). Following the normal rules of inheritance, reviewed above, it is almost certain that this event promoted the partition of the tripartite inheritance (C in Fig. 3) which had linked his father with two uncles indivis. Like Prosper, his near neighbour and 'cousin', it is probable that Gaspard was left with the task of building his own patrimony. What is certain is that by the time of his death in 1735 he was able to leave almost enough land to allow his five sons to co-inherit indivis. In addition to the 10.94 (in 115 parcels) in Montmin he had acquired or maintained valuable vineyards in the commune of Faverges<sup>30</sup>. Comparison with other patrimonies with five inheriting sons (e.g. the Neyrets) would indicate that this would not be sufficient to allow all to set up as heads of household if they did so at the same time. Jean François (aged

30) and Prosper (29) were left in charge of three young brothers, Joseph (10), Maurice (8) and François (6) and a surviving sister Maurisa. A vigorous engagement in the landmarket by Jean François as head of household with eighteen transactions in the journalier de Montmin between 1736 and 1753<sup>31</sup> allowed the lineage to absorb significant proportions of the estates of declining families (the Aretans and Rogres) as well as inheriting the land of their cousin Jean Pierre - the grandson of Pierre (Fig. 7) who lived and eventually died in Paris in 1753. This increase in the patrimony allowed for the marriages of the three younger co-inheriting brothers who were able to find wives from long surviving families. The younger sons were probably often away<sup>32</sup> but returned one by one to marry in line with the growth of the patrimony, (Joseph in 1743, Maurice in 1749, François in 1755). Their elder brother, Jean François, died in 1753 leaving three young families under the 'partage'agreement of 1754: the widow Maurisa Rulland with her three young sons (aged 12, 5 and 2) under her guardianship; their uncle Maurice and his wife and young daughter were to share house number 1733. Joseph and François, the remaining co-inheriting brothers were to live in the adjacent house number 1741 which was acquired from another member of the gens (Claude Antoine and La Françoise Suscillion (Ponay) (Appendix 3)). Taken together this 'nit' comprised 7 adults, 4 babies and three children under 13.

Various further adjustments were made in the patrimony over the next twenty years until a further putative (?) partage was arranged in 1773 to take account of the marriage of Bernard the eldest son of Joseph (now 53) the co-inheriting brother of François (who had three daughters and a son). Although the son did not return to succeed the property in Montmin he was provided for in the 1773 'partage'<sup>33</sup>. The lack of success in other lines of this lineage focusses attention on Joseph who allowed two sons to marry and inherit: Bernard in 1773 (see above) and Jean in 1788. They and the two marrying sons of the widow guardian of Jean François were able to re-consolidate

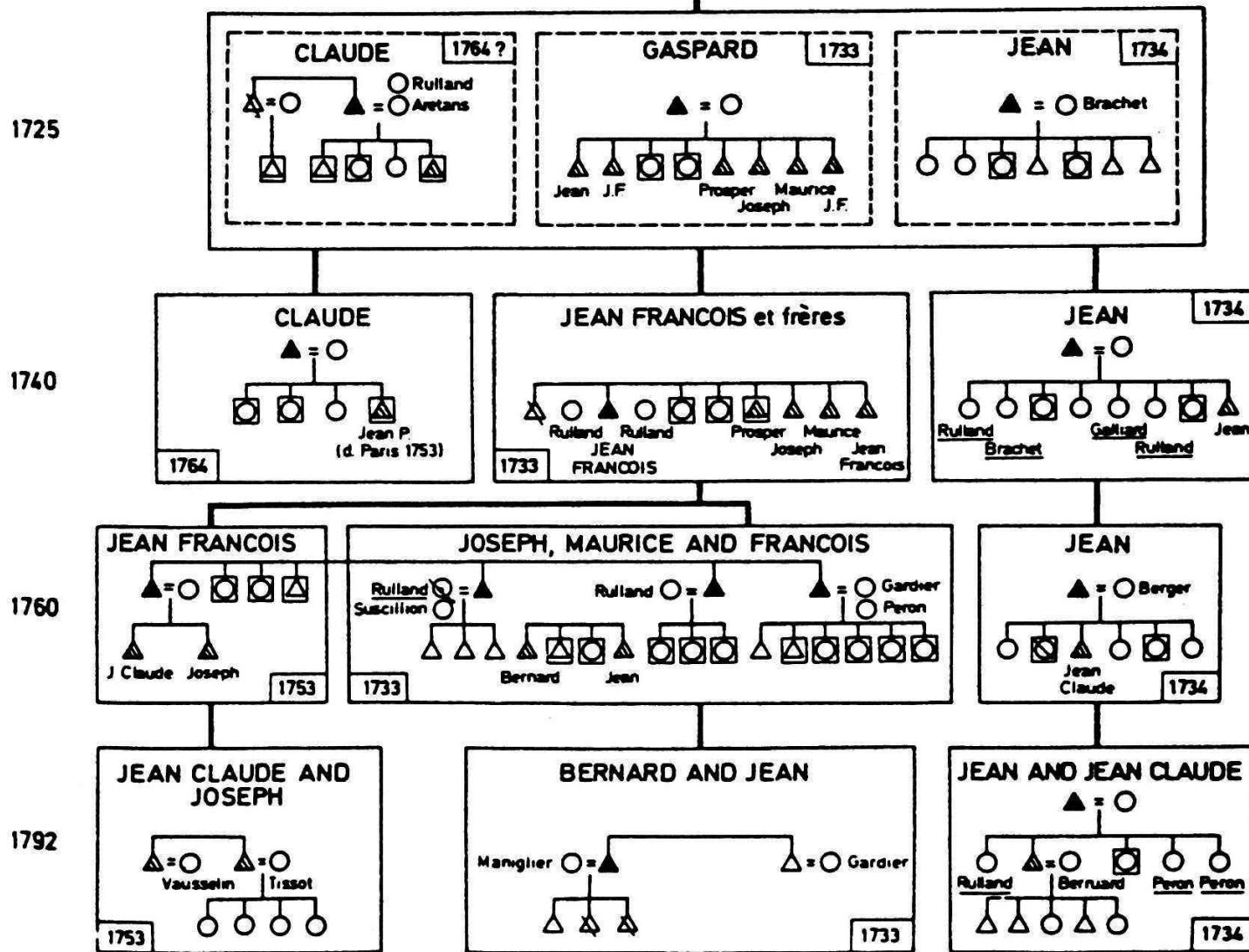
Figure 7



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**SUSCILLON -(Rosset)**

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the patrimony. These arrangements, traced through a century of patrimonial history in terms of successful land acquisition, particularly by Gaspard up to 1735 and certainly by the confreria who maintained the system under the 'chieftaincy' of Jean François from 1735-1753 allowing a sensible if putative division into two strands of indivisibility, one following the line of the senior son and monitored by his widow and the others focussing on the arrangements between the three surviving frêrèche members also involve sensible sharing out of available domestic spaces.

A further feature of this process can be identified. Marriage arrangements were almost exclusively with strong sound Montmin gens and promoted male marriage contracts<sup>35</sup>. Moreover, the function of marriage in making links with other members of the same gens are made clear in the witnesses to the 1755 partage where Hugue Suscillion, son of Prosper, the brother of Maurice (who is one of the subjects of the previous example above) is identified here as 'uncle'<sup>36</sup>. In fact his 'nephews' are his brother's wife's sister's husband's children! There can be few clearer indications of the strong links which draw members of the gens into explicit if surrogate kinship relationships.

#### The Neyrets: Marriage alliances and gens extension

In the winter of 1652 in the parish of Giez, Melchior Neyret died. He was the eldest of three brothers and a cousin who had inherited the undivided family lands of their father Louis and uncle Bartheleme. Although Melchior had married in 1648 he had died without leaving offspring.

A surviving will of his grandfather secure in the family deed box<sup>37</sup> specified that the numerous parcels of land which were the main portion of the collective inheritance were to remain undivided at least until the majority of the first grandson of his eldest son who would then receive ownership of half inheritance. But Melchior had died without issue and his two brothers, Claude and George, were still minors. Meanwhile,

Philibert, his cousin and co-inheritor was already a married young man in his mid twenties presumably demanding a level of independence. Local Savoyard common law and custom identified a route out of this apparent dilemma. The partage arranged and registered in 1653 between the two conjoined branches of the family allowed for half the lands to be allocated indivis to Claude and George under the legal tutelage of their mother until their majority. The remaining portion was allocated to their cousin. This formal legal arrangement had two advantages. Firstly, it allowed both branches of the lineage the freedom to develop strategies of capital accumulation to build up their segment of the divided patrimony. Secondly, it allowed for an interim phase of higher level co-operation in day to day management between the widow-guardian and the cousin.

In fact the two brothers managed to acquire some land but it was not enough to sustain more than one subsequent heir. Claude did not marry and Louis, son of George (who died in the 1720s) was made the sole inheritor of conjointly held property while his brother entered the church. In the other branch of the family Philibert (Fig. 8) negotiated good marriages first for himself with a well established lineage (the Rullands), from whom he received substantial sums of money in dowry. One of his sons, Antoine secured a marriage and a house and holding of lands (cadastre de Montmin) in the neighbouring commune of Montmin with the well established Rulland gens (Claudine ff. Germain Rulland). His daughter La George married Joseph Clavel the son of a rich peasant in the neighbouring parish of Gye for a substantial dowry of 506 livres. This sum was ameliorated by a marriage between Antoine's son and the younger sister of Joseph Clavel for a dowry of £ 320<sup>37</sup>. This debt reducing operation linked the two families in a double alliance which continued to find expression in notarial documents for over a century.

The Neyrets were one of the few incomers (by marriage into the Rullands) who successfully established themselves in Montmin.

# NEYRET

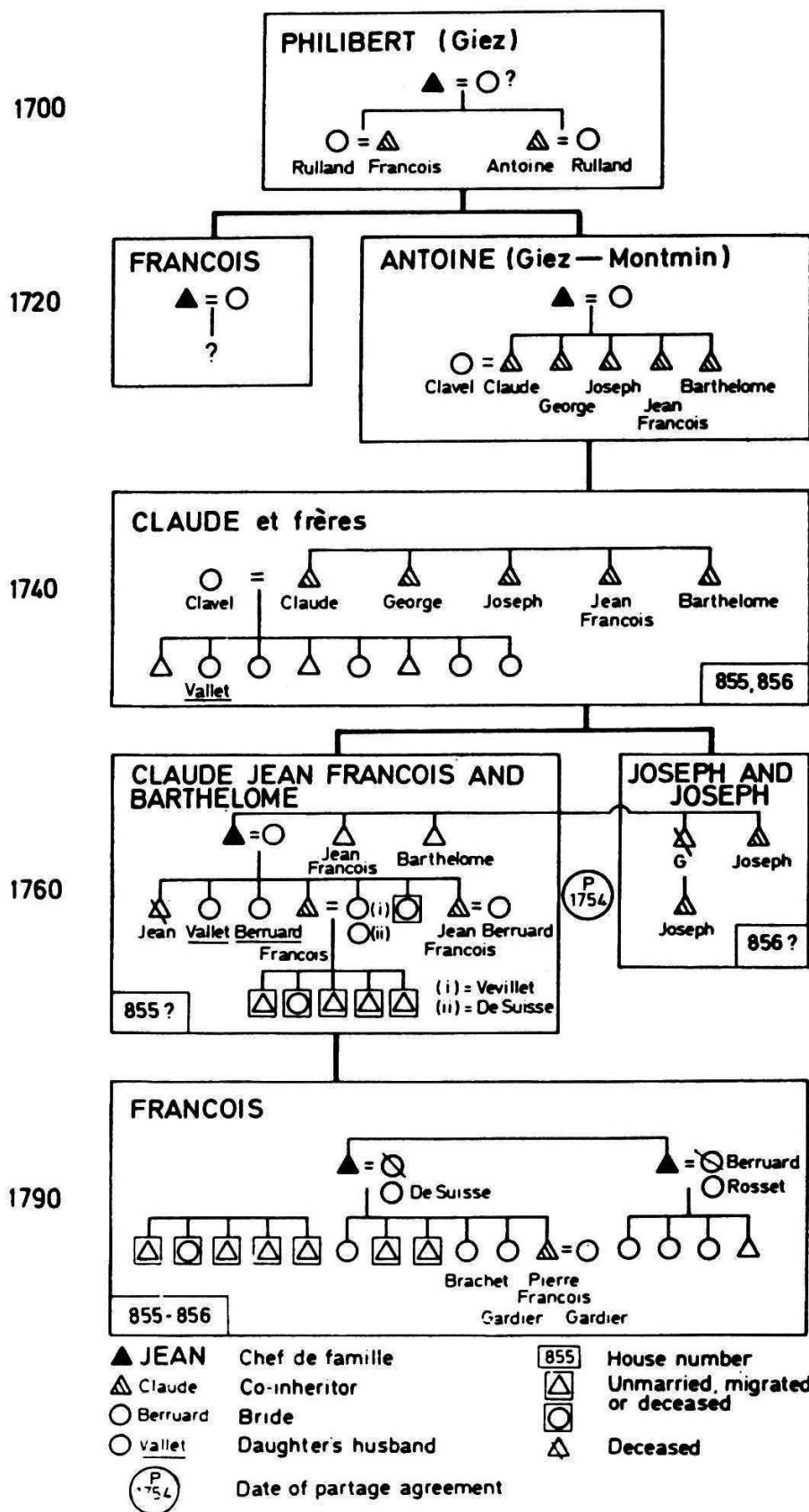
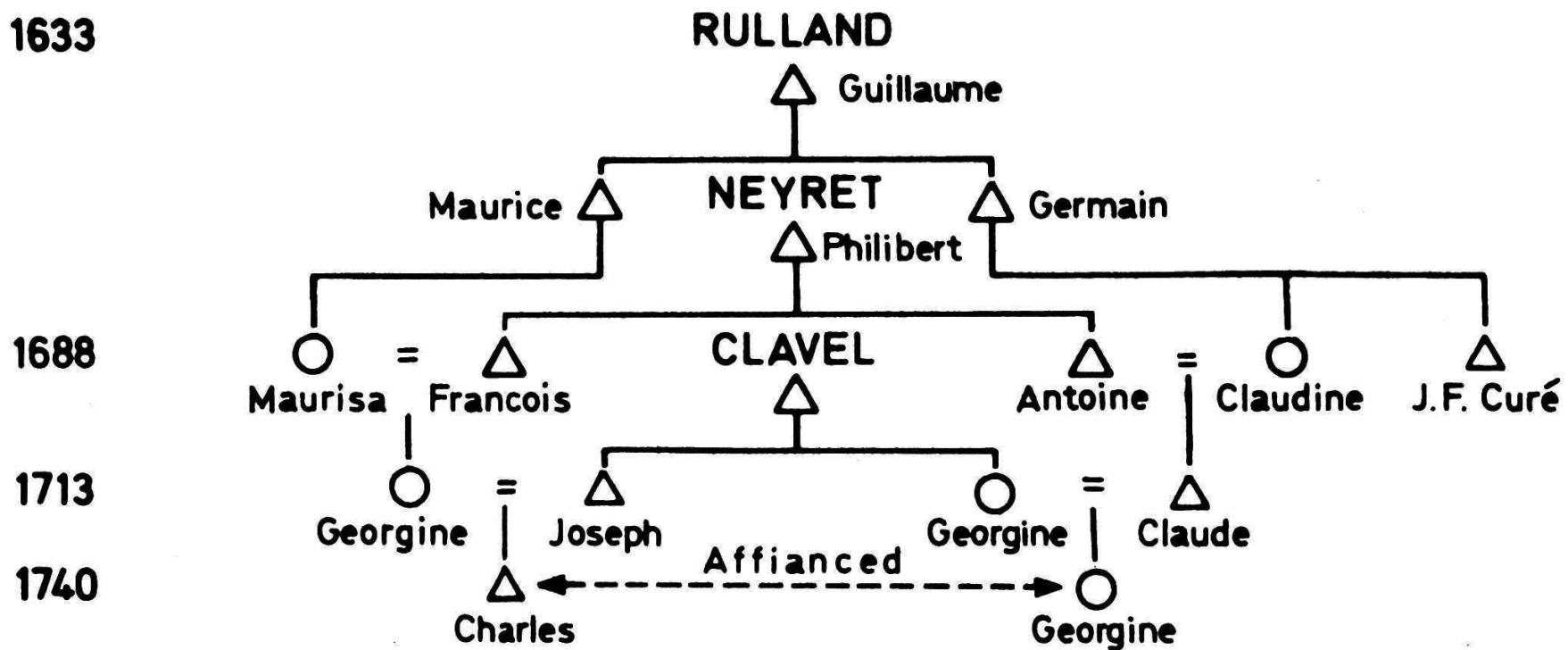


Figure 8

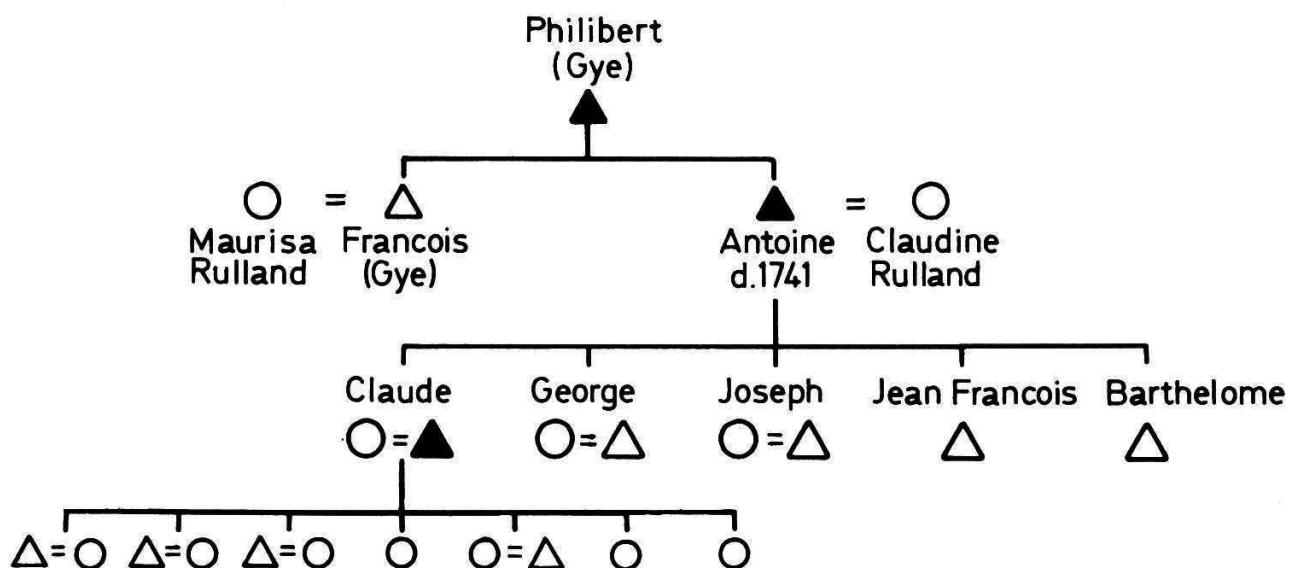
THE STRUCTURE OF MARRIAGE : THREE FAMILIES IN GIEZ AND MONTMIN  
1633 - 1740

1633



## NEYRETS (Montmin branch)

INDIVIS : 1720 - 54



PARTAGES : 1754

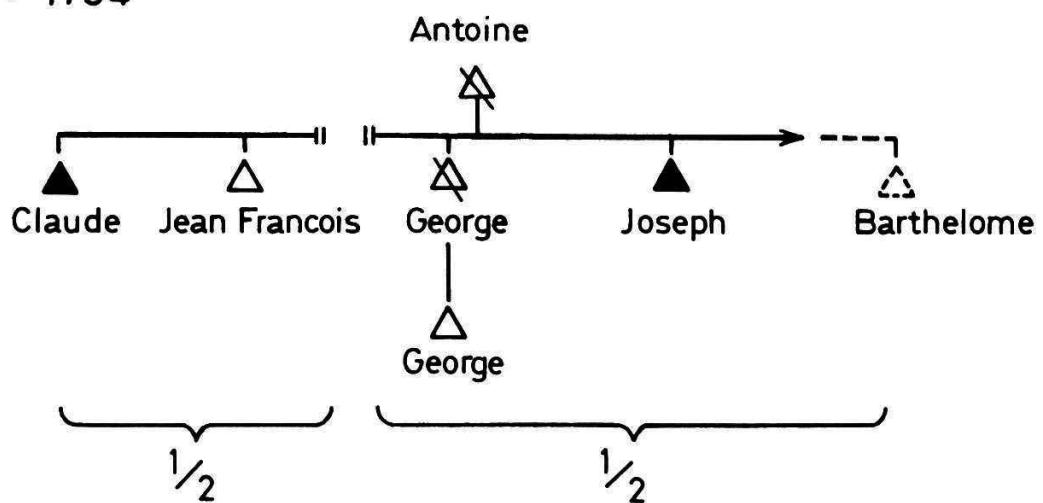


Figure 9b

Antoine had five sons (Fig. 8). One of these sons, Claude, married Georgine Clavel in 1720 (Fig. 9a). Antoine, with his wife, Claudine Rulland, established Claude as 'manager' of the Montmin property. Claude and Georgine lived in a house inherited from the Rullands (No. 855 on the Cadastral plan 1732). In 1728 Antoine and his wife made a joint will which, after securing the substantial dowries (440 livres) of their three daughters (Georgine, Marie and Jeanne Françoise)<sup>38</sup>, ensured the inheritance by equal part and portion indivis between their five sons. In a codicil to the will of 1728 they added the provision of a pension to Jean François feu Germain Rulland, the brother of Claudine who was the priest in Montmin. Significantly there was an instruction that no real partage could take place between Antoine's sons without the consent of their priest uncle<sup>39</sup>.

The size of the Montmin property was increased by the careful management of Claude<sup>40</sup> who became the chef de famille on his father's death in 1741. In the meantime two of Claude's brothers had married - George and Jean François - one, Joseph, remained celibate but took charge on George's death of his nephew Joseph, and Bartholome ceded his share in the patrimony to his surviving brothers<sup>41</sup>, and the patrimony was divided between Claude and Jean François on the one hand and Joseph and his nephew on the other (Fig. 9b). In due course Jean François, Claude's son, inherited the main Montmin patrimony and Joseph (feu George) became the chef de famille of the other main branch of the family in Giez.

It will now be clear that lineage management arrangements of a similar kind are characteristic of all successful families. All relied on the sanction provided by the notarial system strengthened by the journaliers of the cadastre. Few agreements, once made explicit in this way, could be forgotten or fudged. The law acted as a re-inforcement for the process of successful lineage development. There is every indication from work proceeding that this style of life was maintained

throughout the nineteenth and even into the twentieth century despite the social and legal changes which so radically altered the texture of rural life elsewhere in France.

### Conclusion

From the evidence presented in this paper it is possible to identify the strategies used by a Savoyard chef d'entreprise and his lineage in the eighteenth century to accumulate assets in land and stock and to guard against depletion of the patrimony. Active participation in the land and stock market and deployment of young men and women in long distance worker migration certainly off-set the long term debts and obligations which cemented relationships with neighbours and kinsmen.

Marriage alliances played a vital role in developing these relationships as did the use of the tabellions of the notariat to provide an accurate and permanent account of these dealings. All serious decision were taken by the chef only in the context of the overt group approval of the members of the gens (that group of relatives with whom he or she shared patrilineal descent and marriage links). Strategies for dealing with demographic over-provision and imbalances (migration; delayed marriage; celibacy) were also bound up with these broader structural relationships. It is hoped that sufficient evidence is presented to validate this view of long-cycle domestic, familial and genetic interconnections which makes any attempt to fit this society into a scheme based on nuclear households and short domestic cycles depending on early partition, totally misleading.

These accumulations and transmissions of property clearly depended on the successful deployment of strategies which extend longitudinally and laterally well beyond the confines of a single 'household' and it is only in terms of these larger collectivities of kinship which I have identified as lineages, within gens, that it is possible to expose the

social and economic stratifications which underpinned this apparently 'equalising' peasant society. A rising tide of evidence from southern and mountain Europe (Rowlands 1983) suggests that this may not be an isolated example but a set of peculiar responses to a particular local conjunction of historical, social, economic, legal and environmental circumstances. If this is so then the theories of peasant class formation based on the narrower assumptions of family household structure are in urgent need of re-appraisal.

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#### Notes

##### Abbreviations used

ADHS = Archives Départementales de Haute Savoie.

TF = Tabellion de Faverges (1697-1792) ADHS, Series E.

TA = Tabellion d'Annecy (1697-1792) ADHS, Series E.

CSM = Cadastre Sarde, Montmin, ADHS, Series C.

JACM = Journalier 1738-1792, Archives Communales de Montmin.

1. The word gens was used by the peasants themselves (see footnote 22 below) and in the context one assumes that it

means 'people linked by the same broad patronymic connections' even if affinal relationships are quite distant. It will be used in this context here to distinguish the widest set of kinsmen linked by family name and marriage who can in certain circumstances, recognise a level of involvement in the affairs of any individual family ménages or lignage. So that an individual family ménage under a chef is 'nested' within a lineage (or lignage) which itself is nested within a gens.

2. The adjustement here takes account of the age of involvement in herding. It is known that children above the age of five were involved in herding and managing animals in Savoy (Devos 1979).
3. This hypothesis finds further circumstantial support from the listings in the documents of the gabelle de sel. In registrations for every parish in the study area family names frequently appear in close juxtaposition (see Table 1). In some cases the name of the hamlet or sub-village is taken from that of the dominant gens. For example, Demaisons in the parish of Entrevernes.
4. Many references to this area are to be found in the journaliers and tabellions of the period; see footnote 6 and below.
5. In a period of relative price stability, dowries also increased in mean value during the eighteenth century by 25 per cent.
6. A full documentation of these sources is presented in Jones and Siddle, (op.cit.). From the vast array of notarial records all the entries for the communes of the Annecy upper lake basin were abstracted for sample years during the eighteenth century. References in the footnotes listed below merely give examples of entries which are sufficiently common to form the basis for generalisations. These generalisations generally accord with those made by Perrouse (op.cit.) from the notarial records of Chambery from the late seventeenth century. A similar procedure was used to identify sample sources in the

Journalier de Montmin.

7. By far the largest number of the 4,500 transactions in the Journalier de Montmin 1738-1792 (95 %) were land sales and exchanges.
8. TF, 1740, ff. 320-326.
9. Testament of Maurice Arestan of La Cote son of Damien Arestan. (TF, Vol. 74, 1711, 2E f.548) guarantees enough to sustain his wife and money and a house for his daughter so that she can go to Lyon and work 'to the profit of the house' and (from a hundred years later) the testament of Maurice Peron of Forclaz (TF, Vol. 3, 1817, f.1405) settles £ 302.0.0. on each of three daughters and a pension for his wife of a carefully specified annual supply of oats, barley wine, butter, salt, cheese and a room in his house. (See also JACM, 1738, 196; TF, 1742, f.49; TF, 1778, f.22).
10. See Figure 3 and other examples in the Journalier (JACM; ff.136, 264, 320).
11. Cession of rights by Jeanne Françoise Maniglier, widow of Claude Suscillion in favour of Joseph and Claude her two sons (£ 300.0.0. to pay augmentation in marriage contracts) a pension in kind which in addition to specified quantities of wheat, barley and oats, butter, cheese and salt also allocated to herself a pair of shoes and two dresses. She left herself the preference of staying with either son or with her daughters (TF, Vol. 3, 1817, f.1409).  
Other examples of female inheritance are to be found in the Journalier (JACM, Vol. 1, 1738-1792, ff. 53, 131, 202, 216, 260, 289, 296).
12. 17th February 1740, Perrine and Françoise Coutin became inheritors of the lands of their sister Maurise. (JACM, 90).
13. In 1778 all the chefs de famille in Le Bois were drawn into agreement on pasture rights. A third could sign their names. (JACM 8, 822). The appearance of so many basic literates in an isolated Savoyard commune can only

be attributed to these demands for registration.

- 14. T.A. Vol 74<sup>(2E)</sup> f.548.
- 15. For example the Neyret family partition in which priest Bartholome ceded his rights as a co-partitioner to his eldest brother (JACM 1754, f.441). (See also footnote 21).
- 16. On the 4th May 1739, Jean and George Rulland, uncle and nephew, registered lands which were previously noted under the column of the uncle alone in the Cadastre de Montmin of 1732 (JACM, Vol. 1, f.11).
- 17. Many such arrangements must have been made. They tend to come to light when partition agreements eventually become necessary. This happened between the Brachets, Gardiers and Rullands in 1762 and between the Rullands and Gardiers in 1773 (JACM, Vol. 1, ff.521-526 and 760-765). (See also JACM ff.41 & 146).
- 18. Testament of Eustache Coutin wills goods and lands to his sons and then to a principal grandson when he reaches the age of 20. (TF, 1747, f.143). A codicil to a testament of Claude Gardier alters a similar arrangement (TF, 1746, f.114. See also TF, 1741, f.49; TF, 1741, f.225; TF, 1742, f.124).
- 19. The examples of this are numerous in the journaliers and tabellions of the period. Between 1740 and 1750 there were approximately 80 heads of household in Montmin. Of these, ten percent were widow-guardians. These women seemed to wield considerable influence during their guardianship.
- 20. La George Gardier, widow of Jean Valet for example, who was guardian to her four sons between 1740 and 1750 made fourteen different land transactions on behalf of her children. (JACM, ff.48, 50, 234, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 257, 273, 274, 295).
- 21. Between 1744 and 1748 Gaspard Suscillion acted on behalf of his nephew, Claude (JACM, f.245). In 1748 La Claudine Brachet Claude's mother took over the responsibility for administering the estate and arranged a partage with her

brother-in-law on behalf of her son (JACM, f.286).

This is at least the implication of the agreement reached between Maurice Brachet and Maurice Poncet (JACM, ff.244.245) in the examples used in Appendix I.

22. The only specific example of a non aimiable partage that has come to light for Montmin was that between Maurice and Jean, two sons of Theodore Brachet. The dispute occupies four entries in the Tabellion de Faverges of 1778:

On the 11th August 1778 Maurice Brachet of the parish of Montmin ceded all his considerable lands half to his brother, Maurice, and half to his uncle Jean, to raise a capital sum of 13,000 livres. Two days later the contract with his uncle was annulled because it had been made "sans avoir consulter les gens". A week later, early in the morning of 20th August the contract made between the two brothers only a week earlier was also annulled... "Suyvant ses enonciatives et avoir parrer (poiurrir?) un prejudice immense au parties tant parce qu'il ne pourrait vivre en paix avec son frere estant parceque le Maurice voulant conserver son frere au pays..." On the same day their mother, Philiberte Brachet, anxiously re-contracted the pension rights due to her by will of her husband in 1762. (TF, 1788, ff.371 et.seq.) The two alienated brothers then proceeded to a partage. (JACM, 1780, f.53). One is left to imagine the tensions which produced this unusual sequence of events.

23. JACM, 1754, f.434, identifies a cross cousin linkage among the Rullands family which extends over five specified generations. See also JACM 1791, f.1149 for a similar situation for the Suscillions.

24. Cure de Montmin: the Registre de baptêmes (1537-1551) indicates five ménages producing children in this period.

25. TF, 1722, f.320.

26. JACM, 1739, f.3, et al.

27. JACM, 1750, f.375.

28. TF, 1740, ff.320-326.

29. JACM, 1751-68, ff.379, 395, 423, 424, 482, 483.
30. TF, 1740, ff.360-61.
31. JACM, 1753, f.410.
32. JACM, 1790, f.255.
33. JACM, 1773, f.810.
34. JACM, 1773, f.820.
35. JACM, 1750, f.420.
36. JACM, 1755, f.458.
37. JACM, 1740, f.139, et.seq.
38. Testament of Antoine Neyret and Claudine Rulland (TF, 1727, Vol. 31, ff.413-414). The average peasant dowry at this time was 233 livres de Savoie.
39. Codicil to Testament of Antoine Neyret and Claudine Rulland (TF, 1728, Vol. 32, f.11).
40. During the period 1738 and 1754 Claude Neyret enacted 31 separate land transactions most of which were acquisitions. JACM, 1739, f.4 et seq.
41. JACM, 1754, f.442.

#### Appendix 1

##### 4th May 1739

Undivided co-inheritance agreement between Philippe and Joseph Brachet.

(JACM, vol. 1, 1738-1792 ff.162-163)

L'an mil sept out trente neuf et le quatrieme jour du mois de may comprers devant may les honoles philippe et joseph Brachet freres lesquel mon declare d'etre les seul coheriteurs de feu plierre Brachet l'aine ainsy que par testament du (date omitted) recu et signe par m<sup>e</sup> jacquat no. <sup>re</sup> quil mon exhibe et requis donnoter a leurs colomne indivise toutes les pieces inscrites dans la cadastre aux columne dudit feu pierre Bra-

chet Laine leurs pere premierement au fol. 96: dud<sup>t</sup> cadastre les pieces sous les numeros 7: 26: 32: 356: 423: 1916: 1982: 3314: 5716: a la columne dud<sup>t</sup> pierre Brachet appartient aux les d<sup>tse</sup> philippe et joseph Brachet en lesers dites qualites plus les pieces inscrites au<sup>dt</sup> cadastre fol. 98 sous les numeros 33: 65: 66: 125: 127: 143: 158: 111: 163: 187: 262: 300: 362: 178: 418: 424: 430: 448: 449: 458: 463: 464: 465: 488: 607: 608: 623: 638: 738: 739: 387: 740: 741: 756: 763: 788: 817: 854: 946: 967: 1079: 1092: 1099: 1137: 1145: 1179: 1180: 1326: 1973: 1979: 3110: 3114: 3120: 3278: 3305: 3325: 3357: 3358: 3382: 3397: 3398: 3461: 3470: 3474: 3483: 3484: 3495: 5756: 6962: 6964 Granges a lacha indivis avec Baril joseph et consorts: 6967: 6968: 6980: 6981: 7051: 7053: 7052: 7086: 7087: a la column dud<sup>t</sup> feu pierre Brachet laine appartient aux d<sup>ts</sup> philippe et joseph Brachet qui mon requis de les annotter a leur columne indivis ensuite de quoy jay verifie que fectives les d<sup>ts</sup> numeros son inscrit aux columnes du<sup>dt</sup> feu pierre Brachet l'aine jay donne acts aux partyes de leurs requisisitions et consentement et ferai en consequence le Transport des d<sup>ts</sup> columnes a l'autre de meme que de la Tallies diceux en foy de quay les d<sup>ts</sup> columnes a l'autre de meme que de la Tallies diceux en foy de quay les d<sup>te</sup> partys ont cy bas fait leurs marques pour etres illiteres de ce enquis marque du<sup>dt</sup> joseph Brachet. marque du<sup>dt</sup> philippe Brachet.

Berthollet s<sup>re</sup>

The 20th March 1744

Maurice son of Maurice Brachet and Maurice son of Claude Poncet acting as husband for Jeanne Françoise daughter of Jean George Bernard acquires the land of Jean Pierre Bernuard who has emigrated to Paris. The land remains undivided  
(JACM, Vol. 1, 1738-1792, ff.244-245)

L'an mil sept cent quarente quatre en le vingtienne mars on comparus par devant moy les honbles Maurice fils de feu maurice Brachet et Maurice fils de feu Claude Poncet agissant icelvy en qualite de mary constitutaire de la jeanne francoise fillie

de feu jean george Berryard et le dit Brachet en qualite d'acquereur des biens de jean pierre Bernard fils de feu Jean George gagne de mis a paris par contract d'acquis de 23 mars 1743 duement l'eglise le 26<sup>e</sup> stipule et signe par les Mme. Manier et pattu tous deva notre et conseillers du Roy au chatteller de paris et les des Brachet et Poncet et leurs respectives susoires qualite mon representer que la piece du pre au pontet inscrite au folis 47 du cadastre sous le no. 5708 contenant un journal, cent septante une toise un pied mesure de savoie dont taille marque au<sup>dt</sup> cadastre est de onze sols, trois deniers a la columne du<sup>dt</sup> feu par George Bernard leurs est parvenue seavoir au<sup>dt</sup> Maurice Brachet pour une quartrienne portion de toute la dite piece tant plus son particulier que pour ces conssorts qui sa chargerons de leurs portion par les annotations stipules et au<sup>dt</sup> no. aussi tant pour son chef particulier qui pour celuy de ces conssorts qui son chargeron egalement si apres de leur part et lesquels Brachet et Poncet mon requis qu'ensuite ne d'acte de liberation du conseil de la parroise de Montmin du (no date) par moy recu quils ma exhibe iceuse a faire l'annotation requise jequay l'egard et ensuite ai donne acte iceluy a procederai a la annotation requise de des d<sup>ts</sup>. biens charge et de charge ce transport d'une columne a l'autre 6<sup>e</sup> de la perequation enfoi de quay le<sup>dt</sup> Maurice Brachet a si bas signe et le<sup>dt</sup> poncet fait sa marque pour etre illitare de ce enquis pour une cotta particuliere et indivis entre deux.

L.O.6.7.

(Signed) M. Brachet Berthollet

#### APPENDIX 2

#### INVENTORY - Maurice Suscillion fils de feu Prosper

10.11.1741 - 8 a.m.

I, Joseph Chilibas Aude, notary bring to public knowledge and

testify to all lords and justice magistrates to whom this knowledge will belong, that, having been told yesterday evening of the death of Maurice Suscillion, son of the late Prosper, who, having made, through myself, his last testament on the 27th October of this year, had, among other things disposed of his last wills by this testament for his heirs named Jean-Francois and Gaspard Suscillion, his sons, and all the posthumous males that may issue from his marriage with Michelle Vallet, who he has named their guardian (...) So I went from my house in Faverges into the house of the late Maurice Suscillion in Le Bois where I proceeded to an inventory and description of the possessions, moveables, in real estate, money and other things that he left and which have been presented to me by Michelle Vallet and by Hugue Suscillion, her brother in law.

#### IN THE KITCHEN

one pot made of a metal which seems to be iron, (capacity: 5 'pots');

one similar metal pot, (capacity: 4 'pots');

two copper cauldrons with iron garnishments, (capacity: one 'sean' and a half);

one copper cauldron with iron garnishments, (capacity: one 'sean');

a copper casserole with iron garnishments, (capacity: one 'pot');

a copper marmite, (capacity: half a 'sean') worn;

a copper saucepan, (capacity: one 'pot') with a good iron handle, of good value;

a frying pan, worn;

two copper bowls, of little value, worn;

two pewter measures (capacity: one 'pot' and half a 'pot') of good value;

a big brass spoon, rather worn;

a big iron spoon, rather worn;

another iron spoon, rather worn;

one mattock;

three 'detrees'? one big and two average, made of iron, good value;  
four spades, rather worn;  
two chains, four feet long each;  
one fire iron;  
a plough-share, a brace and two supports for the plough, each made of iron, rather out of use;  
an anvil and two iron hammers, made for sharpening a scythe;  
a three leg trammel;  
a stove;  
a 'fire-shovel' (for the ashes);  
three planes, two big ones to make planks, one four feet long and four inches wide and the other three inches long and three inches wide;  
two long axes and two welding irons;  
two little axes;  
two little hammers;  
one pair of pincers;  
three firwood chairs covered with straw, a wooden table of very little value;  
some wooden crockery, which have not been assessed;  
The parents, neighbours and witness having agreed that there was little else of value in order to avoid more expensive fees.

IN THE DOWNSTAIRS BEDROOM (Poele)

two firwood bed frames, covered each with a common cloth and two sheets of little value;  
twelve pounds of two thread;  
a little brass lamp;  
ten mixed cloth sheets, seven half-worn and three of which are new;  
ten mens' shirts and two for children made of the same mixed cloth;  
a towel made of the same cloth;

a rifle and a pistol of good value;  
a hunting knife without its sheaf, of little value;  
a 'bed tent' (bed drapes) made of white cloth;  
a white mixed cloth tablecloth, half worn;  
a fustian shirt and three trousers of country cloth;  
a 'north cloth' jacket;  
a sheepskin vest;  
All these clothes are rather worn;  
a little fir chest in which are the New Testament and two new books on duty and practice and other books of a devotional kind;  
The two new books are: "Imitation of Our Lord J.C.", and "Wise interviews in the convent of Bayones", both in good condition;  
nine little devotional books, in bad condition;  
a chest in which are:  
a pocket knife;  
two coulored wooden cases  
sheaf of receipts signed 'to Prosper Suscillion' which, after consideration, I found useless, and therefore did not assess;  
two little 'esanettes' (?) made of new cotton cloth;  
six razors in two cases and a sharpening stone, quite new;  
three little cast iron snuff boxes, of little value;  
two boxes of little value;  
half a pound of thread;  
a little wooden chest in which are:  
three glass bottles.  
For these chests in which these things are found, and all the clothes, the family, neighbours and witnesses have testified, with Hugue Suscillion, that they belong to him.

#### IN THE ATTIC

a barrel ('mesure de menthon') half full of new wine;  
a chest made of unseasoned fir wood, rather worn;

a spool of spin wool;  
two big 'pallicults' for the vegetables;  
eight 'cartes' of barley;  
three quarts of peas;  
three 'cartes' of wheat in a little bag;  
two big oil jars (no indications of contents);

IN A LITTLE ROOM NEAR THE KITCHEN

two little saws;  
two planes;  
two joint makers;  
two other carpenter's tools, used to join planks;  
two big carpenter's planes.

IN THE ROOM UPSTAIRS

a bag full of four 'cartes' of oats;  
a little firwood chest; without lock;  
contents - three 'cartes' of small pease;  
another chest, made of the same wood but new;  
another chest, made of the same wood but worn;  
two big chests, used to keep flour (in one are four 'cartes' of barley flour);  
a fir wood chest strengthened with iron and a lock, belonging to Hugue Suscillion.

ANOTHER ROOM

three firwood chests - two empty and the third holds the clothes of Maurisay Vallet, their servant, the widow's sister;  
a firwood bed frame;  
thirty five pol of 'chamure'(?);  
six brassieres;  
two scythes with their handles (half worn);

A BEDROOM

a new firwood bed frame;  
four yokes;

four big new wicker baskets;  
three big kneading troughs which are valuable;  
a little sink hooped with wood;  
a certain quantity of wicker ready to make baskets;

IN THE COWSHED (not linked to the house)

two red-haired cows, about fourteen, which the witnesses estimated 8 patagons for the both;  
a six year cow, estimated value 6 patagons;  
a seven year cow, estimated value 5 patagons;  
a seven year cow, estimated value 4 patagons;  
a three year bull, estimated value 3 patagons;  
a two year bull, estimated value £ 10;  
five ewes, estimated value £ 8;

IN THE BARN (over the cowshed)

a twenty step ladder )  
a twelve step ladder ) rather good condition  
an eight step ladder )  
two wicker vats;  
a 'teche' of rye corn, estimated contents six 'cartes';  
a 'teche' estimated contents 20 'cartes';  
a 'teche' estimated contents 20 'coupes' of oats;  
a 'teche' full of vegetables; 5 'cartes' of broad beans and 6 'cartes' of white peas.

The witness testified that the reserves of fodder will hardly be sufficient for the animals during the winter.

IN THE STOREROOM IN THE VILLAGE OF MONTBOGAN

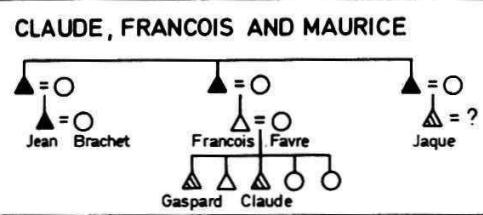
a wooden tank (capacity: 13 'sommes') rimmed with iron;  
two firwood barrels, rimmed twice with iron, capacity 4 sommes each and filled with wine of the year;  
another firwood barrel (capacity 2 sommes) half full with the same wine;  
a rather worn empty firwood barrel capacity two sommes;  
a barrel of little value, made of firwood (1 1/2 sommes);  
a little poplar chest that I found under a bed in which are

the contents of all the titles and papers of the house,  
which chest I sealed in order to assess it next week, the  
19th of this month, when we will reassume this inventory,  
interrupted by the night.

## SUSCILLON - (Poney)

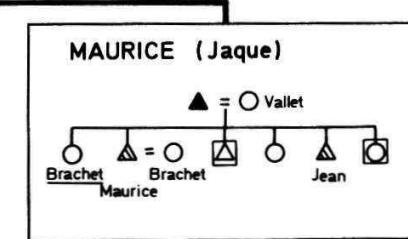
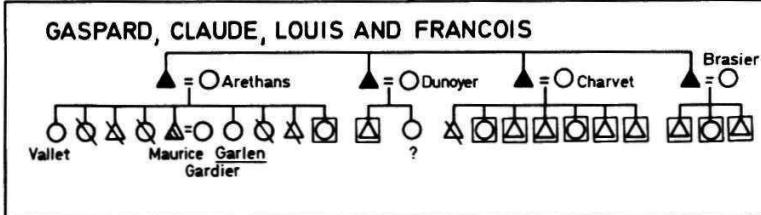
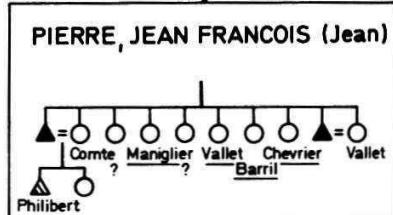
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1620

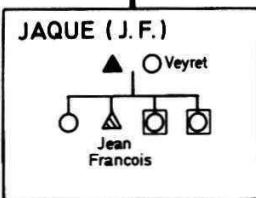
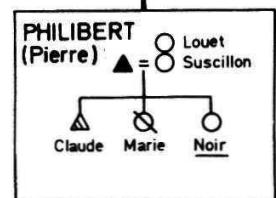


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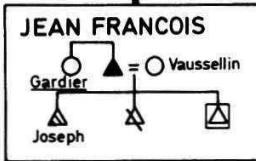
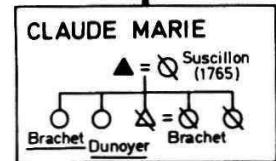


1730



▲ JEAN Chef de famille  
 ▲ Maurice Co-inheritor  
 ○ Vallet Bride  
 ○ Vallet Daughter's husband  
 □ 4134 House number  
 △ Unmarried migrated or deceased  
 △ Deceased

1762



1792

