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**ROYALISTS AND PATRIOTS**

**Nîmes and its Hinterland in the late Eighteenth Century**

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**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**University of Warwick**

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This is a study of an event: an abortive royalist insurrection in the city of Nîmes in June 1790 and its aftermath - a series of royalist revolts centred upon the commune of Berrias in the department of the Ardèche in 1790, 1791 and 1792. The thesis is divided into four parts, each designed to contribute to an explanation of what made these events possible. Part I is a discussion of the composition and ideological assumptions of royalism in the South-East of France. Part II consists of an examination of the social and economic structure of Nîmes in the eighteenth century. Part III is a study of the relationship between Nîmes and its hinterland as it was organised through the production of silk. Part IV deals with the manner in which the form of this town-country relationship intersected with tensions and conflicts within the city itself in the later eighteenth century. It is argued from this analysis that it is impossible to explain royalism in unilateral terms. Royalism was the product of a developing social process; it cannot therefore be deduced from the divisions which it contributed to produce after 1790. Royalists became royalists because of the particular form of their relationship to those who became "patriots" in the decades preceeding 1790. Secondly, royalism cannot be explained exclusively in terms of local and regional tensions. Royalists occupied a particular place within the hierarchy of functions which articulated the relationship between Nîmes and its hinterland. Rather, therefore, than deducing royalism from tensions at one particular level - whether of the village, small town, region or city - this study has sought to explain royalism in terms of the relationship between these different levels, and of the manner

in which contemporaries sought to understand this relationship.

The argument pursued throughout this study is that royalism in the South-East can be seen as one possible "solution" to the "problem" of social mobility in eighteenth century France.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

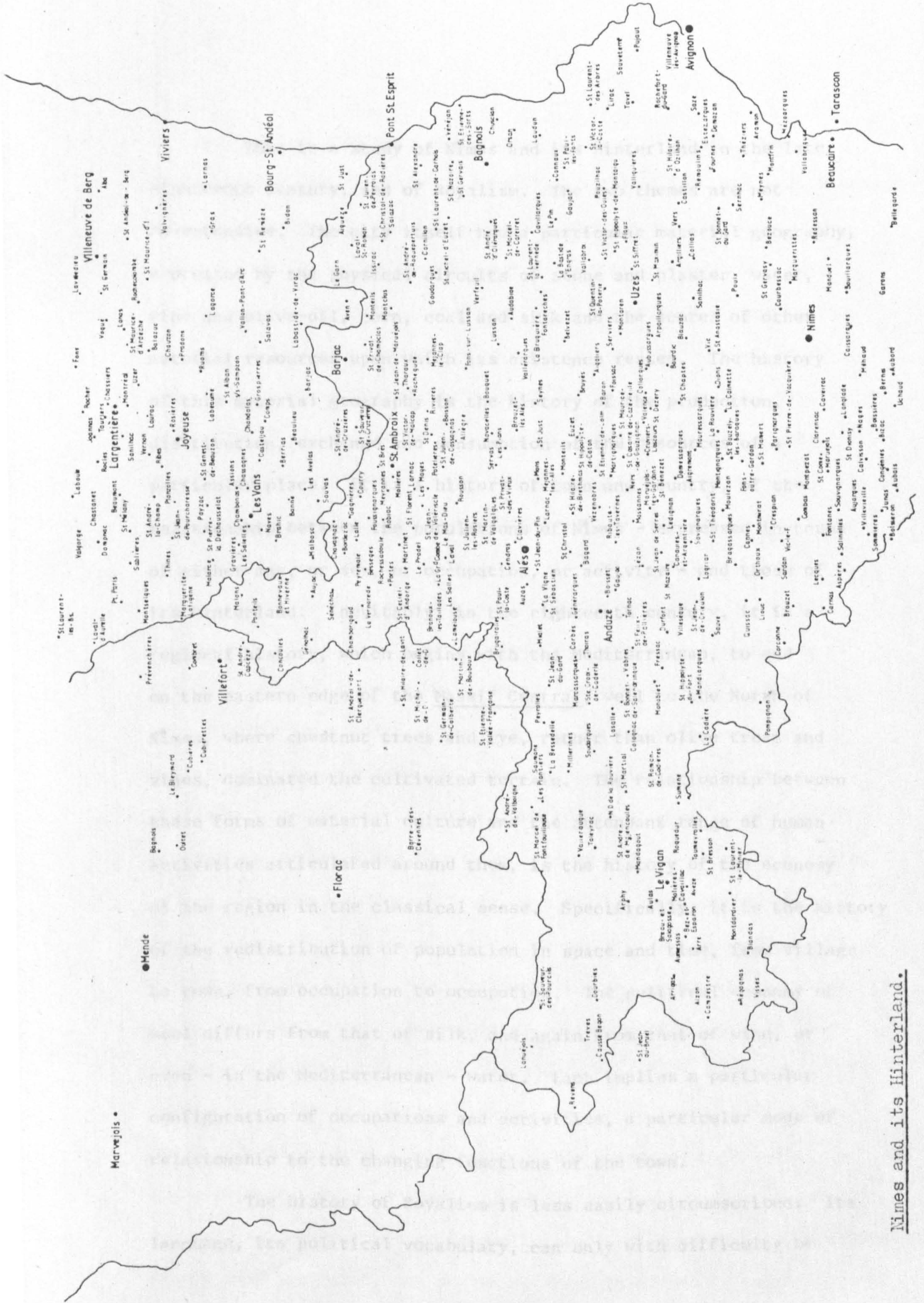
A.A.E.	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris.
A.h.R.F.	Annales historiques de la Révolution française.
A.C.N.	Archives Communales de Nîmes (or Largentière, Alès, Les Vans)
A.C.C.M.	Archives de la Chambre de Commerce, Marseille.
A.D. Ardèche	Archives départementales de l'Ardèche, Privas.
A.D. Gard	Archives départementales du Gard, Nîmes.
A.D. Hérault	Archives départementales de l'Hérault, Montpellier.
A.D. Rhône	Archives départementales du Rhône, Lyon.
A.D. Vaucluse	Archives départementales du Vaucluse, Avignon.
A.N.	Archives nationales, Paris.
A.N. MC	Archives nationales, Minutier central des notaires.
B.M.	Bibliothèque Municipale (of Nîmes, Avignon, etc.)
B.N.	Bibliothèque nationale, Paris.
B.S.H.P.F.	Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français.
B.S.P.F.	Bibliothèque de la Société du Protestantisme français, Paris.
FFC	Archives départementales du Gard, Fonds Fornier de Clausonne.
FL	<u>Id.</u> "Livre de Copies de Lettres", F.Fabre-Lichaire.
Mém.Ac. de N.	Mémoires de l'Académie de Nîmes (or du Gard).
OF	<u>A.D. Gard</u> , "Cahiers de Copies de Lettres," Ourson freres.
P & P	Past and Present.
P.R.O.	Public Record Office, London.
R.H.E.S.	Revue d'Histoire économique et sociale.
R.H.M.C.	Revue d'Histoire moderne et contemporaine.
Rev. Viv.	Revue du Vivarais.

## Introduction

"Le fond de la société d'Ancien Régime, en France et peut-être ailleurs, ce sont les rapports d'une masse de dominés avec une poignée de dominants. Les manières de dominer constitueraient peut-être l'essentiel de l'analyse souhaitable, avec les accords, les négociations, ou les conflits entre les divers types de dominants ..."

P. Goubert. "Clio Parmi les Hommes", Paris, 1976.





Nîmes and its hinterland.



This is a study of Nîmes and its hinterland in the late eighteenth century, and of Royalism. The two themes are not co-extensive. The city itself had a particular material geography, expressed by the physical circuits of stone and plaster, water, wine and olive-oil, corn, coal and silk and the scores of other material resources upon which its existence rested. The history of this material geography is the history of the production, distribution, exchange and consumption of the resources of a particular place. It is a history of town and country, of the relationship between the populations of Nîmes - expressed in terms of either age, or sex, or occupation, or activity - and those of its hinterland. Inevitably, in the eighteenth century, it is a regional history, which begins with the Mediterranean, to end on the eastern edge of the Massif Central, well to the North of Nîmes, where chestnut trees and rye, rather than olive trees and vines, dominated the cultivated terrain. The relationship between these forms of material culture and the attendant range of human activities articulated around them, is the history of the economy of the region in the classical sense. Specifically, it is the history of the redistribution of population in space and time, from village to town, from occupation to occupation. The political economy of wool differs from that of silk, and again from that of wine, or even - in the Mediterranean - water. Each implies a particular configuration of occupations and activities, a particular mode of relationship to the changing functions of the town.

The history of Royalism is less easily circumscribed. Its language, its political vocabulary, can only with difficulty be

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contained within the life of a region. Echoes of Paris, Geneva, Amsterdam and London - the metropolitan world of the High Enlightenment - alongside the occitan of most royalist discourse in Nîmes in 1790, suggest a different geography, more extensive and diffuse. This is a study of the mechanisms by which these two histories intersected.

This study grew out of a sense of confusion which arose when comparing the recent historiography of royalism in revolutionary France to the language and behaviour of royalists in Nîmes and elsewhere between 1790 and 1793. The Bagarre of 1790 and its aftermath in the Gard and the Ardeche are now relatively well known.<sup>1</sup> Yet there is a sense in which recent studies of royalism fail to really grasp the full content of the object which they are seeking to explain. This is as true of studies of royalism in the west of France as of those concerned with the South-East itself. The sociological materialism which dominates most "social history" carries with it an element of timelessness which enables it to abstract from concrete situations and reduce them to categories of occupation, property and the like. The result is a history vitiated of its substance, a history divorced from the realities of power, which, above all else, was what the events of the revolutionary decade as a whole were about. If royalism was certainly the expression of "a broad and complex framework of social hostilities", it also employed a particular language and sought to impose a particular content upon the new political order created in France after 1789. This study began with a feeling that this language or rhetoric was not somehow external to royalism, not a "popular heritage of mutual hatred", an "obsolescent religious terminology" arising from "anachronistic traditional division", but something which needed to be taken



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seriously.<sup>2</sup> This is an attempt to understand the texture of that language in its relation to the forms of power developing in late eighteenth century France. It is an attempt to understand royalism in historical, rather than sociological terms, as much as the product of that eighteenth century of salons, Academies and metropolitan sophistication as was its 'official', constitutional counterpart.

This study begins with an examination of the composition - in socio-occupational and geographical terms - of royalism in Nîmes and its hinterland in 1790. The purpose of this analysis is a specific one. It seeks to emphasise the diversity of social groups and geographical localities involved in counter-revolutionary activity at a particular moment in time. Just as Marc Soriano sought to explain the appearance of a burlesque of Virgil's Aeneid in Paris in 1649 as the product of a specific socio-political conjuncture,<sup>3</sup> the problem which this analysis has tried to pose is that of explaining how the aspirations and objectives of people objectively separated by geography, occupation and culture could have combined to produce the abortive moment of royalism in the summer of 1790. It seeks, in other words, to pose the problem of what royalism was about in that moment in which the destinies of so many different people were called into question.

The problem of the relationship between royalist organisations - between royalism as a movement - and the variety of resources upon which it drew, is therefore a problem of defining the means by which some common perception of the political order against which royalism defined itself could have been possible.

The second part of this introductory section is therefore devoted to an examination of the languages of political analysis of the France of the last years of the old regime. This discussion of the modes of understanding the relationship between social change and political order in the late eighteenth century is designed to introduce two mémoires written in 1785 or 1786 by one of the leading figures of the royalist movement of 1790, Pierre Froment. Ostensibly a narrative, Froment's mémoires also embody a specific perception of the nature of the political order against which he revolted in 1790. The purpose of the body of this study is to explain how this perception came, not only to be possible, but also to serve as the means by which the heterogeneous movement that was royalism in the South-East could have happened at all. The history of the origins of that perception is bound up with the material history of Nîmes, with the relationship between the city and its hinterland over the eighteenth century, and with the different places within the structure of this relationship occupied by those who became either royalists or patriots in the early years of the Revolution. This is an attempt to produce a social history which is more than a history of external categories, and to produce a history of ideas which is more than a history of disembodied concepts. It is thus a study, both of a region, and of the manner in which contemporaries sought to understand the social order of that region.



6.

NOTES - Introduction

1. See the studies by J. M. Hood: "The Riots at Nîmes and the Origins of a Popular Counter-Revolutionary Movement." Princeton University Ph.D. Thesis 1968. "Protestant-Catholic Relations and the Roots of the first Counter-Revolutionary Movement in France." J.M.H. 43.1971.pp245-275. Patterns of Popular Protest in the French Revolution: the Conceptual Contribution of the Gard." J.M.H. 48. 1976. pp. 259-293; and by G. Lewis, "The White Terror in the Department of the Gard: Counter-Revolution, Continuity and the Individual." P & P. No.58. 1973.
2. The citations are taken from J. N. Hood (1971) above. Dr. J. M. Roberts' important study, The Mythology of the Secret Societies (1972), begins from the same premiss contained above, viz, that "the problem with which the conscious contributors to the mythology of secret societies were trying to deal was one of change on an unprecedented, accelerating and ever-grander scale." (p.355). In what follows, I diverge from Dr. Roberts in calling "change" the formation of a capitalist political order, without, however, calling into question the significance of his insight into the intentions of those responsible for the "mythology of secret societies," i.e. that "the writing devoted to the secret societies may have been rubbish, but it was also often an attempt at historical analysis, directed to explaining a historical problem." (p.355). Regrettably, Dr. Roberts does not develop the implications of his insight.
3. M. Soriano. "Burlesque et langage populaire de 1647 à 1653: Sur deux poèmes de jeunesse des frères Perrault." Annales.E.S.C. 24<sup>e</sup> année. 1969. pp 949-975. My debt to this article in the manner in which I have approached the subject matter of this thesis is considerable.

Part I The Problem of Royalism

Chapter I Forms and Functions of Royalism in 1790

Here is one manifestation of royalism:

"Peuple fidelle à votre Dieu, à votre Roi, levez la tête; assez & trop longtemps elle a été courbée sous le joug des plus vils tyrans; assez et trop longtemps vous avez été le jouet de la faction la plus impie & la plus barbare ... Frappé de l'état aussi terrible qu'accablant, où est reduite la plus fortunée des provinces, ainsi que tout le royaume; considérant qu'il n'y a aujourd'hui aucun moyen que celui d'une force ouverte & superieure aux efforts des méchants, qui puissent arrêter le torrent de tant d'impiétés et de barbaries ... Nous croyons pouvoir et devoir faire usage du puissant moyen que la Providence nous met entre les mains, dans la confédération de quarante cinq mille hommes armés dans le pays des montagnes & de vingt cinq mille hommes également armés et fédérés dans le Bas Languedoc, pour le rétablissement de la Religion catholique, des prerogatives de la Couronne, le bien des peuples et la delivrance du roi." <sup>1</sup>

Here is a second, from an anonymous letter sent to the Protestant deputy Rabaut Saint-Etienne and signed Eustache Valbonne, Catholique romaine Pour la vie, Prêt a verser son Sang pour la Soutenir:

"En transant cé deux ligne mon sang se glasse & mé cheveux c'est dresse par l'horreur qu'un ame honnette et sensible a de tes execrables projets cromveliste ... C'est dans ton infernal laboratoire de Jacobins que tu a combiné avec tes cannibale la ruine de la Religion et de la Monarchie. Cé toy encore .. qui avoient combiné lexeccrable complot de te defaire le 5<sup>e</sup> 8bre de la famille royale et de toutes ses fidelles garde qui tu a fait massacré comme a Nisme le 3 may et le 14 juin et à Montauban Castres et autres lieux ... Il nous faut la tête de tous scelerat principalement la tienne comme la plus noire et la plus criminelle." <sup>2</sup>

The dissimilarities of orthography and style suggest wider problems of the relationship between the rich and the poor, the urban and the rural, the literate and the semi-literate, within a single organised movement. Throughout the eighteenth century French was



the language of a minority of the inhabitants of the Midi.

"Nous pensons en languedocien avant de nous exprimer en français: cette langue-ci n'est qu'une traduction de la notre," wrote Boissier de Sauvages, the author of a French-Occitan dictionary, in 1756.<sup>3</sup> In 1795 one of the deputy Boissy d'Anglas' correspondents instructed him to ensure that:

"dans les cultes dans les villes comme dans les campagnes pour ce qui est de l'instruction des ministres aux peuples, soit prones ou serments enfin toutes instructions ... soient faites en françois et non en patois comme ont les faits dans certaines villes comme à la compagne."<sup>4</sup>

This elementary expression of the distance which separated a peasant from a bourgeois is rarely visible in public records. It is a cultural distance which appears infrequently - in the français patoisant of an anonymous letter and in the occasional literal transcription of an exclamation or a threat. Its presence has to be assumed and added to the variety of other elements determining the social and political composition of royalism in the early years of the Revolution.

Royalism in the South-East of France was socially heterogeneous. Between 1790 and 1793 there were attempts to organise insurrections against the National Assembly in localities as distinct as the city of Nîmes, with its population of some 40,000 inhabitants, and the villages of Thueyts and La Souche, on the northern edge of the district du Tanargue in the newly formed department of the Ardèche. There were royalist enclaves in half a dozen smaller towns - Sommières, Uzès, Alès, Saint-Ambroix, Barjac, Les Vans, Joyeuse, Villeneuve-de-Berg - in the region lying between

Nîmes and Aubenas in the Ardèche. There were dozens of bourgs - like Genolhac, Banne or Saint-Jean de Valériscle - and scores of smaller villages and hamlets, which were to acquire notoriety as bastions of reaction and foyers de fanatisme.

At Nîmes, a long period of political intrigue and social tension culminated in a bloody massacre on June 12th - 14th 1790, when between 100 and 300 royalists were killed by members of the patriot National Guard in Nîmes and from villages and towns in the Vaunage and the Cévennes, to the south-west and west of the city. This was the bagarre de Nîmes.<sup>5</sup> Two months later, on August 18th 1790, a vast assemblée fédérative held on the plaine de Jalès in the village of Berrias, on the southern edge of the department of the Ardèche, in response to the massacre at Nîmes issued an openly royalist manifesto. This was the first Camp de Jalès.<sup>6</sup> In February 1791, after anti-royalist riots at Uzès, a second assembly at Jalès was convened, and armed members of the royalist national guard of dozens of villages in the Ardèche and the Gard attempted to march upon Nîmes. Over a year later, a third, much smaller royalist insurrection - the abortive conspiration de Saillans - took place in the same region. It was followed, in the spring of 1793, by Charrier's unsuccessful rebellion in the neighbouring department of the Lozère. Royalism was thus endemic to a vast zone stretching northwards from Nîmes, as far as Aubenas in the Vivarais and Mende in the Gévaudan, or westwards - to Sommières, Saint-Hipolytte and Le Vigan in the Cévennes.

The social composition of royalism reflected this diversity of localities. Identification of the most prominent royalists -



leaders, organisers or more discreet conspirators - presents few problems. The majority have left sufficient trace of their activities to ensure that their complicity is not in doubt. Broadly, they mirrored the composition of the upper echelons of eighteenth century French society: the church, the army, the landed nobility (of varying degrees of authenticity) and the liberal and commercial professions were all represented in the royalist group at Nîmes, among the members of the royalist societes des vrais Français and within the état-major of the Camp de Jalès. The short-lived royalist municipality of Nîmes, which held office between January and July 1790 (it was suspended after the Bagarre), contained five nobles or soi-disants, an abbé, two doctors, an avocat, a négociant, a former conseiller at the Présidial of Nîmes and an assortment of small merchants, landowners and artisans.<sup>7</sup> Among the captains of the royalist companies of the national guard at Nîmes, were a former page du roi, a négociant, a procureur and a former greffier consulaire. At Nîmes the royalist leadership centred upon the Froment family, particularly Pierre Froment, formerly keeper of the municipal records, his youngest son François and his brother, the Abbé Jacques Froment. Among the other leaders of the royalist companies of the national guard were two lawyers, André Folacher and Antoine Vidal, two merchants - Charles Borie and Charles Gaussard - and a former page du roi, Jacques-François Descombiés. At Jalès, the nucleus of the royalist organisation was made up by the co-seigneur of Berrias, Louis-Joseph Bastide

de Malbosc, the prior of the adjoining parish of Chambonas, Claude Allier, a notaire, Francois Perrochon, from Saint-Ambroix, Louis-Antoine Delbos, chevalier d'Auzon, Claude-Antoine de Chalbos, Baron de Theyrargues, the abbé de la Bastide de la Molette and a cluster of local notables - lawyers, retired army officers, rentiers and priests - from the towns and villages of the vicinity.<sup>8</sup>

The social composition of their supporters and allies was equally heterogeneous. In April 1790, royalists in Nîmes assembled in the city's chapelle des Pénitents blancs and approved a statement demanding the preservation of the royal prerogatives and the position of the Catholic church. A surviving fragment of the original petition contains the signatures of 154 individuals, of whom 40 specified their occupations. Ten of these described themselves as négociants and another 4 as marchands; 9 were silkworkers and the remainder artisans or small retailers, with the exception of two lawyers and one councillor at the Présidial.<sup>9</sup> Many of the adherents to the deliberation were obliged to retract their signatures after the Bagarre. A Sr. Joseph Gourdon, tafetassier, declared that the délibération des catholiques de Nîmes was "insidieuse, ne l'ayant signée que par ignorance et erreur de fait."<sup>10</sup> In all, a total of 103 individuals publicly retracted their signatures.<sup>11</sup> All but 36 of them merely signed their names. Their clumsy signatures suggest, however, that most of them were neither wealthy or sophisticated. Of the remainder, the majority were artisans and small manufacturers, able to sign only with difficulty.<sup>12</sup> The Bagarre itself left many royalists dead. Estimates of the



total vary between the three hundred or more advanced by royalists, and the fifty or less proposed by their opponents. Francois Fabre-Lichaire, a well-to-do silk merchant, wrote that between 200 and 300 had died "au lieu de trois mille," as his correspondent had suggested.<sup>13</sup> The most reliable guess comes from the future conventionnel Privat-Garilhe, an eyewitness with no royalist sympathies. According to him, "on apreine (sic) le nombre des morts à deux cents, mais je crois qu'on le diminue. On en trouvait partout, car on a enterré à l'hopital seul 112. Cellui des blessés n'est pas connu. Il en meurt de ceux-là journallement."<sup>14</sup>

The names and occupations of these victims is not, of course, an entirely reliable reflection of the social composition of royalism. As Garilhe noted, "il y a parmi les morts des coupables, mais il y a aussi des victimes innocentes. Bien des gens qui n'étoient pour rien dans la querelle ont été tués."<sup>15</sup> In addition, the registers of the Hôpital general of Nîmes have not survived, so that it is possible only to identify those victims buried by their parish priest. A further twenty-one individuals - "mort d'une blessure occasionée d'un coup de feu," "mort d'un coup de feu," or simply "enterré avec beaucoup d'autres au cimetière de l'hotel-dieu" - can be identified in this way.<sup>16</sup> Among them were six travailleurs de terre, two taffetassiers, three faiseurs de bas, an ouvrier, a porteur de chaises, a marchand, a marchand de vin, a marchand de paille, a jardinier, a cordonnier, and a maître

tailleur d'habits. They were typical of the ordinary membership of the royalist companies of the national guard of Nîmes which were involved in most of the fighting. "On les (i.e. the companies) formoit des travailleurs de terre, des artisans, meme en dernier lieu on y avoit incorporé des portefaix et des balayeurs de rues," Garilhe informed his cousin.

The registers of the national guard of both Nîmes and the towns and villages of the Gard and the Ardèche represented in the royalist assembly at Jalès have disappeared. 178 villages and towns were represented at the first camp de Jalès.<sup>17</sup> The camp brought together between 20,000 and 30,000 armed members of local national guards drawn from a zone covering portions of the departments of the Gard, the Ardèche and the Lozère.

Since the complexion of the assembly was widely known in advance, the decision to send a deputation to Jalès was a conscious political choice. Many villages and towns in the Vivarais and the Uzège sent considerable deputations. Rivière de Teyrargues, a village to the south of Saint-Ambroix in the Gard, sent no less than fifteen officers. The village of Notre-Dame de Meyrannes sent a detachment of 74 légionnaires; the legion of Valabrix, in the district of Uzès, sent 25 men. One of the captains of the national guard of Uzès informed the état-major of Jalès that "nous comptons sur une centaine d'hommes et deux cents a peu pres des communautés qui nous circonvoisinent." Deputations of a similar size were sent from villages nearer to Jalès - Banne, Malbosc, the two Cruzières, Ribes, Grospierres, Les Assions - on







the edges of the Gard and the Ardèche.<sup>18</sup> Occasionally, however, certain communes decided to send token deputations of two or three as a precaution against potential reprisal, rather than as a gesture of solidarity. It was rare for the decision to send a deputation to pass without opposition.

The social composition of the companies of the national guard represented at Jalès can only be ascertained indirectly.<sup>19</sup> Eligibility for the national guard was met by fulfilling the requirements for active citizenship.<sup>20</sup> Effectively, this ensured that most of the male inhabitants of villages in the Uzège and the Vivarais could enlist in the légion nationale legitimately.<sup>21</sup> Thus, in December 1790, the village of Malbosc, on the fringe of the Vivarais, drew up a census of its population. "On compte dans cette municipalité 181 maisons habitées situées en neuf villages asses éloignés les uns des autres y compris les hameaux et maisons écartées," it reported.

"Le nombre de personnes qu'elle renferme - vieillards, hommes, femmes, enfans et domestiques - s'élève à mille et vingt neuf individus, existant au mois de Decembre 1790.

Les citoyens actifs sont au nombre de 148. Le surplus qui consiste en trente trois sont des habitants de la dernière classe ne payant pas trois livres de taille. L'état des domestiques, valets, servantes ou bergers se porte au nombre de 16 qui sont tous originaires de l'endroit. Le nombre des habitants peu aisés fournit non seulement les domestiques nécessaires, mais encore une quantité considerable d'ouvriers qui vont à assister aux ouvrages publics pour avoir de quoi se nourrir et faire substanter leurs familles."<sup>22</sup>

The community of Brahic performed a similar operation in January 1791. Of 92 male chefs de famille, only seven were not active citizens. The village had a total population of 388.<sup>23</sup> At Thines, out of a total population of 650, there were 130 active citizens.<sup>24</sup> At Berrias 228 individuals or families (excluding widows)



were enumerated in the livre de taille of 1789; in 1790, 166 of the commune's inhabitants were classed as citoyens actifs.<sup>25</sup>

Broadly speaking therefore, membership of the companies of the garde nationale represented at Jalès was a reflection of the social structure of the towns and villages from which they came. With the partial exception of Nîmes, there were few landless labourers in the region.<sup>26</sup> The national guards of the Ardèche and the Gard were therefore made up of travailleurs de terre, journaliers, assorted artisans and small propriétaires and cultivateurs - all owning a certain amount of land - and the members of the liberal and commercial professions - bourgeois, notaires, procureurs, médecins, marchands and négociants - found in even the smallest villages of the Midi méditerranéen. Since, as Privat-Garilhe remarked,<sup>27</sup> royalists in Nîmes and their counterparts in Uzès, Alès, Joyeuse, and Villeneuve-de-Berg, created their own particular companies of the national guard composed mainly of citoyens passifs, the social basis of popular royalism extended to even the poorest labourers and urban workers.

Royalism in the South-East thus embraced a variety of social worlds. Its élite belonged to a movement which, if often diffuse and occasionally chaotic, was of provincial, if not national, dimensions. Royalists in Nîmes had their counterparts in Arles, Avignon, Montpellier, Montauban and Toulouse, and, by the summer of 1790, were in regular contact with the first émigrés at Turin. By the following year a semi-permanent network of information and

instruction had been erected between royalists in the Midi and their allies at Turin and Coblenz. This network was the apanage of the coded message, of agents and double-agents, disguises and mysterious meetings, and the fascination and danger of intrigue.<sup>28</sup> It had a geography of its own, which reached from the Vivarais, southwards to Barcelona, via Nîmes and Perpignan, and eastwards to Turin and later Coblenz, via Lyon, Chambéry and Savoy. The comte d'Antraigues had his sources of information in the Jacobin club at Villeneuve-de-Berg. The abbé Jacques Froment, a native of Nîmes, was in regular contact with royalists in Joyeuse and the village of Naves in the Ardèche, together with former political allies in Nîmes itself. The town of Villefort, on the eastern fringe of the Lozère, formed a further centre of information and conspiracy, with close connections with royalists in Chambéry, Lyon, Geneva and Coblenz.<sup>29</sup> "Je pars le mardi pour Turin ..." runs an anonymous letter to a cleric intercepted at Villefort in the spring of 1792.

"Si on vous force à partir, ou que vous coures le moindre danger, venez ici. Prenez un passe-port pour Lyon sous la qualité de jeune homme qui quitte les études pour aller apprendre l'horlogerie. Allez à l'auberge de France, place des Carreaux. Demandez M. Adrien ou Chabrol qui vous feront avoir un autre passe-port pour Genève sous cette qualite. De là vous viendrez à l'auberge du Dauphin et m'attendrez ... Sur rien prenez un habite laïque, havresaque et cocarde - route de Chasorne à Langogne de nuit, si Bonet y est. Autrement par Lesperon, ou on va de L.F. puis au Monestier ou vous verrez à l'abbaye Mr Cavalier qui vous indiquera pour Lyon."<sup>30</sup>

The style speaks for itself.



Locally, royalists in Nîmes, Uzès, Alès and the other towns and villages involved in the camps de Jalès, maintained a regular degree of co-ordination in their activities. The coincidence between local elections and intensifications of royalist activity did not escape any of the agents of the national assembly.<sup>31</sup> "Les troubles de Nîmes avoient éclaté au moment de la formation des corps administratifs, et probablement pour l'empêcher," reported one of the commissaires du roi sent to investigate the second Camp de Jalès:

"Il est remarquable que ceux qui viennent d'avoir lieu à Uzès, à Saint-Ambroix etc. ont précédé de peu de jours l'assemblée electorale qui doivent (sic) donner un évêque au département du Gard, et que le camp de Jalès avoit été fixé à peu près à l'époque de cette assemblée convoquée pour le dimanche 27e fevrier."<sup>32</sup>

In the same way, royalists throughout the region followed the example of Nîmes and organised their own companies of the national guard often with their own uniform or cocades. At Villeneuve-de-Berg "certains esprits inquiets et turbulents" took advantage of the formal creation of the garde nationale in August 1790 to organise their own companies:

"Ils ne se proposent rien moins," reported the Directoire du district, "que de former des compagnies, de leur nommer des chefs qui se trouveraient avoir l'uniforme bleu, tandis que la garde nationale seule reconnue dans cette ville ... composée de près de cent hommes choisis parmi l'élite des citoyens ... se trouveroit avoit l'uniforme habit verd, ce qui presenterait un contraste frappant (et) engagerait necessairement des rixes entre les verds et les bleus."<sup>33</sup>

In the village of Berrias, with its population of some thousand inhabitants the companies of the national guard were divided in a similar manner. "Il y a deux compagnies P(atriotes) et deux

companies catholiques," ran a memorandum to the Directory of the department of the Gard early in 1791. "Des Ptes, ou pour mieux dire quelques factieux des ces Ptes designent les autres sous le nom de cebets, bragouzes etc."<sup>34</sup> These divisions, and the rhetoric which they produced, were duplicated in dozens of towns and villages throughout the region.

To this extent it is possible to describe a royalist movement, which covered much of the northern half of the Gard and the southern portion of the Ardèche, and merged, if only tenuously, with the clandestine network centred upon Turin and Coblenz. At a second level, however, royalism was an intimate and personal affair; the product of subterranean currents of local association, local loyalties and local tensions, where the abstractions of throne and altar gave way to the particularities of the real, the visible and the known. "Citoyens," announced a placard posted in the village of Lablachère in 1795 and signed L'Ami du Peuple, de la Liberté, de l'Egalité, de la Justice et de l'Humanité, "En parcouran ces contrées j'ai vu là avec regret la masse du peuple meprisee de la part d'une bande de Royalistes ..."

"Je m'en va vous les citer: Rivière le meneur, Audibert fils l'empoisonneur, Gervais le babillard, Salel des Ribières le politique, Boissel le fanatique Thoulouse du Béage avec son fils, l'espion des tirands, Lebre de Dumont, le sot et l'ignorant, Rondil de Salines, l'aveugle et l'insensé, qui par son aveuglement se laisse tromper, Richard chapelain, l'avare, flateur des femmes dévotes pour avoir leur argent, quand elles ne portent rien leur donne leur va-t-en. Voilà citoyens ceux dont vous devez vous méfier."<sup>35</sup>



The converse was equally true. Just as royalists were known and publicly identified, so too were their opponents. "Jettez les yeux ... sur ces ames venales que les protestants sanguinaires payent de votre argent pour debaucher une partie de vos compagnons d'armes," warned a placard entitled Aux Gardes nationales du Camp de Jalès which appeared in the autumn of 1790:

"A Barjac c'est un Borie, à Joyeuse, un Planzolle, un Cousin, et un Thoulouze, à Lablachère c'est un Colombier; à L'argentière un Gimont et à Berrias un Delarque, frère d'un fameux fripon député à l'assemblée nationale. Gardez vous de la seduction de cette horde de citoyens pervers devenus le jouet de la sceleratesse des Brigans de la capitale et qui se sont vendus aux Protestans ..." <sup>36</sup>

At this level, royalism was the product of local scandals, long-standing enmities and the durable and very personal divisions which occurred within small communities. Its language is replete with the rich imagery of the language of the rural poor. Paul Durand of the village of Saint-Sauveur-de-Cruzières stated that, in March 1792,

"le nommé Chambon fils aîné de St. Sauveur lui demanda s'il avoit tué son cochon et s'il avoit du vin ... Le deposant lui ayant repondu que oui, il lui dit 'eh bien, nous viendrons manger les saucisses et boire le vin, et qu'on lui mettroit encore cinquante hommes chez lui à discretion, étant un foutu gueux de patriote.'" <sup>37</sup>

It is probable that many such statements were made, originally, in a patois, rather than in French. <sup>38</sup> There is enough to suggest that much of the language of popular royalism was a patois variant of the langue d'oc - occitan. A royalist song, diligently transcribed by a member of the municipality of Les Vans in the year III, is probably representative of many others. It consists of a series of slanderous portraits of the local pierrots

(patriotes):

Parlen un paou d'aquel Pegut<sup>39</sup>  
 que n'es esta un premier Pierrot  
 que travaillo lou dimenché  
 li foutren lou sabre din lou ventre

(chorus) Ah ah vraiment  
 la guillotine les attend  
 sautri sautra la dera  
 saran toutes guilloutina  
 la guillotine lour aura.  
 D'enfant de Maria  
 ne voulan pas ça  
 d'enfant d Brutus  
 ne voulan pas plus<sup>40</sup>  
 d'enfant de Courbis  
 ne voulan pas gis.  
 Ah ah tous scelerats  
 saran trop tard guilloutinas.

Parlen un paou d'aquel Mazer<sup>41</sup>  
 qui li foutren sa teste en l'air  
 Li et sa foutu mounine (wife)  
 passeront à la guillotine

(chorus)  
 Parlen un paou del grand Colomb<sup>42</sup>  
 que requerissié lou savoun  
 per ne donna a sas maistresses

(chorus)

And so on, for fifty more verses, through the summer evenings, echoing across the narrow streets of the small town, to the accompaniment of jeers and shouts, creating fear behind the shuttered windows and locked doors of the pierrot houses.<sup>43</sup>

Similarly, Louis Chalmeton, a travailleur de terre of the village of Berrias, confessed, with more than a little irony, that "il m'arrivait souvent le jour comme la nuit, de chanter avec mes amis ... des chansons contre la constitution, mais c'était simplement par ignorance, n'étant pas alors bien instruit que toute la nation voulait la constitution."<sup>44</sup> At Nîmes, when news arrived



that Rabaut-Saint-Etienne had been elected president of the National Assembly, a song appeared to commemorate the event:

"L'exécrable assemblée a fait un président  
dont le choix à jamais deshonoré la France  
au fauteuil est assis Rabaut le prédicant  
Agent stipendié de l'huguenotte engeance..."<sup>45</sup>

Here, the distinction between organised 'insurrection' and informal communal reprisal was fine. Innumerable local disturbances were heralded by the appearance of a gibbet in the market place, by crosses painted over the doors of known patriotes or placards posted at the entrance to the hotel de ville. Variations upon popular songs - Marlborough s'en va-t-en guerre or Je suis marquis prêt à boire - were frequently the prelude to a barrage of stones and the occasional gunshot directed at the windows of a local patriote.

In part, such practices were an extension of the traditions of the barrack room. The names of many minor royalists - Jean-Baptiste Malbosc dit marquis, Etienne Pelet dit Pialety, Jean Sarremejane dit Vivet, Joseph Moutet dit Labillat - echo the noms de guerre of the armées royales, and it would be instructive to examine the evident similarities between certain aspects of the royalist mentality and the traditions of the army. But popular royalism owed a greater cultural debt to informal local traditions. This was manifest not only in the words used in insults and threats, but also in the symbolic gestures of collective pressure and intimidation. A farandole, the appearance of a may tree in the place publique or more obscure customs, such as the public sale of a hat, could

all become occasions of riot or disorder. The riots at Uzès, which precipitated the second camp de Jalès, began on the evening of February 12th 1791, after a fight in a cabaret. Later that evening a royalist farandole began, and was dispersed by the municipality. On the following day, the 13th, "les farandoules recommencèrent et grossirent. Des attroupements se formèrent. On commença à craindre. Un nommé Boussard, revenu depuis trois ou quatre jours du Régiment royal qui l'a renvoyé à la demande de ses camarades, étoit à la tête. On y crioit "A bas la nation, au Diable la Nation, Vive les Aristocrates! Tout cela preageait une explosion prochaine. Elle ne tarda pas en effet à se manifester."<sup>46</sup>

Such disturbances could occur from other popular activities. On Sunday June 30th 1790 the patriote municipality of Joyeuse reported that "nombre de particuliers, ennemis acharnés de la municipalité, profitant de l'absence de M. le Maire, M. le procureur de la commune et du Sr Charme, députés à Privas en qualité d'électeurs, machinèrent quelques jours auparavant la réforme de cette municipalité."

To this end:

"Ils prirent ce jour là la pretexte de faire un branle en y entraînant tous ceux qu'ils rencontrèrent le long des rues afin de grossir le nombre des sauteurs ... Le Sr Baile étoit un des plus zelés partisans de ce branle, aussi que le Sr Brahic ... Pour animer l'esprit de tous ceux qui le composaient, ils avaient soin de les desalterer avec du vin que le Sr Brahic charait le long des rues."<sup>47</sup>

The manoeuvre failed, but the gestures continued. In February 1792, the municipality forbade "toute personne d'exercer aucun tumulte



dans les rues ni ailleurs, de chanter aucune chanson scandaleuse soit de jour soit de nuit, de porter aucun baton ni aucune arme," and, two weeks later, "fait défense à toute personne de prendre aucun déguisement ni musique."<sup>48</sup>

At Les Vans, the royal acceptance of the constitution of 1791 was celebrated with a farandole on Sunday, September 18th. Royalists in the town decided to respond in kind:

"Toute la semaine (suivante) est employée à provoquer un rendez-vous avec toute la contrée dans cette ville. Le signal est un chapeau qu'on propose à jouer. Il est rapporté que des lettres et des emissaires circulent partout ... Le samedi 24e, le chapeau est acheté. On affecte de ne le parer que de rubans blancs et rouges. Une grande cocarde blanche y est aborée ... Le dimanche 25, quelques jeunes gens des Assions arrivent avec un autre chapeau orné de rubans ... Le premier chapeau parait par la ville. Les esprits s'electrisent: les patriotes ferment leurs portes. Le rassemblement se forme sur l'esplanade; d'autres paroisses fournissent d'autres acteurs. Il y avait plus de cent étrangers .. Les chapeaux joués sont portés d'un manière triomphale. On demande au maire la permission de faire la farandoule. Il le refuse. Les petitionnaires lui repondent qu'on la fera qu'il le permette ou non, et on la fait ... Enfin ce jourd'hui, le matin, le maire donne sa démission."<sup>49</sup>

The range of royalist activity thus extended from individual acts of reprisal - an anonymous letter, a murder, or the selective destruction of property - to armed insurrection, with the less formal mutations of local rituals creating an ambivalent but potentially explosive, point of transition between the two. In 1790 or 1791, any of these activities were political activities. They engaged or called into question power and authority, from that of a particular individual elected to the office of procureur of a commune of five hundred inhabitants, to that of the National Assembly itself. It is an altogether richer, and more varied range

of political activity than than encompassed by the revolutionary sections of Paris in the year II. The juxtaposition underlines the social heterogeneity of royalism in the South-East. For where organised politics in revolutionary Paris was limited to a fairly narrow social elite, varying in its composition in accordance with the salient characteristics of a particular quartier, politics in the south-east covered both the literate, prosperous and fully metropolitan world of the royalist elite of Nîmes, and the worlds of scores of tightly-knit, remote and relatively archaic rural communities in the Uzège and the Vivarais.<sup>50</sup> Royalism in the south-east was thus a fusion, or to be more accurate, an attempted fusion, of a multitude of social worlds. The purpose of this study is to examine how such a fusion came to be possible.

Most obviously, the language of sectarian conflict provided a common perspective which transcended social and geographical division. Symbolically, the Bagarre of Nîmes was a grotesque re-enactment of the Michelade of 1563. In 1790, as in 1563, Calvinists came to power in the wake of a massacre of Catholics. In the 1790's, as in the 1560's, hostile pamphleteers raised the spectre of the establishment of an independent Calvinist republic in the South of France.<sup>51</sup> In May 1790, a correspondent informed the comte de Saint-Priest that "toutes les villes et villages sont partagés en deux partis suivant les religions. Il y a eu des assemblées et des coalitions de ces deux partis et des sermens prêtés de part et d'autre de se réunir pour se soutenir."<sup>52</sup> Anti-Protestantism was a major component of royalist rhetoric in the South-East,



and became particularly vituperative after the Bagarre. In October 1790, the royalist municipality of the village of Banne announced the "discovery" of what it claimed was a letter from Protestants in Nîmes announcing preparations for a further massacre:

"Nous vous adressons la présente," it ran, "pour vous dire combien nous sommes impatients de voir arriver vos gardes nationales et celles de toutes vos contrées et circonvoinage. Dites-leur de notre part que la salade est prête; nous les attendons aux Esplanades pour y mettre le sel, pourvu que ce soit avant la fin du mois ou au plus tard le 10e octobre, parce que plus tard elle pourrait se gater. Comme elle sera assez copieuse vous pouvez inviter le Gevaudan ainsi que les Auvergnés; nous leur en conservons leur bonne partie. Qu'ils viennent sans façon, nous leur ferons donner le Rigaudan."<sup>53</sup>

Rumour and the prevailing uncertainty lent credence to these claims. On February 24th, 1791, the municipality of the village of Saint-Eulalie, on the edge of the Hautes-Cévennes, asked for sixty guns from the Directory of the department of Ardèche:

"Comme nous trouvons (sic) menacés de toute part de la surprise de la part des Calvinistes et que notre garde nationale de notre dite municipalité se trouvant sans fusils et bayonette ni autre arme convenable pour le soutien et la Deffance de Notre Sainte Religion."<sup>54</sup>

Fear of Protestant violence and a desire to avenge the Bagarre were the usual explanations given by men arrested as royalists, for their involvement in the Camps de Jalès. On July 31st 1790, Joseph Moutet, the maire of Les Vans, warned the departmental administration that the impending assembly at Jalès was a danger to the town:

"Toutes nos paroisses voisines sont catholiques et leurs projets nous sont connus de venger sur les protestans de cette ville l'injure faite aux catholiques de Nîmes."<sup>55</sup>



And two months later, several witnesses to the proceedings at Jalès reported that they had seen members of the national guard carrying staves in the form of a cross, to the accompaniment of shouts of "Vive les Catholiques! Au Diable les Protestants!"<sup>56</sup>

Three members of the National Assembly sent to investigate the Camp reported that "on nous dit que les municipalités et le peuple des contrées insurgentes restent convaincus que le devoir les obligeoit à ce qui a été fait ... Beaucoup de catholiques se croient dévoués au martyrs et y sont parfaitement résignés."<sup>57</sup>

Usually, however, vengeance was the most common reason. Jean-Louis Lavie, a ménager from Saint-Jean de Marvéjols, aged 25, stated that he had been told that the camp de Jalès had been formed "pour venger les catholiques qui avoient été égorgés par les protestants dans les affaires de Nîmes et d'Uzès, et comme j'ay été obligé de quitter mon habitation à Saint-Jean à l'occasion de ces mêmes affaires, j'ai cru me venger des torts qu'on m'avoit fait ..."<sup>58</sup>

This body of attitudes was buttressed by a more sophisticated literature of anti-Protestantism, which reached back to accounts of the Michelade and passed, via accounts of the révolte de Rohan and the guerre des Camisards, to the works of the abbe Novy de Caveirac, published between 1750 and 1770, and imitated in some of the more virulent royalist pamphlets to appear in the 1790's.<sup>59</sup> An inventory made of the stock belonging to a Sr Gaude, a bookseller in Nîmes in the early 1740's, mentions twelve copies of Brueys' Histoire du Fanatisme dans les Cévennes, a violently

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pro-catholic account of the guerre des Camisards published at Montpellier in 1709. It was the largest single item in his stock, after the New Testament (22 copies).<sup>60</sup> To this extent, the rhetoric of anti-Protestantism transcended social division.

There is little, however, to suggest that this durable tradition was accompanied by great attention to the formalities of religious observance. In 1725, barely two decades after the château de Grospierres had been razed by the Camisards, the curé of the parish enumerated the number of communicants over the Easter period. On Shrove Tuesday there were 27; on Maundy Thursday, 63; on Easter Saturday there were 37; 36 on Sunday; 49 on Monday and 32 on Tuesday. On the Sunday before Easter there were only four communicants; on Sunday April 8th 1725, there were seven and on the following Sunday, only one. At this time the village had a total population of some four hundred, of whom three quarters were old enough to receive the Sacrement.<sup>61</sup> The number of pascalisants in certain catholic parishes in the diocese of Alès suggests a similar indifference to the public rituals of devotion. In four parishes composed exclusively of anciens catholiques (Saint-Sauveur-de-Pourcils, Saint-Laurent-de-Lanuéjol, Saint-Pierre-de-Revant and Notre-Dame de Trèves) the proportion of communicants recorded in the episcopal visitation of 1738 varies from between 50 to 66% of the total adult population - a relatively low proportion for the obligatory mass at Easter.<sup>62</sup> It is probable that attendance on a normal Sunday was very much lower.

It is therefore probable that the body of attitudes which made up popular catholicism was sustained less by the formal precepts



of observance, than by local tradition, local solidarities and the slow accretion of the elaborate rituals of sectarian conflict over the generations, expressed over the regular seasonal and weekly cycle of social intercourse. The peasants of the Ardeche were, according to the Prefect, "laborieux, courageux, superstitieux, ennemis de toute contrainte, attachés à leur miserable pays."

"Dans un état de méfiance continuel contre leurs ennemis, ils ne s'écartent jamais de leurs habitations sans être armés d'un fusil, de pistolets ou d'un large coutelas qui s'adapte au besoin au bout d'un baton en forme de pique ... Ils aiment le vin, les liqueurs fortes avec passion. Les jours de foires et de dimanche ils s'entassent dans les cabarets (et) en boivent avec excès. Là les têtes s'échauffent, les haines se reveillent. On aperçoit son ennemi, on le provoque la rixe s'engage et bientôt on se donne des coups de fusil, de pistolets (et) on se porte aux coups de coutelas ... Souvent le vin n'entre pour rien dans ces terribles démêlés."<sup>63</sup>

Statistics confirm this impression. Criminality in the Vivarais, the northern edge of the Uzège and the eastern fringes of the Gévaudan and the Velay, was markedly a criminality against persons and not property. Physical assault, murder or rape made up a much larger proportion of criminal proceedings in this region than they did in the areas around Nîmes, Montpellier, Narbonne or Toulouse, where theft and fraud was much more common.<sup>64</sup>

The rituals of rural sectarian conflict were a logical extension of these forms of popular disorder. The carefully calculated insults which frequently preceded fights between royalists and patriots were a further mutation of the same tradition. Alexis Souchon, a weaver from Les Vans, stated that "ayant fait une partie aux boules avec François Tendil ... Il aperçut à son



retour audevant la Porte Rouge (de la ville) un groupe composé de Marc-Antoine Chevalier, Jean Tichy dit Gévaudan, aubergiste, du nommé Arnaut, boulanger, et de Francois Borelly ... Ledit Arnaut l'ayant appercu avec ledit Tendil, reconnu pour patriote, dit, en s'adressant au groupe: "Souchon est un foutu porc."<sup>65</sup>

The ensuing brawl was entirely predictable.

It is not surprising that children were involved in identical disturbances. A minor riot in the town of Les Vans on May 29th 1791, began when children began stoning the Protestant church when a service was in progress.<sup>66</sup> At Alès, the municipal administration issued an arrêt on 1st Fructidor an IV forbidding "tous les enfants et à tous individus quelconques de se réunir en troupes pour se poursuivre avec des pierres."<sup>67</sup> Here social geography provided a formal and permanent setting for such activities: the Protestant quartier du Pont-Vieux was separated from the catholic quartiers du Marché and de la Rocque by the bed of the river Gardon, which formed a natural battle ground for the children of both communities.<sup>68</sup> A letter from Joseph Lacroix, of the village of Brahic, later accused of complicity in Saillans rebellion by ten witnesses, to the juge de paix of Les Vans, is a fine illustration of this compound of elaborate aggression and unsophisticated piety:

"J'ay appris que vos desseins sont de me faire arrêter. J'étois cependant hier à votre ville et vous auriez tres bien fait de profiter de cette belle occasion. Je suis à present chez moi tranquille n'ayant rien à me reprocher, sur tout des affaires qui vous concernant ... Mais, monsieur, où sont mes crimes, et le sujet de cette arrestation? ... Ce que je disjeudy dernier a la sortie de la messe étoit que si un louis fesoit pendre tous les coquins, je le donnerois, que je ne croyois pas meme de mieux l'employer. Ah! Monsieur vous vous opposés à cette raison. J'en suis vivement surpris. Si j'étois sans doute à la place

de Jourdan-coup-têtes, je seray à vos yeux un honnête homme. Mais Dieu me préservera des pareils crimes. Je prefere d'être brave aux yeux de notre souverain redempteur qu'aux crottes ... Le temps viendra que vos belles entreprises cesseront. Celluy de la justice viendra et vous serez autant petit que vous etes grand dans le moment."<sup>69</sup>

From this perspective then, royalism in South-Eastern France was an extension of a certain regional culture, made up of a compound of local traditions, the rituals of sectarian hostility and an informal popular piety. Yet the historical problem remains. Why should this compound have formed at a particular time and in a particular place? If the fear of Calvinism endowed royalism with a powerful and emotive general appeal, what were the particular circumstances which gave rise to the Bagarre of Nîmes, and led from Nîmes to the remote plain of Jalès? If the language of sectarian conflict reveals an area in which the fears and aspirations of many different social groups and communities could come together, how much more does it conceal? For royalism and catholicism were never synonymous. Even the tiny village of Berrias, in the heart of the royalist zone, was riven by conflicts between patriotes and royalistes - who were all catholics.<sup>70</sup>

At Joyeuse, Barjac, Villeneuve-de-Berg and Bagnols - towns with almost no Protestants - the conflicts were no less virulent. At Nîmes, Uzès, Alès, Saint-Ambroix, Les Vans and Villefort, there were catholic, as well as Protestant, patriotes. What, therefore, was the meaning of the language of sectarian hostility in the context of 1789-1790? Why did some men of bourgeois or noble origin side with some peasants or artisans in defence of throne and altar?



What were the tensions and conflicts explained by the rhetoric of religious hostility? For rhetoric can be selective and specific, even in the form of the most extreme generalisation. This is its force and its mystery. The rhetoric of royalism was more than an epiphenomenon of other, more 'real', tensions and conflicts.

It served to translate a given structure of material association into an organised movement. It was the means by which a particular form of power was identified and rejected, and, as such, owed much to the languages of political discourse of the late eighteenth century.

Notes - Chapter 1

1. "Proclamation de Francois-Louis, comte de Saillans ... Commandant en second au nom de Leurs Altesses Royales, Monsieur & Monseigneur Comte d'Artois, dans le Bas-Languedoc, le Vivarais, le Velay etc. ..." in Conspiration de Saillans avec les Pieces authentiques. Privas, 1792, Annexe 3.
2. A.N. F<sup>7</sup> 4774<sup>86</sup> n.d. (1790 ?). Compare with the anonymous letter to the same man sent from Montauban in 1790, and reproduced by D. Ligou in A.h.R.f. T.22, 1950. pp.350-352: "Oui maître Etienne Rabaud, le sang impur a commence a couler ..."
3. P.A. Boissier de Sauvages, Dictionnaire Languedocien-Francais. Nimes, 1756, p.vi.
4. A.N. F<sup>7</sup> 4606 6. Fruct. III. See also M. de Certeau, D. Julia & J. Revel, Une Politique de la Langue: La Revolution Francais et les Patois. Paris, 1975.
5. The fullest account of the Bagarre can be found in F. Rouviere, Histoire de la Revolution dans le Departement du Gard. Nimes, 1887-1889, Vol.I. See also the studies by J. N. Hood and G. Lewis cited above p. and G. Lewis, "The White Terror in the Department of the Gard, 1789-1820: A Study in Counter-Revolution." Oxford University D.Phil. Thesis, 1965.
6. Accounts of the camps can be found in M. Tallon, Les Camps de Jales, Vienne, 1879. F. Boissin, Les Camps de Jales. 2nd edn., Annonay, 1896. C. Jolivet, La Revolution dans l'Ardeche, Largentiere, 1930.
7. Cf. F. Rouviere, op.cit. T.I. p.87.n.i. for the list of members.
8. A.D. Gard. L 2620; A.E.A. Corr. Politique France. 636 ff 90-93; A.D. Ardeche. L 311-313; P.R.O. F.O. 95/630, 631 & P.C.I./126.
9. A.C. Nimes IKI.
10. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>44</sup> 12 f<sup>o</sup> 298V<sup>o</sup>.
11. The other retractions can be found in A.D. Gard 2E<sup>40</sup> 92ff 316V<sup>o</sup> & 340.



12. The full list is as follows:  
négociants - 3; fabriquant d'étoffes - 1; bourgeois - 1;  
fabricant en bas - 1; bijoutier - 1; musicien - 1;  
faiseurs de cardes - 2; maîtres cordonniers - 5;  
garçon cordonnier - 1; faiseurs de bas - 3; maître  
teinturier en soye - 1; berger - 1; boulangier - 1;  
arithmétique - 1; carbonnier - 1; cardeurs de  
filozelle - 7; ovaleur de soie - 1; choisiller en  
soie - 1; buratier - 1; taffetassier - 1; broquier - 1.
13. A.D. Gard IE (unclassified). Papers of F. Fabre-Lichaire.  
Livre de Copies de Lettres. To J. Roux, St. Martin-de-Castilhon,  
16.7.1790.
14. A.D. Ardèche IF 15. To Fabre, Jaujac, 30.6.1790.
15. Id.
16. A.C. Nîmes UU 43.ff.214-216 and A.D. Gard IVE 187, 19.6.1790  
to 3.7.1790.
17. A.D. Ardèche L.311
18. Id. No lists of the names and occupations of delegations survive.
19. The earliest surviving registers of inscription to the  
National Guard date from 1792, after it had been reorganised.  
The reorganised national guard of the canton of Banne in  
1792, was made up as follows:
- | <u>Commune</u>             | <u>No. of National guards</u> |                                 |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Banne                      | 510                           | (2 companies)                   |
| Malbose                    | 103                           |                                 |
| Saint-Sauveur de Cruzières | 179                           | from <u>A.D. Ardèche L.1195</u> |
| Saint-Andre de Cruzières   | 120                           |                                 |
| Beaulieu                   | 114                           |                                 |
| Berrias                    | 158                           |                                 |
| Touls                      | 45                            |                                 |
20. J. Godechot, Les Institutions de la France sous la Révolution  
et l'Empire. 2nd Edn. Paris, 1968.
21. See P. Bois, Les Paysans de l'Ouest. Le Mans, 1960, pp 221-237.  
for a similar conclusion.
22. A.D. Ardèche L.1216
23. A.D. Ardèche L.901
24. Id.

25. Id. & A.D. Gard C.1714. 73% of those enumerated on the livre de taille were thus active citizens. Regrettably this is the only instance in which it is possible to compare figures from the taille with lists of citoyens actifs. Since the livre de taille also includes landowners in the parish domiciled elsewhere, it is likely that the real proportion of those who were active citizens was somewhat greater.
26. The social structure of the Uzège and the Vivarais is examined below, pp. 251 et seq.
27. See above p. 14.
28. Cf J. Chaumié Le Réseau d'Antraigues et la Contre-Révolution 1791-1793. Paris, 1965.
29. A.D. Ardèche L 316 & L 1108. Fonds Mazon. F12. Joyeuse fo.258 (on the Pellier, who were in correspondence with agents in Spain in 1792). A.A.E. 637. Correspondence between Jacques Froment and the comte d'Antraigues. J. Chaumié Op.cit. pp 86-99.
30. A.D. Ardèche L 281 (132).
31. A.D. Ardèche. L 312. A.D. Gard L 1206
32. A.D. Ardèche. L 313 "Précis historique des événements qui se sont passés dans les départements de l'Ardèche et du Gard depuis le 14e février 1791..."
33. A.D. Ardèche III E 212 d.12 "Constitution de la Garde nationale de Villeneuve-de-Berg."
34. A.D. Gard. L 413 (Since there were at the most only two or three Protestant families in the village, the language of sectarian conflict was here used by Catholics. See below p.
35. A.N. BB<sup>18</sup> 124.
36. A.N. F7 4774/86.
37. A.N. F7 4552.
38. The question of literacy and the relationship between patois and French is discussed above p.10.
39. A former member of the Société des Amis de la Constitution of Les Vans. A cobbler.



40. The maire of Nimes during the year II.
41. Cordonnier, and a former member of the same society.
42. On the Colomb, see below pp 268-270.
43. A. D. Ardèche. L 1248
44. A.N. F7 4552. Interrogation of Louis Chalmeton. Jan. 1793.
45. Cited in B.S.H.P.F. T.69, 1920.p.33.
46. A.D. Ardèche. L313
47. A.C. Joyeuse. Registre des délibérations municipales.  
5e septembre 1790. Baille was the former greffier de la  
jurisdiction de Joyeuse; Brahic was a fabricant de petites  
etoffes.
48. A.C. Joyeuse. Reg. des délibérations communales. 2 fev. 1792;  
18 fevrier 1792.
49. A.C. Les Vans. Reg. des délibérations communales. 26 sept.1791.
50. On politics in revolutionary Paris, Cf. R.M. Andrews,  
"Political Elites and Social Conflicts in the Sections of  
Revolutionary Paris: 1792-Year III." Oxford U. D.Phil.Thesis.  
1970. I am grateful to Dr. Andrews for allowing me to read  
his thesis, which modifies some of the conclusions presented  
in A. Soboul Les Sans-Culottes parisiens en l'an II. Paris 1959.
51. Cf. Anon., "Les Républiques fédératives ou lettre de M. Rabaut  
Dupuy à M. Rabaut de Saint-Etienne son frère." n.p.n.d. (1790).
52. A.N. F7 3677/1. de Bouzolz to Saint-Priest 10-5-90.
53. A.D. Ardèche. Fonds Mazon. Chr.13 fo.74 2-10-1790.
54. A.D. Ardèche. L 313.
55. A.D. Ardèche. L 311. to Dalmas, P-g-s de l'Ardèche.
56. Id.
57. A.N. BB 16 253. to Ministre de Justice 8-3-1791.
58. A.N. F7 4552 Interrogation 21-7-1792. (Many other examples  
in A.D. Ardèche. L 311, 312, 313. & A.D. Gard. L 2620)

59. On the Novy, see below pp.465-467.
60. A.D. Gard 218B (côte provisoire).
61. A.D. Ardèche. IVE. Registres de la paroisse de Grospierres.  
1725 & 1731.
62. A.D. Gard. G 1317
63. A.N. F 20 161 21-6-1806. Compare with A.D. Hérault. C 657;  
"Ces habitants superstitieux, grossiers, durs à eux-mêmes,  
vindictifs, emportés dans leur colère..." (1780).
64. N. Castan "Caractéristiques criminelles des Hautes-régions  
du Languedoc oriental de 1780 a 1790." Actes du XLIVe Congrès  
de la Fédération historique du Languedoc-Roussillon. Montpellier  
1972. pp 236-7.
65. A.N. F 7 4552.
66. A.D. Ardèche. L 1248
67. A.C. Alès. Reg. des délibérations municipales. I Fr.IV.
68. Cf. J. Brabo (Jan Castagno) E Zou! Tabo! Alès, 1879.  
for a description of such disturbances during the early  
years of the Third Republic.
69. A.N. DXL 6. Copy of letter (i.e. orthography corrected by  
Lacroix to Corenfustier, juge de paix des Vans, 20-5-1792.
70. See above p.19 and below pp.490-492.



Chapter 2 Some Aspects of the Language of Political  
Analysis in Eighteenth Century France

How then was power conceptualised in eighteenth century France? In a classic study, published in 1959, E. Kantorowitz presented an analysis of monarchical government in early modern Europe which showed how the image of royal power of the middle ages implied a more than metaphorical equation between the royal body and the body politic.<sup>1</sup> The king's body was not simply that of the ephemeral creature who lived and died; it was also the repository of the fundamental laws of the kingdom, the incarnation of monarchy. The dual nature of the royal body was still, in the eighteenth century, the premiss upon which discussions of the juridical and institutional order of the kingdom were based.<sup>2</sup> Equally, the ceremonial of public occasions and the ritual of royal funerals and coronations all rested upon the assumption that the physical presence of the monarch, or the public display of his majesty, were fundamental to the effective power of the ruler. Power was personal; not simply in the sense that it was exercised by an individual, but more profoundly in the sense that power was inconceivable without physical embodiment. The ceremonial, ritual and public display of monarchy created an elaborate exhibition of the juridical and social order of the kingdom. They sought to produce the effect of a visible hierarchy, through which invisible forms of command and deference were transmitted and received. Power was public and visible.<sup>3</sup>

Complimenting this form of defining power was an image of morality. If power could be located in a visibly ordered hierarchy of rank, then morality tended to mirror this hierarchy. Conventional analyses of criminality and the conventional forms of petition for clemency both centred upon the problem of the



extent to which an action had or had not violated the symmetrical equation of rank with morality.<sup>4</sup> Moral qualities and juridical qualities were co-extensive, as a will, drawn up in 1714, emphasised. Its author, Jacques de Vivet de Montcalm, marquis de Montclus and presiding judge of the Présidial of the sénéchaussée of Nîmes and Beaucaire, exhorted his heirs to:

"vivre et mourir dans la foi catholique, apostolique et romaine, hors de laquelle il n'y a point de salut, estre fidelle à son Roi et obéissant à ses ordres, et de ne cometre aucune action contraire à l'honneur d'un gentilhomme et au sang dont ils sont issus et au nom qu'ils portent."<sup>5</sup>

Such sentiments were based upon what might be called a rudimentary normative sociology, a series of assumptions about the relation between individual moral qualities and the social order, which served to define the nature of political stability within a highly stratified society. This normative sociology was based upon the premiss that the qualities of individuals determined the qualities of society. In simple societies, the relation between individual moral qualities and the social order was entirely uniform. Good men created good societies because their natural moral qualities allowed them to create good laws. As societies became more complicated, this simple equivalence between individual qualities, individual activities and social morality did not survive. Instead, different moral qualities were attached to the activities of the different components of the social hierarchy. The stratification of moral qualities reflected the developing stratification of society. Montesquieu's De L'Esprit des Lois was the classic formulation of this analysis of the connection between

the qualities attached to individual behaviour and the nature of the social order.

In the discussion of the principle of honour as it applied to monarchical government, Montesquieu explained the stability and continuity of such highly stratified societies in terms of such a nexus of power, rank and morality. Political order in a monarchical society was the product of the visible articulation and differentiation of these three variables.<sup>6</sup> The virtues of the powerful differed from those of the powerless because of their different positions within the ordered hierarchy of rank and moral qualities. It followed therefore that monarchy - as the apotheosis of power - was also the most visible and the most moral of institutions. Orthodox histories of France produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were primarily histories of the moral qualities of the institution of monarchy. Their historicity was grounded upon the degree to which particular kings conformed to the morality expected of monarchs.<sup>7</sup>

In the France of the reign of Louis XV, however, a more critical historical perspective was brought to bear upon the problem of defining the forms of power specific to that society. Its point of departure was a profound intuition that it was insufficient to locate power within a visibly ordered hierarchy of rank and moral qualities. It was this intuition - that the appearance of power and the reality of power were two different matters - which lay at the core of the most acute discussions of the nature of the political order of mid-eighteenth century France.



For the Montesquieu of De L'Esprit des Lois, the modern French monarchy was only apparently a monarchy. It was also a despotism, whose appearance concealed occult forms of absolute power impeding the transformation of the French nobility into that class of patrician-urban-rentiers which Montesquieu had identified as the pillar of the monarchical order in England.<sup>8</sup> "Je me bornerai," wrote his near contemporary Rousseau, in a famous passage, "seulement à jeter un coup d'oeil sur le genre humain placé dans ce nouvel ordre des choses:

Etre et paraître devinrent deux choses tout à fait différentes, et de cette distinction sortirent le faste imposant, la ruse trompeuse, et tous les vices qui en sont le cortège. D'un autre côté, de libre et indépendant qu'était auparavant l'homme, le voilà par une multitude de nouveaux besoins assujetti, pour ainsi dire à toute la nature, et surtout à ses semblables dont il devient l'esclave en un sens, même en devenant leur maître."<sup>9</sup>

This sense of the dislocation of power from its traditional place within the nexus of rank and morality served to direct political analysis away from the visible forms of command and deference of monarchical government towards another object, which in the course of the eighteenth century, came to be defined as civil society. In Montesquieu and Rousseau - and the products of the high Enlightenment of the mid-eighteenth century in general - the relationship between these two objects of analysis remained nebulous, endowing their work with a perdurable ambiguity which stemmed from the nature of their perception of the fractured bond between power, morality and the social order.

The revolutionary crisis which opened in 1787 marked the political intrusion of a different perspective upon the problem. In a certain sense, the celebrated pamphlets of that period represented the naturalisation of a different mode of conceptualising the relationship between power, rank and morality, one which was developed in Scotland and which, in 1790, came to inhabit the institutions created by the National Assembly of revolutionary France. Its point of departure was not governed by a sense of need to equate natural moral qualities with an articulated and stratified social order. Instead, it sought to equate an articulated and stratified social order with those moral qualities functional to its reproduction. David Hume's Treatise of Human Nature, Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments and the classic analysis of 1789 by one of its protagonists - Joseph Barnave's Introduction à la Révolution Française - shared a common conceptual preoccupation. The ground upon which their perspective upon the relationship between power, morality and the social order rested was civil society. The particular associations established between individuals and collectivities in the course of their activities - understood in the widest sense - was the foundation upon which public institutions embodying social authority rested.<sup>10</sup> The representative institutions of revolutionary France created in 1789-1790 were designed to function as a transparent medium, generalising and socialising the flux of morals and behaviour generated in civil society. To the visible hierarchy



of command and deference of the eighteenth century French monarchy, the revolutionaries of 1789 replied with an invisible hierarchy of information and language circulated through the hierarchy of representative institutions adumbrated in Turgot's Essai sur la Réforme des Municipalités.<sup>11</sup> Reason in 1789 was sovereign; it was also, like Smith's invisible hand, incorporeal. It inhabited the area between the representative institutions through which the experience generated in civil society circulated. Condorcet's Essai sur l'Application de l'Analyse à la Probabilité des Décisions rendues à la Pluralité des Voix of 1785 was the quintessence of this reversal of the terms in which the relationship between power, rank and morality was formulated.

The utilitarian reversal of the relationship between power, rank and morality - with its effective subordination of morality to power, rather than the inverse - thus made it possible to equate social change, social mobility and, in extremis, political revolution with continuity of power and an articulated hierarchy of rank. The perspective which it offered upon the nexus rank-power-morality made an equation between permanent revolution in society and permanence tout court in politics a non-contradictory conceptual possibility. This, in essence, was the immense 'leap' of theory which both Hegel and Marx recognised in the institutions and profile of the modern state.<sup>12</sup>

The immense power of the utilitarian perspective as a theory of dynamic social development rested upon its capacity to successfully neutralise individual behaviour. In Hume, Smith, Condorcet or Volney morality was the product of the social order, established - in a sense - ex post facto, rather than as an innate human quality. Human society as an interdependent nexus of production, distribution, exchange and consumption organised through innumerable particular forms of individual and collective taste and custom generated its legalisms as it developed. The ambiguous meaning acquired by the eighteenth century words 'culture' and 'civilisation' - as either faculty or quality - represents this transformation of values.<sup>13</sup> Morality, from an active faculty generating a certain social order, was transformed into a passive quality sustained by a certain social order. Subjectivity was, in the hands of the revolutionaries of 1789, eliminated from history.

There was, however, another possible implication of the intuition that power was not co-extensive with its manifest forms. It was also possible to understand the intuition in a different way and preserve the sense that the relationship between power, rank and morality was determined initially by the intentions and qualities of individuals. To this extent this discourse shared a common point of departure with the 'orthodox' analysis of kingship of the eighteenth century monarchy. But this other mode of formulating the relationship was at once as radically subversive of the 'orthodox' discourse as was utilitarianism, and as analytically



powerful - and politically significant - as its 'progressive' counterpart. The abbe Barruel's Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire du Jacobinisme (1797) belong to the eccentricities of contemporary historiography, "an episode in the history of ideas," significant as "the origin of a mythology," rather than as a work meriting serious comprehension.<sup>14</sup> It is not of course suggested that Barruel's Mémoires are a history of the Revolution; instead it is suggested that there was a logic to, and powerful political implications to be deduced from, a perspective which envisaged power as not the invisible product of the circulation of experience, but rather the product of an occult will, a conspiracy. With Barruel the subjective was restored to an understanding of power in the France of the eighteenth century, but restored in a dynamic, subversive manner. There is a connection running from Barruel to Metternich and the principle of the secret police of the 'new European order' sanctioned at Versailles in 1815, and embodied in the figure of the conspirator-provocateur, which has still to be explored.<sup>15</sup> It has as its origin the intuition that civil society was able to generate, not simply 'experience' or 'reason' but forms of personal association and private activity which escaped the control of the institutions of monarchical government.

In Barruel's hands, Rousseau's intuition that "être et paraître devinrent deux choses différentes" was carried through to its most logical and powerful conclusion. The visible relationship between rank, morality and power embodied in the institutions of monarchical government was found to be a masque, concealing the

organised will of a hidden conspiracy. Barruel turned the relationship between rank, morality and power on its head. Immorality, organised as a subjective system of intrigue, now generated a counter-hierarchy and a counter-power, a subjectively articulated and stratified conspiracy against government.

The analysis which led Barruel to explain the French Revolution as a conspiracy, and the analysis which led Barnave to explain the same process as the result of the development of the division of labour thus originated from a common intuition. For both, institutions and power in the France of the late eighteenth century arose from private associations and activities established in civil society. Society, not human nature or customary practice, was the conceptual object upon which Barruel and Barnave situated their respective political histories. It was this common conceptual object which led the discourse of the one towards the principle of the counter-conspiracy embodied in the state-controlled secret police, and the discourse of the other to the principle of the structured circulation of experience embodied in the state-controlled market.

The way in which the relationship between human activity and the social order was theorised in the late eighteenth century thus served to define distinct forms of political activity and distinct visions of the modes by which rank, morality and power could be combined. The language of the political discourse of both royalists and patriots developed from this long interrogation of the nature of the social order in the late eighteenth century.



The analytical positions occupied by Barruel and Barnave were identical to those occupied by royalists and revolutionaries in the early years of the revolution. The account written by one leading royalist of his life and times is haunted by the need to explain his life in terms of some more general process.

In doing so, he was obliged to draw upon the available vocabulary of political discourse of the late eighteenth century, and attempt to explain what seemed to him to be a tragedy, in terms of a rupture between the civic institutions of Nîmes and the moral qualities of some of its leading inhabitants. In producing a narrative, he was also - unconsciously - producing the outlines of a history of a town in the age of manufacture.

Notes - Chapter 2

1. E. Kantorowitz, The King's Two Bodies. 1959.
2. M. Antoine, Le Conseil du Roi à l'Époque de Louis XV. Geneva, 1971. Ch.I.  
M. Walzer, Regicide and Revolution, 1974, (Preface).
3. M. Foucault, Surveiller et Punir. Paris, 1975, pp.9-35.
4. C.D. Hay et. al. Albion's Fatal Tree, 1975. Ch.I.
5. A.D. Gard. 2E 37 256 fo.312. 14-8-1714.
6. "Ainsi, dans les monarchies bien réglées, tout le monde sera à peu près bon citoyen, et on trouvera rarement quelqu'un qui soit homme de bien.." De l'Esprit des Lois III, 6.
7. M. Tyvaert, "L'Image du Roi: Légitimité et moralité royales dans les Histoires de France au XVIIe Siècle." R.H.M.C. XXI, 1974. pp.,521-547.
8. J. Ehrard, Politique de Montesquieu. Paris, 1965.
9. J.J. Rousseau. Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité. (Garnier-Flammarion edn.), Paris, 1971. p.216.
10. D. Forbes, Hume's Philosophical Politics, 1975. Ch. 2 & 3.
11. K.M. Baker, Condorcet: From Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics. Cornell U.P. 1975. Chs. 3 & 4.
12. M. Foucault. Histoire de la Sexualité. t.I.Paris, 1976 pp. 175-211 and the interview with Foucault in Radical Philosophy 16, Spring 1977.
13. S. Goyard-Fabre, La Philosophie des Lumières en France. Paris, 1972. p.32.
14. J.M. Roberts "The Origins of a Mythology: Freemasons, Protestants and the French Revolution" Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research. 44 1971 pp.78-97.  
cf. also his Mythology of the Secret Societies, (-loc.cit.) pp.188-202. and A.C. Kors. "The Myth of the Coterie Holbachique." French Historical Studies. IX, 1976, pp.573-595.



15. "Mais il n'est peut-être qu'un seul genre d'affaires dont on s'acquitte parfaitement bien dans les petits cours despotiques, c'est la garde des prisonniers politiques." Stendhal, La Chartreuse de Parme. (Garnier edn.), 1961. p.289. Stendhal's creation, comte Mosca della Roveré Sorezana, minister of war, police and finance of Parma was the archetype of the state as provocateur whose history began, almost simultaneously in Britain and France, during that terrible year 1795. See also D.E. Emerson. Metternich and the Political Police, The Hague. 1968.

Chapter 3 Two Images of Nimes in the Late Eighteenth Century



The 'internal' history of an eighteenth century French town is to be found more easily in the literature of the French eighteenth century than in the occasionally anachronistic categories of more recent historical scholarship. From Le Sage to Beaumarchais, urban society in eighteenth century France appears as the site of the contingent intersection of sentiment, aspiration and cupidity. In his fine study of eighteenth century Caen, J-C Perrot has shown how prevalent the theme of the city as both theatre and vortex - the image of urban life of Montesquieu's Lettres Persanes - had become by the third decade of the century.<sup>1</sup> In this literature, the durable categories of occupation and residence beloved of French historians of the late 'fifties and early 'sixties occupy the status of a silhouette, in which the more intimate realities of chance association, private intrigue and secret obligation remain to be discovered. The latter - 'internal' - history of urban society might begin with Diderot's Neveu de Rameau, and that famous moment of illumination:

"But, Mr. Philosopher, there is such a thing as a standard conscience just as there is a standard grammar, and then exceptions in every language, that I think you learned people call ... er ... oh, what is it, er ...

I: Idioms.

He: Exactly. Well then, every profession has its exceptions to the general code, and I might very well call these trade idioms.

I: I see ...

He: And Sovereign, minister, financier, magistrate, soldier, writer, lawyer, attorney, merchant, banker, artisan, singing-master, dancing master are all perfectly honest people, although their behaviour departs from the accepted code in several respects and is full of moral idioms."<sup>2</sup>

As we have seen, the need to account for "moral idioms" led both Barnave and the revolutionaries of 1789 on the one hand, and Barruel and the royalists of 1790 on the other, to their respective analytical and political positions. The urban history of the eighteenth century therefore has to be a history of the forms of organisation and articulation of Diderot's "moral idioms". In Nimes, such a history is embodied in a curious pair of manuscripts, written by the father of the most notorious royalist of 1790, François Froment.

Pierre Froment was 64 in June 1790, the time of the Bagarre. He, and two of his four sons - François and Jacques - together with their relatives by marriage Paul Gaussard, Charles Borie and Andre Folacher - were the nucleus of royalist organisation in Nimes in 1790. He had been born in 1726, the third surviving son of Mathieu Froment, a wool-factor of Nimes who later became a fabricant de burattes, making low quality fabrics from a mixture of wool and silk.<sup>3</sup> Mathieu Froment was not a wealthy man. He had married Margueritte Bouvier, the daughter of another facturier en laine in 1707. The household which they set up was endowed with the 4001 in cash which she provided as her dowry and a donation of 5001 from his mother, 3001 of which was payable after her death. Neither of the couple was able to sign their marriage contract, and both remained technically illiterate throughout their lives.<sup>4</sup>



In the late 1780's Pierre Froment recorded the intimate history of his own life in a manuscript entitled Mémoire succinct des Peines et Inquietudes que j'ai éprouvées pendant ma vie, et le temps de mon mariage, que j'ai chaumé à l'Hotel de Ville. At the same time he wrote another history, this one of the municipality of Nimes, entitled Relation de tous les Malheurs dont la ville de Nimes et ses Honnetes citoyens ont été afligés...<sup>5</sup> As a former member of the municipal administration of Nimes, expelled on a questionable charge of malpractice, Pierre Froment was in a privileged position to disclose the particular structure of "moral idioms" by which "private vices" were translated into "public benefits" in the Nimes of the second half of the eighteenth century.

He had entered the municipality of Nimes in 1743, "la veille de la fête de l'Assomption," in the capacity of petit-commis au greffe, at the age of 17. Previously - until the age of 11 - he had frequented a school maintained by a Sr. Guiraud, "infirmes et avancé en age," where he had been taught to read and write by Guiraud's wife, a parisienne, and their son. Between the ages of 11 and 13 he stayed at home: "Je n'étois occupé à la maison qu'à devider de la filozelle et à faire quelques commissions." The position, he recalled, was unsatisfactory. "Je trouvois la fabrique de mon père quelque chose au-dessous de ce que je pensés à parvenir. J'avais du gout pour la lecture et l'écriture. Je m'y appliques moy-même sans aucun maitre." The opportunity to

move away from the world of petty woollen and cheap silk manufacture arose in 1739, when a notary, Thomas Marignan, noticed the quality of the signature upon the marriage contract of one of the family's domestic servants. "Il me demanda à mon père pour aller écrire à son étude (et) il lui fut accorde." Eighteen months later, he entered the cabinet of a Sr. Jean-Maurice Reynaud, one of the town's most prestigious lawyers, "pour travailler sous luy en qualité de secrétaire quelques heures du jour." He combined the two posts for eighteen months; Reynaud "me donnoit comme à ses fils ma pension de 11 4s par semaine tous les samedy au soir." Early in 1743 he was offered the position of petit-commis by Pierre-Louis Cassan, avocat et trésorier du chapitre de Nîmes, greffier de la ville et du Diocese, in the offices of the municipality, keeping its records. He was to remain there for the next forty years, poised between the world from which he had come and that to which he aspired. "Ne voulant pas embrasser d'etat bas, j'étois obligé d'y tenir, n'ayant pas de profession ni de fonds pour commercer." Thus the two established avenues away from the world of work and into that of cultured consumption were blocked. For Froment this ultimately implied recourse to the "moral idioms" of eighteenth century urban society.

In 1745, when he was 19, his mother died, leaving a household inhabited by his father, himself and his younger brother, Joseph Froment, the only two of the six brothers not to have



established their own households. His father was reluctant to remarry, "et visant à nous établir on lui proposa, quoique je futs jeune, de me marier avec la fille du Sr. Jacques Doumergue, fabriquant de burattes comme mon pere." The marriage was arranged by a maternal aunt - a Bouvier - and took place in November 1747, when Froment was 21.<sup>6</sup> Three years later, in January 1750, Joseph, the youngest of the six brothers was married to Marie Castan, the daughter of a corn-factor and merchant. "Cette femme étoit un diable. Ce mariage amena la desunion dans notre famille."

The disunity provoked by the marriage reflected a tension between the two functions of the eighteenth century family, as either reproducer of an established familial division of authority and property, or as an instrument of capital accumulation and social mobility. When Joseph Froment was married, his father promised him half of his house on the rue de la Ferrage, in the populous manufacturing parish of St. Charles, all his furniture and 1,500l in cash in six months.<sup>7</sup> This met with the opposition of the oldest of the six brothers, Jean Froment, a wool-factor as his father had been, and, with his wife, a Protestant. "Il y a eu des querelles, et des prises qui amenèrent des procès entre nous." The changing functions of property and the role of the eldest son within the family were both in question in the dispute.<sup>8</sup> In an attempt at reconciliation, Jean Froment dined and spent the night at his father's house. During that night Mathieu Froment's stock, cash and his dead wife's jewellery were stolen. Suspicion of the theft fell upon Pierre. "Mon frère,"

he wrote, "en sa qualité d'ainé, crû sans lui imputer mal à propos, pouvoir commettre cette basse action, à cause que mon père l'avoit privé de l'heritage." Legal proceedings ensued. Pierre Froment found that his immediate superior at the Hotel de Ville, a Protestant named Pavé, principal commis à l'hôtel de ville, supported his father's accusations and sought to have him removed from his post. His patron, however, remained loyal. "M. Cassan ne voulait jamais rien croire contre moi." Eventually he abandoned the legal procedure. "Je futs privé au moins pendant huit ans de parler à mon père, tant on l'avoit monté contre moi, ni mes frères, à part Mathieu, avec lequel nous avons des affaires d'interêt ensemble et en société." It finally transpired that it had been Joseph, the youngest brother, who had committed the theft to prevent the oldest brother from reclaiming his-legitimate - share of their father's estate.

The disputed donation produced alignments within the family which intereseected with alignments elsewhere. It was not finally settled until 1790.<sup>9</sup> Until 1768, Pierre Froment's career was relatively tranquil. Between 1743 and 1763 his annual income as a clerk in the hôtel de ville amounted to 120 Lt. "en gages et appointements." The death of Pavé, the chief clerk, in 1763, led to his appointment as a coécateur of the records of the municipality, with an annual income of 300 Lt. together with 180 Lt. from Cassan, the keeper of the records. In addition to this, his wife "faisait elle-même d'eau de vie, quelques burattes, du salage de cochons,



et de mon côté j'avais quelques petites fermes en seul, ou intérêts dans d'autres." He was able to capitalise his income, repairing and improving their mettérie de Valence, his house and an olive press which he owned. A second house, on the plan de Bachélas, with a vegetable garden was acquired for 6,000 Lt and 3,000 Lt of his father-in-law's debts were paid off, "peut-être plus que mon épouse fit face à son particulier." At the height of Pierre Froment's misfortunes in 1785, his wife donated all her property to one of their sons, Jacques, a canon of the church of Saint-Gilles, near Nîmes, to the value of 22,000l.<sup>10</sup> Froment himself drew up a memorandum of his financial position on December 21st 1784, when he was forced to leave Nîmes to avoid arrest.<sup>11</sup> His capital assets were worth a total of 80,300 Lt, of which 59,700 Lt consisted of real property, including an oil press worth 12,000 Lt and a mettairie in the village of Ledenon, near Nîmes, worth 24,000 Lt. His total annual income was 5,535 Lt, of which 55% was provided by the revenue from 7 offices, ranging from the receivership of the Cathedral chapter (900 Lt) to the provision of heating materials to the military fort (150 Lt). The man who, in 1743, had accepted the post of petit-commis at the Hôtel de ville since he had no qualifications for office or assets to engage in commerce had travelled relatively far.

The means by which this was done are obscure. One channel was certainly commerce, both in association with his brother Mathieu, and, in all probability with the important commercial house frères Cathalan of Marseille. The brothers Etienne and Jacques Cathalan were natives of Nimes and relatives by marriage

of Froment's patron, the lawyer Pierre-Louis Cassan, who left his estate to his brother-in-law Jacques Cathalan in 1768.<sup>12</sup> Etienne Cathalan was also related by marriage to the Hugues of Nîmes and Dôle, where Pierre Froment stayed in the spring of 1787, during his exile from Nîmes.<sup>13</sup> During the 1770's, Froment, as successor to Cassan in the post of receiver of rents and tithes of the chapter of the Cathedral of Nîmes - and therefore someone with access to cash - appears to have functioned as the commercial house's banker in Nîmes, as Cassan had done previously, accepting and occasionally discounting bills of exchange for frères Cathalan in Marseille. In 1784, 12,000 Lt of Pierre Froment's capital assets consisted of debts due to him from frères Cathalan.<sup>14</sup>

These few hints suggest a process of accumulation articulated around that nexus of family connection, patronage, public office and commerce which in the eighteenth century came to be identified as "corruption". What Diderot entitled "moral idioms" were the means by which Froment's flight from his bas état was accomplished. They also threatened to throw him back into the void of petty manufacture from which he had emerged. When he drew up an état et situation de mes affaires in the winter of 1784, he accounted for 20,000 Lt of the 69,877 Lt which fell on the debit side of his memorandum as the result of "la vuide de la caisse du Chapitre survenue des vols que la cabale ou leurs directeurs m'ont fait faire."<sup>15</sup> "Private vices" and, at the least, "public affairs," had become relatively indistinguishable. Froment's



misfortune was to have failed to carry the transition to its logical conclusion. In 1784, he was left with no more than "private vices".

The situation into which he was thrown, at the age of 58, in the winter of 1784, had its origin nearly twenty years earlier, in 1768, when his patron, the lawyer Pierre-Louis Cassan died. His death left the offices of greffier of the town and civil diocese of Nîmes vacant, together with that of treasurer of the Chapter of the Cathedral. These positions were at the disposal of a number of competing patrons, whose own intentions were not necessarily identical to those of the aspirant Froment.

In 1768, the office of greffier of the municipality of Nîmes was at the disposal of another ascending familial group, dominated by a lawyer, Jean Alison. Alison was a native of the Vivarais, from the bourg of Vallon, with landed property in the adjoining parishes of Salavas and La Gorce.<sup>16</sup> According to Froment, his initial position as an avocat instruisant had been relatively humble, "n'ayant pour tout bien et ressource que le peu du produit de son cabinet," and lodging in the barn of a house on the rue de Payan belonging to a Sr. d'Etamine. His ascent began with his marriage to Marie Feuillade, his landlord's sister-in-law. The marriage produced two surviving children - a son, Jean-André, and a daughter, Suzanne. In 1750, the son was married to Jeanne Clerc, "fille d'un riche bourgeois de Nîmes," in whose house Alison père had subsequently taken rooms. She brought with her a dowry of 30,000 Lt and a cluster of relatives and connections among the city's commercial and professional community. The daughter,

Suzanne, became a nun, because, according to Froment, her father, "quoy qu'il ne fut pas catholique," wished to avoid giving her a dowry. She was unsuited to the vocation and, according to Froment, was involved in a number of affairs with the local jeunesse of the nobility, among whom were two individuals - the chevalier de Merez and the baron de Ledenon - whom Froment was to encounter later in life. "Il en arriva des accouchements. Ces mêmes jeunes gens poussèrent leurs entreprises jusques au Petit Couvent qui faillit à estre supprimé." When Jean-André Alison drew up his will in 1782, he left an estate worth 50,000 Lt.<sup>17</sup> There had, however, been numerous moments in which the interplay between connection and material opportunity had offered far more.

The municipality of Nîmes in the 1740's, when Froment entered the hôtel de ville, was made up of a number of venal, hereditary, offices and two elective councils.<sup>18</sup> The office of mayor belonged to a noble family, at the time headed by Pierre de Rouvière de Dions, who also owned the office of presiding judge (Président) of the Présidial of Nîmes and its sénéchaussée.<sup>19</sup> The office of lieutenant de maire, or deputy, belonged to a retired army officer, Charles-Louis de Joubert, who had acquired it by borrowing the money from a Sr. Pierre Nègre, a Protestant négociant, "qui avoit fait une fortune considérable dans les Illes de l'Amérique." It was Alison père who, according to Froment, persuaded Nègre that his loan to de Joubert was at risk and encouraged him to transfer his credit, and the office, to Jean-André Alison. There is other evidence, however, that the connection between Nègre and Alison was not simply the product of intrigue. A commercial house from Nîmes, dealing



under the name of Nègre & Alison existed on San Domingo in the early 1730's.<sup>20</sup> Whatever the nature of the connection, it is clear that Jean-André Alison's acquisition of the office of lieutenant de maire was the product of "moral idiom". His subsequent career was premised upon the deployment of the resources of office for the acquisition of place.

Two of the secretaries employed in Alison père's cabinet - Antoine Pontier, the son of a notary, and Jacques Viala, the son of a retail merchant - were introduced into the developing network of connection. It was Pontier who was to emerge as Froment's rival for the offices of greffier of the municipality and diocese in 1768. Viala became a secretary in the cabinet of another lawyer, Jean-Arnaud Valladier, a cousin of Jean-André Alison, who was also from Vallon in the Vivarais, where his father, also an avocat, held the office of judge of the seigneurial court of Ruoms.<sup>21</sup>

Between 1766 and 1775, the municipality of Nîmes was reorganised in conformity to a succession of royal edicts. Venal offices were abolished, re-established and then abolished again.<sup>22</sup> Alison "se fit nommer premier consul, par une cabale dont il se servi." In 1768, when the two offices of greffier fell vacant, Alison, as mayor and first consul, was able to engineer the election of his man Pontier to the post of greffier of the diocese, and ensure that the municipal council accepted his election to the other vacant post when Pontier's term of office as second consul

of the town expired on January 1st, 1769. "Voilà comme je fus culbuté," Froment recorded.

"Il est bon d'énoncer icy que pour préparer les cabales et complots de 1768, la femme de Pontier ayant accouché d'une fille, Alison court chez tous les conseillers politiques pour que cet enfant fut présenté à Baptême au nom de la ville ... Il y a eu un très grand repas aux Pères Augustins où toute la cabale et les deux conseils assistèrent. Ce furent des promesses d'amitiés éternelles, des santés portés par Alison pour la famille Pontier, des souhaits pour sa prospérité et posterité ... Jamais de pasquenades de cette espece et ce genre qui pourtant furent nécessaires pour entraîner et faire réussir Pontier à être nommé greffier de la ville."

Froment was left to continue as principal clerk in the hôtel de ville and to seek income elsewhere to suppliment that provided by the receivership of the Cathedral chapter which he took over from Cassan.

For Alison, however, the successive reorganisations of the municipality of Nîmes were an opportunity to extend his own nexus of "moral idiom" somewhat further. The re-establishment of venal offices in May 1772 brought a further connection into operation. This was another lawyer, Francois Surville, who owned the office of greffier of the recently created and short-lived Conseil supérieur established upon the chancellor Maupeou's initiative.<sup>23</sup> Surville was also responsible for the collection of the tariff levied by the municipality upon livestock and wine brought into the city to be marketed. Alison, according to Froment, "vivoit d'intelligence avec lui pour saisir mutuellement des fonds de la communaute que led. Surville avoit en main comme fermier de la subvention." The money - over 150,000 Lt - was used to enable



Alison to purchase the office of mayor and Surville that of second consul. The mayorship was ceded to Alison by Rouvière de la Boissière, the brother of the former hereditary mayor Rouvière de Dions, because he owed Surville money and, according to Froment, was anxious to acquire the office of presiding judge of the newly created Conseil supérieur, thus "se laissant fléchier pour pourvoir aux dépenses que la charge de Premier Président lui occasionnoit."

The four years from 1772 to 1775 saw the full deployment of private connection to the benefit of the group. "Alison n'étoit pas scrupuleux à prendre des intérêts dans les sociétés dans laquelle la ville pouvoit être utile." In addition to his association with Surville in handling the income produced by the ferme de la subvention, there were other "moral idioms". "Personne n'a ignoré dans le tems que le Sr. Ourson ne formât une société avec Aimard, cousin d'Alison, et que le lieutenant de maire ne lui en fait donner par la ville et par force un paville de la fontaine sous prétexte de favoriser une fabrique de bon teint en rouge. Alison étoit associé, on ne peut en douter."<sup>24</sup> There was also the installation of an English calender, for pressing wool, imported by Louis Chambaud.<sup>25</sup> "Les commercants comme André et autres y étoient associés .. Alison y étoit participé et même Pontier."

"Autre trait d'Alison pour accroître sa fortune. Il est encore lié avec Surville, Pontier, Valladier, Beaumont. Ils acceptèrent l'héritage de feu Mr de la Boissiere, ou le firent accepter par Beaumont pour tous ... après avoir expolié et partagé tout ce qu'ils avoient pu et fait mourir insolvable Mr de la Boissiere."

Finally Pontier was provided with the receivership of all the revenues of the Bishopric of Nîmes, "à tres bon compte."

"Ils ont tous gagnés considerablement, mais plus Pontier et Surville, puisque le premier a acquis la terre de Saint-Gervazy et la second la seigneurie de Valcombe, pres Saint-Gilles."<sup>26</sup>

In 1775, however, venal municipal offices were again abolished and on August 14th 1775, Alison was prevented from being elected to the post of mayor and first consul. Froment in his turn was finally elected to the post of greffier and keeper of the municipal records. From this point, his career became imbricated in the protracted manoeuvres between the group associated with Alison and their opponents over access to the resources of the municipal administration.<sup>27</sup> Froment's relationship to the Alison connection, already strained because of the rise of Pontier, was broken over another incident. "Pendant son règne il avoit place des vallets de ville à sa devotion, notamment un nommé Isnard qui avoit été son domestique à gage." Isnard had become capitaine de guet and chief valet de ville. He occupied an office in the hôtel de ville adjoining that in which Froment, as premier commis, worked. According to Froment, he had used a forged skeleton key to enter his office and tamper with the minutes and papers of the municipality. Froment's discovery of this led to Alison's determination to have him removed from the greffe of the hôtel de ville.

In 1781, the incumbent mayor, the chevalier de Merez, who, according to Froment, had had a scandalous liaison with



Alison's sister in a convent, proposed that the amount of work involved in maintaining the municipality's records required the appointment of an assistant. The plan misfired. De Merez's candidate was defeated and Froment was able to engineer the nomination of his youngest son, François, to the post. A further reorganisation of the municipality in October 1782 enabled Froment to secure his appointment to the office of greffier consulaire for life, with the succession to fall to his son, François.<sup>28</sup>

In December 1784, however, the Cour des Aides of Montpellier issued a warrant for Froment's arrest, on a charge of defrauding the municipality during the assessment and collection of the taille in 1782 and 1783. He was forced to take flight, firstly to Chambéry, and subsequently to Dole and Avignon. He was only able to return to Nîmes in the autumn of 1789, when the future of the courts was in question. He described the charge brought against him as the result of a plot, organised by the circle associated with the now defunct Alison. It was one which again brought into play a rich network of private connection. The two men responsible for drawing up the charge - Adam de Montclar, a councillor of the Cour des Aides, and the baron d'Aigrefeuille, the procureur-général at the same court - were both intimately linked to Froment's opponents. Montclar's mistress, Mme de Melon, was the sister-in-law of the chevalier de Merez, the lover of Jean-André Alison's sister. De Merez had also been the lover of the sister-in-law of a procureur, Paradan, who Alison had encouraged to buy the office of greffe consulaire when it became venal in 1765.

"Il n'entendait rien en rien au greffe de l'hôtel de ville. Il voulut seulement pour ses provisions s'acquérir un credit pour emprunter. Alison le soutenoit, mais c'étoit un homme dangereux par ses violences."<sup>29</sup>

D'Aigrefeuille, the procureur-général, was heavily in debt to a member of the wealthy Protestant family, the Lapiere, to whom the lawyer Francois Surville was related to marriage. "De l'autre côté ledit procureur-général fut sollicité par Surville, à qui il doit de l'argent."

Froment's career was thus broken by the nexus of connection centred upon Jean and Jean-André Alison. In all, in his Relation de tous les malheurs dont la ville de Nîmes et ses honnêtes citoyens ont été afligés, Froment named 29 individuals linked by some association over and above that involved in public function. The cabale which he identified as the cause of his failure to escape his own bas état was organised around a network of connection involving kinship, common pecuniary interest, patronage and a certain topography of 'chance' association. The religious element was simply a component of these other determinants of the structure of connection in eighteenth century Nîmes. It is clear from the composition of a cabale which extended to the Bishop of Nîmes, included an Augustinian friar - the abbé Montfaucon, uncle of Alison's client, Pontier - and numbered several individuals - including Alison and his cousin Valladier - with relatives with vocations in the Catholic church, that this was not a simple Calvinist plot. Froment might have been able to claim to have been the victim of a conspiracy, but was unable to claim that it



was a visible and evidently sectarian one. Instead, the emphasis of his 'internal' history of Nîmes fell upon the conspiratorial, occult nature of the private network responsible for his misfortune.

As Froment explained it, his own 'tragedy' was the product of a developing dialectic between his own integrity and his opponents' duplicity. The key to his "history" of Nîmes is the interplay between honesty and dishonesty, authenticity and hypocrisy, transparency and opacity. From the one group of terms stemmed a visible relationship between moral qualities, public function and social order; from the other, a clandestine relationship between immoral qualities, private 'interest', and social disorder. Froment's "history" is organised around a dialectic between epithets. Alison père was "malin par caractère," "de mauvaise foy," "ambitieux," "toujours enfermé", "ne fréquentant ni se fo filant avec personne," "peu scrupuleux," engaged in "semant des soupçons," circulating rumour, "toujours feaux," in order to attain his secret objectives. His victims, on the other hand, embodied the principle of innocent morality: the father-in-law, Clerc, was "droit", "bon", his widow, "très économe"; Rouvière de la Boissière, dispoiled of his office, was "le meilleur et le plus éclairé des magistrats, désintéressé, incorruptible;" de Joubert, also despoiled of his office, "n'étoit pas riche, mais honnête homme, faisant le bien de la ville;" de Meude, also used by Alison to further his plans, "n'étoit pas homme d'affaires ... il étoit honnête homme ... il auroit même sacrifié du sien pour faire le bien de la communauté;" Aigoïn, a carpenter brought unwittingly into the intrigue by buying an office in the municipality, "étoit très honnête homme. Il a été dupe par son vendeur."

The mode of conceptual organisation upon which the account rested also implied a definite political perspective. The distance between the struggle against "moral idiom" and the principle of the counter-conspiracy in the name of virtue was a narrow one. The profile of the secret society and clandestine organisation, which was to become the hallmark of one form of French royalism - before its association with republicanism - was already in place in the analytical framework around which Froment's mémoires were structured.

"Toun triompho vai esclata  
 Froumen, dissipo teís alarmos.  
 Un ami de la verita,  
 Touca de toun sort jusqu'ei larmos  
 Ven d'afficha din nostra mur  
 La hounto de teys oupresseurs."<sup>30</sup>

In his narrative, Froment identified a number of areas in which what, since the nineteenth century, it is customary to call the economy came to have particular, concrete forms. From a modern perspective the nexus of family ties, patronage, association in manufacture and commerce, public office and litigation might be described in terms of the relative lack of differentiation of the economy. And yet there is a sense in which Froment's language is rather more precise. In organising his narrative around the manner in which private interests deformed the proper functioning of civic institutions, Froment was drawing upon a contemporary mode of political discourse, and referring to forms of social activity particular to the urban society of



the age of manufacture. The organisation of his "history" as a history of "corruption" was based upon the idea of a relationship between "the political" and "the economic" which is radically different from that embodied in the utilitarian discourse of the revolutionaries of 1789. In this sense the value of Froment's account lies less in the information which it contains, than in the extent to which it suggests the considerable difference between his society and that produced during the revolutionary epoch. The transition from monarchical government to representative institutions was also a transition from one relationship between "politics" and the "economic" to another. Froment's narrative was the product of a recognition that the forms of social mobility generated by commerce were incompatible with the traditional relationship between civic institutions and family connection. For Froment the implications of this crisis were brought home in the spring of 1789 when many of the members of his "cabale" emerged as the elected representatives of "the nation". This transformation was to result in a very different relationship between civil society and public life from that which Froment had described. In this sense royalists and patriots were describing two different realities. For Froment, the solution to the crisis of "connection" was a political conspiracy designed to restore the virtues upon which the stability of civic institutions depended. For the men of 1789, like the deputies Boissy d'Anglas and Rabaut Saint-Etienne, the solution to the crisis was the

elimination of the problem of virtue by the creation of representative institutions, capable of circulating the experience and symbols of esteem necessary for the continued reproduction of the social order. More therefore than two ways of conceptualising the same reality, the two discourses were premised upon radically different ideas of the relationship between the public and the private, and signified two different forms of the operation of power. A comparison between the internal logic of Froment's mémoires and that embodied in another account of Nîmes produced at almost the same time discloses this difference with some clarity.

Buried within Froment's account of his life was a certain image of Nîmes. It was an archaic image. It made use of the idea of the city as a theatrical device, as a setting for the dramatic reconstruction of the sequence of events which had produced his own tragedy. The city functioned as an arena in which public events contributed to the creation of its specific identity and thus of its history. In this way, Froment's narrative belonged to a tradition which looked back to the civic histories of the city states of Renaissance Italy. The city functioned as a receptacle into which the chronicle of civic and cultural achievement was inserted. It was empty of any content other than that produced by the public activities of its inhabitants. The city was the domain of public life. The intrusion of "cabales" into this sphere of social activity was thus synonymous with a break in the chronicle of civic achievement. It represented corruption, and was explicable in terms of the cluster of destructive forms



of association and moral qualities with which the term was associated.<sup>31</sup> In its form, Froment's manuscript narrative belonged to a long sequence of civic histories, beginning with Poldo d'Albenas' history of Nimes of the late sixteenth century and continuing with Leon Menard's Histoire de la Ville de Nismes, et de ses Monumens et Antiquités which appeared in 1755. Where those works were celebrations of the city's identity as presented in the record of the notable public achievements of its inhabitants, Froment's narrative was a chronicle of decay and the destruction of civic virtue, which nonetheless shared the same conceptual field.

In 1790, the Royal Society of Medicine of Paris awarded its prix d'encouragement to a different account of the city, which eventually was published in 1806 as a Topographie de la Ville de Nismes et de sa Banlieue. Its two authors - Jean-César Vincens-Plauchut and Jean Baptiste Baumès - were a generation younger than Froment and occupied very different positions within the city's social hierarchy. Vincens-Plauchut, elected to the legislative Assembly in 1791, was a member of a wealthy commercial dynasty, who had retired from commerce to live off his income and devote his time to natural history and political economy; Baumès, a doctor, and the son of a doctor, taught at the Medical Faculty of the University of Montpellier and was one of the pioneers of clinical medicine.<sup>32</sup> The perspective they brought to bear upon the image of the city was substantially different from that buried within Froment's narrative. The internal architecture of the Topographie de la Ville de Nismes was the result of a vision of the city in which the humanist image of the town as the site of a specifically urban

culture was subordinated to one which envisaged the town as a concentrated totality of interdependent functions. While the humanist discourse presented the town as an empty space, to be filled by public activities, Vincens and Baumès based their account of urban culture upon the material and biological vitality generated by private activity. "Personne n'avoit songé à considérer la ville de Nîmes dans son ensemble, et à lier en un système méthodique et générale les diverses parties qui constituent sa topographie", they announced in their Introduction. The Topographie was informed by a vision of urban society as the point at which human biology and life processes intersected with the distribution of things. The relationship between these two coordinates was the structure upon which their account of the city rested.

"Le rapport de l'homme avec le sol qu'il habite, en développant les effets des influences locales sur sa constitution, sur sa sante, sur ses maladies, pouvait donner la doctrine la plus sûre, du moins la plus riche en faits, reversibles aux générations suivantes."<sup>33</sup>

The specific identity and character of the town was thus the product of a particular combination of climate, mineral and vegetable resources, people and human artifacts located in a particular place. The diachrony of the humanist discourse was subordinated to the synchrony of topography. "L'histoire raconte; la topographie décrit; la première est la répertoire des événements, la seconde un recueil de faits, d'observation et d'expérience".<sup>34</sup> Vincens and Baumès described Nîmes in a manner which implied a redefinition of the relationship between private activity and civic culture. Rather than begin with an account of the city centred upon the character of its institutions and the qualities of its



inhabitants, they assumed the legitimate existence of production, distribution, exchange, and consumption - or, in other words, civil society - as the primary determinants of the city's identity. In a real sense, Nîmes as they envisaged it was the product of the organic interdependence of these variables. The "science" of their Topographie made it possible to recognise the place of private activity within the order of legitimate activities which constituted the city's identity. Where the image of the city embodied in Froment's narrative belonged to the intellectual world of Machiavelli, that embodied in the Topographie belonged to that of Malthus. It was an image grounded securely upon the development of manufacture and commerce within the city during the eighteenth century, and of the new forms of knowledge associated with this development.

Notes - Chapter III

1. J-C Perrot. Genese et Structure d'Une Ville Moderne: Caen au XVIIIe Siecle. Paris, 1975. pp.20-26.
2. D. Diderot Rameau's Nephew (Penguin edn.), 1966, p.61.
3. A printed, and slightly incomplete genealogy of the family can be found in A. Reverend. Titres, Anoblissements et Pairies de la Restauration. Paris, 1901. t.III p.102.
4. A.D. Gard 2E<sup>39</sup> 146 fo.451. 4-4-1707; 2E<sup>37</sup> 275 fo.454 1739; 2E<sup>40</sup> 35 fo.348 4-1-1750.
5. These two manuscripts were discovered among the unclassified papers of the Présidial of Nîmes, (A.D.Gard Serie B). I am very grateful to the archivist of the Gard, M. Jean Sablou and his assistant, M.Y. Chassin du Guerny, for allowing me complete access to this mass of unsorted material, which also includes a large number of the remains of several commercial partnerships active in Nîmes during the eighteenth century. (see below, pp 150-163. ). Unless otherwise stated, all citations are taken from these two manuscripts by Pierre Froment.
6. A.D. Gard 5E<sup>187</sup> (99) fo. 47. 7-11-1747.
7. A.D. Gard 2E<sup>40</sup> 35 fo. 348. 4-1-1750.
8. cf.Y.Castan "Père et fils en Languedoc au XVII<sup>e</sup> Siecle." XVIIe Siecle 1974. 102-103, pp. 31-43.
9. A.D. Gard 2E<sup>36</sup> 853 fo.540 8-2-1790.
10. A.D. Gard.Registers of Bonnaud, notaire, (un-classified). 22-1-1785.
11. A.D. Gard Serie B (unclassified). Papers of the Presidial.
12. A.D.Gard. Papers of the Hotel-Dieu of Nîmes (provisional cote E 214. Registre des Délibérations) 30-5-1764. On the Cathalan, see C.Carrière. Négociants marseillais au XVIIIe Siècle. 1973. p.926., A.D.G. 2E<sup>30</sup> 848 fo.47 & A.N. AB XIX 2902.
13. A.D. Gard. Serie B. (unclassified) Papiers Froment. Jacques Froment to Etienne Cathalan 23-6-1787 and ?-6-1788.
14. id. J. Froment to Etienne Cathalan 10-12-1787.



15. A.D. Gard Serie B. loc.cit.
16. On the Alison, see A.D. Gard 2E<sup>40</sup> 32 ff 69&70v 10-2-1744, wills of J. Alison and his wife; 2E<sup>36</sup> 905 fo 132 12-9-1750 marriage of J-A.Alison; 2E<sup>39</sup> 196 fo 321 31-12-1763 Procuration of J-A. Alison concerning property at La Gorce, and sources cited below.
17. A.D. Gard. 2C 345 3-1-1782.
18. For a full examination of the municipality and its institutions, see below pp. 450-487.
19. On the geographical extension of the jurisdiction of the court, see below pp. 259 - 279.
20. A.D. Gard. Serie B (Papiers des commercants) unclassified, Journal de la société Reynaud & Guiraud, 14-3-1732, 31-5-1732, deliveries of consignments of indigo to the value of 5,0931\* and 7,1271\*\* respectively from Nègre & Alison.
21. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 916 fo.40. 13-3-1766. The Valladier were also nouveaux-convertis. In 1762 another of Alison's cousins was nominated to the cure of the parish of Aymargues. (A.D.Hérault C. 8246 Alison-de Joubert 3-4-1762).
22. For a full account of these events, see below pp. 450-487.
23. On the reform of the judicial administration, see below pp. 512-513.
24. The firm of Eymard & Cie in which Ourson freres were involved had received a grant from the Intendance for the establishment of the dye-works. Cf. A.D. Gard Serie B. (unclassified) Papers of Ourson freres.
25. The installation of the English calendering machine in 1765 was initiated by the firm of Fornier & Cie, the largest commercial house specialising in the cloth trade in the second half of the century. See below, pp. and D. Fabre "Une Maison de Commerce nîmoise au xviiiè Siècle." Mémoire de Maîtrise, Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier 1971.
26. See below p. 481.
27. See below pp. 450-487.
28. See below pp. 479-481.

29. See below pp.444-445.
30. A.D. Gard. Serie B. Unclassified Papers of the Presidial.
31. For the prevalence of this mode of discourse in eighteenth century social theory, see J.G.A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment. Princeton, 1975., Part III; J. Shklar, Men and Citizens: A Study of Rousseau's Social Theory, 1969; and J. Chaumié, Le Réseau d'Antraignes et la Contre-Révolution. Paris, 1965 and id., "Les Souvenirs de Jeunesse du Comte d'Antraignes "in Mélanges à la Mémoire de Jean Sarrailh, Paris, 1966, pp.245-258 for an illuminating example of the logic and political implications of eighteenth century humanism.
32. On Vincens, see below pp.91-93 ; on Baumès, see M. Foucault, The Birth of the Clinic, London 1973. pp.68-69.
33. J.C. Vincens & J.B. Baumès Topographie de la Ville de Nismes, Nimes, 1806. (Introduction).
34. Id.



Part II

Nîmes and its Economy in the Eighteenth Century

**Chapter 4**

**Nimes in the Eighteenth Century**



# PLAN DE LA VILLE DE NISMES ANCIENNE ET MODERNE.



## RENDU

1. Ancienne muraille. 51. Rue de la école saint
2. Vestiges de tours. 52. Les dominicains.
3. Porte antique. 53. Fort des carmes.
4. Tour primitive. 54. Rue de pierre.
5. Porte d'Orléans. 55. Mairie de
6. Porte de la. 56. Rue de l'ancien
7. Couronne. 57. Rue de la colonie.
8. Rue de la. 58. Rue de la. 59. Rue de la. 60. Rue de la. 61. Rue de la. 62. Rue de la. 63. Rue de la. 64. Rue de la. 65. Rue de la. 66. Rue de la. 67. Rue de la. 68. Rue de la. 69. Rue de la. 70. Rue de la. 71. Rue de la. 72. Rue de la. 73. Rue de la. 74. Rue de la. 75. Rue de la. 76. Rue de la. 77. Rue de la. 78. Rue de la. 79. Rue de la. 80. Rue de la. 81. Rue de la. 82. Rue de la. 83. Rue de la. 84. Rue de la. 85. Rue de la. 86. Rue de la. 87. Rue de la. 88. Rue de la. 89. Rue de la. 90. Rue de la. 91. Rue de la. 92. Rue de la. 93. Rue de la. 94. Rue de la. 95. Rue de la. 96. Rue de la. 97. Rue de la. 98. Rue de la. 99. Rue de la. 100. Rue de la.

Plan de la ville de Nîmes ancienne et moderne. Par M. de la Roche.

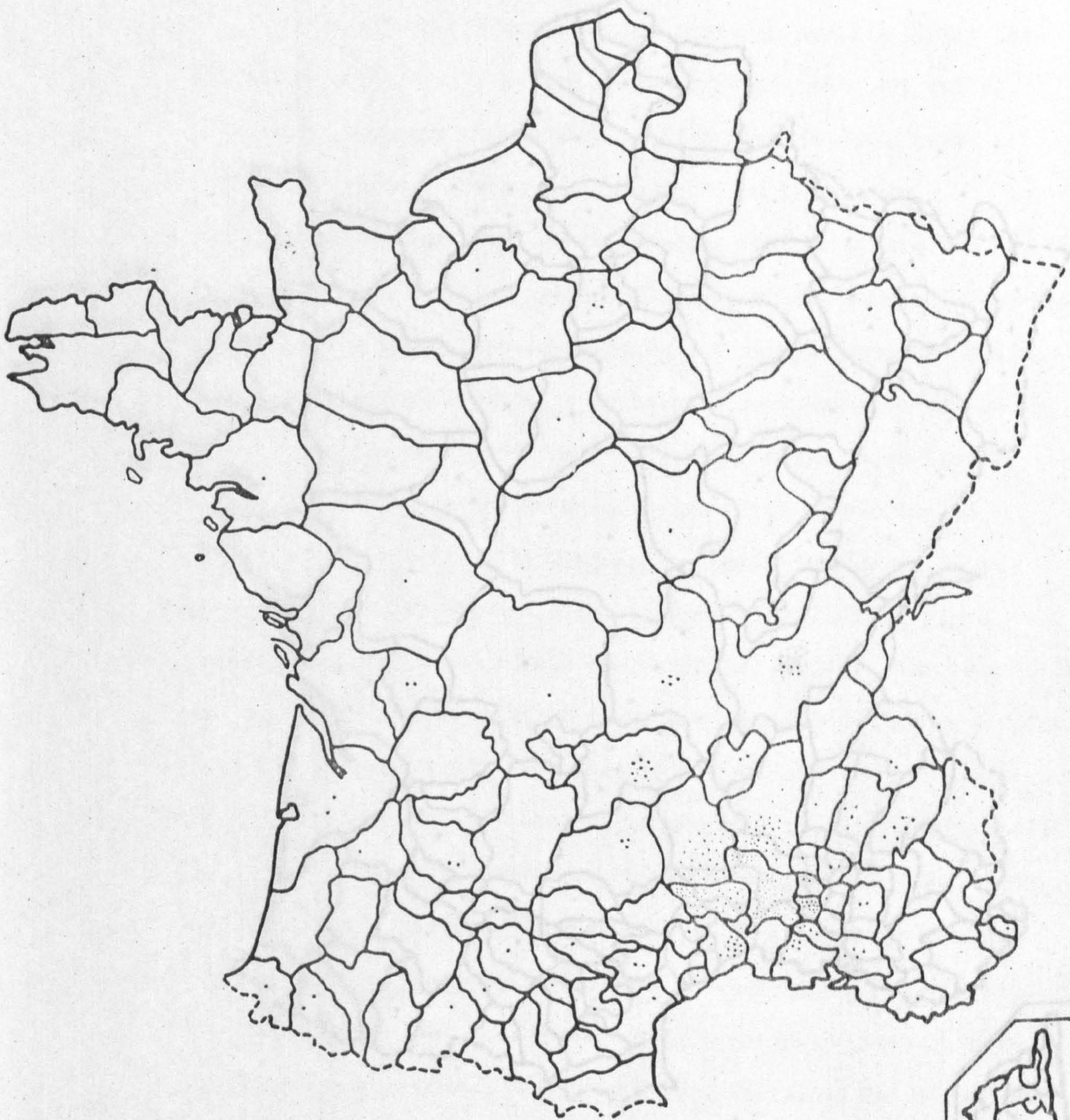


Between 1680 and 1790 the population of Nîmes probably doubled. It increased from some 20,000 inhabitants, immediately before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, to between 40 and 50,000 at the time of the Revolution.<sup>1</sup> During the latter half of the century six new suburbs were built outside of the old city walls, spreading outwards from the great arteries of migration into the city: the faubourg de la bouquerie and the faubourg des prêcheurs to the North, the faubourg Saint-Antoine and the faubourg de la Magdeleine to the West, and the faubourgs de Richelieu and de la Couronne to the South-East and South of the City. Their growth was the product of regular immigration into Nîmes from the countryside, particularly to the North and North-West. Under half of the men married in the city between 1705 and 1709 or between 1785 and 1789 were natives of Nîmes.<sup>2</sup>

The absence of fiscal records or other enumerations of the city's population makes it difficult to reconstruct the distribution of occupations within the city.<sup>3</sup> The occupations given in two samples of marriage contracts, collected from two five year periods - 1705-9 & 1785-9- are the best available reflection of the composition of the population. With the obvious exception of the clergy, the entire social hierarchy of Nîmes was present among those married in the city.<sup>4</sup> Even those with no property drew up marriage contracts before a notary.<sup>5</sup> Only the floating population of the city, the men and women whose existence is only revealed in an entry of admission to the city's Hôtel-Dieu, fall outside of the range of those setting up a household, even if the household was a purely nominal one.<sup>6</sup>



Geographical Origins of Men married at Nimes: 1705 - 1709.



. = 1 individual.



Geographical Origins of Men married at Nimes: 1785 - 1789.



. = 1 individual.



In 1705-9 the total amount given in dowries in the 1038 marriages which were arranged in the city was some 941,800 Lt. In 1785-89 the mass represented by 1728 dowries was a total of 3,413,274 livres. The average amount given in dowries thus increased from some 930 Lt. to about 1997 Lt during the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup> This increase was a reflection of the growing proportion of the city's population involved in large-scale commerce and the attendant range of productive activities upon which it was based. Nearly a third (29.7%) of the 943 men married and domiciled in Nîmes in 1705-9 were involved in agricultural production as travailleurs de terre (181), vignerons (49), jardiniers (32), ménagers (10), laboureurs (6) or bergers (3). In 1785-89 the proportion of the total of 1602 men domiciled in Nîmes who were engaged in agriculture at the time of their marriage had fallen to a fifth (20.2%) - or nearly 10% less than it had been in the early years of the century. In addition, the range of agricultural activities and forms of landed property described in the marriage contracts had become more limited. The proportion of those described as travailleurs de terre had grown from 64 to 79%, and a new category - the journalier - had displaced that of the vigneron among those associated with agricultural production. Possibly these changes in the vocabulary of agricultural activity reflect the disappearance of the vestiges of an autarchical peasant community within the area covered by the city. Only a detailed study of the distribution of landed property would confirm whether there was a tendency towards fragmentation of small and medium-sized property and a concentration

of larger units, as these figures suggest. The likelihood is that there was.

It is clear, however, that a growing proportion of the population came to depend upon sources of income other than the land during the century. In 1705-9, 30.1% (292) of those married were engaged in the manufacture of textiles in some way or another. Under a third of the population was thus engaged in the production of commodities for the purpose of relatively large-scale commerce. This may have been a reflection of the situation following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the disruption to commerce caused by the war of the Spanish Succession, although - as we shall see - the growth of the hosiery industry during the last years of the reign of Louis XIV was rapid.<sup>8</sup> Indeed framework knitters accounted for just over half of the 292 marriage contracts involving men engaged in the production of textiles. The majority of the remainder was made up by those engaged in weaving or finishing woollen and linen goods (89), while the remaining 48 were associated with the preparation and manufacture of silk fabrics. By the eve of the Revolutionary period the manufacture of textiles had grown considerably in importance. Nearly half of all the 1602 marriage contracts (48%) drawn up between 1785 and 1789 involved men engaged in some aspect of textile production. The overwhelming majority of them were either silk weavers (taffetassiers and ouvriers en soie) or framework knitters. The 29% of those engaged in textile production associated with wool or linen in the early eighteenth century had



disappeared almost entirely. Nîmes had become a substantial manufacturing centre.

Of the 722 individuals associated with the preparation and production of textiles in 1785-89, 309 (or 40%) were silk weavers. They were the most recent and the most numerous component of the city's population.<sup>9</sup> They formed a block of wealth lying between the mass of travailleurs de terre on the one hand, and the smaller group of framework knitters on the other. The 203 framework knitters married between 1785 and 1789 and domiciled in Nîmes were the most prosperous of the three groups which together accounted for 48% of the 1602 marriages arranged in the last five years of the old regime. The average value of the dowries given to those whom they married was 732 Lt, over twice that of the average of 315 Lt made up by the dowries of those betrothed to travailleurs de terre. The marriage contracts drawn up in this later period usually contain declarations of the value of the couple's household, or their total assets, at this, the beginning of their adult lives. It is thus possible to present the range of fortunes of the three major components of the city's population on the eve of the Revolution:

1. Value of Framework Knitters' Property at Marriage: 1785-1789

	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Under 100 L	29	14
100-499 L	59	29
500-999 L	59	29
1000-1999 L	38	19
2000-4999 L	12	6
5000-9999 L	5	2
10000 and over	1	1
TOTAL	<u>203</u>	<u>100%</u>

2. Value of Silk Weavers' Property at Marriage: 1785-1789

	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Under 100 L	78	25
100-499 L	150	49
500-999 L	55	18
1000-1999 L	16	5
2000-4999 L	7	2
5000-9999 L	3	1
10,000 and over	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	309	100%

3. Value of Agricultural Labourers' (Travailleurs de Terre)

Property at Marriage

	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Under 100 L	65	25
100-499 L	140	54
500-999 L	38	15
1000-1999 L	10	4
2000-4999 L	4	2
5000-9999 L	-	-
10,000 and over	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	257	100%

In the course of the century the composition of the mass of the city's population had changed substantially. It had become a population increasingly dependent upon manufacture for its income, and one which was less involved in the production of goods for local use. The majority of the 45% of those domiciled in Nîmes who were described as textile workers were engaged in the production of silk hose or silk cloth. The products of their work were commodities in the full sense of the term, destined to be exported over an immense geographical area.



The development of manufacture in the city was bound up with the growth of large-scale commerce. 113 of the 943 marriage contracts of the period between 1705 and 1709 were entered into by men involved in some aspect of wholesale or retail trade in Nîmes - marchands, marchand-facturiers, facturiers or commis-marchands. On the eve of the Revolution the number of contracts involving merchants or retailers (négociants, marchands, facturiers, mangonniers, colporteurs or commis marchands) was 93. The proportion of those engaged in trade in the two samples of marriage contracts had fallen from some 12% to under 6%. Yet the proportion of the total amounts given as dowries by this section of the population in both periods was the same, accounting for 30% of the total amounts of 941,806 Lt. and 3,413,274 Lt respectively. During the century there had been a concentration and centralisation of commerce, typified by the emergence of that characteristic figure of eighteenth century society, the négociant, whose activities transcended the divisions between different branches of trade, and between commerce and banking. The general emergence of large-scale commerce, usually organised around a series of interlocking partnerships (the société en commandite) was accompanied by the relative eclipse of the plethora of local and regional merchants - facturiers en laine, marchands facturiers en bas, marchands mangonniers, marchands teinturiers en draps - of the early eighteenth century.

These changes in the size and occupational structure of the city were complimented by more subtle modifications in the composition of the city's wealthy central quartiers. Increasingly the narrow streets running laterally off the two great avenues

of opulent social intercourse - the rue de l'Espic and the Grand'rue, which ran northwards from the Roman Arena - housed the members of the small number of very wealthy families whose fortunes had been made in commerce. The process of local accumulation was matched by a gradual dispersion of the members of these families along the changing circuits of commercial exchange which animated the city's economy. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century there were members of these families or their relatives to be found in almost any of the great commercial centres of eighteenth century Europe. The changes in the occupational topography of the city were intimately related to the invisible topography of the changing network of commercial exchange.

Although the old centre of the city housed the majority of its wealthiest inhabitants - négociants, bourgeois, councillors at the Présidial, nobles and royal officials - there was no marked differentiation in the geographical distribution of occupations between the different parts of Nîmes. At the end of the eighteenth century, the town was divided into four parishes: Saint-Castor, in the centre, St. Paul to the East, St. Charles to the North and the smallest, Saint-Bandille, to the West. The most populous of these was the central parish, Saint-Castor, which housed the mass of artisans and retailers whose incomes depended upon the consumption of the wealthy. The parishes of Saint-Paul and Saint-Charles which stretched away into the garrigues, housed most of the labouring population engaged in either agriculture or manufacture, and a slightly



larger proportion of silk-weavers and agricultural labourers than the central parish. The three major components of the city's population were, however, distributed fairly evenly among the four parishes.

Distribution of Silk Weavers, Hosiers and Agricultural Labourers among the Four Parishes of Nîmes (1785-1789)

	<u>Silk Weavers</u>	<u>Framework Knitters</u>	<u>Agricultural Labourers</u>
St Castor	23%	29%	18%
St. Paul	28%	26%	35%
St. Charles	30%	23%	28%
St. Bandille	9%	7%	7%
Parish Unknown	9%	15%	12%
Total	309	208	257

There was therefore no rigid differentiation in the distribution of the population within the city in the last years of the old regime. It would be false too to assume that the divisions between the different occupations at the lower end of the social hierarchy were any the more rigid. Although it is likely that there was a high level of occupational endogamy in the choice of marriage partners (which cannot be measured, since too few of the marriage contracts mention the occupations of parents), the large number of women engaged in waged work of some form or another cut across the divisions of occupations. The 100 Lt which made up Marie Bonnet's dowry in 1789 when she married a travailleur de terre had been earned "par son travail a la filature des cocons". This was typical of many similar small sums mentioned in the marriage contracts of the late

eighteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Antoinette Lavie's dowry of 250Lt consisted of jewellery which she had bought "des profits particuliers qu'elle s'est faits par son travail ... à la broderie des bas."<sup>11</sup>

Marianne Auziere had earned her dowry of 198 Lt "par son travail à la couture des bas."<sup>12</sup> Many other women had worked as domestic servants. The nature of the marriage contract itself tends to exaggerate the sense of a nuclear family, while the reality was clearly more complex, and the lateral extensions of each family embraced the worlds of both manufacture and agriculture, extending frequently into the countryside from which so many of the city's inhabitants had come.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the largest dowries, like the 30,000 Lt given to Margueritte de Genas when she married Francois, comte de Chaumont, Lieutenant des maréchaux de France in the diocese of Lodève, were some thirty times greater than the value of the average. Almost all of them were given to the daughters of nobles or magistrates at the Présidial, like the 25,000 Lt and half of his property given by Jean-Joseph de Fabrique, a councillor at the Présidial, to his daughter when she married Francois Philebert de Julien, seigneur of Saint-Laurent de la Vernede, La Bruquiere, Bousquet and other places.<sup>13</sup> Of the sixteen dowries involving sums of 10,000 Lt and more, eleven were given to the daughters of nobles or magistrates at the Présidial court. Only a tiny fraction of the commercial community, like Henri Vernede who endowed his daughter with 10,000 Lt when she married Pierre Galissard or Jean Colomb, whose daughter received 20,000 Lt when she married the merchant



Antoine Lacoste, had fortunes capable of providing dowries of this size.<sup>14</sup>

In the period between 1785 to 1789, the largest dowries - of some 150,000 Lt - were over sixty times greater than the value of the average. The sums involved were relatively small by the standards of Paris, Lyon, Marseille or Toulouse at the end of the century, but unlike these cities, they were composed as frequently of dowries given to the daughters of men who were or had been involved in large-scale commerce, as they were by the dowries of daughters of nobles or magistrates at the court of the senechaussee. The 160,000 Lt given to Magdeleine Mazel, the daughter of the former merchant Jean-Jacques Mazel, or the 120,000 Lt given to the daughter of Alexandre Vincens-Valz, uncle of one of the authors of the Topographie de la Ville de Nimes, when she married the noble Jean-Georges Fitler, a négociant of Lyon from the town of St. Gall in Switzerland, were as large as the 100,000 Lt given to the daughter of the baron de Vauvert when she married a Roverié de Cabrieres in 1785.<sup>15</sup> It would be an exaggeration to think of a redistribution of wealth away from the local nobility and magistracy during the eighteenth century. If any section of the city's population is under-represented in the marriage contracts transacted before notaries, it is undoubtedly the nobility. The most substantial noble land-owners - the dukes of Uzès, the marquis de Castries, the Baschi, comtes du Caylar - lived in Paris and inter-married with the aristocracy of the metropolis. Many noble families arranged their marriage

settlements privately, and since they selected their partners from an area which extended well beyond the city, it is not surprising to find that the number of marriages involving nobles or magistrates of the Présidial recorded in notarial registers is too small to make any firm statements about the wealth of the local aristocracy on the eve of the revolution. There is enough to suggest, however, that the households formed by men like Jean Allut, who married the daughter of Jean-Jacques André of Nimes in 1788, and whose combined fortune was worth 490,000 Lt, or of Jacques Vincens de Saint-Laurent, the friend of the future deputies Boissy d'Anglas and Rabaut Saint-Etienne, whose fortune after his marriage to the daughter of André Maigre was some 150,000 Lt, were of a value comparable to that of all but the wealthiest noble estates.<sup>16</sup> Rather than a redistribution of wealth, it would be more accurate to describe the process as a broadening of the socio-professional composition of the very rich. Opulence was no longer the prerogative of noble families alone. A process of accumulation in commerce and subsequent gravitation towards the landed aristocracy lay behind this enlargement of the circle of the city's wealthiest inhabitants. The career of Jean-César Vincens-Plauchut, one of the two authors of the Topographie de la Ville de Nismes was typical of the paths followed by the small number of families whose fortunes were comparable in size to those of the magistracy and local nobility at the end of the eighteenth century.



When Jean-César Vincens married in 1780 he was given 100,000 Lt by his father Alexandre Vincens-Devillas, as his share in a partnership named Vincens & Cie. This affair was a partnership between the cousins Alexandre Vincens-Valz and Alexandre Vincens-Devillas, from which the latter withdrew in favour of his son. It was of a size sufficient to enable it to invest 100,000 Lt in the loan floated by Calonne in December 1783.<sup>17</sup> By this time, however, the family was moving away from commerce and towards the aristocracy. Vincens & Cie had succeeded a number of other commercial partnerships whose success - in the absence of any commercial papers - can only be assumed. Jean-Cesar Vincens retired rapidly from the firm, to become a member of the Academy of Nimes, the Royal Society of Medecine of Paris and the Royal Antiquarian Society of London. His brother Jacques entered

the army, purchasing the office of lieutenant in the regiment des Barrois, before seeking to purchase a landed estate after his marriage to a Maigre in 1785. The affairs of Vincens & Cie were managed by the youngest brother, Emile, and, in 1783, were complimented by those of another partnership, Boyer-Devillas, Vincens & Cie, which replaced the firm of Boyer-Devillas & Cie established in 1778, when Alexandre Vincens-Valz's son, Jean-Alexandre, became a partner. Boyer-Devillas & Cie had been established at the same time as the firm of Devillas freres, fils & Cie of Nimes, which replaced the firms of Devillas & Cie of Lyon and Devillas freres & Cie of Nimes.<sup>18</sup> The substantial fortunes enjoyed by the Vincens in the 1780's were the product of this intricate network of family and commercial association. A brilliant study has revealed the process by which another of the city's leading commercial families - the Fournier - attained a similar position in the last years of the reign of Louis XVI.<sup>19</sup> Their wealth - and that of the André, Chabanel, Devillas, Lacoste, Maigre, Meynier, Pieyre or Vernède - was the result of the protracted interplay between the accumulation of capital and the extension of the market over the course of the century. The effects of this process upon the socio-occupational composition of the population were reflected in the samples of marriage contracts which we have examined; over the century the composition of the city's population was increasingly dominated by manufacture, while the accumulation of commercial capital tended to favour the formation of a more diverse social elite.



The mechanisms which gave rise to this process were the result of changes in the structures of manufacture and exchange which are examined in detail in the chapters which follow.

Notes - Chapter 4

1. Figures of the city's population are, at best, guesses. On the population of Nîmes in the late seventeenth century, see J. Orcibal, "Etat present des recherches sur la Répartition géographique des "Nouveaux Catholiques" a la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle." Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France T.33, 1947, pp.62-102. On the population of Nîmes at the end of the century see J.N. Hood thesis cit., appendix I. In the three years 1770-1772, when the royal administration recorded both Catholic and Protestant baptisms, there were an average of 1994 baptisms a year. (A.D. Hérault C 7-9). This would have implied a population of some 48,853, if multiplied by a co-efficient of 24.5. In 1767 the doctor Jean Razoux estimated that the city housed some 45,000 inhabitants: J. Razoux, Tables Nosologiques et Météorologiques très étendues dressés à l'Hôtel-Dieu de Nîmes depuis le le juin 1757 jusques au le janvier 1762. Basle, 1767.
2. See Maps, based upon an enumeration of the geographical origin of the signatories of 2,800 marriage contracts between 1705-9 and 1785-9.
3. The only surviving fiscal documents of this nature - the compoix - are highly unreliable reflections of the composition of the city's population. The compoix cabaliste - assessments of the value of moveable goods - are inevitably weighted heavily in favour of manufacture, and exclude the large number of people dependent upon agriculture for their livelihoods. Thus M-B Boyer's study, "Nîmes au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," (D.E.S. Montpellier University, 1960), based exclusively upon this source, makes no mention of the agricultural population. The compoix terrein - assessments of the value of landed property - reflect their fiscal purpose too greatly, and thus concentrate upon property, rather than the occupations of current holders of property. Far too many entries are prefaced by the phrase "hoires de ..." to make them a reliable guide to the composition of the population at a given moment.
4. In the three years 1785-1787, the number of marriages celebrated at Nîmes were 339, 416 and 352. The average number of marriage contracts drawn up over the five years 1785-9 was 346 a year. A.D. Hérault. C 23-25.
5. See also M. Garden, Lyon et les Lyonnais au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Paris, 1970 pp.213-223 for a similar situation. The Languedoc as a pays de droit écrit, was a region in which recourse to the notary was automatic in matters related to formal arrangements within families.



6. See, e.g. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>43</sup> 15 f<sup>o</sup> 121 v<sup>o</sup> (1-5-1787). Marriage of P. Livernois to B. Vidal.
7. These averages are the results of dividing the totals by 1013 and 1709 respectively. 25 of the contracts in 1705-9 and 19 of those in 1785-9 do not value the dowry, stating only that the future bride "se constitue avec tous ses biens," whose value is not indicated. The figures are approximately half the value of households at Lyon as calculated by M. Garden, op.cit. p.219. They cannot be exact since dowries often included pensions annuelles, or promises to house and feed the future couple whose value has been partially omitted from the calculations. No direct comparison between the amounts involved in the two samples is permissible, since the value of the livre in 1785-9 was very different from that in 1705-9. Where comparisons between the two samples has been made, it has always been as a comparison of proportions.
8. See below pp. 108 et seq.
9. The marriage contracts rarely state the occupations of the parents of the future couple. In the case of silk-weavers (ouvriers en soie), only 23 contracts do so, in which 7 of the silk-weavers were the sons of silk-weavers, 9 the sons of other textile workers and 6 the sons of other artisans or agricultural producers.
10. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>40</sup> 91 f<sup>o</sup> 537.
11. Id. 2E<sup>40</sup> 88 f<sup>o</sup> 29v<sup>o</sup>.
12. Id. 2E<sup>40</sup> 88 f<sup>o</sup> 249.
13. Id. 2E<sup>39</sup> 147 ff 80 & 470v<sup>o</sup>.
14. Id. 2E<sup>37</sup> 251 f<sup>o</sup> 421; 2E<sup>37</sup> 252 f<sup>o</sup> 35.
15. Id. 2E<sup>43</sup> 14 f<sup>o</sup> 481; 2E<sup>36</sup> 851 f<sup>o</sup> 49; 2E<sup>36</sup> 838 f<sup>o</sup> 745.
16. Id. 2E<sup>39</sup> 210 f<sup>o</sup> 147; 2E<sup>39</sup> 209 f<sup>o</sup> 133.
17. See H. Luthy, La Banque Protestante en France. Paris, 1963, T.2.p.537.
18. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 844 f<sup>o</sup> 508; 2E<sup>36</sup> 836 f<sup>o</sup> 205; 2E<sup>36</sup> 843 f<sup>o</sup> 79.
19. R. Chamboredon, "Une maison de Commerce Languedocienne au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siecle: Simon & Arnail Fournier & Cie," Mémoire de Maîtrise, Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier, 1971.

## Chapter 5

The Structure of Manufacture in Nîmes  
in the Eighteenth Century



In their Topographie Vincens and Baumès calculated that the population of Nîmes in 1788 was some 39,650. Although the estimate is probably too low,<sup>1</sup> their work has the great merit of concentrating upon the question of productive labour in the city before the Revolution.

Born of that marriage of medicine and political economy characteristic of the utopianism of the late eighteenth century, the Topographie defined the material wealth of the city as a function of the relationship between three variables: population, material consumption and productive work. Significantly a fourth possible variable - revenue, particularly in the form of rent - was absent from their scheme of things. Vincens and Baumès envisaged their object not as a discussion of the distribution of income within the urban population, or between town and country, but rather as an examination of the relationship between productive and unproductive labour, material resources and the physical well-being of the city's population. Productive labour was key to the wealth of the material life of the city's population. The resources available to the city's 40,000 or so inhabitants were thus a function of the relationship between an annual aggregate staple consumption of 758,524 myriagrammes of flour, 1,302 cattle, 27,164 sheep and 11,400 kilolitres of wine and the output of a productive population amounting to some 14,157 men, women and children.

The description of the productive sector of the population which they produced was heavily weighted in favour of manufacture. Only 950 individuals among a total of over 14,000 were listed as having any function as agricultural producers. They are described as terrassiers and jardiniers. The city's considerable population of agricultural labourers (travailleurs de terre) was omitted -

along with the nobles, clergy, merchants, lawyers, doctors and other members of the professions not engaged in productive labour. For Vincens and Baumès, the waged, together with the notability, were excluded from the universe of political economy. Neither produced a "vendible commodity". The composition of the productive labour force was thus a product of their particular analytical perspective.

The Productive Population of Nîmes after Vincens and Baumès

Textiles	12,437
Agriculture	950
Building	690
Clothing	660
Bakery	160
Metallurgy	120
Leather	40

A considerable proportion of the productive population of the city was female; 4,245 of the textile workers were women, who were employed as reelers, seamstresses, embroiderers, sorters or throwsters in the silk trade and accounted for over a third of the 12,400 people engaged in the production of textiles.

Textile production, and the production of silks and silk hose in particular, was by far and away the largest component of



the structure of manufacture described by Vincens and Baumès. The accuracy of their description is beyond question. By the mid-eighteenth century the city had displaced Tours to become the second largest centre of the silk production in France after Lyon. In 1752 it was estimated that the city produced 200,000 dozen pairs of stockings and 20,000 silk or silk-based fabrics a year, worth a total of some 11,500,000 livres.<sup>2</sup> The distribution of this value - as the price of cocoons or spun silk produced in the city's hinterland, as wages, commission or repayment of petty debts, or as a return upon sales to one or other of the city's commercial outlets - which equalled the value produced annually from the land, determined the distribution of products among the city's population.

A century earlier, however, the structure and composition of manufacture in Nîmes had been considerably different. Although there is no global exercise of political arithmetic comparable to that produced by Vincens and Baumès, the surviving enumerations of the population made for fiscal purposes and records of apprenticeships in notarial registers indicate that, for much of the seventeenth century, manufacture in Nîmes consisted mainly of the manufacture of woollen textiles.<sup>3</sup> Little is currently known about the production and distribution of woollen cloth in Nîmes during the reigns of Louis XIII and Louis XIV. The size of the fortunes of some merchants - the Boisson and the Pelissier, for example, who both endowed their daughters with over 100,000 Lt in the 1680's - suggests that the trade may have been substantial.<sup>4</sup> At some time, however, - possibly

before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, if the partial survey of apprenticeship indentures made by Puech is accepted, possibly a little later if the indices of continuing commercial vitality after 1685 are to be accepted - the manufacture of woollen textiles began to decline. This process, which was accompanied by a redistribution of the productive population away from wool and into silk was symptomatic of a larger process, involving a re-orientation of the structures of exchange into which the city was inserted. The transition from wool to silk as the basis of the city's productive activity reflected the formation of an economy which - at certain levels - was part of a relatively integrated and differentiated world market, able to impose its rhythms upon the the distribution of productive activity from year to year and from trade to trade within the city itself. Vincens and Baumès' Topographie was, in large measure, made possible by this experience.

The absence of continuous series of figures representing physical output or changes in the level of fixed capital (looms, calanders, stocking-frames, etc.) makes it impossible to produce a precise chronological study of this transition. Surviving figures from the reports of the inspectors of manufacture indicate that there was a considerable reorganisation of the structure of manufacture within the city between the period of the Revocation of Nantes and the end of the Regency. (See Table appended to this chapter).



By 1730 Nîmes housed over 1,000 stocking frames, over 600 looms working in silk and a further 340 working in wool. Over half of the stocking frames - since either 1728 or 1729 - were working with silk. By the third decade of the eighteenth century manufacture in Nîmes was bound up with the supply of silk from the city's hinterland to the North and North West.<sup>5</sup>

The reorganisation of manufacture which occurred in the two generations following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was related to and determined by a major re-orientation in the geographical structure of the city's commerce. Although the structure of exchange in the seventeenth century is relatively unknown, it is probable that large-scale commerce in the seventeenth century was centred upon the Italian peninsular and the Levant.<sup>6</sup> As late as 1727, one of the city's merchants - Jean Méjanelle - gave this axis pride of place in his description of the principle outlets for the commodities distributed from Nîmes.

"Son commerce se fait dans le Piémont, à Gênes et sa rivière, à Naples, Venise, Romagne, Livourne, en Espagne, en Suisse, en Allemagne, dans le Millanais, en Hollande, à Hambourg et dans tout le royaume."<sup>7</sup>

A generation later - in the mid-eighteenth century - the major outlets for the city's manufactured goods lay to the South - in Spain and the Spanish colonies in South America, and to the North - in the Holy Roman Empire. The eclipse of wool as the staple of the city's manufacture was partly related to this re-orientation of the geography of exchange. Méjanelle noted this

in 1727, remarking that the trade in woollen goods had declined considerably,

"depuis que l'Espagne et l'Italie ne tirent plus des imperialles, la Sicile et l'ile de Malthe des cadis de Nîmes, ny le Piémont des molletons ..."

and compared this state of affairs with the demand for silks, particularly from Germany after the revaluation of French currency.<sup>8</sup>

By the fourth decade of the eighteenth century, Nîmes was no longer a significant centre of woollen textile production. Woollen cloth was produced elsewhere and the commerce in woollen goods came to be centred more upon Montpellier than Nîmes. The textiles produced to the west and North-west of the city - in the Vaunage, the Cévennes, the Gévaudan and the Vivarais - tended to pass through Montpellier, although a small number of large commercial houses headed by the Fornier, Pieyre, Bresson and Lapiere families, continued to deal in these goods throughout the eighteenth century, selling mainly in the rest of France, Spain and Italy.<sup>9</sup>

"Le Commerce consiste dans l'achat de petites draperies qui se fabriquent dans le Gévaudan, le Rouergue et les Cévennes, dans le Haut-Languedoc comme Limoux, Castres, Mazamet, Boisseron, Lécarme, etc.... Les négociants de Nîmes font teindre, apreter et préparer les draperies qu'ils vendent dans les différentes provinces,"

the corps des marchands-drapiers reported in 1770.<sup>10</sup> The assets of one of the largest of these merchants, Jean Bresson, who went bankrupt in 1790, owing nearly 660,000 Lt reflected this orientation. In addition to two amounts of 10,000 Lt invested in the capitals of the firms of Bresson & Tiers and Archinard & Cie of Nîmes, Bresson had 12,000 Lt invested in the firm of Monerie & Cie of



Carcassonne, where his current account was also over 117,000 Lt in credit, and over 8,000 Lt worth of goods stored with another merchant in Carcassonne.<sup>11</sup> Nîmes in the eighteenth century was primarily an entrepot, rather than a manufacturing centre for woollen goods.

Numerous mémoires written during the eighteenth century offered explanations of the decline of woollen cloth production in Nîmes. The absence of a suitable water supply, the inferior quality of the goods produced, the plague of 1720 in Marseille which denied the city access to Italy and the Levant and enabled English merchants to capture the market, were all invoked as explanations.<sup>12</sup> It has also been argued that the decline was the result of a transfer of investment into silk, and away from a commodity whose profitability was threatened by competition from Amiens, Beauvais and the other northern textile centres in the late seventeenth century.<sup>13</sup> Until the research has been done, this must remain a hypothesis. There are indications, however, which suggest that explanations couched in terms of superior competitiveness may be inadequate, and that the displacement of wool by silk was bound up with more complex changes in the structure of commerce, changes which led to the installation and development of a substantial hosiery industry in Nîmes by the end of the second decade of the eighteenth century. The structure of manufacture which this innovation produced was to remain substantially the same until the Revolutionary years.

Notes - Chapter 5

1. See above p. 95.
2. A.D. Hérault.C2281.
3. See A. Puech, La Vie de nos Ancêtres d'après leurs livres de Raison, ou les Nimois dans le Second Noitié du XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, Nîmes, 1888, and L. Teisseyre, "L'Industrielainiere à Nîmes au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: Crise conjoncturelle ou crise structurelle," Annales du Midi, 88, 1976, pp.383-400.
4. Livre de Raison of I. Boisson (late 17th century), the property of M.E. de Balincourt, of Nîmes. I am grateful to the owner for allowing me to examine the document.
5. See below, Part III.
6. See below, pp. 120-123.
7. A.D. Hérault. C 2503.
8. Id.
9. Id. C 5543.
10. Id. C 5589,
11. Id. 8B 433.
12. Id. C 5589.
13. L. Teisseyre, art.cit. pp.395 et.seq.





<u>Year</u>	<u>Stocking Frames Working On</u>		<u>Total Nimes</u>	<u>Total Nimes &amp; Jurande*</u>	<u>Silk Looms</u>	<u>Looms Making "Burattes"</u>		<u>Looms Making Wool</u>	
	<u>Silk</u>	<u>Wool</u>							
1777 <sup>28</sup>				4550					
1780				5-6,000					
1783			3000	5557	2360				
1787				4000					
1788				3557					
1789					2550				

(Silk Handkerchiefs: 1783 - 922)

Sources: 1. A.D. Gard IVE 76; 2. B.N. Mss Fr.8057; 3. id.; 4. A.D. Hérault C2639; 5. A.D. Hérault C2640; 6. - 9. A.D. Hérault C2449; 10. A.N. F<sup>12</sup> 1398; 11. A.D. Hérault C5543; 12. - 14. A.D. Hérault C2449; 15. A.D. Hérault C4678; 16. - 21. A.D. Hérault C2450; 22. A.D. Hérault C2634; 23. A.D. Hérault C2643; 24. A. D. Hérault C5614; 25. A.D. Hérault C4679; 26. A.D. Gard IVE 200; 27. B.M. Nimes Mss 66; 28. A.D. Hérault C2384; 29. Vincens & Baumès (1806); 30. A.D. Hérault C5629, C5543 A.N. F<sup>12</sup> 1398; 31. A.D. Hérault C2296; 32. A.N. H 748<sup>221</sup>; 33. A.D. Gard IVE 200.

\* The Jurande of Nimes covered the four civil dioceses of Nimes, Uzès, Alès and Viviers. In 1743 the town of Ganges, in the diocese of Montpellier, was given its own corporation of fabricants en bas which explains the slight drop in the number of stocking frames reported in 1743.



Chapter 6

The Hosiery Industry

The development of framework knitting in Western Europe in the second half of the seventeenth century coincided with the great migrations of Catholics from the British Isles and of Protestants from France.<sup>1</sup> The two events were not unrelated, and raise analogous questions. Just as Catholics and Calvinists followed certain itineraries, paused, turned to other localities and then moved on, so the movement of the stocking frame was accompanied by deviation, hesitation and rejection, before it was adopted in a number of particular localities. The emergence of an established diaspora of religious exile was paralleled by the emergence of a geography of framework knitting. The establishment of a hosiery industry in Nîmes was bound up with this complicated process of assimilation and rejection.

From Rouen and Paris, the stocking frame moved to Nîmes through Avignon and Orange.<sup>2</sup> It accompanied the first wave of English and Irish exiles along the Rhone valley through Lyon towards Marseille.<sup>3</sup> By 1662 two of the merchants associated with Colbert's hosiery establishment at the château de Madrid had settled in Avignon.<sup>4</sup> They were accompanied by a small number of English and Irish artisans and merchants who formed the core of the small hosiery industry which developed in Avignon over the following two decades. Henry Brent, described as an "ouvrier en bas de soie" in 1665 was a native of London who had arrived in Avignon by 1660.<sup>5</sup> In June 1666, he formed a partnership for the production of silk stockings with William Chapman, a merchant originally from Northamptonshire, who had also arrived in Avignon in the early 1660's. In his will, made in 1674, he is described as a



"marchand ouvrier en bas de soie." His bequests suggest a modest fortune, while his request for thirty-nine requiem masses after his death, together with a donation of the considerable sum of 100 écus to the chapel of Saint-Geniès of Avignon, suggests a typically baroque piety.<sup>6</sup> In addition to bequests of 100 écus each to his brothers Giles and John, he left a stocking frame each to his two relatives Thomas Tilly and William Ware, and made his wife, Sara Tilly, his heir.

At the time of the drawing up of this will, Chapman had ended his association with Brent and had formed another partnership with a further Catholic exile, William Berckley. This affair, which began on January 1st 1668, was to last for seven years. The partners owned thirteen stocking frames, eight belonging to Chapman, four to Berckley and one belonging to an inhabitant of Lyon, which was leased for the considerable sum of 200 Lt a year.<sup>7</sup> Profits and losses were to be divided in the proportion of a third to Berckley and two thirds to Chapman.

The partnership does not appear to have been renewed at the end of the seven year period. In February 1675, Thomas Tilly, marchand fabriquant de bas de soie, married the daughter of a bourgeois of Avignon endowed with the respectable sum of 3,300 Lt. and was given a quarter share in a partnership with his brother-in-law Chapman and the sum of 2,028 Lt. Tilly's contribution to the association consisted of three stocking frames, evaluated at 1,000 Lt each - or more than double the price of a stocking frame

a generation later.<sup>8</sup> A year later - in October 1676 - William Ware, who was also from Northamptonshire and the son of William Ware and Elizabeth Chapman, received a further quarter share in the partnership and contributed another three stocking frames to its capital.<sup>9</sup>

The English presence in Avignon does not, however, appear to have been a durable one. In November 1678, Chapman and Tilly dissolved their partnership and formed a new one with a capital of 6,000 Lt.<sup>10</sup> It was to last for six years and be based at Marseille, where each partner had two stocking frames. It would seem that Chapman remained in Avignon, although during the same year he was described as a resident of Marseille when he acquired French nationality.<sup>11</sup> Tilly, however, moved there to manage the affairs of the small partnership, while William Ware, the third relative, moved to Toulouse.<sup>12</sup> A generation later, the English connection with framework knitting in Avignon had come to an end. Chapman's eldest son - Joseph-Sauveur - was employed in the recette de Tabac in the town of Draguignan, while the cadet, Jean-Pons, had entered a Dominican monastery in Avignon.<sup>13</sup> In 1737, the eldest son had become Mr. Joseph de Chapman, écuyer, of Draguignan.<sup>14</sup>

## II

During this period, the stocking frame moved to Orange. The step was a small one. Like Avignon, the town lay outside of the frontiers of the kingdom and it is significant that, as in Avignon, the move followed an initiative from Paris. In Avignon, the initiative had come from the brothers Jean and Louis Hindret, marchands de



Paris, who had been involved in the creation of the atelier at the château de Madrid. In Orange, it was the work of the brothers Pierre and Louis Boucherat, bourgeois de Paris, who, in January 1668, hired three Avignonnais - Francois Coutellier, maître serrurier, Jerome Thioulier, faiseur d'aiguilles and Francois Bony, ouvrier en bas de soie - to make two stocking frames. Both Coutellier and Thioulier had been previously employed by Chapman and Berckley in Avignon.<sup>15</sup> Six years later - in 1674 - Louis Boucherat leased a stocking frame to the man who was the final link in the chain, which led to Nîmes, Louis Félix, a Protestant and a bourgeois d'Orange.<sup>16</sup>

On November 7 1674, Félix formed a partnership with Antoine Grizot, a Protestant pastor from the village of Bernis, near Nîmes, in which their sons - Jacques Félix and Simon-Pierre Grizot - were to manufacture stockings and produce the frames necessary for this purpose. The making of the frames was to be the work of Timothé Pastre, a locksmith from Nîmes.<sup>17</sup>

The circumstances which produced this partnership remain obscure. Félix seems to have accumulated connections with Nîmes over a long period, (one of his sons was apprenticed to his son-in-law Jean Bouzanquet, marchand canevasier de Nîmes, in 1655), but no family connections appear to have complimented the partnership with the Grizot.<sup>18</sup> In 1678, his son Jacques, now described as a marchand de Nîmes, married a Dlle Françoise Puech, whose dowry was worth a modest 1200 Lt, including 100 Lt "gagnés par son travail et industrie." Jacques Félix received 1200 Lt as his share of his parents' estate, of which 500 Lt was to be paid in six months and 700 Lt after their death.<sup>19</sup> His milieu was one bounded by the lower edges of the retail trade and the upper level of the skilled crafts.

His association with Simon-Pierre Grizot seems to have been a brief one.<sup>20</sup> By 1682, Grizot was in partnership with his two brothers, Henri and Antoine, for the production of stockings.<sup>21</sup> A year earlier he had married Judith Chauvin - the daughter of a notaire from the village of Bernis - and contributed as his share of the household's effects.

"tous les cabaux qu'il a pour la fabrique de bas de soie et de laine ... consistant en trois metiers montés dans sa maison ... à Nages, de valeur de trois cents livres chacun ... la laine pour ladite fabrique et le fer destiné à faire d'autres metiers, à raison de quoi a été dressée dans ladite maison une boutique de serrurier et mis pour cela un garçon propre pour cela."<sup>22</sup>

Regrettably, however, all trace of the commercial activity in which Grizot was involved had disappeared. No accounts or inventories seem to have survived, so that what remains are the external signs of a fortune whose growth seems to have ended before his death: a will of 1696 containing bequests of 1,000 Lt to his father, "s'il revient dans le royaume," and an annuity of 500 Lt to his wife; a second marriage in 1716, to the daughter of a bourgeois de Nîmes endowed with the considerable sum of 20,000 livres paid in bills of exchange; a second will in 1722, with bequests of 8,000 Lt each to his nephews Henri and Jean and other smaller donations worth a total of 2,000 Lt; but then, in 1733, a final will in which the donations to his nephews were reduced to 4,000 Lt each and his other bequests limited to a total value of some 600 Lt. His estate was left to his nephew, another Simon-Pierre Grizot.<sup>23</sup>

Despite this relative failure (one which compelled his heir to request a reduction in his cote de capitation),<sup>24</sup> the alliances made by his collateral descendants indicate that the family had found its place within the commercial élite of the Protestant



community of the Bas-Languedoc (cf Table 1).<sup>25</sup>

The Grizot

	Simon-Pierre (merchant)	(m.I. Judith Chauvin; l. Simone payan).		
Antoine. (Pastor)	Henri (Merchant)	Simon-Pierre. (merchant). m. Marguerite Mazel.		
	Antoine	Henri (merchant-hosier)	Jean-Jacques (Governor of Versoy)	
		Jean. (emigrated to Rolle in Switz- erland).	Etienne (Bourgeois of Nîmes)	
	Daniel. (hosier)		Joseph	
			Margueritte (m. André Liquier négt. at Naples).	
			Magdeleine (m. Jean-David Levat. Négt. at Montpellier)	
			Angelique (m. Jaques Ducaylar Négt. of Nîmes)	
	1680	1720	1740	1780

During the first two decades of the eighteenth century Grizot was undoubtedly the largest entrepreneur associated with the hosiery industry. In 1717 he owned 43 stocking frames, more than double the number owned by anyone else in the city.<sup>26</sup> This was a large number, representing - at 300 Lt a frame - a total investment of some 12,900 livres. The amount bears witness to the spectacular growth of the hosiery industry in the period between 1690 and 1710, when a platform of some 1,300 frames in the city was attained. Over the following two decades, the number of frames grew more slowly, before accelerating dramatically again in the decade after 1722 (cf Table 11):

Table II

	<u>Nîmes</u>	<u>Nîmes and Jurande</u>	<u>Source</u>
1705	887	-	A.D.Gard IVE 76.
1708	1300	?	B.N. Ms.fr. 8057
1711	1100	?	Id.
1721		2500 (!)	A.D. Hérault C 2639
1722	1006	1686	Id. C 2640
1723	1070	?	Id. C 2449
1724	1082	?	Id. Id.
1726	1192	2000 (!)	Id. Id.
1727	?	1784	Id. Id.
1728	1318	?	A.N F/12 1398
1729	?	2250	A.D.Hérault C 5543
1730	1440	?	Id. C 2449
1731 (1st half)	1424	2385	Id. Id.
1732	1430	2601	Id. Id.
1733	1450	?	Id. Id.
1734	1442	2646	Id. C 2450
1735	1453	2564	Id. Id.
1736	1460	2667	Id. Id.
1737	1547	2783	Id. Id.
1738	1781	?	Id. Id.
1739	?	4510	Id. Id.
1743 (*)	?	3200	Id. C 2634
1744	?	5100	Id. C 2643
1751	?	5100	Id. C 4679
1759	1606	3474	A.D.Gard IVE 80.
1767	2000	?	B.M.Nîmes Mss.66
1783	3000	5557	A.N.F/12 1398
1787	?	4000	A.D.Hérault C 2296
1788	?	3557	A.N.H. 748/221

The Number of Stocking Frames Active in Nîmes and the area of its Guild in the 18th Century

(\*) After 1743 the town of Ganges in the Cévennes was granted its own guild - hence the apparent fall in this year.

By the end of the War of the Spanish Succession, however, the hosiery industry had become a major component of the economy of Nîmes. This development - which parallels the declining agricultural production and the sombre climate of recession of the 'long' seventeenth century<sup>27</sup> - requires some explanation.



### III

The thousand or so stocking frames working in Nîmes towards 1710 represented a total capital investment of some 300,000 livres. Investment on this scale implies the existence of a reservoir of capital available to be placed in framework knitting. Two circumstances favoured the formation of such a reservoir. In the first place, the long term fall in rents which began in the 1670's and continued into the 1720's and beyond, removed many of the usual incentives toward investment in property or land.<sup>28</sup> In 1686 Jean Forestier, a marchand de fer et de bois, was forced to cede all of his property to his creditors because his assets

"consistent en biens fonds, marchandises et autres effets .. (ne peuvent) estre de grand velleur à cause que la pluspart consiste en de maisons dont personne ne les veut achepter, le prix en ayant diminué à cause de la rareté de l'argent et de la cessation du commerce."<sup>29</sup>

If the number reduced to this unhappy situation was small, there were probably many more who found the revenue from a stocking frame a welcome addition - if not alternative - to the dwindling income to be drawn from real estate. In 1685 Jacques Marignan, a former notaire from the village of Milhaud placed the sum of 2,500 Lt in a partnership to be formed between his nephew Jacques and a certain Jean Molleret, marchands et facturiers en bas de laine. The sum was to be used to make twelve stocking frames, which were to be placed in a workshop in the village of Milhaud.<sup>30</sup> In 1686 Pierre Sabatary, a maitre chirurgien, and his brother-in-law bought two stocking frames and agreed to "prendre des apprentis, faire des bas et vendre d'iceux." Their net income from their brief association amounted to 103 and 190 livres during its two year life.<sup>31</sup>

When Etienne Bernard, a procureur at the Présidial of Nîmes married in 1708, he received, as part of his bride's dowry "la rente de quatre mestiers à faire bas et autres deux mestiers à faire bas."<sup>32</sup> Pierre Fontanès, an ouvrier en draps de soie received a stocking frame and two weaving looms from his father, a silk-weaver, when he married in 1709. His bride, the daughter of a shoe-maker, contributed another stocking frame to the couple's assets.<sup>33</sup> The examples could be multiplied; they all suggest that the 10 to 15% return on a stocking frame was a bon placement de pere de famille in the conditions of the late seventeenth century.<sup>34</sup>

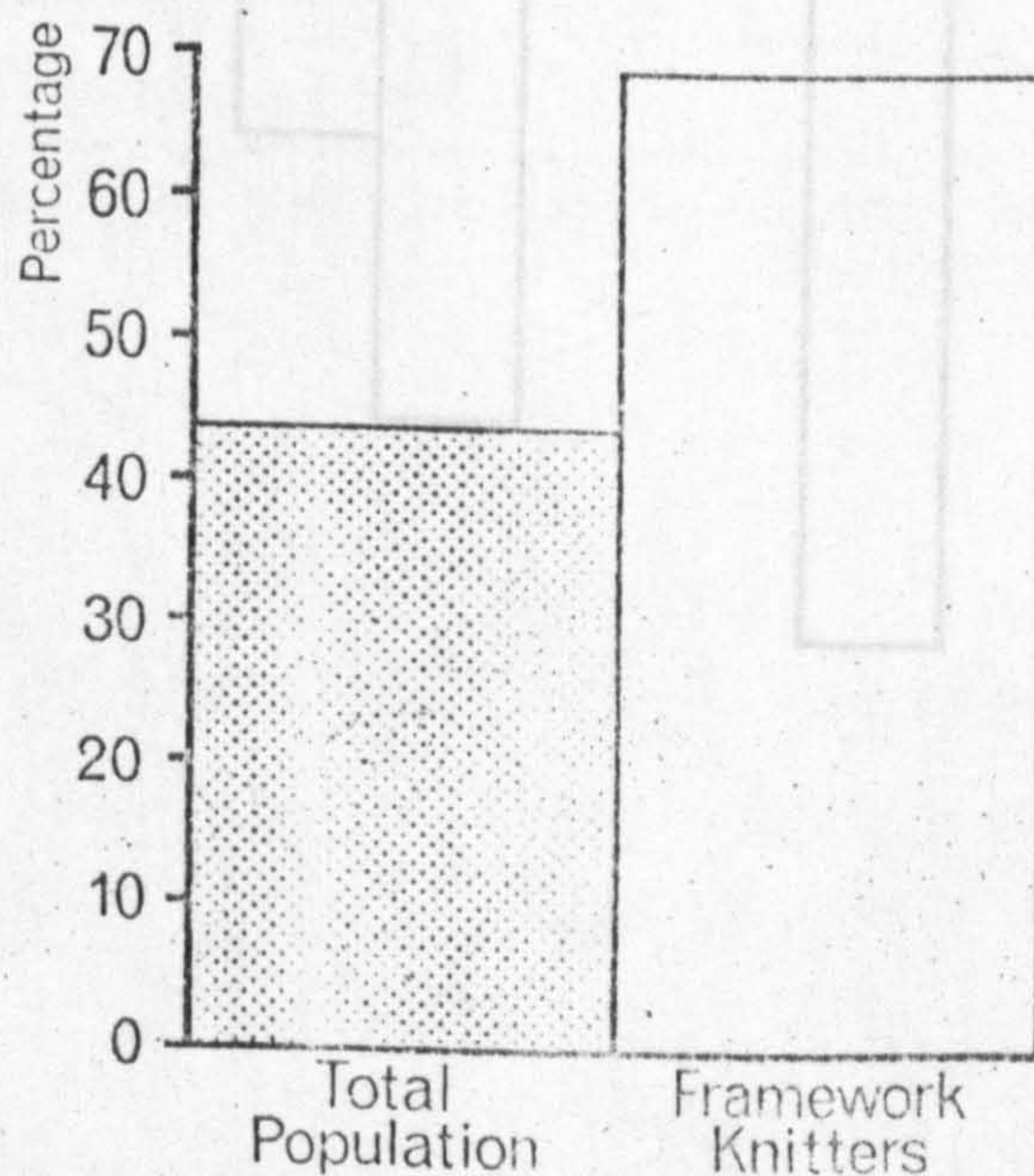
A further incentive towards investment in hosiery came from the collapse of the city's silk industry. "Le metier ne vaut rien," was the laconic comment appended to an état des corps de metier drawn up in 1691 which enumerated a mere 19 maître-taffetassiers and 100 master silk lace and ribbon makers.<sup>35</sup> In 1681, the city's silk merchants had claimed that there were over a thousand weaving looms actively occupied in the town.<sup>36</sup> The figure was not to be reached again until after the middle of the eighteenth century. It is probable that the decline was already underway by the time of the emigration provoked by the dragonnades and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.<sup>37</sup> The long term downward movement of nominal prices and its attendant consequences upon the demand for the high quality passenterie and ribbon-ware produced in Nîmes suffice to explain the general trend. It is not surprising therefore to discover a Donzel, a Bousquet, a Dalbiac, a Lacoste



and half a dozen other of the city's largest silk merchants on a list of 44 individuals "fezant travailler à la manufacture des bas" drawn up in 1705.<sup>38</sup>

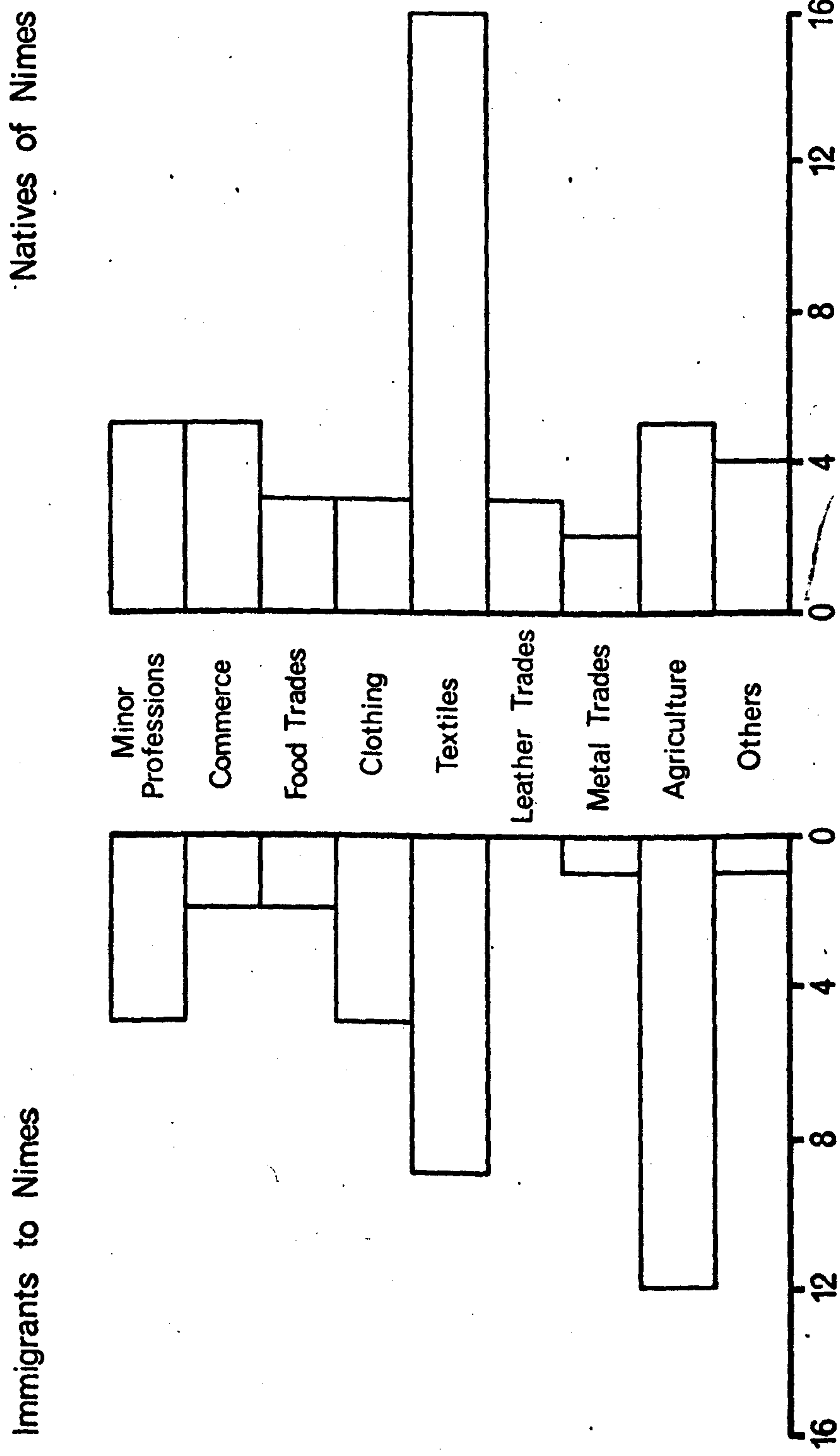
Most framework knitters however, owned their own stocking frames. Until 1723 admission to the corps des fabricants en bas - which had been formed in 1700 - was not premissed upon the payment of a droit de maitrise. Anyone therefore who was able to afford a stocking frame could enter the corporation. Tables I to III present a profile of the city's framework knitting population as seen through some 150 marriage contracts drawn up between 1705 and 1709.

MALE LITERACY IN NIMES  
(1705-1709)





OCCUPATIONS OF FATHERS OF FRAMEWORK KNITTERS (1705-1709)

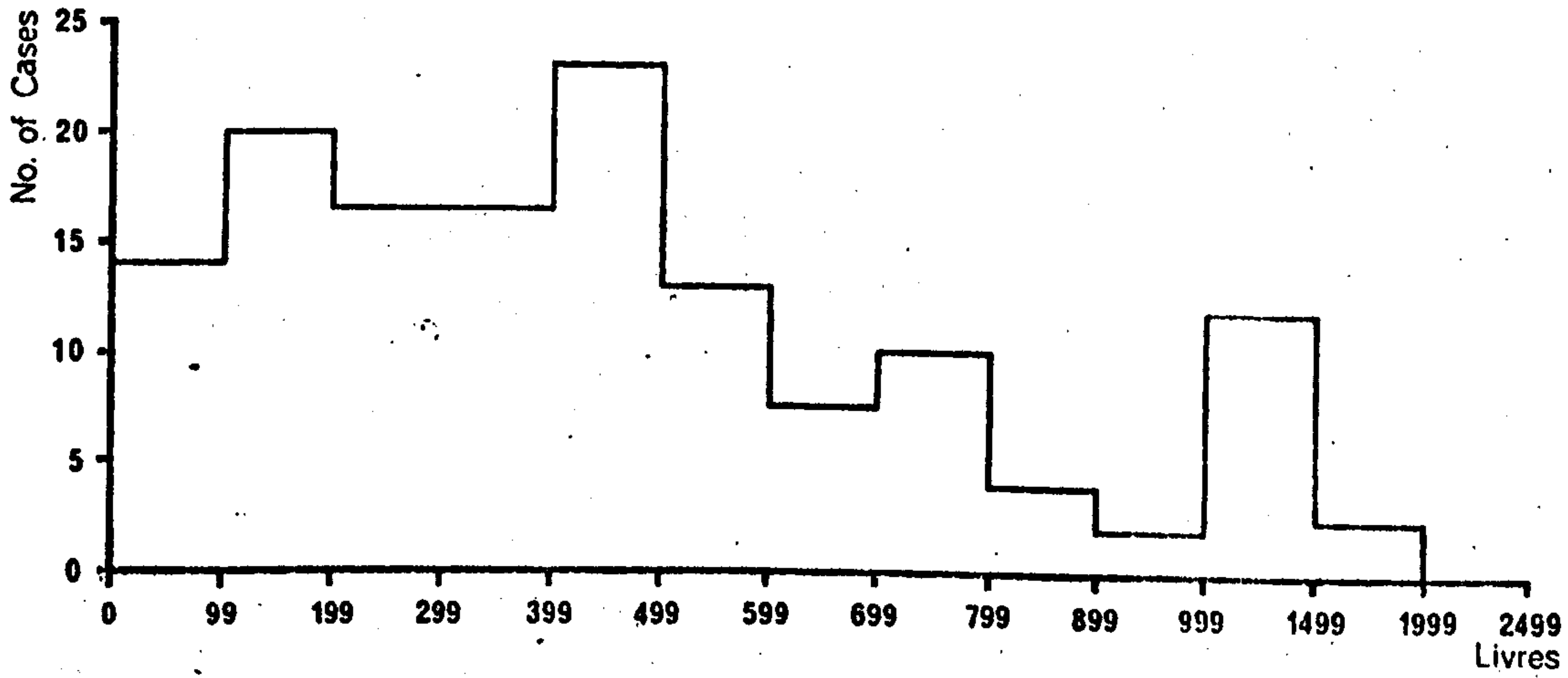




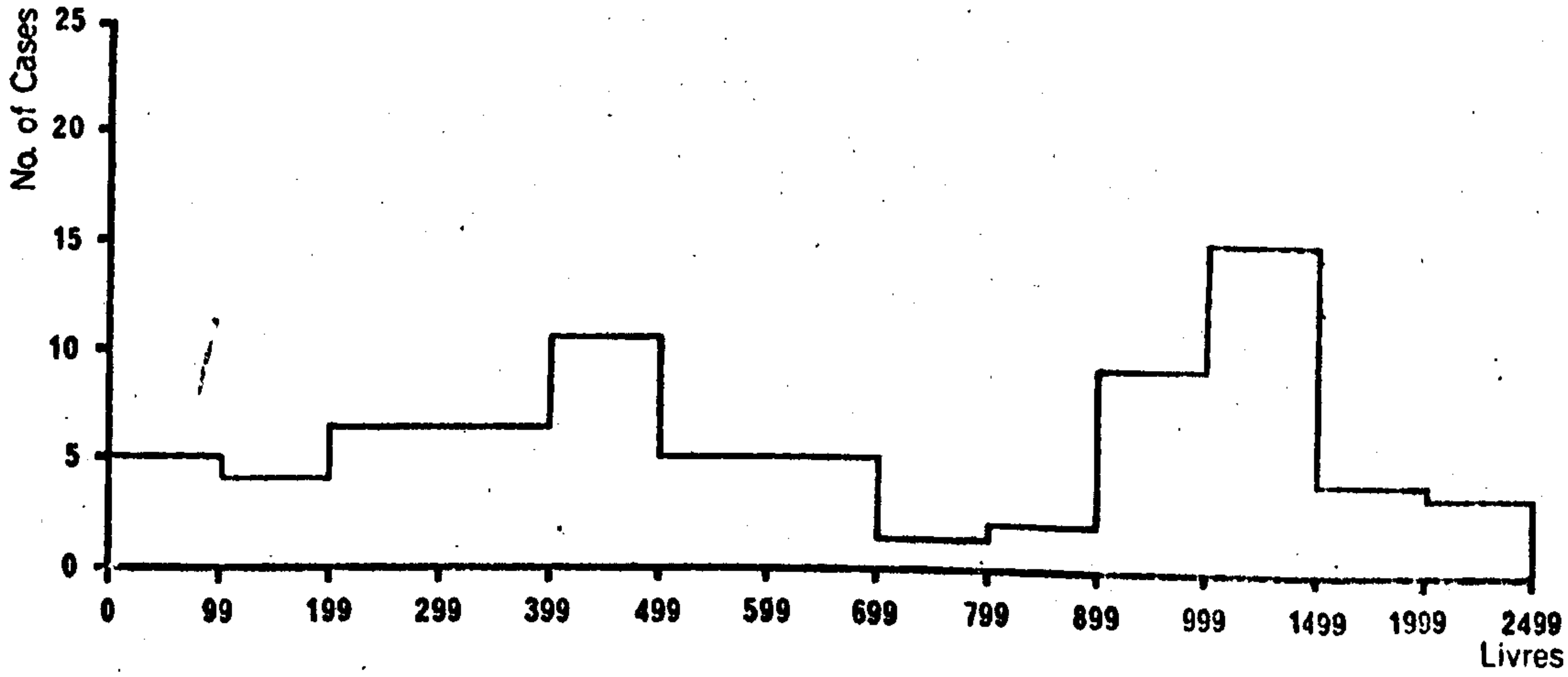
III.

VALUE OF FRAMEWORK KNITTERS' ASSETS AT MARRIAGE  
(1705-1709)

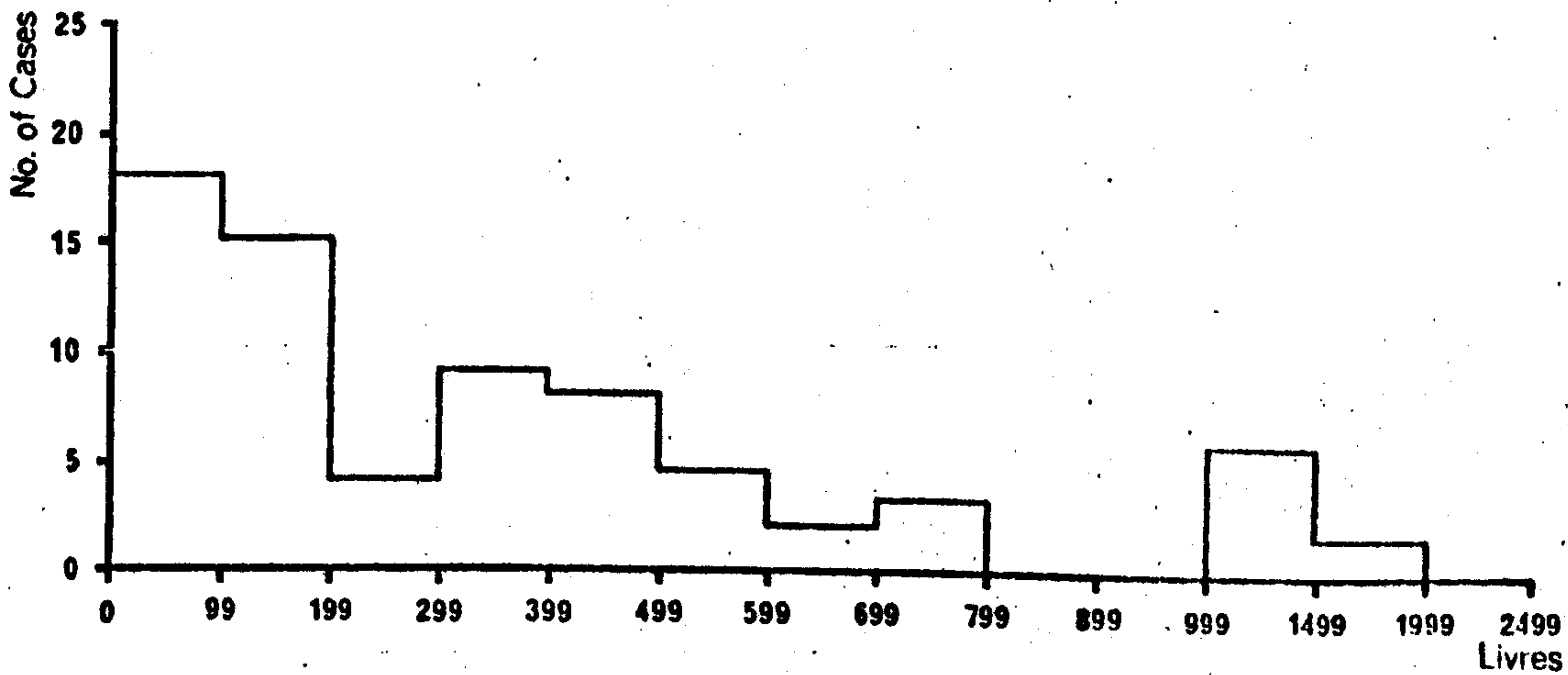
Dowries



Couples' Assets



Portions



This profile reinforces the suggestion that the hosiery industry developed from resources already present in the city. Most framework knitters had been born in Nîmes, were literate (and probably Protestant), were the sons of relatively prosperous artisans or small retailers often associated with the production of silk fabrics, if they were natives of Nîmes, or of the more substantial landowners (ménagers and laboueurs) if they were immigrants from the city's hinterland. The value of their households at the onset of their married lives indicates a modest independence, beyond the range of the mass of the city's population at this time. In other words, the conjuncture of the late seventeenth century favoured the transfer of capital and expertise from other sectors of the city's economy into the hosiery industry.

#### IV

A conjuncture favourable to investment in stocking frames was not, however, peculiar to Nîmes. The general conditions which affected innovation on the productive side of the industry were common to Avignon, not to say Montpellier or Marseille. The origins of a development specific to Nîmes lie elsewhere, in the network of exchange which animated the city's commercial economy and offered the markets which were penetrated by the products of its hosiery industry.<sup>39</sup> Significantly, only two of the 44 individuals listed as "fezant travailler en bas" in 1705 appear among the 29 wealthiest merchants (allivré at 10 Lt. or more) on the compoix cabaliste of Nîmes of 1700.<sup>40</sup> One of them was Grizot; the other - Jean Colomb -

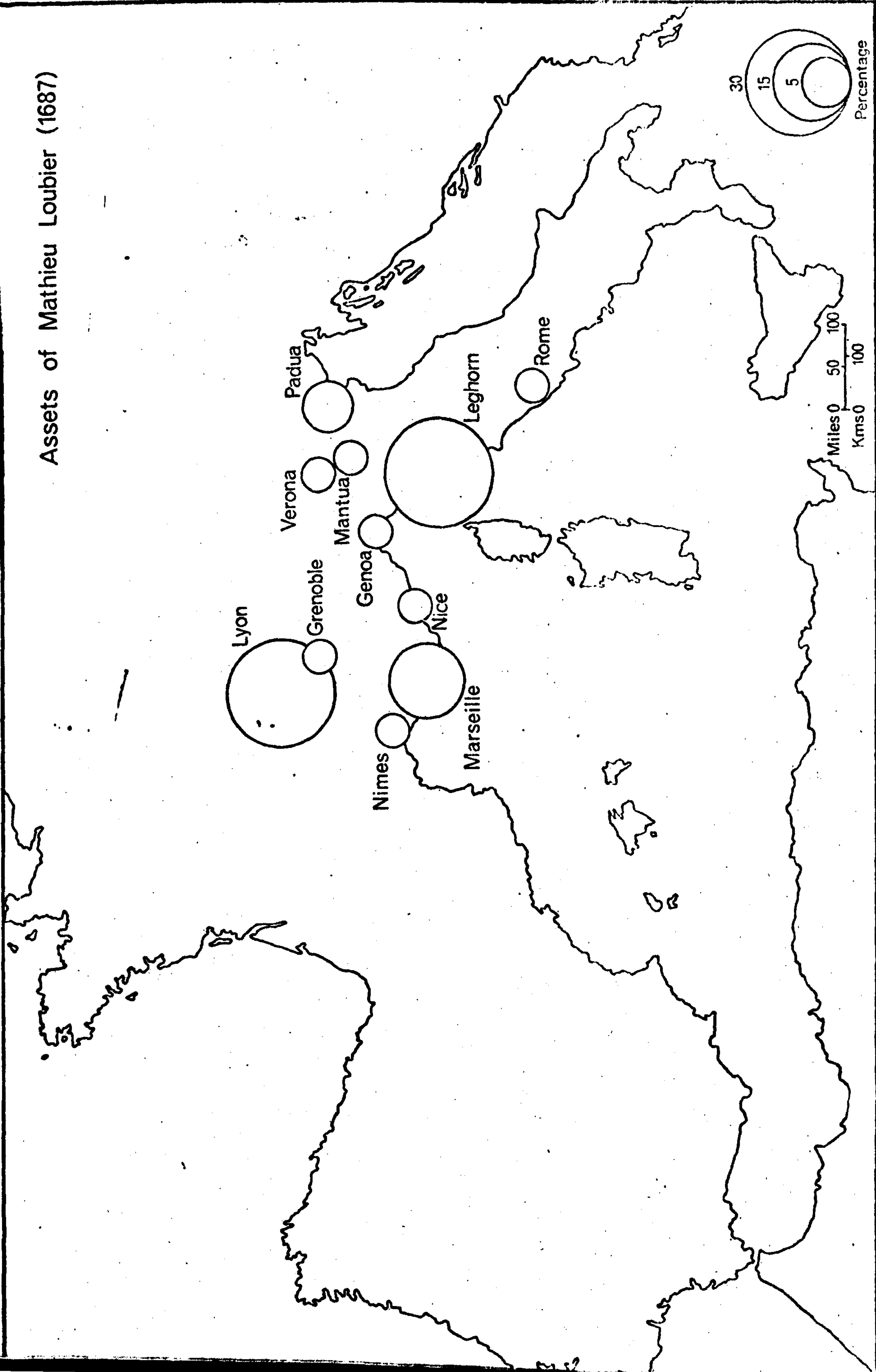


was a large silk merchant. Commerce rather than industry dominated the city's economy and determined the rhythms of the expansion of its hosiery industry.

Regrettably, no surviving statistical series permit the reconstruction of the commercial space covered by the circuits of exchange radiating outwards from Nîmes at the end of the seventeenth century. A number of partial indices can, however, be brought together:

1. The actif of a large merchant - Mathieu Loubier - who died in 1687. He had placed 50,000Lt for a 2/5's share in a partnership with Jean Audemard of Nîmes and Charles Pellet of Anduze formed in 1675. The firm of Audemard, Loubier & Pellet must therefore have had an initial capital of some 125,000 Lt. Between 1678 and 1680 it also had a branch in Malta, managed by a Sr Jean Raffin, a native of Uzès who was involved for a half share of the branch's capital and "avoit associé le Sr Vernède aussy resident à Malthe pour la moitié de susdite moitié." When the partnership was dissolved in 1685, Loubier's share of its assets amounted to 80,889 Lt, drawn overwhelmingly from commercial houses in Lyon and in Italy:

Assets of Mathieu Loubier (1687)





The 31% of his actif owed by commercial houses in Leghorn suggests that Italy was a stage on the route to the Levant.<sup>41</sup>

2. An inventory made of the effects of Simon Calvas, bourgeois de Nîmes, in 1700. Calvas had formed a partnership with his brother Jacques and a Sr Abraham Poussiélgues in 1682. Poussiélgues was to reside in Malta "pour les affaires de leur negosse." In 1689 Calvas formed a sub-partnership with the firm of frères Simon of Aleppo "concernant leurs affaires du Levant." Frères Simon were still receiving merchandise from what had now become the firm of Simon Calvas & Ignace Simon in 1697.<sup>42</sup>
3. The inventory of the effects of the firm of Jean-Pierre & Claude Conrazier which went bankrupt in 1703. The partnership had been in existence since 1691 at the latest. It had branches in Sicily and Malta, where Jean-Pierre Conrazier resided. An impression of the scale of its affairs can be drawn from a "police de chargement fait à Sète le 15 may 1703 pour compte propre de Sr Jean-Pierre Conrazier de Malte" which mentions 125 "petites balles draperie" and a second police mentioning a further 71 bales.<sup>43</sup>
4. A partnership formed by four merchants - Claude Lombard and André Hector of Nîmes, Pierre Reboul of Mantua of Italy and Jacques Imbert of Clermont de Lodève - in 1683 with a capital of 31,000 Lt "pour négocier en la ville de Mantua et autres états de l'Italie."<sup>44</sup>

These few instances suggest the importance of the axis running from Nîmes to Marseille (or to a lesser extent to Sète) and then to Italy, Malta and the Levant. At least fourteen commercial houses from Nîmes had branches on the Italian peninsula or in Malta in the period between 1680 and 1710. Their names include the wealthiest merchants of the period: Cambon, Audemard, Lombard, Calvas, Chabaud, André, Maystre, Vernède, Teissier.

The circuit of exchange drew upon the woollen fabrics produced in the Languedoc and perhaps particularly upon the petite draperie of the Uzège, the Cévennes and the Gévaudan. Mathieu Loubier's stock included 32 cadis des Cévennes, 100 pieces of burattes (a wool and silk mix) and 143 serges d'Anduze or d'Uzès.<sup>45</sup> Significantly

two of his associates - Pellet and Raffin - were merchants from these towns. The Conrazier owned 37 pièces imperialles de Ganges and five of their creditors were merchants from the cévénol town. A further eight of their creditors were from Limoux and one from Carcassone, so that it is clear that Nîmes was also an entrepot for the products of the haut-Languedoc. An inventory made of the stock belonging to the firm of Jacques Cambon & Cie which had a filiale in Palermo in 1699 mentions 49 pièces cadis d'Anduze, (while a further 25 pièces were with his dyer), 32 pièces draps de Saint-Pons and 12 imperialles.<sup>46</sup> In 1696 49% of the 2953 bales of woollen cloth imported to Marseille from the fair of Beaucaire went to a single commercial house, the firm of Claude & Jeremie Baguet & Cie.<sup>47</sup> This establishment, formed by the members of a family originally from the village of Aimargues, to the south-west of Nîmes was closely associated with the commercial houses of the Protestant city. As early as 1650 the family was represented in Marseille, by Pierre Baguet and Pierre Charron "marchands en compagnie" who were correspondents of the firm of Jean & Jacques Boisson pere & fils of Nîmes "tant pour raison de négoce de marchandises en drapperie, remizes et brevets de change, cedulles, obligations qu'autrement."<sup>48</sup> In the last years of the seventeenth century Claude & Jérémie Baguet (the successor to Baguet & Charron) were the chief recipients of the bales of cloth sent from Nîmes by the firm of Chabaud & Pison, which also had a branch in Malta.<sup>49</sup>

It seems probable therefore that a substantial proportion of the woollen cloth produced in the region to the North and North-West of Nîmes - estimated at a total of 215,000 pieces of cloth in



1708<sup>50</sup> - passed through the city to Marseille, Italy and beyond.

During the period covered by the wars of the League of Aubsburg and the Spanish succession the number of pieces of cloth which passed annually through Marseille rose dramatically: from under 10,000 in the last years of the 17th century, to over 20,000 by 1717.<sup>51</sup>

There is no reason to believe that Nîmes did not profit from this expansion.<sup>52</sup> In 1697 Jacques Cambon and Antoine Teissier formed

a partnership "pour négocier en draperies et autres marchandises" with an initial capital of 60,000 Lt. When a balance was struck in 1699 after Cambon's death, it was found that the partnership was owed 217,329 Lt, of which 36,047 Lt consisted of the positive balance of the profits and loss account in their Grand-Livre.<sup>53</sup>

Teissier remained in commerce long after the death of his associate, and the firm of Jean & Antoine Teissier & Cie of Nîmes and Palermo was only finally dissolved in 1742. By that time, Teissier had acquired the office of secrétaire du Roi worth between 60,000 and 100,000 livres, bought the domain of Marguerittes for 98,500 livres in 1738 and then donated his entire estate and the sum of 100,000 livres "pour en disposer à ses plaisirs et volontés" to his only son when he married Marie Salles, the daughter of a nîmois who had established himself as a banker in Paris.<sup>54</sup> There were other, less spectacular 'ascents'. More generally, it may be asked how much of the evanescent Satre-Bosc-Auvellier-Plauchut financial consortium of the period between 1685 and the 'crash' of 1709 rested upon the gathering momentum of commercial exchange between the Bas-Languedoc and Marseille?<sup>55</sup>

## V

Although the first stocking frames to be used in Avignon and Nîmes produced silk stockings, the industry as it developed in Nîmes adopted wool as its basic primary material. Until the 1730's the majority of stocking frames in the city produced stockings made of wool or of a wool and silk mix (bas d'étamine). This adaptation would seem to correspond to the requirements of the expanding market which lay beyond Marseille, and particularly in Italy. The stock of another partnership - formed between the cousins Pierre and Louis de la Farelle in 1682 and terminated by the death of Pierre de la Farelle in 1691 - indicates such a process. In addition to some 347 pieces of woollen cloth (including 137 cadis de Marvéjols, 64 cadis d'Anduze, 24 droguets d'Uzès, 11 bayettes de Castres and 14 draps de Saint-Pons), the firm had 58 dozen pairs of woollen stockings. The cousins also dealt in dyestuffs, imported from Marseille, and had 728 lbs of alum, 69 lbs of indigo, 55 lbs of red arsenic and 69 lbs of gum arabic in stock. Four bales of cloth belonging to the partnership were in the hands of Claude & Jérémie Baguet of Marseille, a further two bales with the cévenol firm of Boissier and Bourguet (originally from Anduze and Nîmes) at Genoa and a bale of draps du Vigan with a commercial house in Nice.<sup>56</sup> The stock was probably representative of the commodities which circulated along the Nîmes-Marseille axis and formed the context of exchange which nourished the city's growing hosiery industry.



## VI

These are insubstantial indications. The absence of a series of accounts, and particularly of any of the livres de copies de lettres mentioned so frequently in the inventories of merchants' effects, must reduce analysis to the level of reasoned speculation. The role of Lyon - that other pole to which the commodities produced in Nîmes and its hinterland were drawn - remains hypothetical. Beyond Lyon lay Geneva, the Swiss cantons, and the markets beyond the Rhine. The evidence which it has been possible to accumulate suggests, however, that their influence belongs to a later period of the history of the hosiery industry. The growth of the industry in the years which followed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was the response to another zone of attraction, to the circuit of exchange which ran from Nîmes to Marseille, Italy and the Levant. It was this network which offered the hosiery industry its first market - which was probably an Italian market - and this network which offered it access to Cadiz and the Spanish colonies. Its importance within the economy of Nîmes in the late seventeenth century may explain why a hosiery industry developed - not simply in Nîmes - but in Nîmes rather than elsewhere in the Languedoc.

In his memorandum on the Commerce and Manufacture of the Languedoc of 1727, Méjanelle wrote that the manufacture of silk stockings in Nîmes had increased prodigiously since 1719. "Mais

la qualite des bas en a sy fort diminué ... que les allemans qui en tireroient la plus grande quantite s'en plaignent." Stockings made from wool, he continued, were still produced, although "cette fabrique a diminué de plus de la moitié à cause de la mauvaise qualite qu'on en fait, surtout ceux de la femme, dont la plus grande partie se consommait en Espagne."<sup>57</sup> Between 1730 and 1740 the shift from wool to silk within the city's hosiery industry was consolidated. By 1738 under a third of the 1700 stocking frames in the city were working on the wool, although the hosiery industry outside of Nîmes continued to rely upon wool until the 1770's

The first half of the eighteenth century had seen a considerable increase in the number of stocking frames in the Vaunage and the Cévennes to the west and north-west of the city. In 1728 the inspecteur des manufactures listed 269 stocking frames in the towns of Durfort, Sauve, Saint-Hippolyte, Anduze and Saint-Jean-du-Gard but confessed that,

"la plus grandes partis des mestier estant dans des amaux ou maison separtés dans les montagnes où les peysant (fabriquent) quelque pièce ... quant ils ne sont pas occupes à cultiver leurs petits heritages. La plus part du tems quant les jure gardes vont visiter leurs mestiers il ferme leurs portées et s'en vont travailler à la campagne."<sup>58</sup>

It is therefore probable that there were many more frames scattered among the smaller villages and hamlets of the Cévennes. In 1743 there were said to be 3,200 stocking frames in the jurande of Nîmes as a whole, and it is likely that half of them were located in the city's economic hinterland. In 1759, a total of 1,868 frames were located in thirty-three towns and villages outside of the city.



Of these, 491 were in the towns of Durfort, Sauve, Saint-Hippolyte, Anduze and Saint-Jean-du-Gard, so that, in thirty years, the number of frames in these five centres had almost doubled.<sup>59</sup>

Unlike the hosiery industry in Nîmes, the industry in the Cévennes and the Vaunage remained tied to the production of woollen stockings until well into the eighteenth century. Of the 1868 frames listed in 1759, 1,543 were working in wool and only 325 in silk.<sup>60</sup> Nearly half of these latter were situated in the town of Ganges, on the southern edge of the Cévennes. The change from wool to silk in the area outside of Nîmes occurred as rapidly as the earlier change in the city itself, and marked the second great period of expansion of the silk hosiery industry which took place between 1760 and 1780. An état général de la fabrication du département de Nîmes drawn up in 1783 lists a total of 2,557 stocking frames distributed among eighteen major centres in the Cévennes and the Vaunage.<sup>61</sup> Of this total, there were 2,055 frames making silk stockings, 383 working in cotton and only 119 making woollen hose. Together with the 3,000 frames listed in the city itself, there were over 5,000 stocking frames producing, mainly for commercial houses in Nîmes by 1780.

The transition from wool to silk in the hosiery industry was bound up with two developments, one technical, the other commercial. The former consisted of the adaptation of the stocking frame to silk, which allowed silk hose to enter the traffic with Spain and the Spanish colonies as well as the Northern market. In the late 1730's Jean Dubois, a fabricant en bas from Nîmes petitioned the

crown for an annuity claiming that

"il a introduit le premier dans cette ville la  
fabrique de bas de soye superfin ... et qu'il a introduit  
le premier le commerce à Cadix, où il fu en l'année  
1735."<sup>62</sup>

This adaptation of the machine to a finer material completed the incorporation of silk into the hosiery industry. In 1733 the firm of Bousquet and Cie, which specialised in the hosiery trade, was able to offer a range of stockings made of different combinations of materials, to its clients in Southern France, Italy and Spain: 50 dozen pairs of woollen stockings to Boullay, Cabanis and Boullay of Marseille, 24 pairs of poor quality silk stockings (filoselle) to Cosmes oncle & Neveu & Cabanon of Fézénas, and an assortment of silk and woollen hose "4 paires verds, quatre paires bleu, deux paires ponceau & deux paires couleur de roze" to a potential client in Cadiz. "Il est à propos de vous fair observer," they informed the firm of Galibert, Cabane & Caila of Cadiz "que nous avons une fabrique de bas de fleuret que nous avons poussé à sa dernière perfection."<sup>63</sup> They offered them a potential 1,000 to 1,200 dozen pairs of stockings made of filozelle a year "sy nous voyons que vous puissiez nous en placer beaucoup". These stockings were destined primarily for the Spanish colonial market. "Ne manquez pas de nous dire ... sy ceux pour les Indes se vendent seulement lors du depart des galions de la flotille," they inquired of Galibert, Cayla, Cabanis & Cie in the autumn of 1733.<sup>64</sup> By the end of the decade the traffic centred upon this particular axis of exchange had become one of the major determinants of the structure of manufacture within the city. For



the remainder of the eighteenth century a substantial proportion of the hosiery manufactured in Nîmes was determined by the opportunities and demand emanating from Cadiz. In 1744 the inspector of manufacture stated that the annual production of the 5,100 stocking frames in Nîmes and the countryside consisted of 2,046,296 pairs of stockings exported to Spain and Southern Europe, and a further 2,870,784 "paires bas de soye forts ou de fleuret, coton et estame à trois fils, tant pour la consommation du Royaume que pour la Suisse, l'Allemagne et pais septentrionaux."<sup>65</sup> These were the two markets upon which the hosiery industry depended for the remainder of the century. The overall size of the hosiery industry changed little between the mid-eighteenth century and the Revolution. The periods of its most rapid expansion - the 1720's and 1730's, and the 1760's and 1770's - were the result of a growing use of silk as its staple raw material and the formation of the two major outlets in Cadiz and Northern Europe, for the hosiery produced in the city. The three decades preceding the Revolution were marked by the growth of another component of the manufacture of textiles: the production of silk fabrics.

Notes - Chapter 6

1. I am grateful to the Passold foundation for a research grant, which enabled me to collect much of the material used in this chapter.
2. On the appearance of the stocking frame in France, of P.M. Bondonis. "Colbert et la Fabrication des Bas." in Revue d'Histoire économique et sociale. 1929. and his "La Fabrication des Bas en Normandie au XVIIIe siècle." in Bulletin des la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie. 1957. pp.293-302.
3. On this 'floating' population, cf E.le Roy Ladurie. Les Paysans de Languedoc. Paris, 1966. pp.127-128.
4. Much of the reconstruction of the itinerary described above was made possible by the work of two scholars - the late Hyacinthe Chobaut of Avignon and M. Léonce Robert of Nîmes. I am grateful to M. Robert for giving me complete access to the notes which he made for the catalogue of the exhibition on Trois Siècles de Bonneterie au Metier en Bas-Languedoc. Nîmes, 1957. The study by Leon Dutil "La Fabrique de Bas à Nîmes au XVIIIe siècle." in Annales du Midi. t.17.1905.pp.218-251 remains a valuable study of the early years of the corporation of framework knitters. See also M. Defourneaux. "Les 'Bas à la Péruvienne' et les Manufactures du Languedoc au XVIIIe siècle." in Annales du Midi, T.78, 1966, pp.271-282.
5. A(rchives) D(épartementales) du Vaucluse 2E Pradon 1227. fo. 527.
6. A.D. Vaucluse. 2E Pradon 562. fo 3. Cf. M. Vovelle. Piété Baroque et Déchristianisation en Provence au XVIIIe Siècle. Paris, 1973.
7. A.D. Vaucluse. 2E Lapeyre I. fo 20.
8. Id. 2E Charasse 469. fo 84v. On the price of stocking frames in Nîmes; see below pp.146-7.
9. Id. 2E Vincenti. 1548. fo 423v.
10. Id. Lapeyre 6. fo 430.
11. A.D. Bouches du Rhone B 109. fo 231.
12. A.D. Vaucluse. 2E Martin 844 fo 105. (11-3-1697).



13. Id. 2E Vincenti 1249 fo 7v (Will of Chapman's second wife and widow, 24-2-1708).
14. Id. Lapeyre 179 fo 51.
15. L. Robert op.cit. p.14.
16. A.D. Vaucluse Bonnet (notaire d'Orange) 30-10-1682.
17. L. Robert. op.cit. & A.D. Gard 2E<sup>37</sup> 215 fo 285v.
18. Id. & A.D. Vaucluse Bonnet (notaire d'Orange) 328 fo 142.
19. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 109 fo 156.
20. Félix left no durable mark upon the town's economy. He may have emigrated after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.
21. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 133 fo 153.
22. Id. 2E<sup>36</sup> 765 fo 532v.
23. Id. 2E<sup>37</sup> 246 fo 505; 2E<sup>37</sup> 258 fo 427; 2E<sup>37</sup> 264 fo 220.  
2E<sup>37</sup> 271 fo 204v; 2E<sup>37</sup> 273 fo 155v.
24. Cf. A. Michel, Nîmes et ses Rues, (réimpression, Nîmes, 1969), (rue Grizot).
25. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 902 fo 503v; 2E<sup>36</sup> 911 fo 84; 2E<sup>36</sup> 831 fo 261;  
2E<sup>36</sup> 840 fo 803; 2E<sup>36</sup> 807 fo 248.
26. Id. IVE 77.
27. Cf E. Le Roy Ladurie, op.cit., pp.517-537.
28. Id. pp.586-592, and Appendix II.
29. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 110 fo 125v.
30. Id. 2E<sup>37</sup> 229 (29-1-1685).
31. Id. 2E<sup>39</sup> III fo 219.
32. Id. 2E<sup>37</sup> 292 fo 44v.
33. Id. 2E<sup>37</sup> 252 fo 210.
34. Other examples in A.D. Gard 2E<sup>42</sup> 46 fo 348; 2E<sup>37</sup> 250 fo 259.  
2E<sup>37</sup> 251 fo 400; 2E<sup>39</sup> 147 fo 501v.
35. A.D. Herault. C 2774.

36. Id. C 2199.
37. A. Puech. La Vie de Nos Ancêtres d'Après leurs Livres de Raison. Nîmes, 1888. pp.366-7 shows that the number of apprenticeships in the silk industry was already beginning to fall by 1670; and see below pp
38. A.D. Gard. IVE 76.
39. Cf. P. Vilar. "Problems of the Formation of Capitalism". Past and Present 10. 1956. p.15-38. D.C. Coleman "Textile Growth", in K.G. Ponting & N.B. Hart eds., Textile History and Economic History. London, 1973. And, for an excellent example, C. Carrière & F. Rebuffat "Fabricants languedociens et Marché espagnol des Bayettes ..." Provence Historique. XXIII, 1973, pp.404-418.
40. A.D. Gard IVE 76. Archives communales de Nîmes PP.2. The livre d'allivrement was not a monetary unit, but a coefficient based upon the value of an individual's assets (cabaux and industrie) which served as the basis for the collection of the taille. In the case of those involved in commerce and industry it is therefore a reasonable measure of real wealth.
41. A.D. Gard. Serie B (Papiers du Présidial) - unclassified, Inventaire des effets de Mathieu Loubier (1687). Id. 2E<sup>39</sup> 110 fo 521; 2E<sup>39</sup> III (2-4-1688).
42. A.D. Gard. Serie B Inventaires (1700).
43. Id. (1704).
44. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>37</sup> 247 fo 624.
45. A.D. Gard. Serie B loc.cit.
46. Id.
47. A.D. Bouches du Rhone. IXB 13 cited by C.Carrière "La Draperie languedocienne dans la Deuxieme moitié du XVIIe siecle." in Conjuncture économique, Structures sociales: Hommage à Ernest Labrousse. Paris, 1974. pp.160-161.
48. A.D. Gard. IE 175 fo 152. The Boisson of Nîmes appear to have built up a massive fortune in the second half of the seventeenth century, permitting Isaac Boisson (Jean's younger son) to endow his two daughters with 60,000 and 100,000 livres respectively when they married. (Livre de contracts d'Isaac Boisson, belonging to M. de Balincourt of Nîmes, to whom I am grateful for allowing me to consult the papers in his possession.)
49. A.D. Gard Serie B (unclassified). Livre de lettres de voiture de Chabaud & Pison. (1698-1702).



50. Bibliothèque nationale. Mss fr. 8037.
51. C. Carrière. art.cit. p.165. See also, C. Carrière. Négociants marseillais au XVIIIe siècle. Marseille, 1973. pp.43-44. C. Carrière & M. Morineau "Draps du Languedoc et Commerce du Levant au XVIIIe Siècle." R.H.E.S. T.56, 1968.
52. The affirmation that "La draperie languedocienne est audoise et lodévoise, principalement catholique. Elle souffre peu de la Revocation; elle prend son vol vers 1680-1715, au moment précis où s'écroule la production agricole," (E. Le Roy Ladurie, op.cit. p.646) requires some qualification. The largest commercial houses in Nîmes at this time were all controlled by nouveaux-convertis. There was thus a draperie protestante which profited as much from the expansion as its Catholic counterpart.
53. A.D. Gard. Serie B (unclassified) Inventaire Cambon, 1699.
54. Id. 2E<sup>36</sup> 896 fo 334v; 2E<sup>36</sup> 899 fo 204.
55. The system rested upon the transfer of the revenue from the taille and other taxes collected in the Languedoc to the Crown's financiers and bankers in Paris (notably Reich de Pennautier and Samuel Bernard). The system was profitable to the extent to which its members could draw upon the credit which it offered to speculate on commodities and in rates of exchange. Cf G. Chaussinand-Nogaret Les Financiers du Languedoc. Paris, 1970. pp.43-56,
56. A.D. Gard. Serie B (unclassified). Inventaire de la Farelle, 1691.
57. A.D.Hérault. C 2503.
58. A.N. F<sup>12</sup> 1398.
59. A.D. Gard. IVE 80.
60. Id.
61. A.N. F<sup>12</sup> 1398.
62. A.D. Hérault. C 2455.
63. A.D. Gard. Serie B (unclassified). Livre de Copies de Lettres, Bousquet & Cie, 1-8-1733.
64. Id. 21-9-1733.
65. A.D. Hérault. C 2643.

Chapter 7 The Manufacture of Silk Cloth



The shift from wool to silk in the hosiery industry contributed to the revival of the manufacture of silk cloth in Nîmes after 1730. It is probable that most of the silk produced in the vicinity of Nîmes in the last years of the reign of Louis XIV was exported in an unfinished state, to Lyon or Tours or even Paris. Thus although there were undoubtedly many important commercial houses dealing in silk in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, it is probable that only a small amount was actually finished in the town itself. For much of the early eighteenth century, the industry was smaller in scale than it had been immediately before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Its growth during the third quarter of the seventeenth century appears to have been spectacular. According to the authors of the Topographie de la Ville de Nîmes, there were only 34 looms in the city in 1664. By 1681, however, the city's leading silk merchants claimed that there were some 1,100 "metiers de taffetas ou de burattes" in the city.<sup>1</sup> It seems that this figure was attained again only towards the middle of the eighteenth century, although the figure of 500 looms in 1750 put forward by Vincens and Baumès is almost certainly too low, and the 1,155 looms enumerated in 1761 by the corporation of silk manufactures were recorded at a time of severe recession provoked by the seven years war.<sup>2</sup>

Pierre Léon has estimated that between 1730 and the Revolution the number of looms in Nîmes grew at an annual average rate of 3.7%, nearly twice the rate of increase at Lyon.<sup>3</sup> The number of admissions to the corporation of silk merchants and manufacturers between 1703 and 1765 (which did not require an apprenticeship) reflects

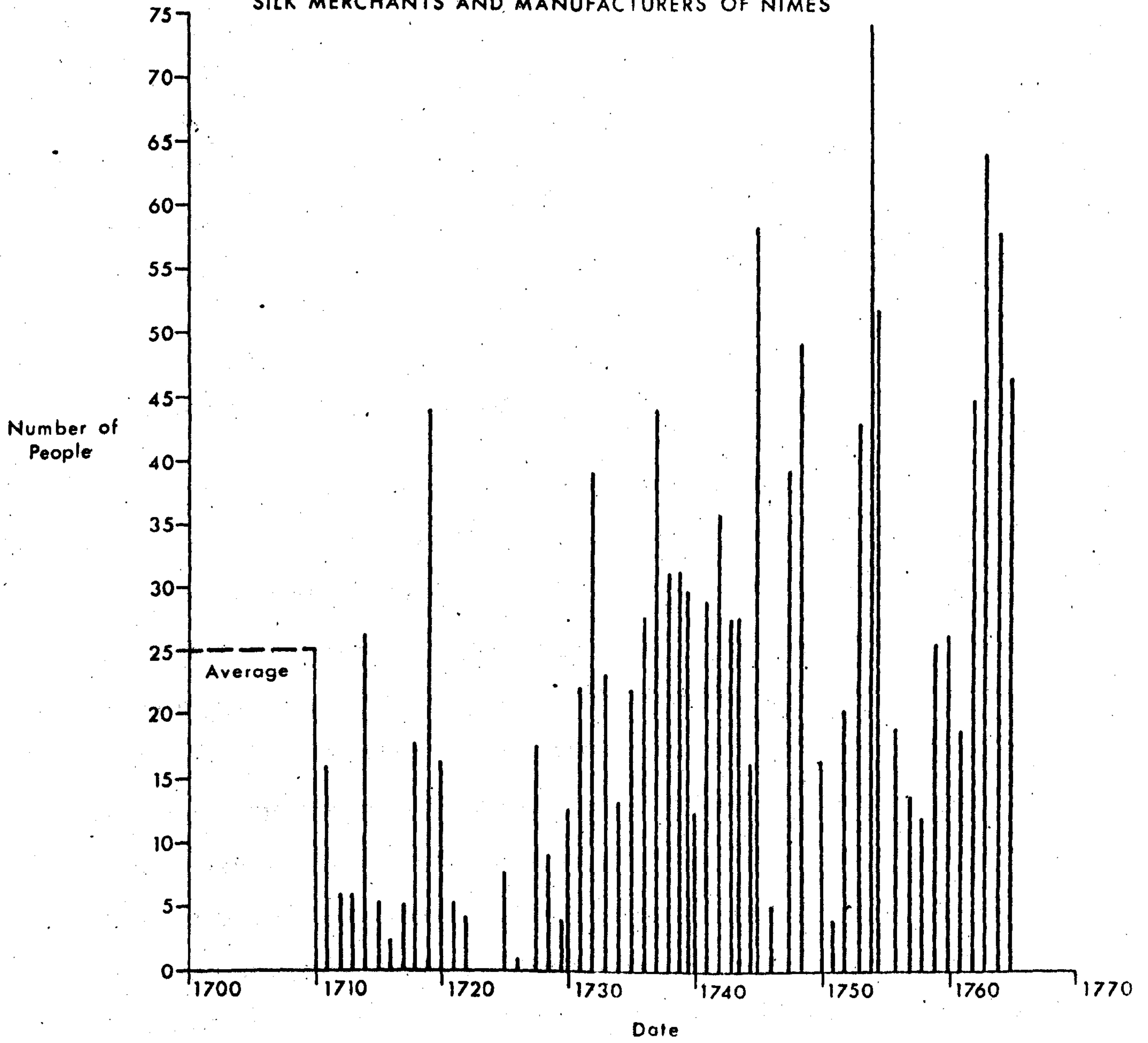
the rhythms of this expansion, and points to the prosperity of the silk trade in the late 1730's and from the mid 1750's onwards.

Noms des Maitres Reçus dans le Corps des Marchands Fabricants  
en Etoffes de Soie de Nismes

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of People</u>
1703-1710	211
1711	16
1712	6
1713	5
1714	26
1715	5
1716	2
1717	5
1718	18
1719	44
1720	16
1721	5
1722	4
1723	4 (gap from April 1723 to
1724	- January 1725)
1725	8
1726	1
1727	18
1728	9
1729	4
1730	12
1731	22
1732	39
1733	23
1734	13
1735	22
1736	28
1737	44
1738	31
1739	29
1740	13
1741	29
1742	36
1743	27
1744	27
1745	16
1746	58
1747	6
1748	39
1749	48



ANNUAL ENTRIES TO THE CORPORATION OF  
SILK MERCHANTS AND MANUFACTURERS OF NIMES



<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of People</u>	
1750	16	
1751	4	
1752	20	
1753	43	
1754	73	
1755	51	
1756	24	
1757	18	
1758	14	
1759	25	1759-60
1760	26	1760-61
1761	19	1761-62
1762	45	1762-63
1763	64	1763-64
1764	58	1764-65
1765	46*	1765-66

(\*of whom 15 were "fils de maitre") Source: A.D. Gard IVE 192

Regrettably no comparable series of figures exist for the last quarter of the century. In 1783, however, the city housed 3027 looms, producing 39 different types of silk cloths, over three times the number of looms listed in a mémoire concernant le commerce de .. Nîmes produced in 1749 or 1750.<sup>4</sup> This expansion was primarily the result of the addition of new types of fabrics - "mezaines et polonaises, damassades, prusiennes, Perguy liserés, Florence Sattiné florence broché, florence façonnée appelée américaine, florences à petites grains, hamburgeoises," etc. - to the range of 15 produced in the mid-eighteenth century. There were no changes in the techniques of production in the silk industry of eighteenth century Nîmes comparable even to the adaptation of the stocking frame to silk. New designs, new fabrics, changes in weaves, colours or finishes were the means by which the silk industry in Nîmes grew.<sup>5</sup> It was an expansion



which reflected the growth of the city's commerce and the increasing sensitivity of its leading commercial houses to changes in international fashion.

The substantial expansion of the manufacture of silk fabrics in the second half of the eighteenth century owed much to the very much greater rate of return to be obtained from a given quantity of silk than was offered by the hosiery industry. The production of silk fabrics was more intensive of labour than the hosiery industry, so that in years of full production, a weaver could expect an income from a working year of 300 days of between 270 Lt producing Toscanes to 890 Lt from peluches de soie while the income from a stocking frame working on silk was between 288 and 360 livres, a year, at the rates paid in the middle of the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Given that the costs of setting up a loom were nearly ten times less than the costs of a stocking frame, there was a substantial incentive for both the working population and for the commercial houses to prefer the production of silks to silk hose if at all possible. The growing quantity of silk produced in the Uzège and the Vivarais, and the opportunities presented by the growth of the internal market as rents rose, resulted in a period of expansion in the second half of the century which matched the earlier growth of the hosiery industry. By 1789 Nîmes housed a working population which contained more men and women engaged in the production of silk fabrics than there were in the hosiery trade.<sup>7</sup>

Notes - Chapter 7

1. J.C. Vincens & J.B. Baumès, Topographie. p.108;  
A.D. Hérault C 2119.
2. A.D. Gard. IVE 200.
3. in F. Braudel & C.E. Labrousse (eds), Histoire économique et sociale de la France. T.2., Paris, 1970.p.519.
4. A.D. Hérault. C 5614 & C 5620.
5. Cf. D.C. Coleman, "Textile Growth" in N.B. Harte & K.G. Ponting, Textile History and Economic History, 1973, pp.1-21.
6. These figures are calculated from the prices paid to workers per aune of silk, or dozen pairs of stockings produced in the mid-eighteenth century. A.D. Hérault. C 5614 & C 2642.
7. Thus J-C Perrot's conclusion to his fine analysis of another "luxury" industry - the production of lace in Caen and its environs - is equally applicable to Nîmes: "La moins mécanisée des branches n'est-elle pas celle qui suscite aussi, dans ses établissements pionniers, les ateliers, les formes sociales les plus proches du monde industriel? ... En un mot, les industriels avaient appris à gouverner le travail bien avant de gouverner l'énergie mécanique." J.C. Perrot, Genèse d'Une Ville Moderne: Caen au XVIIIe Siècle, Paris, 1975. pp.427-428. The much lower organic composition of capital in the production of silk fabrics offered a flexibility and separation of design from execution in the labour process which was much more advanced than in other sectors of textile production.



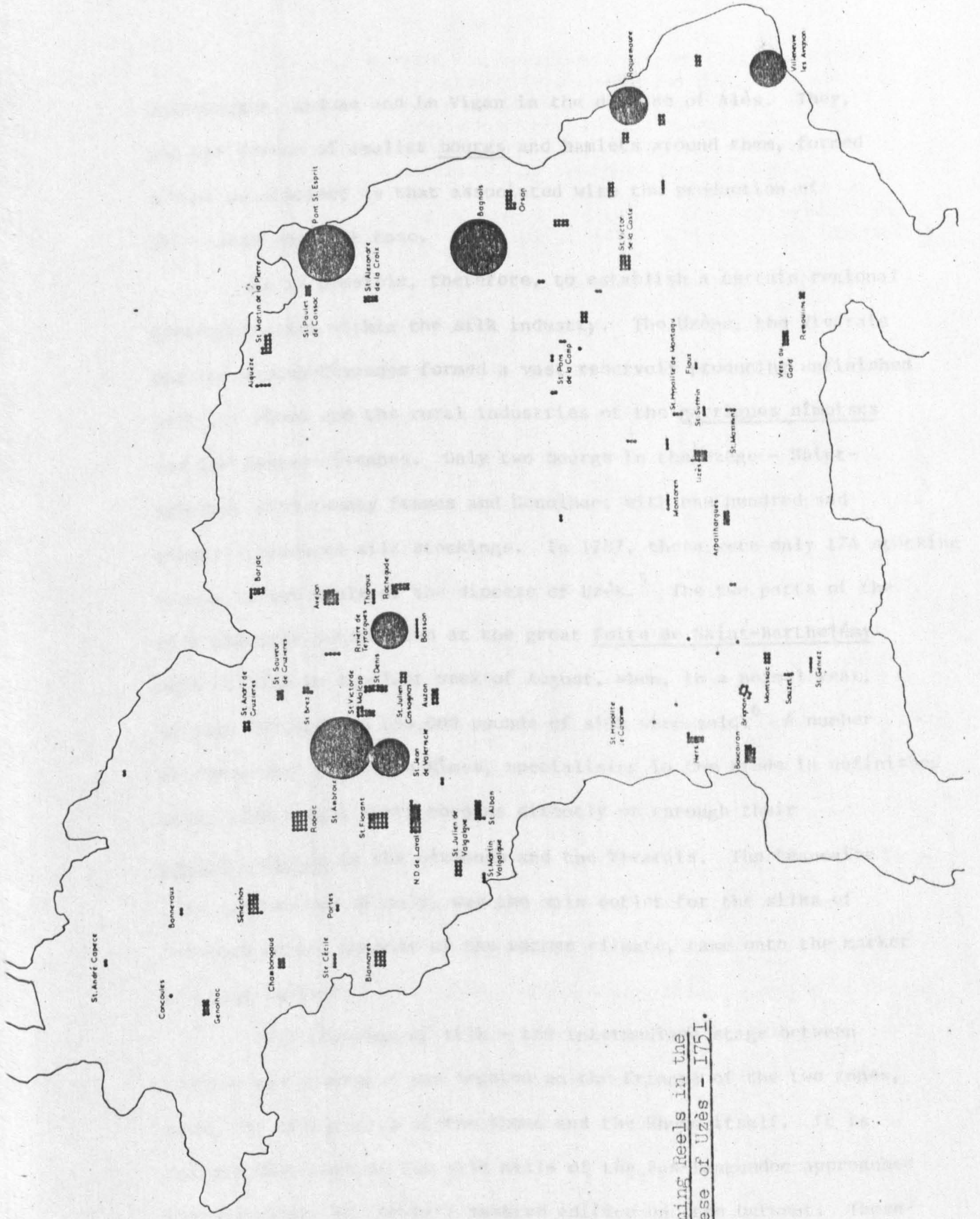
Chapter 8 The Regional Division of Labour in Manufacture

By the middle of the eighteenth century, a complex and highly differentiated system had grown up around the production of silk.<sup>1</sup> It extended from Nîmes as far west as Le Vigan in the Cévennes, and as far north as Aubenas in the Vivarais. Unlike its counterpart at Lyon, the growth of the silk industry at Nîmes was closely associated with the formation of a market in locally produced unfinished silk, and with the necessary widespread plantation of mulberry trees. By 1759 over three quarters of all the mulberry trees planted in the Languedoc were to be found in the three dioceses of Uzès, Alès and Viviers.<sup>2</sup> In this way the rhythms of the circulation of corn, cocoons and money merged with and modified the traditional rhythms of rural production. The abbé Boissier de la Croix de Sauvages described this annual cycle in an eloquent passage, written towards the middle of the eighteenth century:

"Ce sont donc les muriers, c'est la feuille des muriers, les vers à soye que cette feuille nourrit, les cocons qui font les vers à soye nourris de cette feuille et la soye qui se tire des cocons .. Voilà ce qui fait monter l'argent de la plaine deux fois de l'année sur nos montagnes. Mais il n'y reste pas longtemps. L'intérêt de l'argent que le marchand nous a avancé pour acheter les cocons qui naissent chez nous, et le bled que le cévénois a mangé à crédit pendant toute l'année et qu'il faut payer à la vente de la soye fait que l'argent provenant de cette vente ne reste pas longtemps dans ce pays, et qu'il redescend dans la plaine qui nous a fourni le bled."<sup>3</sup>

The geographical distribution of silk reels in the region to the north of Nîmes mirrored the geography of this Bas-Languedoc soyeux.<sup>4</sup> A number of small towns served as local entrepôts and centres of the production of unfinished silk: Saint-Ambroix, Pont-Saint-Esprit and Bagnols in the diocese of Uzès; and Alès,





Spinning Reels in the  
Diocese of Uzès - 1751.



Valleraugue, Anduze and Le Vigan in the diocese of Alès. They, and the dozens of smaller bourgs and hamlets around them, formed a zone as distinct as that associated with the production of silk cloth and silk hose.

It is possible, therefore, to establish a certain regional differentiation within the silk industry. The Uzège, the Vivarais and the Hautes-Cévennes formed a vast reservoir producing unfinished silk for Nîmes and the rural industries of the garrigues nîmoises and the Basses-Cévennes. Only two bourgs in the Uzège - Saint-Ambroix, with twenty frames and Genolhac, with one hundred and twenty - produced silk stockings. In 1787, there were only 174 stocking frames in the whole of the diocese of Uzès.<sup>5</sup> The two parts of the silk industry intersected at the great foire de Saint-Barthelémy held at Alès in the last week of August, when, in a normal year, between 100,000 and 150,000 pounds of silk were sold.<sup>6</sup> A number of commercial houses in Nîmes, specialising in the trade in unfinished silk, also bought their cocoons directly or through their commissionaires in the Cévennes and the Vivarais. The Beaucaire fair, at the end of July, was the main outlet for the silks of Provence which, because of the warmer climate, came onto the market a little earlier.

The throwing of silk - the intermediate stage between reeling and weaving - was located on the fringes of the two zones, along the tributaries of the Rhone and the Rhone itself. It is certain that none of the silk mills of the Bas-Languedoc approached the dimensions of Lombe's massive edifice on the Derwent. Those at Nîmes itself were small and usually powered by a man.



"La machine dont ils se servent est une cage d'environ 2 toises (3,9 mètres) de diamètre sur laquelle sont fixés des rouets et des bobines qu'un châssis intérieur, mobile sur un axe, fait mouvoir par frottement avec grand bruit. Celui qui est employé à ce genre de travail se renferme dans la cage, et il n'a d'autre occupation que de tourner autour d'un pivot, et en reculant d'une manière uniforme, dans un atelier qui exige une humidité habituelle et renfermé"<sup>7</sup>

Some of the mills in the Cévennes and the Uzège were, however, water powered; those at Alès and Anduze by the two Gardons; and those at Pont-Saint-Esprit and Bagnols by the Rhône and the Cèze. In addition to the silk mills proper, the particular requirements of the hosiery industry led to the development of a smaller machine for twisting silk to be used for making stockings. These manually operated machines, known as ovales, were located mainly in Nîmes and the hosiery centres of the Basses-Cévennes.

Silk mills represented the largest item of fixed capital used in the silk industry. Figures of the amounts invested are rare, but the few that it has been possible to piece together suggest that only the very largest were worth 5,000 livres or more. The silk mill owned by the Martial, a family of négociants in the town of Bagnols was one of the biggest in the region.<sup>8</sup> Unlike most of the mills in the Bas-Languedoc it was water powered. A small diversion on the river Cèze carried controlled amounts of water to a wheel which drove eight mills. The machinery was laid out on two floors. The ground floor contained:

- "1. Un doublage pour les organsins à 2 plans de 24 bobines chacune, faisant 48 lorsque le doublage se fait à deux fils et 72 lorsqu'on le fait à trois.
- 2. 5 moulins de tois servant également pour la façon de la trame et poil et pour former le tors des organsins au moyen des points de retard qu'on donne aux guindres qui les recourent de dessus les bobines. Ces 5 moulins sont à 3 vargues dans le compte de 14 à 6 bobines. Par conséquent chaque vargue porte 84 bobines, chaque moulin 252 et les 5 moulins ensemble font mouvoir 1,260 bobines de soye soit trame, poil ou organsin."

On the second floor of the building there were:

- "1. deux doublages à deux places de 24 bobines.
- 2. 5 grands devidages à 24 tavettes.
- 3. trois moulins de filage à la piemontaise destinés à donner le 1er apprêt à l'organsin avant qu'il passe au doublage."

A second building, opposite the first, housed thirty machines for reeling silk.

At the height of the season the mill employed 97 workers, all women, with the exception of eight mouliniers and an overseer. It also gave work to some 600 reelers and turners in the villages around the town between June and September.

The mill was a converted corn mill which had been acquired in 1728, during the first great period of the expansion of the silk industry, by the partnership of Reboul & Cie of Marseille. The firm, was in fact, a société en commandite, in which most of the capital was owned by the Swiss négociants Gaspard and Nicolas Sollicoffre also of Marseille.<sup>9</sup> In 1738, in the wake of the bankruptcy of G & N Sollicoffre, Antoine Reboul, one of the partners in Reboul & Cie ceded the mill to his brother-in-law, Francois Martial, a négociant from the village of Lasalle in the diocese of Alès. Martial had been involved in trade with North Africa and had moved to Marseille



where he married Jeanne Reboul. When he died in 1775, he left a fortune of some 84,000 livres to his four children.<sup>10</sup> His eldest son, Louis, married the daughter of one of the largest hosiers in Nîmes in 1775, and received 68,000 livres as her dowry.<sup>11</sup>

Between 1781 and 1786 the mill at Bagnols produced an average of 9,000 lbs of silk a year and treated between 10,000 and 30,000 lbs of cocoons. Among Louis Martial's correspondents were commercial houses not only in Nîmes, but also in Lyon and Paris - among them Couderc fils & Passavant, Jean-Baptiste Brun & Cie and Vve Delazon fils & Roussel of Lyon, Isaac Pourrat and Antoine Colomb & fils of Nîmes and Gervais & Duchamp of Paris.<sup>12</sup>

This close association between commerce and silk-milling was probably a common one. The major commercial houses specialising in unfinished silk or silk fabrics usually maintained a regular connection with, and often advanced capital to a particular moulineur. The assets of a négociant from the bourg of Valleraugue in the Cévennes included "un moulin avec une meson atenant" worth 5,000 livres.<sup>13</sup> Most of his silk was sent to Paris, and principally to the négociant and banker Louis Félines, a native of the cévénol town of Alès, where his brother acted as his agent. Similarly, the négociant Marc-Antoine Colomb of Nîmes, whose annual turnover regularly exceeded 100,000 livres between 1757 and 1780, advanced 300 livres to his miller "pour l'achat d'un moulin" and allowed him to place sums of 300 and 600 livres in his business at a rate of 5%.<sup>14</sup>

To a certain extent, this close relationship was a necessary result of the relative large investment required for a silk mill. Stocking frames represented a much smaller fixed capital.

Francois Lafoux, a fabricant de bas from the village of Saint-Laurent-Le-Minier, who went bankrupt in 1783, owned two stocking frames valued at 500 livres "que le Sr Nègre (un) de mes creanciers a fait saisir."<sup>15</sup> Henri Pourtalès, of Ganges, who was also forced into bankruptcy in the same year, owned two stocking frames valued at 800 livres.<sup>16</sup> This figure, of between 250 and 400 livres, appears to have remained constant for most of the century:

Stocking Frame Prices in Nîmes

<u>Date of Sale</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Price</u> (livres)	<u>Source</u>
14-11-1727	metier à faire bas	300	A.D.G. 2C 305
7-11-1727	Id.	390	-
18-11-1727	2 metiers à faire bas	499 19s	-
24-12-1727	metier à faire bas de soye	460	-
21-1-1728	metier à faire bas	340	-
4-2-1728	metier à faire bas de soye	460	-
30-4-1728	Id.	310	-
22-5-1728	Id.	320	-
9-6-1728	Id.	497	-
25-6-1728	Id.	499	-
9-4-1767	Id.	432	A.D.G. 2C 308
3-10-1770	Id.	299	A.D.G. 2C 306
27-12-1774	Id.	336	A.D.G. 2C 320

Looms were considerably cheaper. In 1771 Suzanne Bonijoly sold "un metier à faire taffetas for 30 livres, and in 1775 "deux metiers servant à fabriquer des mousselines de soye damasse" were sold for 200 livres.<sup>17</sup> Looms were generally worth 40 to 50 L.<sup>18</sup>

The cost of a stocking frame was probably low enough to enable many maître-fabricants en bas to own their own frames. The registers of frames exported from Nîmes to the towns and villages of its hinterland between 1728 and 1736 indicate that sales of



stocking frames were usually made among artisans or small marchands-fabricants en bas. In 79 transactions recorded between November 1729 and November 1730, 65 of the sellers were locksmiths, the usual manufacturers of stocking frames, and the others were all fabricants de bas. All the buyers - from Nîmes, Uzès, Saint-Jean-du-Gard, Saint-Côme, Calvisson, Sauve, Lasalle, Lédignan, Marsillargues, Manduel and Marguerittes - were also fabricants de bas.<sup>19</sup> For them, a stocking frame was an important investment, frequently paid for from a dowry or a legacy, and carefully maintained for twenty or thirty years.

It is certain, however, that the practice of frame-renting was also current in eighteenth century Nîmes. Simon-Pierre Grizot, the largest merchant-hosier in the city in the early years of the century, who dealt under the raison of Grizot & Nazel, owned 30 stocking frames and leased out at least another 16, according to the visite of 1717.<sup>37</sup> Interest on frames was very much higher than the 5% recognised by the courts and tolerated by the church. In 1772 a fabricant en bas from Calvisson leased a frame to a stocking maker in Nîmes at a rate of 42 livres a year, or 12% if the frame was worth 350 livres.<sup>20</sup> In 1778 Marc-Antoine-Jean Raffin, seigneur du Crouzet, of the town of Anduze enjoyed an annual revenue of 96 livres from four stocking frames "dont un nous appartient en seul et les trois autres sont en société avec M. Louis Jalaguier notaire. Il y en a donc 2 1/2 à nous. Ils sont tous en louage. Ceux qui nous concerne vaut plus de 600 Lt."<sup>21</sup> The frames were

thus bringing an annual return of some 16%.

The independence suggested by the ownership of a stocking frame was, however, merely nominal. The structure of the industry, and the extreme division of labour involved in the production and distribution of both silk cloth and silk hose, ensured that control of the whole was effectively limited to a narrow circle of large commercial houses in Nîmes. They bought the commodities manufactured in the city or its hinterland, usually paying a piece rate, and subsequently sold them to other centres in France or beyond her frontiers. The protracted rhythms of international trade and the delicate fabric of credit upon which it rested, were, in the short term, the most important factors affecting the livelihoods of those working in the silk industry. Consequently, the formal division of merchants and artisans into guilds and corporations was largely irrelevant to the real social and economic relationships which grew up around the production of silk. In 1767, for example, 1,005 individuals were counted as members of the corps des marchands fabricants en bas. Of this total, there were said to be "890 travaillant à façon pour le compte de 115 maitres faisant fabriquer."<sup>22</sup> Only a very small proportion of these 115 were more than minor regional or secondary suppliers to larger commercial houses. The formal structure of manufacture was thus in large measure determined by the size and composition of the market. Its structure is the subject of the following chapter.



Notes - Chapter 8

1. The development and consequences of this system are discussed below. Part III.
2. A.D. Hérault. C2251.
3. B.M. Nîmes. Mss 307 fo 288.
4. See maps based upon A.D. Hérault C 2263.
5. A.N. H 748<sup>221</sup>.
6. See below, ch. 16 & 17.
7. J.C. Vincens et J.B. Baumès, Topographie de la Ville de Nîmes, p.514.
8. A.N. F<sup>12</sup> 1437.
9. On the Solicoffre, See H. Lüthy op.cit. t.2.p.89.n.14.
10. A.D. Gard. 2C 320 13-2-1775; 2C 341 30-11-1780; 2E Seguin notaire 14-2-1775.
11. Id. 2C 320 13-2-1775.
12. A.N. F<sup>12</sup> 1437.
13. A.D. Hérault. 8B 425.
14. A.D. Gard. Fonds Colomb de Daunant, Grand-Livré of Marc-Antoine Colomb f<sup>o</sup> 53.
15. A.D. Hérault. 8B 926.
16. Id.
17. A.D. Gard 2C 309 5-8-1771; 2C 322 3-7-1775.
18. Thus Jeanne Lamidon's dowry of 40 Lt when she married a compagnon taffetassier consisted of "un Saint-Esprit et un mettier a faire taffetas." (A.D. Gard 2E<sup>10</sup> 88 fo 217). These were the usual amounts at which looms were valued in 1785-89.
19. A.D. Gard. IVE 106.
20. Id. IVE 79.
21. Id. 2C 312 10-6-1772.
22. B.M. Nîmes. Mss 466.
23. A.C. Nîmes SS 31.

Chapter 9 The Structure of Exchange



The number of stocking frames, silk looms or spinning reels in and around the city during the eighteenth century is a rather one-dimensional reflection of an economy whose substance and texture changed profoundly over the eighteenth century. The redistribution of productive work away from wool and into silk reflected both the development of an internal market centred upon aristocratic-rentier consumption and the formation of a number of new markets in Spain, the Spanish colonies and northern Europe for the commodities manufactured within the city and its hinterland. An anonymous essay of 1767 captures something of the reality of the geographical area which the products of manufacture within the city were now distributed over. "Son commerce s'étend aussi loin que celui de Lion," it claimed. "Nos négociants commercent dans tout l'Europe, jusques à Moscou et St. Petersburg, dans les Echelles du Levant, dans toutes nos Isles et toutes les Isles et terres espagnoles."<sup>1</sup> The geographical distribution of the various branches of the Pourrat family, - originally apothecaries and dealers in drugs in the Nîmes of the early eighteenth century and bankers in Paris, Lyon, Saint-Petersburg and Nîmes three generations later, suggests that this was no rhetorical assertion.<sup>2</sup>

The emphasis placed upon regional and local studies by historians of the Revolution in the last decade or two has led to a tendency to minimise the scale of eighteenth century commerce. Yet there is a considerable literature dealing with the economy of eighteenth century France; the works of the Lüthy, Dermigny, Carrière, Meyer and Butel are all classics.<sup>3</sup> Revolutionary historiography,

particularly in Britain, has paid little attention to the fluid world of the circulation of commodities and money which they have reconstructed. Eighteenth century Nîmes was an ordinary provincial town, different from Toulouse or Orléans or Bayeaux only in the degree to which its population was dependent upon manufacture and commerce, as well as land and office, for its income. But - like any "ordinary provincial town" in late eighteenth century France - it was part of a world market. This fact requires emphasis. Pierre Froment inhabited a city which was more than a provincial town. He inhabited a commercial centre whose economy was closely associated with the rhythms and fluctuations of a world economy. The scale of business transacted by the very small number of major commercial houses in Nîmes in 1770 or 1780 - if not earlier - was entirely comparable to that transacted by a commercial house in Paris, Amsterdam, London or Cadiz. The city's most successful entrepreneurs - the Fornier, the André, the Vincens, the Devillas, the Pieyre - were négociants on a world scale. There is a romanticism attached to regional history - perhaps particularly in Britain - which has led to a preoccupation with the local and the particular at the expense of the universal and the uniform. The world of money and commodities of the later eighteenth century to which the city's leading entrepreneurs belonged had very little to do with the local and particular, or with Nîmes as such. Vincens and Baumès Topographie was very much a product of this world. The two men envisaged Nîmes as a particular case of a universal principle. Their perception of Nîmes was not - as was Froment's - a perception of the city itself, but a perception of the



city as a particular illustration of the abstract principles of modern political economy. The history of that perception is bound up with the experience accumulated and circulated through generations of commercial activity within the area covered by the city's economy.

In 1789 Nîmes housed eighty commercial houses.<sup>4</sup> At a conservative estimate of two to three individuals to a partnership, some 160 to 240 individuals were involved in commerce of a fairly substantial nature, ranging from relatively small scale local trade in corn, dried and salted foods, drugs or textiles to international speculation and banking. Assuming that the average investment of each of these individuals was a relatively low 10,000 Lt each, the capital tied up in the more than local commerce probably amounted to some 1,600,00 to 2,400,000 Lt - a sum which undoubtedly exceeded the amounts invested by the city's inhabitants in office or fixed interest loans, and which rivalled the amounts invested in land.<sup>5</sup> Nîmes was a commercial and manufacturing centre of some importance. Seven of the 80 commercial houses listed in 1789 were wholesale dealers in silk and a further 22 were listed as wholesalers and manufacturers of silk fabrics. Of the remaining 50, 15 specialised in the wholesale hosiery trade, 7 dealt in silk handkerchiefs, 8 were associated with woollen goods, 6 with linenware, 4 with corn, 5 with spices, dyestuffs and chemicals and 6 with ironware and hardware.<sup>6</sup>

The livre de la Taille ... concernant le Cabal, Faculte et Industrie des habitants de Nîmes drawn up in 1790 contains the names of 177 merchants or négociants.<sup>7</sup> From this, it is easy to identify the most substantial entrepreneurs in the city in the late eighteenth century. Those expected to pay 100 livres or more were:

Henri Devillas-Ducailar	105 Lt	Jean Devillas	255 Lt
Jean Pieyre	156 Lt	Heirs of Jean Maigre	201 Lt
Alexandre Vincens-Valz	234 Lt	Heirs of F <sup>s</sup> Fornier	120 Lt
Francois Lapierre	105 Lt	Isaac Prestreau	120 Lt
Damien Verdier de Lacoste	156 Lt	Scipion Chabanel	109 Lt
Paul Chabanel	120 Lt	F <sup>s</sup> Meynier de Salinelles	120 Lt
Antoine Donzel	270 Lt	Jean Chabanel	144 Lt
Jean André	117 Lt		

These fifteen individuals represented the city's prosperous commercial elite. Only five of them - Pieyre, Lapierre, LaCoste, Fornier and Meynier were associated with the woollen or linen trades, the remainder dealt mainly in silk. The structure of commerce had been very different at the turn of the century. The allivrement of 1700 lists 209 individuals involved in either the wholesale or the retail trade.<sup>8</sup> No comparison between the amounts that individuals were assessed at on the two compoix is possible. Significantly, none of the 27 names allivré at 10 livres or more in 1700 - who represented the city's most substantial commercial merchants at this time - appear in 1790. Between 1700 and 1790 the city's mercantile elite had changed completely. The dynasties associated with commerce in the aftermath of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes - the Boisson, Calvas, Audemard, Privat, Loubier, Maystre, de Possac, Lalliaud and Mathieu - had disappeared, to other cities, into the aristocracy or had been extinguished. Significantly, at least 16 of the 27 most substantial merchants in 1700 were associated with the traffic in woollen goods.<sup>9</sup>

In the early eighteenth century wool and woollen goods were the staples of the city's exchange. By the time of the Bagarre, their place had been taken by silk. The fortunes of the city's



leading commercial families in 1790 - the Vincens, Devillas, André, Chabanel, Maigre and Prestreau - were bound up with this transformation, a transformation of the geography of exchange as well as of the structure of manufacture. The decades of the 1730's and 1740's, which saw the emergence of these dynasties, was a period in which the geography of the distribution of commodities produced in Nîmes changed considerably, as silk displaced wool as the major article used in manufacture. In 1745 when the corporation of silk merchants levied a contribution from its members to liquidate part of its debts, the largest amounts were paid by firms which were the direct predecessors of the largest commercial houses in Nîmes in 1790.<sup>10</sup>

The dozen firms which contributed 150 Lt or more were:

André freres	330 Lt	Pierre Bresson	210 Lt
Devillas freres	330 Lt	Antoine Valz	190 Lt
Alexandre Lacoste	310 Lt	les cousins Blancard	170 Lt
Pourrat oncle & neveu	280 Lt	Vincens freres	150 Lt
Lacoste aine	270 Lt	Rey & Legrand	150 Lt
Louis Vincens & Cie	240 Lt	Colomb & Vialla	150 Lt

(A.D.H. C 2259)

The core of the city's commercial elite at the time of the Bagarre had emerged by the mid eighteenth century and, with it, a structure of exchange which was to remain intact until the revolutionary years. In 1788 the provincial administration drew up a list of the 45 principle entrepreneurs and bulk merchants in Nîmes, enumerating the number of artisans employed by each commercial house and listing the principle markets with which they were associated.<sup>11</sup> The major item of international trade was hosiery, with its markets in Spain, Italy, Germany and Russia. Six commercial houses in Nîmes operated on that scale. The market for silks was primarily a domestic one; some firms specialised in the trade with Paris and the court, others sold mainly at the fairs of Bordeaux or Beaucaire,

while the majority sold to the provinces. Six firms were listed as négociants en gros, on an international scale, while a seventh - Jacques Roland - dealt in corn, exporting to Holland and England and importing American goods to Nîmes. This structure of exchange and its attendant structure of manufacture came to an end only during the disruption of the war years after 1792.

A composite picture of this changing commercial area is impossible to reconstruct. No source contains the information which would make it possible to measure the relative importance of particular axes or circuits of exchange at different moments in time. The surviving fragments of the papers of a number of commercial partnerships are sufficient, however, to suggest the outlines of the commercial space filled by the city's economy.<sup>12</sup>

Two livres des achats of the firm of Chabaud and Pison for 1701-1702 and 1716-1719 which dealt in wool and silks mention purchases of fine silks, embroidered in gold or silver, from Lyon, of woollen cloth from Northern France - draps d'Elbeuf, molletons de Rouen and draps d'Abbeville - as well as spices from Geneva.<sup>13</sup>

At the beginning of the century, the city was thus involved in trade of national dimensions. In one year - 1720-21 - the firm of Reynaud & Guiraud, another substantial partnership, sent over 25,000 Lt worth of finished and unfinished silk to commercial houses in Lyon, Amsterdam, Paris and Marseille.<sup>14</sup> By 1740, when the partnership



went bankrupt, it had become an international commercial house of some substance, heavily involved in the colonial trade with San-Domingo and Canada, importing dye-stuffs, sugar, cotton, and beaver-pelts to France through its correspondents in Bordeaux, Marseille, Le Havre and Rouen and exporting silks and woollen goods to Martinique and San-Domingo.<sup>15</sup> Between June 1731 and January 1735, the firm imported 5,554 beaver hats worth 62,608 L which were sold either to commercial houses in Bayonne or to the firms of Cazaubon, Behic & Cie, Cayla, Cabanis & Cie and Garnier, Cornabé & Fromaget in Cadiz, from where they were re-exported to Havanna.<sup>16</sup> The firm's major suppliers at the Cap francais was a partnership of merchants from Nîmes - Nègre & Alison - from which they obtained consignments of indigo and sugar sent to either Bordeaux or Marseille.

Reynaud & Guiraud was by no means the only partnership involved in the colonial trade. As early as 1712 a partnership named Bizeur and Joubert listed goods worth 4,000 Lt on the vessel named Le Renommé "qui est parti pour la mer du Sud," among its initial assets worth 42,000 Lt.<sup>17</sup> In 1745 the firm of Castanet & Viviès went bankrupt with debts of 91,429 Lt arising from Castanet's inability to remit payment from San-Domingo for goods bought in Nîmes, Montpellier, Lyon, Geneva and Marseille because of the war.<sup>18</sup> Roux frères of Marseille handled the interests of several commercial houses from Nîmes in cargoes to the colonies.<sup>19</sup> Over the course of the century dozens of nîmois embarked for the colonies, including one of Guizot's ancestors, a Larnac, a Jausaud and many others. "L'on regarde en F<sup>ce</sup> pour certain une fortune assurée à tous ceux qui

ont le bonheur de passer ici," wrote Pierre Nègre to his uncle from San Domingo, "et pour mauvais sujet ceux qui s'en retournent infructueusement."<sup>20</sup> Fortunes made in the West Indies seem however to have been relatively few: only the Nègre, the Larnac and the Trentignan could look to the colonies as a source of substantial wealth.<sup>21</sup> It was more usual for firms in Nîmes to participate in the colonial trade indirectly, through commercial houses in Marseille, Cadiz and, to what seems to have been a lesser extent, Bordeaux and the other Atlantic ports.<sup>22</sup> Marseille was near enough for most firms to avoid the need to establish branches there. Most of the commercial houses established by nîmois there had no direct financial links with Nîmes. Cadiz - in the Fornier and the Rivet - had at least two major firms financed from Nîmes from the 1740s, while representatives from Nîmes were to be found in most of the Atlantic ports. When Frederick Samuel d'Oleire died in 1788 his assets included 23,841 Lt invested in the firm of Claris & Cie of Bordeaux, and an actif of 100,000 Lt.<sup>23</sup>

The Grand-Livre of a partnership named Sagnier & Lozeran, successor to Quatrefages, Sagnier & Lozeran, and itself successor to Quatrefages & Sagnier, presents a different geographical network. It specialised in the hosiery trade to the Northern and Western coastal towns of the Iberian peninsula in the 1740's and 1750's, and for this purpose had a branch at Bayonne. The town was its major outlet, together with the towns of Burgos, Valladolid, Saint-Sebastian, Pamplona, Alcala, Bilbao, Salamanca, Sarragossa and Madrid.<sup>24</sup>



At the other end of the commercial area filled by Nîmes, was that occupied by the silk merchant, David Pastre, who left a partnership with his father-in-law in 1759 to become a hosier. He set about establishing a clientele by writing to commercial houses at Hamburg, Franckfort, Isserholm, Drezden, Leipzig, Cassel, Hanau, and Augusta, as well as Nancy, Brest, Saint-Malo, Lyon and Toulouse. He had, he informed them, "une filature de soye considérable dans les Sévennes pour avoir la soye de la première main."<sup>25</sup>

If Spain, Lyon, Switzerland and Germany formed a broad North-South axis around which the commerce in silks, silk-hose and silk-cloth was centred, the East-West axis running from the Haut-Languedoc, the Cévennes and the Gévaudan towards Marseille and the Italian peninsula remained the staple of the traffic in woollen goods. The inventory of the merchant François Mazel, one of the members of a partnership named Mazel, Crespin & Galissard, lists among his papers his notebooks kept at the fairs of Pézénas and Montagnac in 1730-31 and his correspondence with his two sons at Genoa in 1729-1732.<sup>26</sup> The partnership had been established in 1701, with two of its members - Mazel & Pierre Galissard - in Nîmes and the third organising the supply of cloth from Masnèze in the Gévaudan.<sup>27</sup> This structure - centred upon the traffic in the woollen goods of the Massif Central to Italy - was similar to that of the firm Cavalier & Veyre, a partnership between Pierre & Adrian Mercier and André and Jean Cavalier of Nîmes and Louis and Simon Veyre of Annonay in the Vivarais, which was dissolved in 1700.<sup>28</sup>

The importance of the Italian axis for the city's economy in the early eighteenth century has been emphasised. The period between 1680 to 1730 saw branches of commercial houses based upon Nîmes established at Genoa, Livorno, Brescia, Mantua, Rome and Naples. The connection with both Genoa and Naples appears to have been particularly important and was responsible for the fortunes of at least four commercial dynasties: the André, Boissier, Maystre and Teissier in the early eighteenth century.<sup>29</sup> The fortunes of the Fornier, the Pieyre and the Lapiere - the three dynasties most closely associated with the woollen trade in the eighteenth century were also associated with this particular axis. Marseille, with its dual apertures to Italy and the Levant on the one hand, and Cadiz and the Spanish colonies on the other probably housed more representatives of commercial houses and commercial families from Nîmes than any other French town in the eighteenth century.<sup>30</sup>

The growing use of silk in the manufacture of hosiery and other textiles in the course of the eighteenth century added a further component to an already highly developed network of exchange. A letter sent in 1768 by the firm Ourson freres of Nîmes, which specialised in dealing in unfinished silk with the major houses of Nîmes and Lyon, to Veuve Lacoste & Cie of Nîmes, a firm with a branch in Paris dealing under the name of Cresp, Leroy & Cie on the rue Saint Denis, was the product of a geography of exchange centred upon silk of European dimensions:

"Il resulte des avis de Mms les Lyonnais que les 244 balles soye d'Alès des achats de Beaucaire n'ont pas été des mieux accueillies. Aussi la fabrique ne fait pas encore grand mouvement à Lyon, et cette lenteur ne peut qu'être défavorable aux soies ... la foire de Frankfort sur l'Oden n'a pas été gracieuse, les ventes y ont été difficiles et rares, au point que trois de nos maisons n'ont pas vendu 20 dizaines de bas. Elles en étoient pourtant bien pourvues ... Je crois vous avoir dit, Madame,



que les Italiens se flataient, je ne sçai sur quel fondement, de vendre leur soye grèse 7 ou 8 pour cent seulement au dessous du prix primitif de l'année d<sup>re</sup>. Ils ont à décompter, car à la foire de Breschia on ne leur a pas donné la peine de déballer... L'on assure qu'à Londres qui tiroit beaucoup de ce país là les affaires y sont plus languissantes que sur nos places de commerce. Il s'agit à présent de la foire de Bergame. Si les choses ne sont pas mieux, gare les pauvres organcins, je les vois vilipendiés, et vous voilà prophétesse Madame."<sup>31</sup>

If Marseille and Cadiz were the two poles around which the trade with Italy, Spain and the French and Spanish colonies was centred, then Lyon and Paris served the same functions for the trade with Switzerland, Germany and the commercial centres of Northern France. "Nous faisons presque tous nos envois à Paris et Lyon," the merchant Jacques Gervais informed a correspondent at Fournon in the Vivarais in 1770.<sup>32</sup> The presence of branches of commercial houses from Nîmes in Lyon throughout the eighteenth century reflected the city's importance as both an entrepot, and a banking centre. The firms of Prade & Cie in 1732 with a capital of 21,000 Lt - a partnership between Jacques Prade & Pierre Mirande of Nîmes - and Rat père & fils - a partnership between Abraham & Marc-Antoine Rat of Nîmes and Lyon founded in 1725 were the result of this connection.<sup>33</sup> Inversely, the firm of Roquet & Scherer of Lyon had a share in the capital of Alexandre Chabanel & Cie of Nîmes between 1758 and 1766, before it went into liquidation.<sup>34</sup> The quarter century between 1750 and 1775, which may have been the most profitable for the silk trade, saw all the major commercial houses associated with silk

in Nîmes - Devillas frères, André frères, Vincens & Cie, Bresson & Cie involved in branches in Lyon or Paris, where Vincens & Cie had a branch dealing under the name Lombard & Cie and where the banker Louis Julien capitalised the firm of Dalaguier, Bedos, and Fabre-Lichaire.<sup>35</sup>

If the number of substantial commercial partnerships and the scale of commercial activity in Nîmes in the eighteenth century fell well short of those of the major ports, or of Lyon or Montpellier, the growth of the traffic in silk goods by the middle of the century meant that the city's economy became a component of the international division of labour of the eighteenth century. It filled a commercial area which extended well beyond the frontiers of the kingdom. Consequently, the history of the economy is more than a regional history, and the rhythms of its development were affected by more than regional factors.



Notes - Chapter 9

1. B.M. Nîmes. Mss 66.
2. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>40</sup> 69 f<sup>o</sup> 262.
3. H. Lüthy, La Banque Protestante, op.cit.  
 L. Dermigny, Cargaisons Indiennes: Solier & Cie, Paris, 1960.  
 J. Meyer, l'Armement nantais au VIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, Paris, 1969.  
 C. Carrière, Négociants Marseillais, op.cit.  
 P. Butel, Les Négociants bordelais, l'Europe et les Isles.  
 Paris, 1974.
4. Tableau général du commerce des Marchands, Négociants, Armateurs etc. de la France, de l'Europe et des Autres parties du Monde ... par M. Gournay. Paris, 1790. pp.513-519. B.N. V 21539.
5. The capital value of all offices in Nîmes at the end of the eighteenth century was less than 500,000 Lt. The amounts invested with the Hôtel-Dieu, Hôpital-General, municipality or diocese of Nîmes probably totalled between 1,000,000 and 2,000,000 livres (cf. A.D. Gard C 772). The amount invested in land is impossible to calculate. In 1765 the annual income in rentes foncières within the city and its taillable alone was estimated at 25,000 Lt., which would mean a total investment of some 500,000 Lt. (A.D. Hérault C8251. Ginoux de St. Vincent to de Joubert, 21-2-1765). This would not include the large landed estates owned by inhabitants of Nîmes outside of the taillable of the city.
6. Tableau Général, loc.cit.
7. A.D. Gard. C 1072-1073.
8. A.C. Nîmes. pp 2.
9. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 114 f<sup>o</sup> 862v<sup>o</sup>.
10. A.D. Hérault. C 2259.
11. Id. C 2296.
12. A.D. Gard. Serie B (unclassified) Papers of the Presidial. I am extremely grateful to M.Y. Chassin du Guerny of the archives of the Gard for allowing me complete access to this mass of extremely important material.

13. A.D. Gard. Serie B (unclassified).
14. Id. Journal of Reynaud and Guiraud.
15. Id. Grand Livre B of Reynaud and Guiraud, f<sup>o</sup>81.
16. Id. Journal, 1732-1740.
17. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>37</sup> 254 f<sup>o</sup> 2v<sup>o</sup>; see also 2E<sup>36</sup> 900 f<sup>o</sup> 396v<sup>o</sup>(1744) for the partnership of Louis & Jacques Larnac of Nîmes and Martinique, and 2E<sup>44</sup> 10 f<sup>o</sup> 589 (1789) for Louis Manié of Port-au-Prince.
18. Id. Serie B. Registre des Insinuations du Presidial, 18-6-1752.
19. A.C.C.M. LIX-437. 15-11-1748, from H-C & P Vincens.
20. A.D.Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 1058, 18-8-1761.
21. On the involvement of the Languedoc with the colonies, see L. Dermigny "Saint-Domingue et le Languedoc au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siecle," Rev. d'Hist. des Colonies, 1958, pp. 369-452. On the Trentignon, see below pp.515-516.
22. Thus the Vincens were established at La Rochelle, the Valz represented at Lorient, the Bros at Rouen during the century.
23. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 851 f<sup>o</sup> 847.
24. Id. Serie B. loc.cit.
25. Id. "Livre de copies de lettres" of D. Pastre, 1759-62.
26. A.D. Gard. Serie B (unclassified) Inventory, Avril 1732.
27. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>37</sup> 256 f<sup>o</sup> 23v<sup>o</sup>.
28. Id. 2E<sup>37</sup> 249 f<sup>o</sup> 125v<sup>o</sup>.
29. Id. 2E<sup>36</sup> 894 f<sup>o</sup> 576; 2E<sup>37</sup> 270 f<sup>o</sup> 636; 2E<sup>37</sup> 257 f<sup>o</sup> 215v<sup>o</sup>; 2E<sup>37</sup> 247 f<sup>o</sup> 624; 2E<sup>37</sup> 256 f<sup>o</sup> 533.
30. C. Carrière. op.cit. p.278 et.seq.
31. A.D. Gard. Serie B (unclassified) "livre de copies de lettres" of Ourson freres, 3-9-1768.
32. Id. "Livre de Copies de Lettres" of J. Gervais.
33. A.D. Rhône. Serie B., Fonds de la Conservation, Actes de Société, 2-1-1737 and 5-5-1725.
34. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 831 f<sup>o</sup> 867.
35. Id. Livre de Copies de Lettres, Ourson freres loc.cit.



Chapter 9 - Appendix ACommercial Houses in Nimes - 1789Silk

Boyer-Devillas, Vincens & Cie  
 Bresson pere, fils aine & Cie  
 Cazeing de LaGrollet, Im-Thurm & Cie  
 Montaud (Jean) & Cie  
 Isaac Pourrat  
 Vincens & Cie  
 Isaac Vincens

Silk Manufacturers & Merchants

Amalric (Francois) & Dumas  
 Auzillon, Ribierre & Cie  
 Bonnaud, Arnaud & Cie  
 Bousquet, Routon & Cie  
 Boyer-Devillas, Vincens & Cie  
 Bresson Tier & Cie  
 Cazeing de la Grollet, Im-Thurm & Cie  
 Foulc Sagnier & Cie  
 Frat (Pierre)  
 Garnier Seguin & Cie  
 Guisquet (Francois) & Cie  
 Lacoste & Cie  
 Lauron & Galibert  
 Loche pere, fils & Cie  
 Loche neveu & Roubel (Alexandre)  
 Mazellet, Barre fils & Cie  
 Mirande  
 Pourcher  
 Roux (Jean) & fils  
 Vaute, Arnaud & Cie  
 Vigne & Cie  
 Villaret

Woollen Cloth

Barne freres  
 Gaillard Londes & Cie  
 Garnier Puech & Cie  
 Lacoste (Ant) & fils  
 Murzas  
 Pieyre (Jean) & fils  
 Rouviere freres  
 Salomon Bourguet & Cie

Grain

Allut Cousins & Cie  
 Blanc freres  
 Brouve, Theron & Valz  
 Charles freres

Manufacturers of Silk Handkerchiefs

Alary freres & Cie  
 Castinel  
 Lagorce  
 Languier (Louis)  
 Languier (Vincent)  
 Privat (Girard)  
 Terme (Andre) Gazayjeune

Manufacturers of Silk Stockings

Amalric & Dumas  
 Chabancl(Frederick & Cie)  
 Daumeson freres  
 Gas & Cie  
 Gallien freres  
 Jaussaud (J.L.) & Cie  
 Lavent freres  
 Maigre (Louis) & Cie  
 Martin freres  
 Meynadier & Olive  
 Ribot (Marc-Antoine) & Cie  
 Rolland Germain  
 Roux freres  
 Truchau & Rouviere  
 Veyrun freres

Linen

Barne freres  
 Gaillard Londes & Cie  
 Garnier Puech & Cie  
 Marchand, Baridon, Isnard & Cie  
 Murjas  
 Rouviere freres

Hardware & Ironware

Fabre freres  
 Léotaud & Cie  
 Léotaud freres  
 Léotaud cadet  
 Melquion pere fils & Cie  
 Nogarède fils

Spices, Dyes & Chemicals

Blanc freres  
 Charles freres & Cie  
 Fabre (Alexandre)  
 Foulc (Francois) & Cie  
 Rolland (Jacques) & Cie

From Tableau Général du Commerce des Marchands, Négocians,  
Armateurs etc. de la France, de l'Europe et des Autres parties  
du Monde. Connu ci-devant sous le nom d'Almanach general du  
Commerce. par M. Gournay. Paris. 1790. B.N. V21539. pp.513-519.



Chapter 9 - Appendix B

Etat des principaux Entrepreneurs des manufactures, et negociants en Gros de la ville de Nismes

Fabrique d'Etoffes de soye, ou de soye et fleuret fil et coton.

Mrs. Boyer de Vilas Vincent et Compagnie

Mrs de Vilas pendant trois générations et depuis le commencement du siècle, ont fait successivement le commerce en gros de la toillerie, de la draperie et la fabrique des étoffes de soye.

Le Sr De Vilas, père de celui qui existe aujourd'hui établit la fabrique des étoffes de soye en grand en 1740. Il eut toujours plus de 250 metiers, et le Sr Devilas fils soutient cette fabrique dans le même état après la mort de son père pendant nombre d'années.

Le Sr Devilas a remis sa fabrique aux Srs Boyer Devilas et Vincent ses neveux auxquels il fait commandite. Ces derniers entretiennent la même quantité de metiers dans les années où les matières sont abondantes et à des prix raisonnables qui en facilitent la consommation. Ils font de marchandises de bonne qualité qu'ils vendent principalement dans les provinces, mais peu à l'étranger.

Mrs Antoine Lacoste et fils et La Carrière

La maison Lacoste fait le commerce depuis deux générations. Il ne consistoit il y a environ 60 ans qu'en draperie, mais depuis environ 30 années ils ont établi une fabrique d'étoffes de soye ou mêlées de soye d'environ 120 metiers. Leur consommation est aux foires, ou dans les provinces du Royaume.

Mrs Louis Chabanel et Compagnie

Ils font fabriquer depuis deux générations. Le Sr Paul Chabanel, oncle de Louis à qui il fait commandite, avoit établi cette fabrique il y a environ 40 ans à la place d'une en bas de soye et filozelle qu'il avoit formée plusieurs années auparavant. Cette maison fait de bonne marchandise, qu'elle ne consomme qu'à Paris. Elle entretient année commune près de cent cinquante metiers.

M. Cazen, Lagraulé, Imtourne et Compagnie

Ils ont succédé depuis 3 ans à la maison de Cazens frères, qui leur font commandite. Ces derniers avoient formé cet établissement depuis environ 30 ans, et ont toujours bien fabriqué. Ils entretiennent année commune plus de cent metiers. Leur principale consommation est aux foires de Bordeaux et dans les provinces.

M Garnier, Seguin et Compagnie

Mrs Devilas frères avoient cette fabrique depuis près de 50 ans, occupant plus de 250 metiers et faisant de bonne marchandise.

Les Srs Garnier et Seguin, à qui cette fabrique a été cedée depuis deux ans entretiennent environ 100 metiers. Ils vendent en partie leurs étoffes aux Srs Devilas qui les expedient dans les provinces, et leur fournissent les matières propres à la fabrication.

Mrs Villiers, Barret et Compagnie

La maison André avoient une fabrique de père en fils depuis plusieurs générations. Ils entretenoient 200 metiers, et leur fabrique jouissait de la meilleure reputation.

Le Sr Jean André a remis depuis 2 ans cet établissement aux Srs Villiers et Barret aux quels il fait commandite, et qui occupent environ 100 metiers. Leur consommation est dans les provinces.

Mr Frat

Il a formé lui même sa fabrique il y a 35 ans. Il occupe environ 80 metiers et fait de bonne marchandises qu'il vend dans les provinces du Royaume.

Mrs. Bonnaud et Arnaud

Ils ont succédé depuis quelques années à la fabrique de Mrs Bresson aîné père et fils, qui l'ont conservée pendant deux générations avec plus de 200 metiers.

Les Srs Bonnaud et Arnaud occupent près de 80 metiers et vendent dans les provinces.

Mrs Loche et Compagnie

Ils ont eux même établi leur fabrique depuis environ 30 ans. Ils font travailler près de 80 metiers, et soutiennent bien la qualité, qu'ils consomment dans les provinces.

Mrs Jacques Sagnier et fils

Ils ont établi eux même leur fabrique il y a environ 40 ans. Elle consiste toute en étoffes, pour meubles tous soye, ou mêlées de fleuret de fil ou de coton. Ils entretiennent communément 60 metiers. Leur consommation est à la cour, dans la capitale et dans les provinces. C'est en ce genre la meilleure et la plus considérable fabrique. Ils font des damas tout soye, ou mêlés, des brocatelles, des satins et autres petites étoffes.



Mrs Bousquet jeune, Routon et Compagnie

C'est la suite de la maison de feu Sr Bousquet aîné, qui avoit établi une fabrique avec quelque reputation.

Il eut une gratification des Etats de la province de 10,000 Lt à la charge d'entretenir 20 metiers de velours à 3 poils à l'imitation de ceux de Gênes. Mais cette fabrication fut abandonnée à cause des pertes qu'elle donnoit.

Les Srs Bousquet et Routon occupent 60 ou 80 metiers, et ont leur consommation à la foire de Beaucaire et dans les provinces.

Mr Gisquet

Il a luy meme formé son établissement depuis quelques années. Il a son débouché partie en Italie, le reste à la foire de Beaucaire ou dans les provinces. Il entretien environ 80 metiers.

Mrs Mazelet, Barre et Compagnie

C'est la suite de deux maisons qui avoient formé chacune leur établissement, celle des Srs Guillaume David, Delgas et Mazelet, à laquelle Srs Jean Pieyre et fils faisoient commandite, et celle du Sr Barre père.

La première avoit toute sa consommation en Italie et en Espagne, et entretenoit 200 metiers. La seconde consommoit dans le Royaume et occupoit 50 ou 60 metiers.

La nouvelle maison de Mazelet et Barre n'entretient actuellement qu'environ 80 metiers, et a tout son débouché dans l'étranger principalement en Italie.

Mrs Villaret et Compagnie

Ils ont formé leur établissement. Leur consommation est dans les provinces du Royaume. La qualité de leur marchandises est bonne, et ils entretiennent année commune 70 metiers.

M. Vigne et Compagnie

Ils font fabriquer depuis deux generations, occupent environ 80 metiers, et ont leur consommation dans les provinces et à la foire de Beaucaire.

M. Boutillon

C'est le fabriquant le plus intelligent, qui de simple maître ouvrier a formé une fabrique qui a beaucoup de reputation en étoffes de soye, unies et façonnées ou en soye brochées en or ou argent. C'est à luy que la fabrique de Nismes est redevable du gout et de la variété qui y règne et en facilite beaucoup sa consommation.

Il entretien nombre de metiers. Les Etats de la province luy accordèrent il y a très longtemps une gratification de 400 Lt et on lui avoit fait éesperer de plus considérables que les circonstances n'ont pas permis de lui accorder. Il mériteroit une récompense du gouvernement.

#### Observation

Il y a grand nombre d'autres fabriquants en étoffes de soye ou mêlées de soye de la seconde et troisième classe qui en général, ainsi que ceux de la première, ont été forcés de réduire cette année le nombre de leurs metiers des 2/3 à cause de la rareté des matières, de leur prix excessifs et du défaut de consommation.

Chaque metier peut produire annuellement 2,000 Lt de marchandises fabriquées. Il y a dans Nismes environ 3,000 metiers occupés; mais depuis le mois de 7bre dernier, il n'y en a pas plus de 1,200 qui travaillent. Il est à désirer qu'il y ait cette année une récolte de soye abondante pour donner à la fabrique des étoffes un peu d'activité.

Il est cependant à craindre que le nombre des metiers ne diminuent insensiblement, car on s'aperçoit depuis quelque tems que sa consommation dans l'étranger se ralentit par les fabriques établies en Suisse, en Allemagne et en Espagne, et parce qu'en Italie elles n'y font guère plus de mode aujourd'hui.

#### Fabrique de Bas

Mrs Louis Maigre et Compagnie

Ils font fabriquer de pere en fils depuis deux generations. Leur établissement remonte à plus de 60 ans. Avant la prohibition des bas de soye en Espagne pour les Indes espagnoles, ils entretenoient plus de 200 metiers et achetoient beaucoup aux autres fabricants. Leur consommation est aujourd'hui en Allemagne et en Russie, ce qui année commune les met en état de faire travailler environ 100 metiers.

Mrs les frères Chabanel et Compagnie.

Cette maison est en tout semblable à celle des Srs Maigre, et établie à peu près à la même époque. Elle a toujours eu les mêmes débouchés et le même nombre de metiers.

Mrs Marc-Antoine Ribot et Compagnie

Ils sont établis depuis environ 20 ans. Avant les prohibition d'Espagne, ils entretenoient plus de 200 metiers et faisoient des achats considérables dans la fabrique.

Leur consommation est aujourd'hui en Allemagne et en Russie, et dans les années favorables ils occupent 100 metiers.

Le Sr Prestreau est le principal associé de cette maison en commandite, et lui procure la plus grande partie



des fonds dont elle a besoin.

Mrs Alexandre Bousquet et Compagnie

Cette maison est établie de père en fils depuis deux générations. Elle consomme le produit de sa fabrique dans le Nord et en Italie, ayant perdu comme les autres son débouché en Espagne. Elle peut faire travailler encore dans une année ordinaire 80 métiers.

Mrs Martin frères et Compagnie

Ils ont formé eux même leur établissement. Il ne leur reste que la consommation de l'Allemagne, et peu en Italie. Ils peuvent entretenir année commune 80 métiers. Ils en avoient 150 avant les prohibition d'Espagne.

Mrs Roux frères

Ils sont établis depuis environ 30 ans. Ils occupent environ 80 métiers de bas de soye filozelle ou en laine. Ils vendent un peu partout.

Mrs Roland, Abric, Germain et Compagnie

Cette maison est une suite de celle de Sr Henry Baumet qui a fait fabriquer de père en fils pendant deux generations. Il leur fait commandite, mais elle travaille peu depuis le cessation des demandes de l'Espagne. De 180 métiers qu'ils avoient, ils n'en ont depuis lors qu'environ 60 métiers.

Mrs Paris frères

Ils font fabriquer de père en fils depuis deux générations. Leur consommation principale est en Italie, ou leur bas ont beaucoup de reputation. Ils ont perdu leur consommation d'Espagne, et n'ont depuis lors qu'environ 60 métiers.

Mrs Amalric, Dumas et Compagnie

Ils ont formé leur établissement réduit à present à une consommation en Italie. Ils peuvent avoir 50 métiers.

Ils ont encore une fabrique d'étoffes de soye qu'ils vendent à Paris où ils ont une maison, et pour laquelle ils ont de 30 à 40 métiers.

Mrs Veyrun frères et Compagnie

Ils ont fait eux meme leur établissement. Leur consommation est en Italie et en Allemagne, et avec celle qu'ils avoient en Espagne, ils pouvoient entretenir 80 métiers réduits actuellement à plus de moitié.

### Observation

Il y a un très grand quantité d'autres fabricants de la seconde et troisième classe qui vendent un peu par tout mais par les mêmes inconvénients qu'a éprouvé cette année la fabrique des étoffes, c'est à dire par la cherté et la rareté de la matière, ont été forcés de diminuer des deux tiers leur fabrication et on peut faire le même calcul de diminution pour la première classe.

Il y avoit quelques autres maisons qui avoient un grand nombre de metiers pour la consommation d'Espagne, et que depuis les prohibitions ne font plus fabriquer.

Chaque metier de bas de soye peut faire par année 2,000 Lt de fabrique. Avant les prohibitions d'Espagne, et la mauvaise récolte de soye de l'année dernière, il y avoit dans la ville ou à la campagne 4,000 metiers. Il n'en a pas à présent plus de 1,000 qui travaillent.

Cette fabrication est celle qui donne le plus de bénéfice à la main d'oeuvre, aux fabricants et à l'Etat. C'est la plus facile à établir et à tomber sans de grands fraix et de grandes pertes, mais comme c'est une jurande, et qu'il faut avoir des lettres de maîtrise pour pouvoir faire fabriquer, les négts capitalistes et industriels sont repoussés par là de cette industrie, ce qui est un vice préjudiciable à l'Etat.

#### Fabrique de Burat composés de Laine et de Filozelle

Mr Bouvier

C'est une des plus anciennes fabriques de ce genre qu'ils soutiennent de pere en fils. Le Sr Bouvier vend comme tous les autres fabricants sa marchandise en brut aux négts de la ville qui la font apretter. Il a une petite consommation au dehors, et il entretien 20 metiers.

Mr Isnard fils

Il fait fabriquer de père en fils depuis deux générations et vend sa marchandise en brut comme le Sr Bouvier. Il occupe environ 15 ou 20 metiers.

Mr Jean Froment

Meme observation que pour le Sr Isnard

Mr Maupeaux

Meme observation. Il n'a que 12 ou 15 metiers.



Mr Roche

A formé son établissement. Il entretien 20 à 25 metiers et vend tout dans la ville.

Mr Gourdoux

On fait le meme observation.

Mr Cambacérés

Meme observation.

Mr Rebufat

Meme observation.

#### Observation

Il y a plusieurs autres fabriquant qui font peu de choses. Cette fabrique est en jurande et il faut être reçu maître pour faire travailler.

Il y a quelques années qu'il se fabriquoit dix mille pièces de burat qui se consomment dans le Royaume, en Italie et en Espagne. Depuis 4 ou 5 ans il ne s'en fait pas au delà de 4 ou 5 mille. Les mauvais aprets occasionnés par les cartons qu'on fait servir trop longtems pour épargner les droits énormes auxquels on les a assujetis sont cause de cette diminution.

Il y a environ 250 metiers travaillant dans la ville ou à la campagne. Chaque metier peut produire 1,600 lt de marchandises fabriquée par année.

#### Négotiants en Gros

Mrs Jean Pieyre et fils

Mrs Pieyre sont établis depuis 4 générations, et depuis le commencement du siècle. Leur principal commerce, qu'ils ont toujours fait en grand, est celuy des draperies de cette province et des autres provinces du Royaume, qu'ils continuent à vendre à tres long terme, en Italie, en Espagne, dans les principales iles de la Méditerranée, à L'Amérique, et aux Indes, qu'ils envoient pour leur compte, de même que plusieurs autres articles des fabriques, soit en étoffes de soye et bas de soye.

Le Sr Pieyre est le seul qui aye soutenu en grand la consommation des draperies de cette province dans l'étranger. Il en fait aussi des envoys dans les provinces du Royaume, et fait des affaires de speculation de tout genre. Il jouit de la meilleure reputation ainsi que ses predecesseurs.

Le Sr Pieyre par son commerce d'exportation a rendu des services essentiels à l'état. Il Mériteroit des récompenses, non pas pécuniaire, parce qu'il jouit d'une grosse fortune, mais des récompenses honorifiques.

Mrs Bresson aîné père et fils

Ils ont eu pendant deux générations une fabrique d'étoffes de soye de 200 metiers qu'ils ont abandonné depuis quelques années. Ils font aujourd'hui un commerce en grand de toute sorte de matières de soye qui alimentent les fabriques de Nismes et de Lyon, où ils ont une maison, et font au surplus des affaires de spéculation de tous genres.

Mrs Vincens et Compagnie

Ils sont établis depuis trois générations, et ont eu successivement de père et fils une fabrique considérable d'étoffes et de bas de soye, qu'ils ont poussé aussi loin qu'aucune autre maison de Nismes, avec beaucoup de réputation, et qu'ils ont quitté pour ne suivre que le commerce de la soye, qu'ils vendent aux fabricants de Nismes, de Lyon et de Tours, et les affaires de spéculation de tous genres.

Mrs Devilas freres

Ils ont quitté depuis peu la fabrique des étoffes de soye, qu'ils avoient entretenue pendant deux générations avec 250 metiers. Ils font aujourd'hui le commerce des matières de soye qu'ils vendent comme les précédents et achètent en outre beaucoup d'étoffes de soye, dont ils font des envois dans les provinces.

Mr Jean André

Il a aussi abandonné une fabrique d'étoffes de soye très considérable, que ses père avoient soutenu pendant plusieurs générations, et qu'ils lui avoient transmise. Il fait en grand le commerce de sa soye, et une très grosse filature en ce genre qu'il consomme à Nismes et à Lyon.

Mr Jean Bresson

Il fait un commerce considérable en laine qu'il vend aux foires de Beaucaire et dans les fabriques du Languedoc et du Dauphiné. Il a aussi une fabrique d'étoffes de soye d'environ 50 metiers. Cette maison est établie pour le commerce des laines depuis deux générations.

Mr Izaac Vincens

Il fait une grande filature de soye, ainsi qu'un commerce considérable de cette matière, qu'il achète à d'autres filatures, et qu'il revend à Nismes et à Lyon. Ses père pendant deux ou trois générations avoient une fabrique considérable de bas de soye qu'il n'a pas conservé.



Mrs Garnier, Puech et Compagnie

Ils ont succédé à la maison Meynier, qui de père en fils pendant deux générations avoient fait un commerce de draperie et de toilerie très considérable, et que ceux-cy continuent avec la même reputation aux foires de Beaucaire et dans les provinces voisines.

Mrs Gaillard et Londes

Ils font depuis deux générations un commerce considérable de draperie et de toilerie, et qu'ils consomment comme les précédents à Beaucaire et dans les provinces.

Mr Jacques Roland

Cette maison fait depuis deux générations un commerce considérables de graines du pays qu'il envoy dans le Nord, en Hollande et en Angleterre, ainsi qu'un commerce des production de l'Amérique qu'il vend en gros à Nismes et à la foire de Beaucaire.

Observation

Il y a nombre d'autres négociants en gros de la seconde classe dans toute sorte de commerce dont les affaires sont moins considérables que celles des maisons cy dessus, ou qui ne font que celles de la commission.

Il y a aussi un corps de cardeurs de filozelle qui sont dans ce genre des affaires qui deviennent tous les jours plus majeures. Ils se procurent de l'étranger les débris des filatures propres à cette industrie qui, avec ceux du pays, procurent aux fabriques les matières qui leur sont nécessaires, sans avoir besoin comme cy devant de les tirer de Zurich.

Le commerce de bled se rend aussi tous les jours plus considérable dans la ville de Nismes, qui est l'entrepot des Cévennes. Cette branche deviendra bien plus intéressante si le Canal projeté pour aller joindre celui de la province est executé.

Le commerce des cuirs et la chamoiserie sont aussi une branche essentielle. Cette marchandise se consomme surtout en Espagne et en Italie.

Enfin le commerce de Nismes est si favorable à l'accroissement de la population, si avantageux aux possesseurs des fonds par la valeur qu'il procure aux denrées et favorise si fort l'augmentation du numeraire qu'il merite toute la protection, et les graces du gouvernement.

Teinturerie

Mr Verdier

C'est un tres habille teinturier, qui a porté au plus haut point de perfection la teinture du coton en rouge-fin dont la teinture est superieure en uni, en vivacite et en solidite a celle du Levant. Aussi fournit-il aux fabriques de Rouen, de Montpellier, de Cholet et du Bearn, la plus grande partie des cotons en cette couleur qui leur sont necessaire.

Il a formé pour cetteteinture un très grand établissement dans lequel il entretient plus de cent ouvriers, et il mériteroit à bien plus juste titre des gratifications relatives aux avantages qu'il procure aux manufactures que le feu Sr Aimard de cette ville, à qui les Etats accordèrent il y a environ 30 ans douze mille livres et la ville un emplacement considerable en pur don pour un établissement pareil qui n'a eu aucun succes.

Le Sr Verdier entretient aussi une fabrique d'étoffes de coton de ce même rouge fin et autres couleurs pour laquelle il occupe nombre de metiers. C'est un homme rempli d'imagination et de talens.

(Source: A.D. Hérault C 2296. le 15e mai 1788)

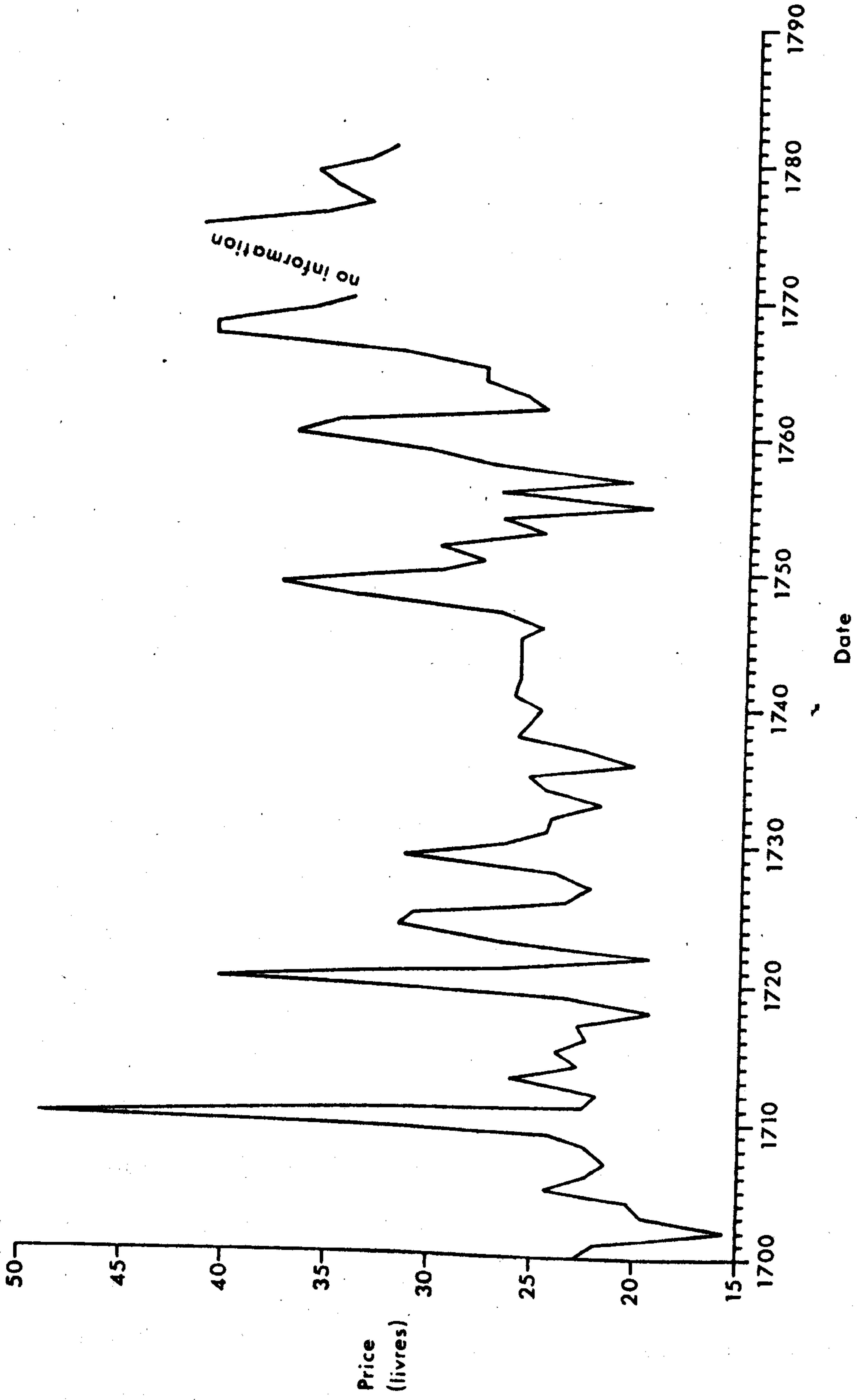


Chapter 10 The Movement of the Economy in the Eighteenth Century

Until the middle of the eighteenth century information about the short-term movements of the city's economy is fragmentary. Analysis of the conjuncture is limited by the absence of continuous series of either goods produced or levels of investment in machinery during the eighteenth century. The temptation to deduce the state of the economy from information on the movement of the price of corn or the annual production of silk in the Uzège and the Vivarais is strong. Undoubtedly, failures of local supply, reflected in large increases in the price of cocoons and shortages of silk at the fairs of Beaucaire and Alès held in July and late August every year, did affect the levels of output and the availability of work in Nîmes. Equally, failures of supply elsewhere, pushed prices up in Nîmes and at Beaucaire and Alès, to the obvious benefit of local merchants, if not of the productive population as a whole. A price rise at Lyon in 1714 for example, arising from a harvest failure in Italy and Piedmont pushed the price of cocoons in the Cévennes up to 40s a pound, enabling a merchant from Nîmes to envisage profits of 100% on his silk.<sup>1</sup> Failures of supply in 1749 and 1750 precipitated sharp rises in cocoon prices and a considerable reduction in the number of looms and stocking frames working in the city. In 1750, the Hôtel-Dieu was forced to borrow 3,000 Lt to cover its deficit, "les rentes de cette maison ayant beaucoup diminué par la cessation de la fabrique."<sup>2</sup> But the revival which followed a normal harvest in 1752 served to maintain a high level of prices as merchants competed for a reduced labour force. David Pastre informed a firm



MOVEMENT OF THE PRICE OF WHEAT - NIMES



in Cahors that he had raised his piece-work rates by 15s per "pour avoir des ouvriers, qui sont fort rares."<sup>3</sup> 1767 was another difficult year, with a harvest half as large as usual. "On parle déjà de démonter les métiers, et dieu veuille que ce ne soit pas ici la soeur de l'année 1750 ou comme vous savez il se perdit si gros sur les soies," Ourson frères informed a commercial house in Lyon.<sup>4</sup> In 1788 the failure of the preceding year's silk supply reduced the number of looms and stocking frames working in the city by half.<sup>5</sup>

It would be wrong, however, to assume that shortages automatically resulted in bankruptcies and recession. The effect of harvest failures was mediated in the case of the commercial houses by the state of the international market. Only in the case of artisans, framework knitters and the inhabitants of the countryside dependent upon the sale of cocoons in silk for a monetary income were the effects more immediate. The effects of changes in the level of supply are best examined, therefore, in terms of the relationship between Nîmes and its hinterland.<sup>6</sup> The movement of the city's economy itself is best examined in terms of the frequency of bankruptcies and changes in the level of profits.

During the eighteenth century there were 186 recorded bankruptcies in Nîmes. The figure is undoubtedly too low. The absence of a juridiction consulaire at Nîmes meant that bankrupts were obliged to deposit a balance of their affairs at the juridiction of Montpellier. Although the papers of this institution contain a certain number of declarations of bankruptcy, the papers of the Présidial of Nîmes contain traces of others and further fragments are scattered among the registers of the city's notaries. The



figures for the first half of the century are particularly poor, and it is impossible to decide whether the 8 declarations of 1715 and the 6 of 1725 stand out because of the absence of surviving declarations from other years or because of the depreciations of the currency which occurred in these years. The number of declarations from the second half of the eighteenth century are again very low, with no recorded bankruptcies in 1750, 1760, 1765 and 1777. Those that do survive suggest enough to make it possible to identify various types of bankruptcy, arising from different circumstances. (See Appendix).

The largest numbers of declarations of bankruptcy fell in five periods: 1751-1752 (18); 1758-59 (10); 1766-67 (10); 1775-76 (11) and 1788-89 (9). Those of the first period appear to have been the product of the bad silk harvests and recession in manufacture of the years 1749 to 1751. Only one substantial failure - of over 100,000 Lt - occurred, while the remainder were made up of retail merchants, artisans, droguistes or bakers, victims of the pressure upon credit caused by selling to artisans unable to pay because of the shortage of work. The peaks of 1758-59, 1766-67 and 1775-76 were the product of crises of a different nature. Half of the 10 bankruptcies in the first period were large commercial houses, as were seven of the ten of 1766-67, including the firms Alexandre Chabanel & Cie, Alexandre Jaussaud and Paul Valz & Cie which all went down with debts of over 100,000 Lt. The wave of bankruptcies of 1775-76 was again dominated by merchants, and notably the partnerships of Nogarède & fils, Louis & David Carreiron frères, David Allary, David Pastre, and Londès, Faure & Cie, all

with debts of over 100,000 Lt.

These latter three peaks were the local reverberations of crises of much larger dimensions. The recession of 1759 occurred in the depths of the Seven Years War. "Rien n'est plus vrai que le credit est des plus resserré," a merchant from Marseille reported in March of that year and listed eight commercial houses in the port which had fallen.<sup>7</sup> The war was again responsible, indirectly, for the following recession. As it drew to an end, there was a massive and short-lived boom, encouraged by the low prices of cocoons and raw silk in the early 1760's. Poor harvests, high prices and large quantities of unsold goods led to a typical crisis of overproduction and a spate of bankruptcies in Paris and Cadiz.<sup>8</sup> The recession of 1774-76 arose from a similar combination of circumstances, which produced gluts of unsold stockings at Cadiz and Lima:

"On evalue la consommation ordinaire de ces Indes à douze mille douzaines de bas ou environ par an. On en a fabriqué beaucoup plus dans le courant des années 1772, 1773, 1774, et 1775. Les magasins de Cadiz et de Lima (en) sont farcis,"

Phélines, the sub-délégué of the Intendance observed. He reported that slumps produced by gluts occurred relatively regularly, at intervals of between 12, 15 or 18 years. "Le mal ordinairement dure un ou deux ans, et quelques fois trois, et lorsqu'il va à trois années la seconde année se trouve la plus funeste."<sup>9</sup>

The bankruptcies of 1788-89 owed something to the harvest failure and shortage of silk of 1787. There were, however, no bankruptcies among the leading firms specialising in the commerce



in silk or hosiery. Two firms-Jacques Barne & Cie and Jean Bresson & Cie-did go bankrupt, with very large deficits: the former owing over 360,000 and the latter over 650,000 Lt, but they were both woollen houses. The slight increase in the level of bankruptcies at the outbreak of the Revolution may also have resulted from certain internal modifications within the city's economy. The available indices suggest that the city's economy had reached something of a plateau in the late 1770's. The number of looms and stocking frames in Nîmes and its hinterland appears to have remained at the level of the late 1770's throughout the following decade, apart from periods in which shortages of silk reduced the number of implements used in production. This suggests that profits on commercial turnover were falling as the international market was becoming more integrated. The fact that many of the city's leading merchant families invested large sums in land during this period and tended to adopt a more passive role in relation to their commercial investments also implies that commerce was less profitable than it had been. The Fornier, who were ennobled in 1771, acquired the barronie of Ledenon in 1775, for 250,000 Lt; a member of the Vincens family was given 100,000 Lt to buy an estate when he married in 1785; Laurens Bresson acquired over 300,000 Lt worth of land after 1777; the representatives of the Devillas and the André appear to have run down their businesses at Nîmes.<sup>10</sup> This may have been no more than the traditional movement towards the nobility, so that appearances may be deceptive. It would be false to ascribe this situation to a recession - and it is noteworthy that all the sombre description of city's economy in the 1780's

were written after 1787 when the silk harvest failed - but it was one which restricted the amount of credit available to merchants and thus placed a greater pressure upon costs in manufacture.

The disengagement of the merchants like Fornier, André, Vincens and Devillas from much direct involvement in commerce in the decade or so before the Revolution occurred independently of a series of prohibitions affecting the hosiery trade. In 1778 the Spanish crown forbade all imports of silk hose to Spain and in 1785, completed the embargo by prohibiting the export of silk hose to its colonies. The prohibition was unanimously presented as a catastrophe by merchants in Nîmes and, although there is evidence of a continuing contraband traffic, it is clear that the volume of the trade passing through Cadiz fell sharply after 1778.<sup>11</sup> Between 1770 and 1778 silks accounted for between 22 and 35% of the total value of all the commodities imported by Simon and Arnail Fornier & Cie at Cadiz. Between 1778-9 and 1784-1785 the proportion fell to between 5 and 15%.<sup>12</sup> The degree to which the Spanish crown was able to enforce its prohibition is, however, problematic. The trade appears to have revived in the early 1780's. Writing in March 1784 the commercial house of Fabre-Lichaire reported that "les affaires sont chez nous comme ailleurs dans le calme. Nous n'avons que la fabrique des bas qui travaille."<sup>13</sup> In July he reported that the rise in the price of silks at the Beaucaire fair, "et la difficulté qu'il y a faire fabriquer rapport aux commissions qu'il y a dans notre ville pour les isles espagnoles," had determined him to withdraw temporarily from the hosiery trade.<sup>14</sup> Orders for the Spanish market were still



very high in February 1785. "Au lieu de prendre fin (les commissions) se sont augmentés jusques en octobre prochain, à un point que les façons ont fait plus que doubler de leurs anciens prix."<sup>15</sup> In July he was constrained to turn down offering work to two framework knitters from Le Puy:

"Il serait bien facile de trouver de places pour occuper vos deux messieurs s'il y avoit de metiers mais ils manquent totalement, et il y a des ouvriers sur le pavé faute de metiers; la bonneterie va au mieux et les façons se payent à des prix exorbitans."<sup>16</sup>

In October he was explaining the poor quality of a consignment of goods in terms of the untrained seamstresses the industry had been obliged to take on:

"La broderie des bas pour les commissions d'Espagne a occupé toute les ouvrières soit de la ville et des campagnes et les cardeurs de filoselle se sont trouvées sans felure et il a falu faire des aprantesses qu'ils n'ont pas traité."<sup>17</sup>

The hyperbolic denunciations of the embargo thus require some qualification. Writing in 1790, Vincens and Baumès recalled that at its height, before the prohibition, the hosiery industry occupied between 4 and 5,000 stocking frames, "ce qui suppose un travail d'environ cent mille douzaines de paires de bas."<sup>18</sup> Of this total, they estimated that between 16 and 20,000 dozen pairs were exported to Spain and the Spanish colonies, or some 20% of the total annual product. The loss of the Spanish market affected only a proportion of the city's total exports and sales to Northern Europe, Russia and Italy continued. The embargo brought the expansion of the hosiery industry to an end, so that it too settled at something of a plateau after the late 1770's. A poor harvest in 1782 and the calamitous récolte des cocons in 1787, when only 70,000 lbs of silk

were sold at the fair of Alès, magnified the immediate consequences of the loss of the Spanish market.<sup>19</sup> It is more probable that in the long term, the growing integration of the market and the rising volume of goods in circulation tended to reduce the level of profits upon turnover, and to encourage merchants to turn towards dealing on commission or to purchase land, which offered a similar rate of return for considerably less risk.

The few surviving accounts of successful commercial houses do suggest a declining level of profitability on annual turnover from the last years of the 1770's. In the winter of 1767, in the wake of the series of bankruptcies which brought down some of the largest commercial houses in Nîmes, an anonymous author estimated that profits in the trade in silk cloth were usually of the order of between 10 and 18% "relativement aux années, au prix des matières, aux demandes, aux variations survenant au prix des soyes, à l'habilité du fabricant à connaître les matières, à les acheter à propos, à choisir les époques convenables pour vendre les étofes..." Profits in the hosiery trade were said to run to between 12 and 25%, "les ventes faites dans l'étranger étaient plus lucratives que celles faites dans le royaume."<sup>20</sup> These estimates seem reasonable. The net profits upon annual turnover of the firm of Bedos, Jalaguier and Fabre-Lichaire, which dealt in silk fabrics over the decade between 1748 and 1759 averaged 9.4%. Gross profits on turnover ranged from between 11% in 1750-51 to 28% in the following year.<sup>21</sup>



<u>DATE</u>	<u>TURNOVER</u>	<u>GROSS PROFITS</u>		<u>NET PROFITS</u> (i.e. "Dépense de Commerce")	
		Lt		Lt	
Août					
1748-1749	66143	14508	21.9%	7899	11.9%
1749-1750	78075	12645	16.1%	5373	6.8%
1750-1751	63922	7080	11.0%	1984	3.1%
1751-1752	87090	24016	27.5%	13601	15.6%
1752-1753	105722	24233	22.9%	12783	12.1%
1753-1754	127383	29144	22.8%	14045	11.0%
1754-1755	183645	41695	22.7%	20898	11.4%
1755-1756	186699	34381	18.4%	14524	7.7%
1756-1757	217596	31767	14.5%	10573	4.9%
1757-1758)					
1758-1759)	447199	86633	19.3%	43006	9.6%

(After this a new société was formed).

The négociant Marc-Antoine Colomb, who specialised in the trade in silks and silk fabrics, selling mainly in Lyon and Paris, returned profits of between 1 and 18% on the account for his marchandises générales between 1759 and 1781, the year in which he abandoned the silk trade.<sup>22</sup>

<u>Year</u>	<u>M. A. Colomb</u> <u>Profits (Lt)</u>	<u>Grand-livre</u> <u>Turnover</u>	<u>% Profit</u>
1759-60	10,686	89,018	12
1760-61	7,408	53,390	14
1761-62	3,598	59,508	6
1762-63	15,923	88,552	18
1763-64	10,017	95,833	11
1764-65	14,773	109,735	14
1765-66	317	109,403	3.9
1766-67	13,852	133,272	10.4
1767-68	1,908	102,367	1.87
1768-69	6,636	122,094	5.2
1769-70	14,063	136,636	10.3
1770-71	1,938	86,607	2.2
1771-72	4,934	103,463	4.75
1772-73	16,763	124,197	13.4

<u>Year</u>	<u>Profits (Lt)</u>	<u>Turnover</u>	<u>% Profits</u>
1773-74	10,002	120,957	8.5
1774-75	3,840	97,458	2.55
1775-76	12,355	149,328	8.3
1776-77	5,286	107,234	4.9
1777-78	1,131	78,057	1.43
1778-79	2,629	117,089	2.25
1779-80	1,532	110,841	1.38
1780-81	3,895	68,716	5.7
1781-82	1,596	24,504	6.5

The figures reveal a tendency for profits in the silk cloth trade to decline from the mid-1770's, despite the continuing high level of the value of sales. It is not surprising therefore that Marc-Antoine Colomb chose to leave the trade in silk and turn to the traffic in bills of exchange and investment in ships sailing to the Spanish colonies from Cadiz.<sup>23</sup>

It is difficult to know how much can be deduced from these examples. If profits on annual turnover were relatively unspectacular, the ratio between initial capital and the annual level of turnover was very much higher. Credit, based upon family connections and personal recommendation, allowed a merchant to build up a large turnover upon a relatively small investment. Thus Marc-Antoine Colomb appears to have begun his commercial career with no more than 14,000 livres inherited from his father. This small investment was rapidly transformed into an annual turnover of over 100,000 livres mainly, one suspects, because of his association with his relatives by marriage, the Pieyre, a well established family which specialised in the wool trade and was related to many of the most powerful commercial dynasties in Nîmes. His first ventures



in the silk trade were made on a compte à demi basis with his brother-in-law, Jacques Pieyre.<sup>24</sup>

The firm of Jean Montaud & Cie, managed by Marc-Antoine Colomb's brother-in-law, offers an even more striking example of the value of personal connections. Until 1760, it was a medium-sized establishment, with an annual turnover of some 90 to 100,000 livres. It then became a société en commandite with a capital of 62,000 livres, of which 35,000 livres was provided by the négociant Francois Fornier, who with his five sons, was involved in a string of banking and commercial houses in Nimes, Paris, Marseille and Cadiz. Immediately, the new partnership's annual actif rose to 244,933 livres in 1760-1761, 254,387 livres in 1761-1762 and 303,271 livres in 1762-1763.<sup>25</sup>

This accumulation of credit would appear to have made large increases upon the initial investment possible. The fortunes of another commercial house, the partnership which traded under the name of Beaudecourt, Chabanel & Cie, offer a case in point. It was formed on July 1st 1770 with a capital of 25,000 livres, advanced in the proportions of 20, 40 and 40% by its three members - Louis Chabanel, Paul Chabanel and Antoine-Job Beaudecourt. When Beaudecourt died in June 1775, the share of the partnership's assets accruing to his estate was valued at 73,922 Lt 4s 9d, an increase partially accounted for by the stock and credit of a previous partnership, Beaudecourt & Cie, absorbed by Beaudecourt, Chabanel & Cie.<sup>26</sup> It was, nonetheless, a dramatic increase, and suggests that the rate of accumulation among successful firms may have been very high indeed. This was in part a result of the structure of commercial

organisation particular to the eighteenth century. It was one which permitted considerable flexibility and, at the same time, ensured that the worlds of commerce and manufacture were never isolated from other areas of social activity.



Chapter 10 - Appendix A

Recorded Bankruptcies in Nimes in the Eighteenth Century

1703	1	1774	5
1709	1	1775	3
1715	8	1776	8
1716	1	1777	
1717	2	1778	2
1718	1	1779	5
1724	1	1780	4
1725	6	1781	3
1726	2	1782	1
1727	1	1783	2
1728	2	1784	3
1729	2	1785	3
1730	1	1786	2
1732	6	1787	3
1733	4	1788	4
1734	3	1789	5
1735	1	1790	3
1736	2		
1737	6		
1739	4		
1740	1		
1742	1		
1745	2		
1746	1		
1749	1		
1751	7		
1752	11		
1753	2		
1754	1		
1755	1		
1756	3		
1757	2		
1758	4		
1759	6		
1760			
1761	1		
1762	1		
1763	3		
1764	1		
1765			
1766	5		
1767	5		
1768	4		
1769	4		
1770	3		
1771	3		
1772	1		
1773	1		

Source: A.D. Gard Serie B (unclassified)  
A.D. Herault. 8B 395-433.

Notes - Chapter 10

1. A.D. Rhône. Papiers des Commerçants. I. Mirabaud to Specht, Gonzebach & Cie, 31-5-1714.
2. A.D. Gard. Papers of the Hôtel-Dieu of Nîmes (unclassified) E 214, Reg. des Deliberations, 5-6-1750.
3. Id. Serie B. (unclassified) Livre de Copies de Lettres, D. Pastre to Palleuil & Gilly, Cahors, 25-8-1752.
4. Id. Livre de Copies de Lettres of Ourson freres, to B. Huber, Lyon, 5-6-1767.
5. See below pp. 203-4.
6. See Part III, ch. 17.
7. Cited by S. Chassagne, La Manufacture des Toiles imprimees de Tournemine les Angers (1752-1820). Paris, 1971, p.484.
8. Cf. R. Chamboredon "Une Maison de Commerce languedocienne ..." op.cit. which carries a full discussion of the crash of Gilly freres & Fornier freres of Cadiz in 1767.
9. A.D. Hérault. C 5619.
10. See above p. 167.
11. R. Chamboredon, op.cit.
12. Id. p.353.
13. A.D. Gard. 1E (unclassified) Livre de Copies de Lettres of F. Fabre-Lichaire to P. Fabre, 13-3-1784.
14. Id., to J. Barrau, Toulouse, 31-7-1784.
15. Id. to id., 21-2-1785.
16. Id. to Robert, Le Puy, 4-7-1785.
17. Id. to Veuve Pons, Perpignan, 11-10-1785.
18. J. C. Vincens & J-B, Baumès, Topographie loc.cit. p.107.
19. See below pp. 333-334.



20. B.M. Nîmes. Mss 66.
21. A.D. Gard. 1E (unclassified) Grand-Livre of Bedos, Jalaquier & Fabre-Lichaire.
22. Id. Fonds Colomb de Daunant, Grand-Livre of M-A, Colomb.
23. L. Dermigny, Cargaisons Indiennes op.cit. p.170.
24. A.D. Gard. Fonds Colomb de Daunant, Grand Livre of M.A. Colomb.
25. A.D. Gard. FFC, papers of J. Montaud & Cie.
26. Id. 2E<sup>36</sup> 925, 9-6-1775.

Chapter 11 Credit, the Organisation of Work and the  
Structure of Connection



Throughout the century, the rhythms of production in the textile industry were determined by the fluctuations of commerce. The mechanisms of the société en commandite, the less formal intermeshing of capital through marriage alliance and loans, and the speculative eclecticism of eighteenth century commerce all combined to produce a considerable concentration of command over labour. In 1787, the three largest partnerships specialising in silk hose at Nîmes - Louis Maigre & Cie, frères Chabanel & Cie and Marc-Antoine Ribot & Cie - were reported to have provided work for up to 200 stocking frames each when the industry was producing normally.<sup>1</sup> The largest ten commercial houses were said to provide work for almost half of the total number of stocking frames in Nîmes.<sup>2</sup>

The major social division in the city was not therefore to be found between maître-fabricants en bas or fabricants en étoffes de soie and their apprentices and day-labourers, but between the small group of large commercial houses and négociants en gros controlling them and the very much larger body of merchants and manufacturers whose livelihoods fell within their sphere of influence. The situation was complicated by the fact that many of the wealthiest négociants were Protestants. In 1752 a stocking manufacturer's wife complained that,

"il y a 8 ou 9 marchands (de bas) très riches et qui ont un commerce assez étendue, tous protestants ... Le peu de catholiques qui peuvent le leur disputer en commerce et en fabrique sont ceux qui souffrent le plus de l'observance (des) réglemens de leur part et de l'inobservance de la part des gros marchands. La façon d'agir de ceux-ci à leur égard leur fait quasi-penser qu'ils sont seuls l'objet de la loi. Tous les autres petits fabricants qui sont le plus grand nombre et qui dépendent des gros parce qu'ils les font travailler et achètent leur marchandise se contentent de se plaindre en particulier."<sup>3</sup>

She identified the eight as "les Srs Jaussaud ... qui exerce un empire tyrannique (sur le corps), les deux MM Chabanel, les Srs Bousquet, Aillaud, Castanet, Maigre, Larnac et Montel." An idea of the size of these establishments may be gathered from the bilan of the négociant Marc-Antoine Jaussaud, who went bankrupt in 1759 with debts of 209,610 Lt 6s 2d and assets worth 148,530 Lt 12s 6d, a collapse repeated in 1767, one of the most disastrous years for commerce in Nîmes.<sup>4</sup>

The wealth of some of the families involved in these commercial partnerships suggests something of the magnitude of their affairs. In 1785 the former négociant David Maigre handed over a fortune of some 336,000 livres to his three sons, David, Andre and Louis. A seigneurial demesne - the domaine de Campuget lying in the taillables of Redessan, Manduel and Bellegarde, - was worth 170,000 livres.<sup>5</sup> This fortune was accumulated through the firm of Maigre freres - the predecessor of Louis Maigre & Cie - a partnership between the brothers David and André Maigre formed towards the middle of the century. André Maigre's fortune was of similar dimensions. In 1785 he endowed his daughter with the sum of 100,000 livres when she married Jacques Vincens Saint-Laurent.<sup>6</sup>

The négociant Jean Chabanel left a fortune of over 400,000 livres when he died in 1775, including a demesne in the terroir of Uchaud valued at 60,000 livres.<sup>7</sup> This fortune had also been accumulated in the commerce in silk stockings, and the firms of Chabanel and Bousquet and Jean Chabanel aîné & Cie. Other dynasties, and particularly those associated mainly with the trade in silk and



and silk cloth - the André, Devillas, Bresson, Lacoste, Pourrat and Valz - could look to fortunes of between 500,000 and 1,000,000 livres by the 1780's.<sup>8</sup>

The gulf between fortunes of this size and that of a small marchand fabricant en bas, giving work to perhaps ten or two dozen frames, was substantial. The large commercial house, with its network of correspondents, its access to regular information and sensitivity to changes of fashion, its great resources and stocks of unsold materials, and its ability to offer and receive the relatively long terms of credit that were customary in commercial exchange, was alone able to command substantial quantities of labour-power and take advantage of the fluctuations of a commerce which remained essentially speculative and, as Pierre Vilar has put it, "gambled on the exchanges between scarce products."<sup>9</sup> The tensions surrounding credit, commercial speculation and the social dependence which it implied, was the result of this power and the obstacles to capital accumulation which it imposed.

While the fluctuations of the economy are easily measured by the trail of bankruptcies which they left in their wake, it is more difficult to measure the wider effects of recessions upon the many thousands of individuals dependent upon manufacture for their livelihoods. It would seem that most of the smaller bankruptcies in the city coincided with rises in the price of corn, even if the relationship between the two was not direct. Failures of the silk harvest - as in 1749-1750 - resulted in widespread unemployment and dramatic increases in the number of men, women and children dependent

upon charity, but the relative severity of each crisis was also determined by other variables. The place of money and kind in wages, the mode and regularity of payment, the seasonal rhythms of employment and the relationship between family size, time spent at work and the costs of subsistence, all determined the degree to which the working population was able to escape the impact of crises. The important part played by female labour - as reelers, turners, sorters and carders in the preparation of silk, and as seamstresses and embroiderers in the hosiery industry - adds a further variable to an already complicated situation.

Labour in the silk industry was usually paid by the piece. Ostensibly the relationship between a merchant and a fabricant was more of a commercial relationship than one of employer and worker. In the hosiery industry payment was by the pair of stockings produced, at a rate which varied according to demand. In 1767, for example, it was said that,

"lorsque le départ de la dernière flotte espagnole pour les Indes fut fixé, Nîmes reçut de Cadix des commissions immenses. Les fabriquants en bas se hâtèrent de les remplir. Ils étaient si empressés qu'ils payaient trois livres de façon de chaque paire bas que l'ouvrier est aujourd'hui charmé de faire à vingt sols."<sup>10</sup>

Payments were related to the type of article produced, and the nature of the material used. The intricate division of labour involved in the production of different types of silks resulted in a complicated hierarchy of systems of payment ranging from the seasonal sums given to the women and children who sorted and turned cocoons into silk in the late summer and early autumn, to the more regular sums paid to weavers and framework knitters upon receipt of the finished article. For these artisans, payment was tied to the rhythms of work. A large



commercial house, like Bousquet & Cie in the 1730's, which gave out work to 26 framework knitters in 1735, distributed carefully weighed amounts of silk to its workers at intervals of between one and three weeks and collected the stockings at the same irregular intervals. Each framework knitter received his raw material and returned his finished articles on a different day from that of the other 25 fabricants. Each artisan was subject to individual control. There was no means that the firm had at its disposal to plan the collective work of the 26 artisans it employed. That sort of control was only technically possible with the factory. In the nine months from September 1735 to the beginning of June 1736 each framework knitter dealt with the commercial house on sixteen occasions. Income was therefore irregular, varying in amount according to the nature and quantity of the article produced. Bousquet & Cie paid their framework knitters 13s for a pair of men's stockings, 10s for women's and 9s for children's. The stockings were weighed when they were returned, as a precaution against theft.<sup>11</sup> Payment by the pair was not the only source of a fabricant's income. The partnership of Pastre freres bought their silk hose from a fabricant named Louis Lafont of Saint-Jean-du-Gard who, in addition to the price of the stockings, was paid a commission of one livre on the profit of each pair sold.<sup>12</sup>

Whatever the forms of payment, it is clear that it was irregular and may frequently have been spread over relatively long periods of time. This was particularly true in the early stages of the production of silk, where women and children were most widely employed on a seasonal basis. Payment for winding, reeling and sorting was usually deferred until late August or September when the saison des vers a soie was drawing to its end, and those women in need of money before then were advanced small sums against wages of some 20s a day.<sup>13</sup>

Even in the specifically manufacturing sector of the economy, the frequency of payment was also determined as much by the relative success of the négociant in selling the final product, as by the rhythms of production. Thus Pastre frères of Nîmes were still, in 1788, paying for silk stockings produced over ten years previously by their fabricant at Saint-Jean-du-Gard.<sup>14</sup> Although this may be an extreme case, it was a logical result of the large area in the relationship between the commercial and manufacturing ends of the silk industry occupied by credit.

The function of credit in the relationship between commercial houses and artisan producers requires some discussion. Analogies with the truck-system of industrial England are tempting, but erroneous. The weavers and framework knitters of eighteenth century Nîmes were not wage labourers receiving a regular daily or weekly income. The wage as a mediator between the producer and social wealth did not exist as such. Artisans were paid by the piece, and disciplined by direct surveillance exercised by commercial houses over raw materials. Silk was a valuable material and the theft of silk was a permanent worry among the city's merchants. In December 1750 an inspection of the fabrique belonging to the firm of Molinesfrères produced a riot when the weavers there were accused of producing silk cloth of an inferior size and appropriating the difference.<sup>15</sup> In 1758 the regional inspector of manufacture proposed installing a silk mill similar but less sophisticated than that developed by Vaucanson, in the hospital at Alès. The mill would ensure a more rigorous control of the hospital's workforce



And thus eliminate theft:

"Combien n'y a t-il pas d'enfans et de familles misérables adonnées à la fainéantise. Mais les directeurs m'assurent qu'ils ne se hazardent guère à leur distribuer de la soye attendu la difficulté qu'il y auroit à surveiller cette multitude et la crainte où ils sont qu'on ne volât la matière."<sup>16</sup>

In 1783 it was reported that there were 186 silk looms worked by "une classe d'ouvriers sans maîtrise".

"La plupart d'eux sont soupçonnés de favoriser le piquage d'once, qui désole la fabrique de Nîmes. le délit est si fréquent ici qu'il ne se passe presque point de semaines que les employés des fermes sur la route d'Avignon n'arrêtent des soyes volées à Nîmes que l'on porte à Avignon, et des soyes volées à Avignon que l'on apporte vendre à Nîmes."<sup>17</sup>

A memorandum on the theft of silk from 1782 by a merchant named Nuty stated that in the 1750's and 1760's, an annual quantity of 360 quintaux, or 36,000 lbs of silk, was stolen, enough to give work to 360 looms. Improved surveillance had reduced the number of looms using stolen silk to about 80, Nuty claimed. He proposed, in typically utopian fashion, to prohibit all artisans from working for themselves if they were working upon material distributed by a commercial house.<sup>18</sup>

In eighteenth century Nîmes, however, neither the wage in its modern form, nor its physical counterpart, the factory, existed. It was materially impossible to prevent weavers or framework knitters from working for themselves. The organisation of co-operation between commercial houses and artisans depended upon forms of power which necessarily differed from those surrounding the wage relationship. Of these, the surveillance and control of the

work of each artisan was primordial. If the clock represents the essence of the modern labour process, then the scales represented the essence of the labour process of the age of manufacture. From the moment at which cocoons were collected every year from the specially warmed chambers in which silk worms were set to work, until stockings or silk cloth were handed over to the commis of a commercial house, quantities of raw, semi-finished and finished materials were weighed, re-weighed and weighed again. The efficiency of work was less a matter of the regulation of productive time, than it was a matter of imposing or organising the free circulation of undiminished quantities of physical things through the entire spectrum of activities covered by the technical division of labour. Abstract labour in the marxist, rather than the ricardian, sense did not, and could not, exist in the eighteenth century. Productive time, the imposition of socially-necessary labour-time in the form of a rationally planned working day, was materially impossible. Only the factory was able to impose this form of abstract labour upon the working population. The regulation of work in eighteenth century Nîmes involved the measurement of quantities of things, rather than the ratio between the amount of things produced and a given quantity of time. Collective surveillance of large numbers of workers was impossible so that each worker's work was measured in individual terms, in terms of the quantity of raw materials given out and the quantity of finished goods returned. In Nîmes this meant that labour itself remained concrete labour, socialised and abstracted only through the market. Vincens and Baumès Topographie reflected this fact. Its rationality belonged to the rationality of political arithmetic, with its emphasis upon the distribution of things among a given population, whereas the rationality of the political economy



of the factory age emphasised the distribution of time between productive and unproductive work.

The permanent possibility of weavers and framework knitters "working for themselves" upon stolen silk - a possibility only eliminated by the power-loom and the powered knitting frame, was a permanent obstacle to the degree of command which the large commercial houses were able to exercise over labour. Irregular rhythms of work and irregular payment of wages were the structural consequences of this material fact. The absence of any form of generalised surveillance of productivity - the factory - meant that the relationship between capitalist and worker was personal, intimate and individual, measured less by the quantity of time spent working, than by amounts of materials given out and received. This fact necessarily left a space within the normal transactions of the working population which was filled by credit. Irregularity of income, arising from the overriding need to inspect the finished product before the payment of wages meant that most weavers and framework knitters were dependent upon forms of income arising from family alliance, ties of friendship and private transactions as well as those derived from productive work.

Only a very small proportion of transactions involving credit have left any trace. The notarial registers of Nîmes for the year 1784 contain 198 formal recognisances of debts, a tiny amount for a town with an adult population of nearly 20,000.<sup>19</sup> Such as they are, they form a representative sample of the population dependent upon credit for part of its income. The largest number

(79) of recognisances were made by men described as travailleurs de terre, jardiniers, ménagers and laboureurs whose debts were usually the result of purchases of mules or small plots of land and the credit relationship binding the countryside to the town. The majority of the remainder (41) were entered into by textile workers, arising from arrears of rent, acquisitions of stocking frames or looms, illness and the provision of drugs or the payment of apprenticeship fees. Unexpected expenditure or recourse to money brought a range of informal ties into play which resulted in the development of extended chains of dependence of debtors upon creditors.

The consequences of this undergrowth of credit surrounding the wage were laid bare when orders fell, prices rose and thousands were temporarily put out of work. In the summer of 1787, as the full dimensions of the failure of the récolte des cocons became clear, the authorities at Versailles were informed that "les négociants et fabricans vont être obligés de renvoyer moitié de leurs ouvriers et de mettre à bas une partie de leurs métiers."<sup>20</sup> In July, there were seditious assemblies of weavers and framework knitters in Nimes. "Messieurs, si vous ne rendez pas justice nous la rendrons nous même," warned an anonymous letter sent to the city's mayor demanding that he write a letter to the royal authorities about the situation.

"Si vous ne faites pas expedier la lettre tout de suite nous savons comme nous y prendront. Car le premier metier qu'il se tombera après la lettre vue nous agirons en consequence. Aussi nous voulons bien vous dire que la premiere saisi ou assignation faite aux taffetassiers nous feron voir de sa maniere dont nous savons nous arranger."<sup>21</sup>

Poverty and indebtedness were here clearly inter-related.



Any thorough examination of the development of the silk industry and its relation to royalism must, in the last analysis return to this supple and ubiquitous relationship between creditor and debtor. If, as one historian has put it, progress in the eighteenth century can be defined as "un passage de la misère physiologique à la pauvreté sociale,"<sup>22</sup> the origins of this process must be sought in the extension of the market and the interplay, over time, between credit, indebtedness and the technical composition of production in the eighteenth century.

The resultant situation was one in which the worlds of work and private association could merge very easily. The emphasis upon individual producers' work meant that the relationship between workers and capitalists was structured in a much more complex way than it became after the appearance of the factory. Many weavers and framework knitters would also be indebted to those who gave them silk to work upon. It was also not unusual for representatives of the city's leading merchant dynasties - the Fornier, the Andre, the Vincens, the Devillas - to be present when one of their regular weavers' or framework knitters' daughters was married. The presence of their elegant signatures on the marriage contracts of artisans is not infrequent. Such manifestations of paternalism were particular to those involved with manufacture. Nobles, or the magistrates at the Présidial, did not behave in this way.<sup>23</sup> The boundaries between one sphere of activity and another in productive relations were indistinct. The world of manufacture was not an autonomous sphere because the nature of the labour process made this impossible. It is this which explains the apparent paradox of the massive distance

between the wealth of merchants and the poverty of silk weavers and framework knitters on the one hand, and the peculiar intimacy with which they co-existed on the other. "Connection" in the eighteenth century was the product of the technical composition of eighteenth century capital and the forms of power - the need to regulate the permanent possibility of 'independence' through "crime", which it allowed.

Viewed in this light, repeated accusations that Protestant merchants selected the artisans to whom they gave work on religious grounds become more intelligible.<sup>24</sup> The organisation of co-operation along the lines of religious affiliation was not the residue of a previously intolerant age, but a form of organisation of co-operation particular to manufacture. What appeared to the author of the royalist pamphlet, Charles Sincère à Pierre Bomain to be a conspiracy designed to deprive the Catholic population of its livelihood, was a logical product of a need to organise co-operation around the two principles of the surveillance of individual work and the assessment of individual character.

The world of "moral idiom" described by Pierre Froment was not a figment of a frustrated parvenu's imagination. "Connection" reached into the core of the organisation of work in the eighteenth century. It lies behind the perdurable myth of the apprentice who married his master's daughter. "Connection" bridged the worlds of production and exchange, of manufacture and commerce, and linked the activities of artisans in Nîmes to the rhythms of the world economy. The events that took place in Nîmes in the summer of 1790



were the product of a crisis of this particular form of power. They occurred because it became possible for a large number of individuals to equate connection with a conspiracy. But for the structure of connection, it is impossible to understand the social heterogeneity of those involved in the events of that dramatic moment. It is necessary therefore to pursue this theme a little further, and examine the extended network identified in 1790 as a "conspiracy".

Notes - Chapter 11

1. A.D. Hérault C2296.
2. Id.
3. Id. C2645.
4. A.D. Gard Serie B (provisionally classed 228), 2-12-1759, and above, p.181.
5. Id. 2C 358 14-10-1785.
6. Id. 2C 357 1-9-1785.
7. Id. 2C 322 12-7-1775; 2C 328 22-3-1777, 2C 329 9-6-1777.
8. See above p.89-92.
9. P. Vilar, "Problems of the Formation of Capitalism". P & P 10, 1956.
10. B.N. Nîmes. Mss 66.
11. A.D. Gard. Serie B (unclassified) Livre des Ouvriers en Bas, Pierre Bousquet & Cie, 1734-6.
12. A.N. AB XIX 1235.
13. See below p.260.
14. A.N. AB XIX 1235.
15. A.D. Hérault. C1309.
16. A.D. Hérault. C8241, Rocher to de Joubert, 21-2-1758.
17. Id. C5620, Lancel to Ballanvilliers, 18-5-1783.
18. Id. C5624.
19. These recognisances (obligations) were made to safeguard the interests of creditors, and the decision to make a formal legal agreement was only taken in extremis. Most petty credit went unrecorded. "Since handicraft skill is the foundation of manufacture, and since the mechanism of manufacture as a whole possesses no framework, apart from the labourers themselves, capital is constantly compelled to wrestle with the insubordination of the workmen." (Karl Marx, Capital, I, xiv). On the use of credit as a



form of regulating the labour-market among artisans, see S. Bologna, "Moneta e crisi: Marx corrispondente della" New York Daily Tribune, 1856-7," in S. Bologna et.al. Crisi e Organizzazione Operaia, Milan, 1974 p.29. See also R. Bendix Work and Authority in Industry. California edn. 1974 Ch.2.

20. A.D. Gard C1788.
21. A.N. H1023.
22. The expression is L. Dermigny's, in Histoire du Languedoc, Toulouse, 1967. p.934.
23. This is clear from the marriage contracts agreed between 1785 and 1789.
24. See above p. 194 and the pamphlet Charles Sincere à Pierre Romain, 1790. B.N. Ld<sup>176</sup> 738.

Chapter 12 The Protestant Community of Nîmes and the  
Social Geography of the European Enlightenment



It has already been argued that there is a danger of myopia in regional studies of eighteenth century France. If the history of a town, or a region, in the reign of Louis XV or XVI fell to a great extent within relatively narrow spacial confines, there were also areas of activity which extended well beyond the limitations of a particular place, and which exercised a profound influence upon local forms of social organisation and activity. Since the publication of Herbert Lüthy's great study of La Banque Protestante the international dimensions of the Protestant diaspora needs no emphasis.<sup>1</sup> Above a certain level of wealth, it was normal for a commercial family to have access to a range of connections virtually co-extensive with the geography of international trade. Charles Carrière has shown that this sort of multinationalism was not something peculiar to Protestantism. Dynasties of catholic merchant-bankers, - natives of Bayonne or Saint-Malo - filled the same immense geographical areas covered by the Necker, the Thellusson and their legion of kindred.<sup>2</sup> In the case of Nîmes, the scale of its commerce, together with the confessional affiliations of the majority of its most successful merchants, combined to ensure that the epithet "provincial" is something of a misnomer when applied to these families. The geography of the Refuge was, as Louis Dermigny has argued, shaped as much by the geography of eighteenth century commerce, as by the relative ease with which it was possible for religious exiles to settle in different European centres.<sup>3</sup> The major figures of

the revolutionary crisis of 1789 - Rabaut Saint-Etienne, Boissy d'Anglas, Jean-Marie-Antoine Griolet - were associated with the Protestant community, but more importantly inhabited a structure of association and acquaintance of national, if not international, dimensions. Their social world was that of the European Enlightenment. The immense cultural space which they inhabited was the product of the social order which had come into being in Nîmes during the eighteenth century.

On March 31st 1787, Louis-Pierre-Amédée de Boissière, écuyer, lieutenant en premier au régiment de Strasbourg, the son of Pierre de Boissière, écuyer, conseiller du Roy, trésorier de France général des finances de Bretagne, and Dame Emilie Guillemot de Beaulieu, of Champigny near Paris, was formally betrothed to Hélène-Marie-Théodore Daure, the daughter of noble Antoine Daure and dame Adelaide-Hélène-Jeanne Wilkinghoff, of the rue Saint-Marc in Paris. The future groom was given the sum of 120,000 livres by his parents; his bride brought a further 60,000 livres as her dowry. Present when the contract was drawn up were a M. Pierre Francois de Moisy, auditeur des comptes, who was married to Emilie-Marie-Anne-de Boissière, the groom's sister; Jean de Boissière, bourgeois de Paris, one of the groom's cousins; M. Benoit Joseph de Tarlé, chevalier de Saint-Louis, commissaire ordonnateur des guerres, cy-devant Intendant de l'Armée du Roy dans l'Amérique septentrionale, who was married to Jeanne-Antoinette Daure, the future bride's sister; and the Protestant pastor Jean-Paul Rabaut de Saint-Etienne, whose wife, Elizabeth de Boissiere, was one of



the future groom's cousins.<sup>4</sup>

The association is not altogether surprising. In one sense, Rabaut Saint-Etienne was heir to the vast range of connections which lay behind the community over whose souls he had care. The Boissière were natives of the village of Durfort, on the South-Eastern edge of the Cévennes, where Rabaut Saint-Etienne's wife was born.<sup>5</sup> By the middle of the eighteenth century, the family was represented in Paris by the négociant Jean Boissière, whose wife, Elizabeth Boissière (probably a cousin), subsequently remarried the nîmois Pierre de Lezan, an infantry captain in the regiment d'Hainaut.<sup>6</sup> Their son, another Jean Boissière, lived in Paris, also as a négociant, on the rue Mauconseil, in the heart of the quartier commerçant on the fringe of the Marais. A second son, Jean-Louis, settled at Marseille, where he was executed during the year II; while a third son, or cousin, Pierre Boissière, returned to Nîmes. One of their daughters was married to a Devillas in 1773.<sup>7</sup> The branch of the family which married into the Daure may have rejoined the Catholic church.

The Boissière could look to a fortune which could be counted in hundreds of thousands of livres, and it would seem that, by the end of the American War, they were securely entrenched within the royal bureaucracy, and particularly within the still largely unexplored world of the fournisseurs aux armées royales of the late eighteenth century. This was certainly the world of the Tarlé, and of the Daure. Antoine Daure was involved with the régissérie générale des vivres from the early 1760's at the latest. An

17.

inventory of his papers made after his death in 1803, mentions accounts established between January 1762 and May 1763 arising from his post as chargé des travaux des vivres at Wezel in Bavaria. In 1779 he seems to have been based at Le Havre, and from 1780 to 1783, he controlled the supplies to the army commanded by the comte de Rochambeau in North America, in which his son-in-law, Benoit-Joseph de Tarlé held the post of Intendant. At the same time, he had an interest in the grain trade with Paris, and leased two mills near Saint-Denis under the prête-nom of David.<sup>8</sup> In 1791, his third daughter, Jacqueline-Pauline-Helene, was married to an agent de change of the rue Neuve des Capucins, Louis-Francois Passy, who had formerly been a commis in the recette générale des finances in the généralité of Soissons.<sup>9</sup> Passy was to become a receveur particulier of the department of the Dyle at Brussels during the Empire. His brother-in-law, Louis-Pierre-Amadée Boissière, held the same office in the adjoining department of the Lys.<sup>10</sup>

The Boissière, and their relatives, thus formed a powerful and well-established dynasty which effected the protracted transition from Monarchy to Empire with discreet proficiency. Their interlocking connections within the tripartate structure of the royal bureaucracy, the financial administration of the provinces and, particularly, the régisserie des vivres of the French army in North America, suggest much of the background to the meeting between Lafayette and Rabaut Saint-Etienne at Nimes in the summer of 1785, which preceded the Edict of Toleration of 1787.<sup>11</sup>



There were, however, other connections which brought Rabaut Saint-Etienne to Paris and into such exalted circles. Inevitably, they passed through the Swiss cantons, and in particular, through Lausanne,

From 1733 until 1763, Lausanne was the unofficial headquarters of the French Reformed Church. Antoine Court, a native of Villeneuve de Berg and the man responsible for much of the reorganisation of the Protestant church after the guerre des Camisards, moved to Lausanne from Geneva in 1733. Over the following decades, he, and his son, Antoine Court de Gebelin (1719-1784), pieced together a semi-clandestine network of correspondents which stretched all over Protestant Europe.<sup>12</sup> Their letters covered everything which concerned the Protestant communities in France. Ultimately, any item of news reached Lausanne, and was then incorporated in a long dispatch to Bordeaux, Rouen, Nîmes or Montauban: the death of a galarien, the arrest of a woman near Toulouse, on suspicion of marrying au désert, projects for a Gazette Protestante, plans for a mass emigration of French Protestants to Canada, or to Ireland, news of a prisoner in the Tour de Constance, news from P at Nîmes, or G near Rouen, or A at Montauban, or any other of the un-named pastors living illegally in France, all found their way into the correspondence. It was a network which reached the highest places: the Franco-Genevan banking world of Paris, via the Dutch and the British embassies, the Dutch court, via the French refugees in Holland, and the English court, via the pastor of the French Reformed Church at Bristol,

Pierre Gautier (né Pierre Boudet at Nîmes in 1725), who was closely connected with Jean-Jacques Majendie, pastor of the Congrégation de Savoie in London, and the tutor of the Prince of Wales and his brother.<sup>13</sup>

Shortly after his father's death in 1763, Court de Gebelin left Lausanne to settle in Paris. His Lettres Toulousaines on the Calas affair had alarmed Voltaire and annoyed the authorities in Lausanne and Geneva by the force of their criticisms of the Parlement of Toulouse. He left Lausanne complaining "qu'il était traité non comme un être libre, mais en esclave."<sup>14</sup>

In Paris, he assumed the position of the semi-official representative of the French Reformed Church to Versailles, a post which he combined with the non-resident chaplaincy of the Van Robbais' private temple at Abbeville. His daughter's marriage to a Solier - whose commercial house, Cayla Solier Cabanes & Jugla, was one of the largest in Cadiz - is indicative of the circles in which he moved.<sup>15</sup> His closest acquaintances - de la Broue, the chaplain of the Dutch embassy, M. de la Poterie, the lawyer Elie de Baumont and the nîmois bankers Teissier & Volpelière, "où il est comme l'enfant de la maison" - were wealthy and powerful men, typical of the cosmopolitan world of the right bank of the Seine. The lists of subscribers to his vast study of Le Monde Primitif ... Dictionnaire etymologique de la Langue française, includes five Van Robbais, Rabaut père et fils, a Volpelière at Marseille, an André, a Rivet, two Vincens, a Tarteiron, an Eymard and the pastors Simon Lombard at Uzès and Jacques Ollivier-Desmonts at Bordeaux.<sup>16</sup>



As one would expect, he was also a mason, and was an early member of the fashionable loge des Neufs Soeurs. "On ne vous a pas trompé," he informed his compatriote Tavernol de Barrès, the lieutenant-criminel of the senechaussee of Villeneuve-de-Berg, "l'Acacia m'est connu."

"J'ai été dans un temps secrétaire d'une .. qui a été bien brillante: celle des IX Soeurs. Elle étoit alors dans toute sa gloire, et c'est moi qui vins à bout de la faire retablir, lorsque nous eumes été cassés comme on casse un verre par le G.(rand) O(rient) et par ordre du Gouvernement ... Si je n'étois associé libre des Amis Reunis composée de toute la haute finance et de nombre de presidents et conseillers de la Chambre des comptes etc. .. je ne tiendrois plus à la lumière. A la tête de celle-ci est mon excellent ami M. de Langes, garde du trésor royal, lié avec les FF les plus distingués de l'Europe entier."<sup>17</sup>

His Musée, established in Paris in 1781 was an extension of the same milieu, and like many of his acquaintances, he became an enthusiastic Mesmerist.<sup>18</sup> It was a world whose power is thrown into relief only when set against the world of a prosperous notable in the Uzège or the Vivarais.

Rabaut Saint-Etienne and his two brothers, Jacques-Antoine (Rabaut-Pommier) and Pierre-Antoine (Rabaut-Dupuy), were sent to Lausanne in 1752, in the wake of a wave of arrests of Protestants in Nîmes and the Cévennes.<sup>19</sup> "Nous avons (ici) trois jeunes rejettons, fils de Prophètes, qu'on a envoyé pour mettre à couvert de l'orage et pour recevoir de l'éducation," Court de Gebelin informed Gautier.<sup>20</sup> Their father, Paul Rabaut, the pastor of the French Reformed Church at Nîmes from 1738 to 1785, was the son of a marchand drapier from Bédarieux in the heart of the Languedoc laineux. His immediate relatives in Nîmes during the 1730's and 1740's - the Geidan, the Bechard, and the Alison - shared a

similar background, as fabricants de bas or small merchants, clustered along the narrow rue de la Carreti re, to the west of the more prosperous quartier des Ar nes. Inevitably, however, the position of a pastor offered access to more substantial circles, and by the time of his eldest son's marriage to Elizabeth Boissiere, he had reached a position of equality with the wealthiest representatives of the city's elite. His youngest sons' marriages were equally well chosen. Rabaut-Dupuy, a n gociant at Nimes, married a distant relative of the fermier-g n ral Randon de Boisset, who were natives of Anduze, while Rabaut-Pomier, who became pastor of the Protestant church at Montpellier, married Elizabeth Cabrol, whose dowry of 46,000 livres was made up mainly of donations from her relatives, the Bousquet.<sup>21</sup> In the year IV, Rabaut-Pommier stated that his father had left goods worth 10,000 livres at his death, and that Rabaut Saint-Etienne had left property worth a similar sum. He also stated that "par suite de la confiscation des biens dont notre fr re Saint-Etienne  toit heritier, nous avons perdu les r coltes en vin et huile de 1794 dont nous aurions pu retirer soixante mille livres."<sup>22</sup> By the late eighteenth century, therefore, the social world of the official hierarchy of the Protestant community was indistinguishable from that of its commercial elite. The career, and alliances, of the pastor Jacques Ollivier-Desmonts, who returned from Bordeaux to Nimes during the Empire, reveals an identical milieu.<sup>23</sup>

Rabaut Saint-Etienne was a corresponding member of Court de Gebelin's Musee de Paris, the association of "savans, po tes, litt rateurs, architectes, musiciens, th oriciens, musiciens, praticiens, sculpteurs, graveurs, peintres, tous distingu s dans leur art," which Court had founded in 1781.<sup>24</sup> He was also, like Court,



a Mesmerist.<sup>25</sup> In 1784, when Court died, Rabaut published a memorial article in his honour.<sup>26</sup> Both men appear to have had fairly close connections with the English Dissenters. Court was offered a post in the famous Warrington Academy in 1772, and was a correspondent of the radical Earl Stanhope, who was later to correspond with Boissy d'Anglas.<sup>27</sup> A further link with these circles was provided by the nîmois lawyer, Jean-Scipion Sabonadière, who settled in London after his expulsion from Nîmes in 1774, and, after a period in the United States during the War of Independence, taught at Dr. Richard Price's 'University' at Hackney.<sup>28</sup> His sister, Louise-Julie, was married at Nîmes, in 1781, to a certain John Wilson Esq., a native of Saint Christopher.<sup>29</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, to find Rabaut receiving a long report on the Priestley riots from a correspondent in Birmingham in 1790.<sup>30</sup>

Three other figures completed the chain of associations which brought the élite of the Reformed Church at Nîmes into the powerful and cosmopolitan world of the Parisian Enlightenment. The first was Jacques Vincens de Saint-Laurent, the lieutenant in the regiment de Barrois at the age of twenty, whose connections with the haute banque protestante of Paris through the commercial house Vincens & Cie, require no amplification.<sup>31</sup> He and Rabaut Saint-Etienne were close friends (Rabaut is usually nicknamed Le Savant in Vincens' correspondence<sup>32</sup>) and inhabited the same quartier du Saint Laurent near the Roman fountain in Nîmes. The Vincens, together with the Valz, were members of a somewhat obscure Société de l'Etoile, which Paul Rabaut had created in 1749, in

response to a request from Court de Gebelin. The society seems to have been an early masonic lodge, which corresponded with several sister lodges scattered along the internal diaspora between Paris and Nîmes. Its members were known as chevaliers de l'étoile (Paul Rabaut was the chevalier Théophile) and were controlled by a hierarchy of 'Phrouros', 'Céphales' and 'Siéclos'.<sup>33</sup> Vincens Saint-Laurent was very much a product of this fashionable, mildly deistic and distinctly un-provincial milieu.

The second figure has acquired a greater notoriety.

"J'ai du saisir cette occasion de faire connaître l'un des chefs de ce nouveau jacobinisme," announced one of his enemies in the year V,

"qui, batant d'une aile, se traîne après les événements de la révolution, sans pouvoir jamais ni les atteindre ni les comprendre ... qui disparaissent pendant les orages, reviennent avec le calme ... qui ont souvent marché en sens envers de la révolution et qui ont été tout ébahis qu'on le trouvait mauvais, qui ne savent ni provoquer ni créer des constitutions, mais qui prétendent les expliquer et les soutenir-mieux que personne quand elles sont faites."<sup>34</sup>

An anonymous letter written at the same time is even more vehement:

"Monsieur le protecteur de la maison autrichienne, il y a une mauvaise comédie intitulée Jean qui pleure et Jean qui rit, il y a aussi un proverbe qui dit rira bien qui rira le dernier. Si tu buvais chopine à côté ou avec les détronateurs du roi et les preneurs de la Bastille, tu entendrais dire que ce ne sera pas toi. J'ai bu du vin d'une gageure qui a été faite, qu'on promènerait la tête dans les rues de Paris au bout d'une pique comme on promène celle d'une bête fauve à la campagne quand elle a détruit un troupeau ... Vous êtes écrit sur les tablettes du peuple. Si Cartouche vivait encore il jetterait la faute de son brigandage sur Robespierre comme vous faites sur le bon peuple de Paris. Adieu



fripont et souvenez vous de ce je vous dit."<sup>35</sup>  
 This, of course, was Boissy d'Anglas, the Boissy-Famine of  
 Prairial of the year III, who lived in Nîmes for ten years between  
 1776 and 1786, in the same house as Rabaut Saint-Etienne. "Je l'ai  
 vu et entretenu tous les jours pendant cette portion de ma vie,"  
 he recalled many years later. "Il ne s'en est pas écoulé un seul  
 qui n'ait ajouté quelque chose à mon estime et à mon amitié  
 pour lui."<sup>36</sup>

The network of connections which brought Francois-Antoine  
 Boissy d'Anglas into the inner circles of the haute societe protestante  
 of Nimes was entirely congruent with the circuits of commercial  
 exchange which radiated outwards from the city. Both physically,  
 with its narrow, undulating streets running between high, blackened  
 walls, and commercially, the town of Annonay, on the North-Eastern  
 edge of the Languedoc, was a prolongation of Lyon.<sup>37</sup> The origins  
 of the great Parisian bank of Tourton & Ravel, which survived  
 the eclipse of the last of the 'Necker' banks, Greffulhe, Montz  
 & Cie, and continued into the Restoration, lay within the tight  
 association between the economies of Lyon and Annonay.<sup>38</sup> Later  
 in the century, the representatives of the two great paper  
 manufacturing dynasties of Annonay, the Catholic Montgolfier and  
 the Protestant Johannot, were prominent members of both communities.  
 With the exception of the Montgolfier, the commercial elite of the  
 town was overwhelmingly Protestant, and produced a pleiad of  
 commercial houses scattered between Lyon, the Swiss cantons and  
 Marseille.

The passage from Annonay to Nîmes thus passed through Lyon, and was eased by a rich undergrowth of marriage alliances and commercial partnerships. The marriage of the négociant Jean Léorat of Lyon, the son of Alexandre Léorat, another négociant, and Anne Johannot of Annonay, to Jeanne Valz of Nîmes, in 1768, was typical of this itinerary. One of Jean Léorat's brothers - Pierre-Mathieu - was a member of the partnership of Jean-Jacques Perret, Johannot & Cie of Lyon during the 1770's and 1780's, which became Johannot, Leorat & Cie in 1786. Two Johannots - François and Mathieu - were witnesses to the marriage of Jean Léorat to Jeanne Valz at Nîmes.<sup>39</sup> A similar variety of ties linked the Tourton of Annonay to the Chapat, indienneurs of Orange, who were in turn relatives of the Arndt of Lyon and the Depossac of Nîmes.<sup>40</sup>

A third group within this network was made up by the Alléon, a family of marchands-drapiers from Annonay who were established in Lyon as correspondents of the Bosc-Sartre financial consortium before the crash of 1709.<sup>41</sup> The Alléon were doubly allied to the Johannot, by the marriages of Ester and Jean Alléon to Mathieu and Marie-Anne Johannot, the children of Jean Johannot (1643-1711), maître-papetier and receveur des deniers royaux d'Annonay, in the first decade of the eighteenth century. One of their brothers, Andre Alléon, married Magdeleine Verdier de Lacoste of Nîmes, and was a partner in the woollen house Antoine Lacoste & fils & Alléon in the early 1750's, which later became the firm of



Antoine Lacosté & fils & Lacarrière.<sup>42</sup> Marie-Anne Johannot, veuve Alléon, was buried as a Protestant at Nîmes in 1740.<sup>43</sup> She left a son, Barthelemy Alléon, an avocat whose wife, Marthe Chauvet, was a distant relative of the Valz, to whom she left all her possessions, consisting of land in the parish of Saint-Laurent d'Aigouze, in 1775.<sup>44</sup>

It was the lawyer, Barthelemy Alléon, who acquired the demesne of Anglas, which lay to the south-west of Nîmes, on the edge of the Vaunage. The demesne and its seigneurie had previously belonged to a M. Francois-Michel de Petit of Besançon, who was obliged to sell it in 1743, in order to liquidate his debts.<sup>45</sup> Barthelemy Alléon died intestate in 1771. His estate was claimed immediately by his niece, Marie-Anne Rignol, the widow of Francois-Antoine Boissy, docteur en medecin, of Annonay. The claim was disputed by Jeanne Johannot, the wife of the lawyer J-C Chomel de Midon, of Annonay, and the daughter of Mathieu Johannot and Ester Alléon.<sup>46</sup> She began proceedings before the Présidial of Nîmes, and engaged a certain Pierre Michel, a procureur at the sénéchaussée, to manage the case. In 1776, however, her case was temporarily shattered by a dramatic coup engineered by Marie-Anne Rignol. In February, she arranged the marriage of her only son, the future Conventionnel, Francois-Antoine Boissy, to Pierre Michel's only daughter, Marie-François. The future bride's dowry was a mediocre 2,000 livres, but the couple's joint property was valued at a comfortable 130,000 livres, the major part of which was formed by the demesne of Anglas, which Marie-Anne Rignol ceded to her son.<sup>47</sup>

The acquisition of the demesne of Anglas permitted François-Antoine Boissy to enter the powerful circles of the Protestant elite of Nîmes. He was, however, more than the son of a mere provincial doctor. The history of the family is lost in the obscurity of the Refuge. In 1735, the grand-father of the Conventionnel, Antoine Boissy, notaire royal, lieutenant de juge and commis aux controlles de Lamastre in the Haut-Vivarais, petitioned the Ferme générale des biens des Religioneux fugitifs for the return of two demesnes in the parish of Saint-Jean Chambre, near Annonay, which he claimed had belonged to his father and uncle, Jean and Jacques Boissy, who had erroneously been accused of emigration after the Revocation. The real fugitives, he stated, were his cousins, the sons of his aunt, Suzanne Boissy and a certain François Bousqueneaud, "surnommés les Boissis par rapport au nom de leur mère, leur père étant décédé peu de temps après leur naissance."<sup>48</sup> The story has an implausible air, and, given the size of many Protestant families in the eighteenth century, it seems unlikely that Antoine Boissy was an only child. It is certain that one of his sons, Jean-François Boissy, emigrated in 1730 or 1731 to Geneva, and spent most of his life in Amsterdam as a private tutor to some of the French Protestant families of the city.<sup>49</sup>

Something of Jean-François Boissy's cultured milieu in Amsterdam is reflected in the interests of his younger brother, François-Antoine Boissy, the doctor of the village of Saint-Jean



Chambre in the Vivarais. Like all members of the medical profession, François-Antoine Boissy was nominally a Catholic, but the pastor Paul Bosc-Forest described him as "l'un des plus zelés protestants que j'aie connus en France."<sup>50</sup> He left a collection of over four hundred books, including de Bèze's translation of the New Testament, Calvin's Sermons on Job, Luther's Reflections upon the Babylonish Captivity, Calvin's "Commentaires ... sur les Evangiles et les autres Apotres," a complete run of the Journal des Savants from 1665 to 1743, all the issues of the Mercure de France from 1736 to 1743, the Book of Common Prayer in English and a vast collection of treatises on medical subjects, history and geography in both English and French.<sup>51</sup> Boissy d'Anglas was thus the heir to the cosmopolitan intellectual world of the Refuge.

The registers of the Protestant church at Nîmes record the death in January 1776 of a "Dlle. Boissy, soixante-cinq ans, tante du Sr Jean-Francois Boissy, bourgeois d'Annonay."<sup>52</sup> It is probable that she was a member of the same family. Some years earlier, she had given 200 livres to Marie Durand, the martyr of Pranles, who was imprisoned in the Tour de Constance for eighteen years.<sup>53</sup> It would seem that Boissy d'Anglas' marriage at Nîmes, and his decision to settle there, were preceeded by a long accumulation of associations through the Protestant diaspora.

There can be no doubt, however, that his connections in Nîmes were to be of great value during the following decade. His somewhat unorthodox acquisition of the demesne of Anglas gave rise

to a protracted and costly legal dispute with the Johannot. In May 1784, he was obliged to sell a house in the quartier du marché de blé in Nîmes for 8,000 livres.<sup>54</sup> In July, he ordered the Parisian banker, Jean-Etienne Theaulon, to recover the interest accumulated on his rentes "constituées sur les tailles ou autrement."<sup>55</sup> In January 1785, he sold another house in Nîmes to the négociant Francois Serre for 7,000 livres.<sup>56</sup> Serre was also one of his major creditors. In the following August, Boissy sold a third house in Nîmes to a merchant named Ravel "sauf et réservé au Sr. Serre de faire valoir son opposition et l'effet d'icelle sur tous les autres biens dudit Me de Boissy et la damoiselle Michel vendus et invendus."<sup>57</sup> Four months later he acknowledged a debt of 2,730 livres to a Sr Isaac Romanet, bourgeois de Nîmes, in return for a loan.<sup>58</sup> By this time, he would appear to have been deeply in debt, and owed much to the protection of the Vincens, and particularly the resources of the négociant Alexandre Vincens-Valz, for his continued financial security.<sup>59</sup> His father-in-law, the procureur Pierre Michel, died in April 1786, "aux isles de l'Amérique", leaving an estate which Boissy d'Anglas repudiated in August.<sup>60</sup>

The long legal dispute with the Johannot drove a permanent wedge between the two families, and it was probably during this period that Boissy d'Anglas formed his close connection with the Montgolfier, the other great family of papetiers from Annonay. In 1791, the affair was still a source of bitterness. "Adieu mon cher abbé," Boissy wrote to the abbé Raymond Montgolfier of Lyon,



"Si vous hainez la perfidie autant que je le fais, vous ne serez point aristocrate. Prenez garde à votre château et à votre calotte et aimez nous toujours un peu, bien que je n'aime plus guere M. Mathieu Johannot - Louis XVI - ni Marie-Antoinette Chomel."<sup>61</sup>

The Montgolfier were probably the wealthiest family in Annonay by the 1780's. Like their rivals the Johannot, they were originally from the village of Ambert in the Auvergne and had settled in Annonay in the late seventeenth century. Pierre Montgolfier, who died in 1793 at the age of ninety-three, was the effective founder of the dynasty. In 1771, his landed property alone - made up of the papeterie at Vidalon and four demesnes at Pourret, Avezieu, Chirol and Fresne - was worth 55,262 L 8s.<sup>62</sup> The value of his commercial affairs remains more obscure. The papeterie was a family affair until Pierre Montgolfier's retirement in 1788, and there were no formal actes de societe until the creation of the partnership Montgolfier & Cie in that year. This was an association between four of Pierre Montgolfier's sons; Etienne, Jean-Pierre, Jean-Baptiste and Jean-Marie, who had previously directed a cluster of subsidiary mills in Dauphiné and the Forez during the 1760's and 1770's. The dimensions of this manufacturing empire were vast, and stretched beyond Paris, Lyon and Marseille the main internal outlets for the products of the papeterie, to the French colonies and the United States. The firm was also the chief supplier of the paper used by the Compagnie des Indes. Pierre Montgolfier was also involved in a partnership with a certain Blumenstein, formed in 1766, for the exploitation of the mines

at Saint-Julien-en-Forez, which supplied an iron-works at Vienne, in the Dauphiné. When he retired in 1788, his share in this partnership stood at 52,400 livres. A further interest was a partnership with a Sr. Faure "pour la vente et fabrication de vernis," which lasted until 1783 at the earliest.<sup>63</sup>

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the family had spread well beyond the narrow limits of Annonay. Pierre Montgolfier was one of seventeen children and was the father of a further sixteen. Two of his sisters and three of his younger brothers entered the church. Augustin Montgolfier (1711-1793) was a Carthusian monk at Toulouse, Etienne emigrated to Canada where he became the Superior of the Sulpician seminary at Montreal; while Jacques (1722-1805) became the receveur-général of the Archbishopric of Paris. Of Pierre's sons, the eldest, Raymond Montgolfier, moved to Lyon as a négociant; his younger brother, Jean-Pierre, settled in Paris, where he married Pierrette-Charlotte Girault, the daughter of one of Maupeou's secretaries, while the two youngest brothers, Michel-Joseph and Etienne-Charles acquired international celebrity as balloonists in the early 1780's.<sup>64</sup>

Much of Etienne and Joseph Montgolfier's fame was carefully manufactured by Boissy d'Anglas. The future deputy of the department of the Ardèche visited Paris on four occasions between 1778 and 1789. While there, he was able to promote the brothers' interests through his connections at Versailles, and particularly through his acquaintance with the minister Malesherbes.



Malesherbes was the principal intermediary in negotiations for a subsidy of 60,000 livres to further the brothers' aeronautical activities, and later, in manoeuvres to obtain tenure of an entrepôt de tabac in Annonay for Joseph Montgolfier, or an abbey for his uncle Jacques. "Une abaye pour M. l'abbé de 12 ou 15,000 Lt de rente vaudrait bien autant qu'un entrepôt de tabac de 100 pistolets ou 1,500 livres," Boissy decided in 1787. At the same time, Boissy was involved in negotiations with one of Calonne's secretaries, de Villedeuil, over a proposal which would have given the Montgolfier an effective monopoly of the production of all the stamped paper in the Kingdom. "J'ai lieu d'être persuadé que si l'on se détermine à charger un seul fabricant de faire tout le papier destiné au timbre, on ne s'adressera pas à d'autre que vous," he informed Etienne Montgolfier in July 1787. Calonne's subsequent dismissal, however, served to destroy these plans.<sup>65</sup>

Inevitably, Boissy benefited from the Montgolfier brothers' celebrity. By 1784, at the height of the fashion for ballooning, Etienne Montgolfier had been admitted to the masonic loge du Contrat-Social, rue Coque-Heron, the loge des IX Soeurs, rue Dauphine and the Loge de la Candeur, rue des Petits-Ecuries, and Boissy d'Anglas had arrived in the same circles.<sup>66</sup> His friendship with Rabaut Saint-Etienne, who in turn, became acquainted with the Montgolfier, added to the range of his connections. Initially, he owed much to the older pastor of the Protestant church at Nîmes. In 1778, when he visited Paris for the first time,

Rabaut's friendship with Court de Gebelin had opened his path to the salons of the capital. Both Boissy and Rabaut Saint-Etienne frequented the comte d'Argental's salon, where d'Alembert, Helvetius, Diderot and Fontanelle had made their names, and were on close terms with his secretary, Mme de Vimeux. The littérateur, de la Harpe, and the poet, Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian, both figures of some stature, were admired acquaintances. La Harpe's Lycée, which succeeded Court de Gebelin's Musée, became the centre of their intellectual interests. "Où êtes-vous au Lycée?" Boissy inquired of Mme de Vimeux in 1788.

"Avez-vous fini d'expliquer la Henriade? Etes-vous toujours bien contents? M. de Florian m'écrit qu'il est un des plus assidus auditeurs, et qu'il est 'charmé' de tout ce qu'il entend. M. de La Harpe, qui m'écrit quelque fois, ne me dit rien de ses succès, et il faut que je les apprenne d'ailleurs. Je suis bien fâché de n'en être pas le témoin et de n'assister qu'en esprit à ses belles leçons."<sup>67</sup>

The fragments of his correspondence that survive from this period of his life, are redolent of the world of the high Enlightenment, of the gossip, the acrimonious disputes about arcane subjects, the delicate inuendo and the elegant puns, which made up so much of the language of high politics as well as that of high culture.<sup>68</sup> His ease in this world belies the rapidity of his social ascent, an ascent crowned in 1787 with the office of secretary to the comte de Provence. And yet, for most of this period, he was not a wealthy man. His accomplishment was to merge the cultural resources of his own background, with the financial resources of his friends



and allies in Nîmes. It was a combination which he was to expand, but never to desert throughout the rest of his life.

A fourth figure, the lawyer Jean-Marie-Antoine Griolet, completed this small circle at the apex of the Protestant community of Nîmes in the late eighteenth century. His career is a further illustration of the ubiquity of Protestantism within the highest circles of ancien régime society, despite the formal limitation which existed until the Edict of Toleration of 1787.

Jean-Marie-Antoine Griolet was born in 1763.<sup>69</sup> His grand-father, Antoine Griolet, the son of Jean Griolet "marchand facturier d'Uzès," had acquired the office of procureur es cours de Nîmes early in the 1730's. In 1734, he married Elizabeth Boisson, the daughter of a merchant of Nîmes, whose dowry consisted solely of "ses biens et une maison pres la cathédrale."<sup>70</sup> His brother, Jacques Griolet, "notaire et procureur d'Uzès," left a widow, who subsequently remarried Jacques Folcher, seigneur de Montaren, a village in the diocese of Uzès.<sup>71</sup> Careful marriages, together with a successful legal practice, seem to have given the family the opportunity to cross the gulf separating the ordinary members of the legal profession from the élite of the Présidial. In 1777, Gabrielle-Henriette Griolet, Antoine's daughter, was married to the Protestant Pierre Lombard de la Chaux, from Nions in the Dauphiné, who was to represent the Drôme in the Convention.<sup>72</sup> Her brother, Jean-Antoine Griolet, who inherited his father's office, was married to a Dlle Marie Chauvin, who was related through her aunt, Elizabeth, to Pierre Perillier, juge-mage of the Présidial

of Nîmes between 1771 and 1779.<sup>73</sup> Thus, when their son, J-M-A Griolet, was emancipated in 1786 at the age of 23, their decision to provide him with 18,000 livres for the purchase of the office of conseiller of the Présidial, was not the product of an entirely random choice.<sup>74</sup>

Shortly after his admission to the Présidial, Griolet became a member of the Academy of Nîmes. Again, the association was not the product of random selection. One of his oldest friends was the négociant Jean-César Vincens-Plauchut, with whom he had studied, under the tutelage of Vincens' father, Alexandre-Vincens-Devillas.<sup>75</sup> His admission was followed soon afterwards by the entry of the third member of the family, Jacques Vincens-Saint-Laurent. "Jamais l'académie ne fut moins en peine pour réparer ses pertes," Vincens Saint-Laurent was to recall in 1806.

"Dans l'espace d'un très petit nombre d'années elle appela dans son sein une foule d'amis des arts, tous encore au printemps de leur age; et cet amant si passionné des belles lettres (Boissy d'Anglas) qui leur avoit exclusivement consacré sa vie avant que la destinée l'eût poussee sur cette mer qu'ont agitée de si horribles tempêtes ... et cet homme ... qui fut à la fois métaphysicien littérateur, poète et qui signale aujourd'hui son habilité pour l'administration (Jean Pieyre, Prefect of the Loiret), et ce savant enlevé par une mort prématurée (J-C Vincens-Plauchut), et cet auteur dramatique dont le coup d'essai fut un si long triomphe sur le théâtre de la capitale (Alexandre Pieyre), et cet écrivain philosophe (J-M-A Griolet), et .. enfin .. puis-je citer le mien."<sup>76</sup>

By 1787, ten of the twenty-four members of the Academy were Protestants.<sup>77</sup> In 1752, when the Academy was re-established,



(it had been dissolved after the Revocation) four of the founding members were Protestants.<sup>78</sup> Since almost all the Protestant members of the Academy were related, their presence was magnified by a certain unanimity of style and interest, which, as we shall see, did not pass un-noticed.<sup>79</sup>

The Protestant domination of the masonic lodges was even more complete. The earliest known lodge in the city was the obscure société de l'étoile, which Paul Rabaut had established in 1749 on the initiative of Court de Gebelin.<sup>80</sup> It was followed by a cluster of lodges of the Scottish persuasion - Saint Jean de l'Humanité, Saint Jean de l'Emulation, Saint-Jean de l'Amitié, Saint-Jean d'Ecosse and Saint-Jean de la Sincérité - founded between 1755 and 1779, whose social composition remains obscure, but whose venerables - Antoine Griolet and Jean Divernois were two - were probably also Protestants.<sup>81</sup> The social composition of four lodges - Les Amis Réunis, La Bienfaisance, Henry IV et Sully and La Philanthropique - established in Nimes between 1785 and 1789, is a further indication of the massive adhesion of Protestants to Free-Masonry:<sup>82</sup>

Lodge	Négociants & Banquiers	Marchands & Epiciers	Bourgeois & Propriétaires	Avocats, Gradués & Procureurs
Les Amis Réunis	19	2	4	2
La Bien- faisance	43	4	1	8
Henry IV & Sully	30		4	12
La Philan- thropique	34	5	5	10

Lodge	Architectes, Artistes & Musiciens	Others
Les Amis Réunis		2
La Bien- faisance	8	11
Henry IV & Sully	1	11
La Philan- thropique	3	11

The lists of members are a litany of the city's commercial elite: the Devillas, Fornier, André, Affourtit, Blanc, Vals, Vincens, Chabanel, Bousquet, Rabaut and Griolet were all masons. The correlation was not, of course, the product of malevolent purpose, but more simply, it was the result of this élite's integration into an entirely national culture, unmodified by local nuance or regional particularism, so that, at this level, an André or a Devillas, would be immediately at ease in a cultural sense, anywhere from Bayonne to Metz, or from Lille to Marseille.<sup>83</sup>

It was a secular culture, animated by the flow of news and gossip from the three poles of Paris, Geneva and the Dissenting Academies beyond the Channel. Its spiritual counterpart was a Calvinism muted by the relegation of the Diety to discreet observation of the chain of temporal activity. The omnipotent Judge had become a less awesome Commission of Arbitration. Rabaut Saint-Etienne's few surviving sermons are tepid homilies - reasonable, reassuring and almost entirely divorced from the



urgent imperatives which confronted Calvinists in earlier times. The wider questions raised by the recognition of a desolate solitude in the face of an awful God gave way to a more comfortable moralism. Thus,

"Quand Zachee donnait la moitié de son bien aux pauvres, il avait calculé sans doute que l'autre moitié lui suffit pour l'entretien de sa maison, de sa table et de sa famille: voilà le calcul que doit faire aussi chaque père de famille dans sa maison."<sup>84</sup>

At the same time, however, Rabaut Saint-Etienne, as Pastor of the Reformed Church of Nîmes, was heir to a second tradition. Its social base was more diffuse, and extended beyond the narrow limits of the quartier des Arènes in Nîmes to the bastions of Calvinism in the Cévennes and the Vaunage, to the west of the city. Here, the austere vision of human solitude, the terror of the infinite power of God, unmediated by the intervention of His temporal Church, and the iron conviction of the Elect were not entirely displaced by the laicism of the Enlightenment. Such sentiments were still to be found even in the highest circles. Thus Marie-Elisabeth Kromm of Lyon, whose relatives - the Fitler, Schlumpf, Devillas and Vincens - were architypical of the Franco-Swiss bourgeoisie des lumières, prefaced her will in the traditional manner:

"Beny soit Dieu qui m'a donne l'Etre. Beny soit Dieu qui perfectionnera mon Etre. La mort est un moyen d'acheminement à cette perfection; mon âge, mes infirmités m'avertissent que l'heureux moment de ma separation d'avec mon corps n'est pas éloigné. La bonté Divine des ma jeunesse a parlé à mon coeur, m'a inspiré le desir

de connoitre et obéir aux saintes règles de conduite qu'elle nous a tracées par les discours et l'exemple de son fils Jesus notre divin législateur .."<sup>85</sup>

For obvious reasons, very few wills drawn up before a notaire were likely to contain such professions of faith. The rare inventories made of the libraries of the wealthier Protestants - such as Francois-Antoine Boissy<sup>86</sup> - occasionally suggest the persistence of similar sentiments. But the mental world of the majority of Calvinists - the thousands of peasants and artisans in the Cévennes and the Vaunage - must necessarily remain opaque.

It has been customary, however, to argue that the sequence of persecution followed by more or less tacit toleration, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, was matched by a corresponding decline in religious zeal.<sup>87</sup> The calvinism of the eighteenth century was thus sincere, yet quietist, respectable, passive and heavily influenced by the Deism of the Enlightenment, in a manner which transcended social or cultural division. Antoine Court, Paul Rabaut, Court de Gebelin, Rabaut Saint-Etienne and Boissy d'Anglas were publicly unanimous that "les sombres jours de la persécution" had been followed by "des jours sereins dont l'air est plus doux."<sup>88</sup> There are, however, enough indications to suggest that this image requires modification.<sup>89</sup>

In 1744, the Crown ordered the illumination of feus de joie to commemorate the French victory at Menin. Protestants in the village of Caveirac, on the eastern edge of the Vaunage, used the occasion to sing psalms. "Après que le consul eut allumé le feu, il cria Vive le Roy," the Intendant, Le Nain, reported,



"Tous les assistants en firent de même, et le nommé Novis, ayant imposé le silence, entonna un psaume de concert avec le nommé Cabanis .. Toute la populace chanta comme eux, et le psaume fini, le nommé Cabanis .. fit la prière. Après quoy toutes les femmes furent chez elle prendre des rechauts dans lesquelles elles importèrent avec la plus grande affectation, du feu ou des cendres dans leur maisons."<sup>90</sup>

The commemoration of the birth of the Dauphin, in 1752, gave rise to identical incidents.<sup>91</sup>

A further indication of the survival of a tenacious popular Protestantism can be found in the continuing discrepancy in the rates of literacy of Catholic and Protestant communities. At Nîmes between 1790 and 1799, 54.9% of Catholic men and 23.5% of Catholic women were able to sign their names to acts of baptism, marriage and burial. The respective proportions of Protestants able to sign were 70.1% and 38%.<sup>92</sup> At Alès, in November 1789, eleven members of the compagnie des Jardiniers of the National Guard, which was based in the Protestant quartier du Pont-Vieux, complained that their patrols had been disrupted by insults from groups of travailleurs de terre and street porters. One of them had arrested a porter named Lavie who had shouted 'Le Diable' in response to the guard's 'Qui Vive'. Lavie then threatened "de se venger contre eux un pour un," and warned them that "s'il avoit son couteau il les éventreroient." The eleven plaintiffs - seven jardiniers, a stocking maker, a blacksmith, a carter and a charon - all signed their depositions immaculately: in contrast to the often crude signatures of Catholics of similar status.<sup>93</sup> This phenomenon can be explained only by a profound

collective acceptance by Protestants of the need to study the Word.<sup>94</sup>

The incident at Alès suggests the manner in which less formal, but equally durable, rituals of collective solidarity sustained the vitality of popular Calvinism at a local level. In 1762, Antoine Dumazert of the rue de la Fabrerie in Alès, complained that one of his neighbours was allowing his garden to be used as a Protestant cemetery. The victim of the complaint, a Sr. Fabre, and some of his friends, responded with a song, slandering the Catholics of the quartier, which they sang outside their windows in the evenings.<sup>95</sup> Pierre Prion, of the village of Aubais, recorded a similar incident, in 1748, during a Catholic procession for Rogations:

"Lorsqu'on fut parvenu près le lieu d'Aubais, il fut fait une station à la croix de la mission pour la bénédiction des fruits ... Pendant cette sainte cérémonie, environ une toise de cette croix, il y avait un fameux proselyte de la créance parpaillotine qui faucilloit du fourage, et, en cette posture, il tournoit le dos à la croix et aux prières que le peuple faisoit."<sup>96</sup>

A similar lack of respect at Nîmes, during a procession of Penitents, in 1771, almost caused a riot.<sup>97</sup>

Formal expressions of faith point again to the continuing power of the Word in the more remote parts of the Cévennes.

"Messieurs," warned an anonymous letter, addressed, in November 1752, to the curés of Florac, the Pont-de-Montvert, Barre, Fraissenet, Saint-Julien, Genolhac and Saint-Germain,

"Nous sommes très convaincus que nous rendrions coupable d'hipocrisie et même d'idolatrie en assistant a vos messes et à vos processions, en



nous prosternant devant vos images, vos croix,  
votre sacrement, soit, dans vos églises, soit  
dans les rues, en faisant bénir nos mariages  
et baptiser nos enfants par votre ministère,  
en un mot toutes les fois que nous adhérons  
directement ou indirectement à votre culte."<sup>98</sup>

In 1795, a certain Valmalès, "inocant patriote de 1789,"  
celebrated his own impending execution on the 29 Thermidor  
"a 6 heures du matin l'an 3ème de la ripublique," with a  
poem which is a strange compound of Calvinism and Jacobinism:

"O Liberte chairie  
du profent de mon coeur  
tu me couttes la vie  
à pres bien de doulleurs.

Avec plaisir je passe  
a l'immortalité  
exposant de la grace  
être en fellicité

En Dieu je me consolle  
dans me plus grands malheurs  
et ta ferme parole  
apèze mes doulleurs.

Je quitte ma famille  
aussy tous mes amis  
un jour dans l'autre vie  
nous serons reunis.

Que rien dans cette vie  
ne vous fasse manquer  
au Bien de la Patrie  
et de la Liberte."<sup>99</sup>

Equally, the heroic tradition of the Church under the  
Cross remained a powerful source of communal solidarity. Hymns  
and psalms dating back to the Revocation were still sung in the  
villages of Pranles, Issamoulenc, Saint-Jean-de-Gua and  
Rochessauve, high in the Coirons, above Privas, in the Ardèche,  
in the early years of the July Monarchy.<sup>100</sup> At Vernoux, also

in the Ardèche, the municipalité cantonale decided, in Ventôse of the year V, that it would be necessary to create an armed guard to protect electors from the Protestants of the neighbouring hamlets and villages. "Il régnait entre l'habitant des campagnes et l'habitant de Vernoux une méfiance extreme," it explained.

"Ce bourg étoit sous la dépendance de deux ou trois entriguans et quatre prêtres insoumis. Le peuple des campagnes, dont les opinions politiques et religieuses diffèrent de celles des habitants de Vernoux se ressouvenait trop peut-être du massacre qu'avoient éprouvé dans ce lieu ses ancêtres du culte protestant, ou deux cent y furent fuzellés en 1744, pour ne pas repugner à se rendre dans un endroit où les mêmes principes étoient soutenus."<sup>101</sup>

The size of the crowds that assembled for services held by Protestant pastors - contemporary estimates usually ran into thousands - imply that at least one of the traditions of the guerre des Camisards had not come to an end.<sup>102</sup>

Although the great prophetic wave of the first decade of the eighteenth century had ended by the early 1720's, in the wake of the reorganisation of the Protestant church by Antoine Court, there are enough hints to suggest that a certain continuity of style and language is masked only by the opaqueness of the mental world from which such sentiments emanated.<sup>103</sup> In 1750, Pierre Prion noted the appearance of a prophet in the village of Calvisson, in the Vaunage, "se disant très entendu dans les opérations alchimiques entr'autres, pour la fixation du mercure, l'impregnation et la transmutation des métaux ... Il prophétisoit que le Grand Seigneur et le Pape seroient bons Protestants en 1759."<sup>104</sup> Several Protestant communities in the Vaunage were particularly receptive



to Quakerism. By 1760, there were Quakers at Vauvert, Langlade, Nages and Calvisson, and a prophetess at Vauvert. "Fille de mere, elle entend bien son metier, car elle ne manque de rien," wrote the pastor Simon Lombard sardonically,

"L'envie me prit une fois de l'entendre prophétiser. Je m'adressai à l'une de mes voisines, chez qui l'inspirée vendait ses oracles. Elle me dit que j'étais un profane et qu'on ne permettrait pas que j'assistasse à leur devotion."<sup>105</sup>

The memory of the Camisards coloured assessments of popular Calvinism and many local officials were prepared to equate sedition of any sort with the legacy of the Camisards. Jean-Georges de Souillac, the bishop of Lodeve, took issue with the miraculous healings performed by Jansenists from Montpellier in the early 1730's, on the grounds that they would encourage a revival of fanaticism. "Vous ignorez pas," he warned the Cardinal de Fleury, "que les convulsions tirent leur origine des fanatiques des Cévennes et qu'il y en avait, dans ce temps, une école en forme à Genève."<sup>106</sup> Over fifty years later, contemporaries were able to refer to a rural rebellion in the Vivarais in terms of the 'moeurs républicains' of the region - although all of rebels in 1783 were Catholics.<sup>107</sup>

The language of Revelations would seem to have been most current during periods of political or economic crisis. The mid-eighteenth century - and the years between 1749 and 1752 in particular - was marked by bad harvests, fears of a second major Protestant rebellion and renewed military expeditions into the Cévennes.<sup>108</sup> At this time, Pierre Prion recorded a 'camisard' baptism, whose language echoed the obscure formulae of the Multipliers, a

millenarian sect which had existed in Montpellier in the 1720's, to which André Bonicel, one of Guizot's ancestors had belonged.

"Ce 7e janvier de l'an de Christ j'ay reçu le billet avec celui d'amour que j'ay reçu avec l'Eau de Vie, No 189, que je dois garder comme la prunelle de mes yeux sy je veux entrer dans la maison d'oraison Temple de Salomon ou habite l'Arch Mystique. Bienheureux sont ceux qui recoivent cecy. Au nom du Pere, du Fils, et du Saint-Esprit. Ainsy soit-il. Jacob et Jean."<sup>109</sup>

In 1793, Pierre Rouvière, an inhabitant of the village of Brenoux, in the Cévennes, was involved in a dispute with the procureur of the commune, Charles Verdier, and his brother-in-law, Pierre Garnier de la Melouze, a wealthy Protestant with a number of powerful connections in Nîmes.<sup>110</sup> Rouvière claimed that they had ordered his arrest and attempted to poison him while he was in prison, after a dispute over some chestnuts. The poison had, however, failed to work, and an exultant Rouvière informed the directory of the department of the Gard that "Dieu a fait un miracle contre ledit Lamelouze et plusieurs de ses amis ... Il a paru deux étoiles, celle du Midi et celle du Levant (au ciel)."<sup>111</sup> There were further reports of prophets in 1815 and 1816, in the wake of the Hundred Days, when the imminent return of the Emperor was expected to herald the last days. In November 1816, a garçon boulanger from Saint-Marcel d'Ardèche was arrested at Valence in the Drôme for posting placards "dédié et adressé à Andre Lafond, l'assosié du prophète de l'Ardèche." Lafont admitted "qu'il savait bien que le placard contenait des injures contre la famille royale, mais que le prophète ayant parlé, il aimait mieux obéir à Dieu qu'aux hommes." The prophet in question was a certain Pons, from the village of Vernoux, who, it was said "prophétise depuis longtemps."<sup>112</sup>



There was a further wave of enthusiasm at Nîmes in 1825-1826, at the time of the accession of Charles IX.<sup>113</sup>

These fragments leave an impression of a certain cultural distance between the Calvinism of the wealthy, sophisticated and cosmopolitan elite of Nîmes and its satellite towns, and the Calvinism of the Cévennes and the Vaunage. It was a distance - but not a barrier. If Rabaut Saint-Etienne could preach publicly before the Duke of Gloucester at Nîmes in 1785, he was nonetheless the son of a certain M. Paul dit Pastourel, garçon pâtissier, dit Mlle Jeannette, dit M. Theophile, marchand de perles fines, as the pastor Paul Rabaut had been known during the period of the maquis des pasteurs. "Hier, en soupant avec Js Roustan, j'avais une bouteille d'eau à côté de moi. Il avait une bouteille de vin à côté de lui. Cette disposition lui fit dire que j'étais frère qu'à l'eau (calot) et que lui était frère qu'à L'vin (calvin)," wrote one of Boissy d'Anglas correspondents in 1778.<sup>114</sup> Yet Boissy d'Anglas, and Rabaut Saint-Etienne, were prepared to spend much of their time conducting their own research into the Camisard rebellion, as Antoine Court had done before them.<sup>115</sup> If they disowned the 'fanaticism' of the gonfleurs and souffleurs of the Cévennes, the emotional force of that other world remained a continuing source of fascinated attention. To the end of his life, Paul Rabaut, continued to interest himself in the literature of the Prophets.<sup>116</sup>

The church under the Cross was, thus, a compound of ambiguities. Formally, it did not exist. The fiction of a Catholic France endured until 1787. Yet the elite of the Protestant church in the south-east lived in close social and cultural proximity

to the Catholic elite of the Court and the Royal government. There were many Protestant merchants and négociants, but there were also veritable dynasties of Protestant avocats, procureurs, chirurgiens and landed anoblis with access to power in all of the institutions of eighteenth century France, from local seigneurial courts to Versailles itself. The survival of Protestantism during the eighteenth century was a reflection of this fundamental social fact. In one sense, throughout the period between 1685 and 1787 the royal administration and the Protestant elite of the South-East shared an incestuous understanding which defined the limits within which Protestantism was allowed to exist in peace. The upper echelons of the Reformed church undertook to police the gaol which the Crown had created. This, in turn, re-enforced the power of the Protestant elite. For the extent to which popular Calvinism could be used to form a certain popular constituency, established the 'illegal' hierarchy of the Protestant church as the accredited mediator between the royal administration and the inhabitants of the Cévennes and the Vaunage. This double ambiguity - in the relationship of the elite of the Protestant community to the Catholic state, on the one hand, and to its own prophetic past, on the other - lies at the heart of the myth of the heroic, yet respectable, church under the Cross. It was an ambiguity which was resolved, if only for a moment, during the winter of 1789-1790. The publication, by Rabaut Saint-Etienne, of Pierre Jurieu's Les Soupirs de la France Esclave, which first appeared after the Revocation and heralded the guerre des Camisards, under the title of Les Voeux



d'Un Patriote in the spring of 1789, was a conscious appropriation of a past which the official Church under the Cross had sought previously to deny.<sup>117</sup> The prophetic language of millenerialism was incorporated into the language of rational utilitarianism of the eighteenth century enlightenment. Prophecy was subordinated to Patriotism in an astonishing récupération of a local tradition by an international culture. It was this feat, and the material and cultural resources of which it was the product, which those who became royalists in 1790 were unable to match.

Notes: Chapter 12

1. H. Lüthy, La Banque Protestante en France. Paris, 1961-63.
2. C. Carrière, Négociants marseillais au xviii<sup>e</sup> Siècle, Marseille, 1973. pp. 939-941.
3. See L. Dermigny, "De La Révocation à la Révolution", in Histoire du Languedoc, Toulouse, 1967.
4. A.N. MC XIV 494 31-3-1787.
5. They were married in 1779; Elizabeth Boissière's dowry was 20,000 Lt. A.D. Gard 2C 469 9-6-1779.
6. A.N. MC LII 508 9-5-1774; A.N. T 1604 d. Boissière.
7. A.N. MC LII 508 18-5-1774; A.D. Gard 2E<sup>39</sup> 209 fo429V<sup>o</sup>.  
A.C. Nîmes UU 126 fo321; UU 150 fo69.
8. A.N. MC IV 938, 12 Brumaire an XI.
9. A.N. MC XXX 521 10-2-1791.
10. Id. MC IV 946 22 Brumaire au XII.
11. Cf. L. Gołtschalk, Lafayette Between the American and the French Revolutions, 1783-1789. Chicago 1950; and B.C. Poland, French Protestantism and the French Revolution, Princeton, 1957. The disappearance of Rabaut Saint-Etienne's papers make it difficult to go any further than this suggestion. Surprisingly the private papers of all of the Protestant merchants which survive for this period make no mention of the Edict, or its effects. See also L. Mazoyer, "Essai critique sur l'Histoire du Protestantisme à la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle," B.S.H.P.F. T.79. 1930. pp.33-56.
12. See C. Dardier, Paul Rabaut; Ses Lettres à Antoine Court. Geneva, 1884. and Id. Paul Rabaut; Ses Lettres à Divers. Paris 1892.  
The most satisfactory biography of Court de Gebelin remains P. Schmidt, Court de Gebelin à Paris. Paris, 1908. See also B.C. Poland, op.cit.
13. Cf. C. Dardier Op.cit.; Dr. Williams Library, London. Mss 43, papers of Pierre Gautier.
14. P. Schmidt. op.cit. pp.11-12.



15. L. Dermigny, Cargaisons indiennes; Solier & Cie. Paris, 1960.
16. The lists of subscribers are printed in vols. I-IV of Le Monde Primitif.
17. cited by C. Dardier, "Notice sur Court de Gebelin," Mém.Ac.Nimes. 2e Serie, T.13.1890.pp.xxxii-xxxiii.n.21.
18. See R.C. Darnton, Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France, 1968.
19. There is no satisfactory biography of the Conventionnel, see my "Note sur le pasteur et conventionnel Rabaut Saint-Etienne B.S.H.P.F. 1975, pp.
20. Dr. Williams Library. Mss 43, 13-8-1752.
21. C. Dardier, Paul Rabaut; Ses Lettres à Antoine Court. Geneva, 1884, T.z.pp.423-428. On the Randon, see Y. Durand, Les Fermiers Généraux. Paris, 1971, pp.514-518.
22. A.N. C 353, cited in B.S.H.P.F. 1931 pp.430-431.
23. Olivier-Desmonts was related to the Fornier through his marriage to a Pelet, to whom the Fornier were also linked by marriage, cf. D. Fabre, "Une Maison de Commerce nimoise, loc.cit.
24. Dr. Williams Library. Mss43, to Gautier, Sept. 1783.
25. Cf. R. C. Darnton op.cit.
26. "Hommage à Court de Gebelin" in Rabaut Saint-Etienne, Oeuvres Paris, 1827.
27. Dr. Williams Library. Mss 43, to Gautier, 7-4-1772, & 27-6-1774.
28. P. Caron, Rapports des Agents du Ministre de l'Interior dans les Départements. Paris, 1913. T.I. pp.358-9.
29. A.C. Nîmes. UU 149 fo 163.
30. A.N. F<sup>7</sup> 3677/1
31. See above pp.91-92.
32. A.D. Ardèche. J 236
33. Cf. Dr. Williams' Library Mss 43, Court to Gautier 15-3-1750 and 13-6-1750. C. Dardier, Paul Rabaut; Lettres à Diverses, Paris, 1892, t.I.p.14.

34. Bailleul, membre du Conseil des Cinq Cents, à ses Collegues  
B.M. F 1006 (21).
35. A.N. F<sup>7</sup> 4606 (231).
36. F-A Boissy d'Anglas, Les Etudes Littéraires et Poétiques  
d'un Viellard. 6 tomes, Paris, 1825. T.3.p.279.
37. I am most grateful to M. J-P Lemoine for allowing me to read his Mémoire de Maîtrise on Annonay au 18e Siècle (Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier. 1971), based mainly upon the papers of the Johannot, now deposited in the archives of the Ardèche. M. R. Zuber has also allowed me to read his Mémoire de Maîtrise on the papéterie Montgolfier, whose archives can be consulted in A.N. 53 AQ 44. I am grateful to M. & Mme Frachon of Vidalon les Annonay, the current owners of the former papéterie Montgolfier, for allowing me to consult their archives. A further section of the Montgolfier papers is deposited in the Musée de l'Air in Paris.
38. On Tourton & Ravel, Cf. H. Lüthy, La Banque Protestante en France, cited above, q.v.
39. A.D. Gard. Registres de Marignan 20-1-1768. J-P Lemoine. op.cit. p.40 n.4; pp.152-3.
40. A.C. Nîmes. UU 141 fo 77; 156 f 229.
41. G. Chaussinand-Nogaret. op.cit.p.51.
42. A.D. Gard 2E<sup>36</sup> 851 fo.201; 2E<sup>39</sup> 192 fo.8.
43. A.C. Nîmes UU 120 f 122 v.
44. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 830 fo 696.
45. A.N. Ab XIX 1330 d.2.
46. A.D. Ardèche. J 324 Précis pour la Dame Johannot .. contre le Sr. Boissy. Toulouse 1780.
47. A.D. Gard 2E<sup>74</sup> 164 fo82v<sup>o</sup>.
48. A.N. TT<sup>2</sup> 106A d.20.
49. Cf. C-E Engel, Jean-Francois de Boissy (1704-1754); Un Refugié français du XVIIIe Siècle, d'après sa Correspondence. Neuchatel, 1941.



50. B.S.H.P.F. 1938. "Journal du Pasteur Paul Bosc."
51. A.D. Ardèche. J 235: Inventaire des Livres.
52. A.C. Nîmes. UU 126 fo.157v.
53. C. Dardier, Paul Rabaut: Lettres à divers T.2.p.220
54. A.D. Gard 2E<sup>37</sup> 346 fo 244.
55. Id. 2E<sup>40</sup> 86 fo 279.
56. Id. 2E<sup>40</sup> 87 fo 6v.
57. Id. 2E<sup>40</sup> 87 fo 843.
58. Id. 2E<sup>37</sup> 347 fo 63.
59. A.D. Ardèche. J 236 Vincens St. Laurent to Boissy. n.d. (1785).
60. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>40</sup> 88 fo 406. Quite why Michel should have emigrated remains a mystery. It may have had some connection with the cloud which hung over the legal profession in Nîmes at this time. See below pp.
61. Papiers Montgolfier, Musée de l'Air XVI 6-7-1791.
62. Id.
63. R. Zuber op.cit. pp.55, 57-8, 59, 90-91.
64. On the fashion for ballooning, see R.C. Darnton, op.cit.
65. Muséede l'Air XVI.
66. Id. XXVI.
67. Cited by H. Bonhomme, "Mme de Vimeux, Secrétaire du Comte d'Argental". Revue Britannique, 1914.pp.144.
68. A.D. Ardèche. J.236 and see below, part IV.
69. A brief biography of the first procureur-général-syndic of the Gard was published by Vincens Saint-Laurent: "Eloge de J-M-A Griolet," Notices des Travaux de l'Académie du Gard, 1806, pp.111-165.
70. A.D. Gard 2E<sup>40</sup> 23 fo 479.
71. Id. 2E<sup>44</sup> 4 fo 459.
72. A.C. Nîmes. UU 146 fo 32.
73. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>44</sup> 5 fo 229v<sup>o</sup>.

74. Id. 2E<sup>36</sup> 849 ff.77 & 798. Griolet was thus related to the circle associated with Alison in the 1760's and 1770's. His mother was the aunt of Henriette Chauvin, who married Alison's cousin, Jean-Arnaud Valladier in 1766. (A.D. Gard 2E<sup>36</sup> 916 fo 40). Also through the Chauvin, he was related to the lawyer Pierre Vigier-Sarrasin, whose wife, Anne Sarrasin, was the daughter of Claude Sarrasin, procureur and Marie Chauvin. (Id. 2E<sup>39</sup>200 fo 160).
75. J. Vincens de Saint-Laurent, "Eloge..."loc.cit. pp.115-116.
76. Id. pp.128-131. Griolet was to flee to Genoa during the year II, where the youngest of the three Vincens brothers, Emile, was already established. When the port was annexed to France, Griolet became secretary of the Genoise Chamber of Commerce.
77. A list of members is printed in the Calendrier de la Ville de Nismes, 1788, pp.113-114.
78. The list of members is printed in M.E. Germer-Durand op.cit.
79. See below, p.501-502.
80. See above p.218.
81. A.Le.Bihan, Loges et Chapitres de la Grande Loge.Paris, 1967,pp.173-4.
82. B.N. Fonds Maçonniques. I am very grateful to M. Daniel Roche of the Ecole Normale de Saint-Cloud for providing me with a copy of the list of members from his notes.
83. Cf. for a similar description G.Gayot "Les Problèmes de Double Appartenance: Protestants et Franc-Maçons à Sedan au XVIIIe Siècle." R.H.M.C. TXVIII 1971 pp.415-429.
84. Cf. G. Dieny Essai sur la Prédication de Rabaut Saint-Etienne. Paris 1907 pp.62-64.
85. A.D. Rhône 3E 5678 9-8-1777. On these families, Cf pp.91-92.
86. Cf. above, p.223.
87. B.C. Poland, op.cit. and D. Bien The Calas Affair, Princeton, 1957, the two most recent historians of French Protestantism in the eighteenth century, both accept this interpretation.
88. Rabaut Saint-Etienne Le Vieux Cévénol reprinted in his Oeuvres, Paris, 1827. T.2.p.87.
89. Here I follow the suggestive article by L. Mazoyer "Essai sur l'Histoire du Protestantisme à la fin du XVIIIe Siècle". B.S.H.P.F., 1930, pp.330-56.



90. A.N. TT 438.
91. A.N. TT 450 Cf. B.S.H.P.F., 1956,
92. H-P & J.M. Ambrosino "Démographie et Subsistances à Nîmes: 1789-1799." Mémoire de Maîtrise, Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier, 1970, p.57.
93. A.C. Alès. IJ 2 26-II-1789. On literacy among Catholics see also pp.13-14.
94. J-P Chabrol's novel Les Fous de Dieu. Paris 1962 provides an excellent imaginative re-creation of this imperative.
95. Cf. M. Bruyère, Alès, capitale des Cévennes: Vie politique, religieuse, intellectuelle, économique et sociale. Nîmes, 1948. pp.789-90.
96. Cited by E.G. Léonard. "La Vie des Protestants au 18e Siècle dans le marquisat d'Aubais." B.S.H.P.F. t.72.1922 p.33.n.1.
97. A.D. Hérault C 6819.
98. A.D. Lozère. G 977. Cited by L. Dupouy. "Les Protestants de Florac de la Révocation de l'Edict de Nantes à l'Edict de Tolération." Revue du Gévaudan. No 11, 1965.p.169. For similar sentiments in the Perigord, Cf. L. Mazoyer "L'affaire du curé de Saint-André-en Perigord." B.S.H.P.F. 1928.
99. Original exhibited in August 1971 at the exhibition "Les Cévennes à la Recherche de leur Passé: la Vie d'autrefois à travers les papiers de famille," held at Florac and organised by M.P. Joutard of the Université Aix-Marseille.
100. Cf. C. Bost. "Poésies populaires huguenotes du Vivarais." B.S.H.P.F. T.89, 1940, pp.205-206.
101. A.N. F<sup>7</sup> 7358.
102. On the assemblées au desert, see C. Dardier op.cit.
103. The most recent study of the millenarism associated with the Camisards is P. Joutard, Les Camisards. Paris, 1977.
104. E.G. Léonard art.cit. B.S.H.P.F. 1922, p.33.n.3.
105. C. Dardier, La Vie des Etudiants au Desert d'Après la Correspondance de l'Un d'Eux: Simon Lombard. Geneva, 1893.p.35.
106. A. Appolis. "Les Miracles Jansenistes dans le Bas-Languedoc." (1732-1745), Annales du Midi, T.67, 1955, pp.269-279.
107. See below p.427.

108. See pp.215.
109. E.G. Léonard. art,cit.p.31 n. 2.
110. Cf. A.C. Nîmes UU 117 fo 69; UU 124 fo 206.
111. A.D. Gard L.421.
112. A.D. Ardèche. 5M 7.
113. Archives du Consistoire d'Annonay. Letter to Boissy d'Anglas. 18-2-1826.
114. A.D. Ardèche J 236 Gaillard to Boissy 8-10-1778 (?)
115. Cf. J-R Armogathe & P. Joutard. "Bâville et la Guerre des Camisards." R.H.M.C. T.XIX.1972,pp.49-50.
116. See in particular C.Dardier, Paul Rabaut: Lettres à Divers T.2.loc.cit.
117. This re-edition is mentioned in E. Kaeppler, "Bibliographie chronologique des Oeuvres de Pierre Jurier." B.S.H.P.F., 84, 1935, pp.391-440.



Part III Nimes and its Hinterland

Introduction



The Sénéchaussée of Nîmes in the eighteenth century consisted of four civil dioceses, those of Nîmes, Uzès, Alès and Viviers. In 1781 most of the area covered by the diocese of Viviers was removed from the Sénéchaussée of Nîmes, and two new jurisdictions, the Sénéchaussées of Villeneuve-de-Berg and Annonay were created. In 1790 this region became the department of the Ardèche, with its chef-lieu at Privas. The area covered by the three dioceses of Uzès, Alès and Nîmes became the department of the Gard. The centre of royalism in 1790 was the region on the boundary between the Gard and the Ardèche, lying between the towns of Les Vans in the Ardèche, and Saint-Ambroix in the Gard. This was the area from which most of the royalist companies of the national guard which assembled at Jalès were drawn.

It was an area which differed little from that further to the South, towards Nîmes. The roles of the capitation of the diocese of Uzès, within which the villages of Berrias, Gravières, Courry, Robiac and others which sent deputations to Jalès lay, indicate a range of activities which, in appearance, were typical of innumerable rural communities in the Bas-Languedoc.<sup>1</sup> The problem of explaining why the reverberations of the events in Nîmes should have been more pronounced in this area cannot be resolved at the level of the village or group of villages. Again, a question of

method is involved. Studies of royalism in Western France have been detailed studies of small regions. They have argued that significant local variations in the degree of "urbanisation", or the distribution of wealth lay behind the political choices adopted in the spring of 1793.<sup>2</sup> Such variations undoubtedly existed within the Sénéchaussée of Nîmes: the towns and villages of the Rhône Valley, from Pont-Saint-Esprit to Aramon and Beaucaire were - to judge from the differentiated range of activities which they housed - more profoundly a part of the economy of exchange than were those of the garrigues of the area to the North of Uzès. Secondly, all the indications are that the region's population grew in the eighteenth century, and there are signs that the landed resources available to many travailleurs de terre (the majority of any rural community) in villages like Berrias and Malbosc were fewer at the end of the century than they had been forty years earlier.<sup>3</sup> Yet there is a problem of precision which remains. The events which occurred at Jalès were the product of a series of formal and informal collective decisions made at a particular time and place. They were the product of a specific perception of a relationship to Nîmes. The purpose of this section is to reconstruct this relationship and to suggest the reasons why the specific form which it took determined the political logic which emerged as royalism in 1790.



Notes - Introduction to Part III

1. This assertion is based upon an examination of the occupations listed on the rolls of the capitation of the diocese of Uzès for 1788-1789, A.D. Gard C1639-40-41. See also below p.
2. C. Tilly, The Vendée, 1964 ; P. Bois, Les Paysans de l'Ouest. Le Mans, 1960; H. Mitchell, Vendée and Counter-Revolution: A Review Essay. Fr.Hist.Studies, v, 1968.pp.405-429.
3. See below p. 386.

Chapter 13 The Sénéchaussée of Nîmes: A Regional Economy



Although smaller in scale, the structure of exchange which ran northwards from Nîmes, duplicated and merged into the network of international commerce of the metropolis. It consisted of circuits of exchange involving corn, wine, leather, wool and silk, and stretched as far as Mende and Marvéjols in the Gévaudan and to Aubenas, Largentière and Villeneuve-de-Berg in the Vivarais. Its local contours were defined by the towns of Uzès, Anduze, Alès, Saint-Jean-du-Gard, Saint-Ambroix, Barjac, Les Vans and Joyeuse - with prolongations eastwards to Bourg-Saint-Andéol, Pont-Saint-Esprit, Bagnols and Beaucaire and south-westwards, through the villages of the Vaunage, to Sommières, Saint-Hippolyte, Le Vigan and Lunel. Each of these centres formed a compound of particular specialities and local-sub-circuits of exchange linked directly or indirectly to the economy of the city. Six of the seven creditors of Bonnal freres of Saint-Jean-du-Gard who went bankrupt in 1780 were from Nîmes. The largest of them was the woollen house Garnier, Puech & Cie in which the Meynier had an interest.<sup>1</sup> The commissionaires of Fornier & Cie of Nîmes, who specialised in woollen cloth, were entirely cévenol: Viala père & fils at Lasalle, Charles Fraissenet & Henri Latour at Anduze, Pierre Belon at Meyrueis near Uzès, Delpuech, Soleirol & Decombe and Aigoïn oncle & neveu at Alès.<sup>2</sup> The abbé de Chapelain, one of the canons of the Cathedral at Mende in the 1780's, bought his vestments from the Boudon of Nîmes who were originally from Saint-Jean-du-Gard and whose presence

in the city was a prolongation of the cévérol town's strategic position along the arc running north-westwards from Nîmes into the Gévaudan which was an established route de laine from the sixteenth century onwards. "Le drap est beau et bon," wrote Boudon in 1789, "Je suis persuadé que vous en serez content. Vous trouverez ci-après la note du montant que vous pourrez faire remettre à MM Bourrillon pere & fils négociants à Mende." And since this was December 1789, "Je suis amplement pourvu de draps et autres articles propres pour les uniformes des milices nationales. Je vous serois obligé de me recommander dans les occasions à vos amis et connoissances."<sup>3</sup>

The network was sustained principally by the traffic in woollen cloth and (by the 1740's at the latest) by the silk industry. But tanning also had its own geography, stretching from Nîmes to Saint-Ambroix, Saint-Jean-du-Gard, Alès and Anduze, intermediaries between the city and the cattle fairs of Langogne and Saint-Chély in the Gévaudan. The Malane of Nîmes were tanners of longstanding. In 1712 Jean Malane marchand tanneur formed a partnership with his son Jean and his daughter-in-law Jeanne Mercier with a capital of 11,000 livres. In 1734 when the association was ended it stood in credit to the sum of 39,534Lt.<sup>4</sup> In 1781 Joseph Marchand representing the firm Marchand, Baridon, Isnard & Cie of Nîmes signed an agreement with the tanner Jean-Baptiste Malane by which the latter undertook to sell him "les peaux de toutes les bêtes qui se tueront pour la fourniture de l'étape tant dudit lieu que de ceux de Connaux et Pouzilhac et des villes d'Uzès et Beaucaire, et par exprès pour l'étape qui sera fournie aux troupes pendant la tenue de la foire/...



de cette dernière ville."<sup>5</sup> By this time however, the leather industry had passed its apogee. Closer regulation of the industry from the 1760's onwards provoked a gradual movement of capital from leather into silk. A description of the departement of the Gard written in the year VIII notes that "on doit distinguer surtout (les tanneries) d'Alais qui .. jusqu'à l'établissement de l'impôt désastreux de la marque des cuirs .. furent portées au plus haut degré d'activite .. (mais) les plus riches fabricans ont depuis longtemps abandonné ce commerce pour celui des soies et autres objets."<sup>6</sup>

"Soies et autres objets" were preponderantly the articles exchanged over a region that stretched as far as the Col d'Escrinet in the Vivarais and beyond Mont Lozère in the Gévaudan. The catchment areas of the silk industries of Lyon and Nîmes covered the Vivarais soyeux, meeting symbolically at the Col d'Escrinet which overlooks Aubenas and, in a sense, divides the Midi méditerranéen from the Midi Lyonnais. Privas, north of the Col d'Escrinet, was very much a colony of Lyon. Its négociants en soie, whose mills still line the Eyrieux between Privas and Chomerac, petitioned for a special chambre publique at Lyon for the sale of their silk in 1780.<sup>7</sup> Aubenas, on the other hand, responded to the economies of Nîmes and Montpellier. Its Manufacture royale de Soie, designed by the mécanicien Jacques Vaucanson, was directed by the Deydier, a Protestant family originally from Montpellier.<sup>8</sup> Further south - at Largentière, Vallon, Joyeuse or Les Vans - the tropisme nimoise was more marked.

The accounts of Pierre Roche, of the village of Jaujac on the eastern fringe of the Cévennes and a little to the west of Aubenas, disclose the attraction of Nîmes with great clarity.<sup>9</sup> Roche would seem to have been a fileur de soie of some substance.<sup>10</sup> In 1791, between early June and the end of July, he bought 83 quintaux,<sup>11</sup> 38 livres and 2 onces of cocoons "qui mon couté ... 11,668 livres 15 sols" from a total of ninety five different sellers. Most of them were from Jaujac or adjoining villages. Roche bought 43lbs 3ozs of cocoons "de la femme de Francois Vignal de La Souche", 60lbs from Jean Rouvière, also of La Souche, 125lbs from Gabriel Planche of Thueyts, 141lbs from Pierre Bastidon of Meyras. Others brought much smaller amounts: 2lbs 4oz from "une personne", 2lbs "d'une femme", 15oz from "un garçon". But the great bulk of the total - some 43% - was acquired from five individuals: a M. de Valleton of Aubenas, who sold him 962lbs of cocoons, a Jean Maurin of the village of Berrias near Les Vans, a notaire, Antoine Durand of Thueyts, a M. Viguiier and an un-named fermier of the demesne of Pontagues at Thueyts, who sold 346lbs 5ozs of cocoons. It is more than probable that these five were intermediaries between the final buyer and a further constellation of smaller sellers in the towns and villages from which they came.

"Ce mercredi, 8e juin 1791 le filozé (sic) a commencé," Roche noted in his cahier. For this he employed ten fileuses and an equal number of tourneuses - all women - who worked for him until the end of August, receiving 18 or 9 sous a day respectively, until the cocoons were spun into raw silk. The silk was then sold.



An Etat des Vantes que j'ay fait et que j'en ai percu, which Roche drew up in December 1791 indicates the geography of his outlets:<sup>12</sup>

2 aoust 1791	vandu à Nismes soye nest payable 85 l 12 onces au prix de 32 monte distraction fait .....	2716	II
19 dud.	à Sr Alzas de Salavas <sup>13</sup> 45 l 12 onces doublon <sup>14</sup> au prix de 12 15s la livre Sur quoy j'ay recu à compte la somme de Plus recu le 2 sept 1791 dud. pour finir .....	350 228	
23 dud.	Robert va vendre à Nismes un balotin pezant net 76 l 13 onces à 32 monte distraction faite .....	2434	
17 sept.	à M. de la Boissonnade de Berias 15 l doublon à 13 la livre ....	193	
	au Sr Murenne la quantité de 278 l 10 onces soye ouvrée et conditionée au prix de 32 10s la livre .....	8965	
14 dec. 1791	au Sr. Helix d'Aubenas 96 l frizon <sup>15</sup> a 23 sols 6d la livre	112	16
	Envoyé à Nismes de ma soye que j'ay vandu au Sr. Robert d'Aubenas au prix de 36 la livre. 58 l 5 onces	2078	5
	Plus .. baillé au Sr. Lalauze 39 l 8 onces soye net et conditioné au prix de 40 la livre à compte des 240 livres que je l'ay vandu. Lesd. 39 l 8 onces	1564	5

Sales to Nimes account for at least 40% of the total value of the silk produced, and probably for more if the destination of the 278 lbs sold to Murenne was known. And this was in 1791, when industry in Nimes was depressed both by the events of the preceeding year, and by the longer term recession in the silk industry<sup>16</sup>. An earlier example illustrates the same orientation. In 1769 the marquis de Rochegude leased the élevage of his silk-worms to two fileurs from the nearby town of Bagnols. The silk was sold to two merchants from Bollène, south of Avignon for 2,721 721 lt 18s 9d,<sup>17</sup> This double movement - of money northwards into/...

the Uzège and the Vivarais, and of silk southwards to the fairs of Alès and Beaucaire, or directly to Nîmes itself - was permanent by the mid-eighteenth century, and formed the structure around which economic and social relations were formed.

This greater metropolitan economy rested upon a multitude of personal connections which led from Nîmes into its arrière-pays. As we have seen, many of the wealthiest families in the city could look to origins (and frequently relatives) in the hinterland. There were still Fornier at Alès, Lezan at Sauve and Boissière at Durfort in 1790. Each of the towns of the region within the Sénéchaussee - Uzès, St. Chaptes, Bagnols, Saint-Ambroix, Les Vans, Alès or Anduze - contained small numbers of prosperous families with important links with Nîmes. A study of the geographical distribution of these patterns of kinship would - for a society like that of eighteenth century France - be almost as illuminating as a study of the relationship between town and country by more traditional means.

Uzès, at four lieux from Nîmes and the same distance from Alès, was a junction for the organsins, trames, chiques, frisons, filozelles and fleurets of the villages of the Uzège and for the petites draperies - molletons of Sommières, molletons of Anduze, cadis de Saint-Mamert, cadis façon d'Orange, pessots, serges d'Alais and serges d'Uzes of the Cévennes. Its largest commercial house - frères Verdier & Abauzit - which regularly paid nearly half of the vingtième levied on the marchands et négociants de tout/...



espèce of the town, dealt in woollen cloth and was a regular buyer at the silk fair of Alès.<sup>18</sup> It was a partnership which was both commercially and personally an extension of Nîmes and Montpellier. Jean Verdier had married Suzanne Allut, the poetess and belle-lettriste of Montpellier in 1769.<sup>19</sup> His brother Jean-Pierre Verdier was married to Anne-Angelique-Justine Allut, Suzanne Verdier Allut's niece. Their brother-in-law Antoine Allut fils, the future deputy of the Gard at the Legislative Assembly, married his second wife, Margueritte-Philipinne Perdriau, "fille de feu M. Jean Perdriau, pasteur et professeur de l'Académie de Genève," at Uzès in 1789.<sup>21</sup> Antoine Allut père had acquired the office of secrétaire du roi and was a member of the Société royale of Montpellier. His son, the Girondin, was educated in Paris and became the Director of the Manufacture royale des Glaces at Ruelle in Burgundy. He was the author of the article on Verrerie in Diderot's Encyclopaedia.<sup>22</sup> In 1764 he received 150,000 lt when he married Margueritte Pomier, whose family was one of the wealthiest in Montpellier.

Uzès was a manufacturing centre of some importance. Its main product was poor quality silk stockings made from

"l'ouvraison de la filoselle et de la bourre de soye, les mauvais cocons et les brins étant filés eux-mêmes, produisant une sorte de soie grossière que l'on peigne à la carde. L'on en fait des bas de grasses etoffes."<sup>23</sup>

These silk stockings were "l'objet le plus considérable du commerce de l'Uzège."<sup>24</sup> A Notte des metiers a faire bas/...

qu'il ya dans la ville d'Uzès written in 1779<sup>25</sup> - a year of recession - offers a clear image of the importance of the industry. "Il y a dans la ville 415 metiers tout compris," it reports, "savoir:

40 metiers à soie battants.  
10 metiers à soie sans travailler.  
290 metiers en filozée battants.  
55 metiers en filozée sans travailler faute d'ouvrage.  
20 metiers battants en laine.

"Le fleuret qu'on emploie à la fabrique des bas de cette ville," it continues, "se fabrique à Bagnols et à Orange. On le fait filer dans les vilages des environs de la ville d'Uzes. "Le débouché et la consommation de ces bas se font en partie à Nîmes, à des marchands qui les vendent aux foires de Pézénas, Beaucaire, Bordeaux, Lyon et autres foires et dans l'étranger et l'autre part est expédiée par les fabricants sur Lyon, Toulouse, Paris et en Allemagne et dans la Provence et principalement dans le royaume d'Espagne."

The position of Nîmes within this commercial network was fundamental. Stocking manufacturers "ont coutume de porter leurs bas à Nîmes chez l'appreteur qui fait aussi fonction de courtier et achète comptant."<sup>26</sup> Peschier frères of Nîmes, who went bankrupt in 1786, had a comptoir on the rue de Massargues at Uzès, run by Gaspard Roman & Ivan "commis ou associés."<sup>27</sup> Roux frères of Nîmes was an extension of a well established commercial house in Uzès which had correspondents at San Sebastian, Barcelona and Cadiz, and - for a time - a member of the family, Francois Roux, on the Cap Francais.<sup>28</sup> Frères Verdier & Abauzit was the most important result of the interdependence of the two towns.



On a smaller scale, the little town of Les Vans, on the eastern fringe of the Cévennes and at the northern end of this réseau d'affaires, was locked into a similar relationship with Nîmes. In 1759 it was said to have 268 families inside its walls, of whom 185 were catholic and 73 religionnaires.<sup>29</sup> In 1787 - 1788, according to the Déclarations de mariages protestants, there were some 250 Protestants in the town out of a total of about a thousand inhabitants.<sup>30</sup> In 1793 Les Vans was said to have a population of 1,693, of whom between a quarter and a third were Protestant.<sup>31</sup> The Protestant community formed the minority of the population - as it did at Saint-Ambroix and Uzès. But the wealthiest families in the town, the Chambon, Colomb and Lahondès, were all Protestants.<sup>32</sup>

The trajectory followed by the Vernède of Les Vans, who were established in Nîmes by the last decade of the seventeenth century, was one which was repeated regularly during the following eighty years.<sup>33</sup> Baissac & Cie of Nîmes, which dealt in silk in the decade before 1789, was a small enterprise run by Joseph Baissac, the son of a notaire at Les Vans. He had settled in the city in 1775, and four years later, he married a nîmoise - Jeanne Roussel - who brought him 8,000 Lt as her dowry. Present at the marriage were Julien Ferry and Mathieu Blanc<sup>34</sup>, both substantial dealers in colonial goods and corn in Nîmes. His house, on the rue de l'Espic, was the meeting place of the lodge La Bienfaisance, which had been founded by Rabaut-Dupuy in 1783, and to which Jacques-Marie Lahondès also belonged.<sup>35</sup> In 1790, when Rabaut-Dupuy became the juge de paix of the 2e arrondissement of Nîmes, Baissac became his assesseur.

His brother, François-Scipion Baissac, a lawyer and notaire at Les Vans, became the procureur of the commune in 1790 and Mayor of the town in 1792 when its royalist municipality was suspended after the third Camp de Jalès. Two of his relatives, Jean-Baptiste and Pierre Baissac, were respectively members of the municipality and the comité de surveillance at the same time. These connections saved Joseph Baissac from the guillotine in 1793, when the société populaire of Les Vans, whose President was Joseph Lahondes, and whose comité de correspondance was headed by François-Scipion Baissac, successfully petitioned the représentant Boisset to obtain his release from prison in Nîmes.<sup>36</sup>

The Lahondès, who owned the largest filature de soie in Les Vans in the mid-eighteenth century,<sup>37</sup> were notables in the town of long-standing, with connections with Nîmes dating back to the first decade of the eighteenth century, when Antoine Lahondès settled there to become a procureur at the Présidial. His descendants included at least two conseillers au Présidial.<sup>38</sup> Two of his nephews, Pierre and Jacques-Marie Lahondès, also moved to Nîmes, but as négociants rather than lawyers. They maintained a close commercial association with their relatives in Les Vans.<sup>39</sup> This branch of the family appears to have partially abandoned commerce in favour of the land by the 1780's. Joseph Lahondès bought the seigneurie of the village of La Figère in the mountains above Les Vans, and was also one of the six co-seigneurs of the town itself. His son Louis Lahondes de la Figère, married a des Hours de Calviac.



"La cousine Janneton est à La Salle" reported Francois de Manoël to his cousin Marc-Antoine in Turin in 1778, "Elle a été appelee par son amie Mlle de Calviac qui s'est mariée avec Mr. Lahondes de la Figère. On dit le mariage tres avantageux pour la Dlle ..." <sup>40</sup>

The marriage made Louis Lahondès de la Figère the brother-in-law of Jean-Baptiste Chambon, seigneur of Uzas, Le Petit Paris and Chaptines, all villages in the same area to the west of Les Vans as La Figère, who married Marie des Hours de Calviac in 1779. It was more of a renewal of an alliance, however, since Joseph Lahondès had married Jeanne Chambon, one of Jean-Baptiste's aunts, towards 1750. <sup>41</sup> The Chambon were the wealthiest family in Les Vans in 1788. <sup>42</sup> The family's wealth was of recent origin. Jean-Baptiste Chambon was the son of a médecin, himself the son of a maître-apoticaire (Jean Chambon) who died at Les Vans in 1763 at the age of ninety, leaving fourteen children. It is probable that the fortune rested upon the commerce des drogueries animated by the great Montpellier-La Rochelle axis. <sup>43</sup> Like the Lahondès, their connection with the Des Hours de Calviac of Alès and Lasalle was one of an extensive range of alliances with the noblesse cénévole which extended from Les Vans to Montpellier. In January 1783, Jeanne-Julie Chambon, Jean-Baptiste's sister, was married to Jacques-Melchior Benezet, seigneur of Gènerargues and La Blaquièrre, who lived at Anduze. Three months later, her sister, Henriette, was married to another anobli, Jean-Pierre Rieu, seigneur of Montvaillant, Thelisses, Le Pradel, Montlucon, La Roquette, Le Mazel and co-seigneur of Anduze, Saint-Jean-du-Gard and Mialet. <sup>44</sup>

Their brother, Chambon d'Uzas, was - typically - a soldier, a gendarme de la garde du Roi in 1787 and a member of the Lodge des Neuf Soeurs in Paris.<sup>45</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Chambon was also a cousin of the négociant Pierre Colomb, whose family remained more profoundly attached to the world of commerce throughout the eighteenth century and gravitated less towards the landed Protestant aristocracy of the Cévennes than did the Chambon. This was probably because the Colomb were integrated more deeply into the commercial élite of Nîmes. When Pierre Colomb died in 1808 at the age of 78, his only son Henri was said to have inherited a sum of 800,000 F - a fortune which made him the wealthiest man in the Ardèche, wealthier than either Jean Johannot or Etienne Montgolfier in Annonay.

"La nature de son commerce est l'achat et la vente des soies. Il a une filature de 80 tours qui font 100 quintaux de soie. Ils font des affaires pour environ 4 à 500,000 F. La produit de leur commerce est évaluée 30,000 F. Leur fortune en capital et en immeubles 300,000 F, en mobilier ou fonds de commerce 400,000 F,"

reports an enquête of 1810.<sup>46</sup> This sum (immense by the relatively low standards of the Ardèche) was probably inflated by the estates of relatives in Nîmes who were executed during the year II.

Like many of the wealthiest Protestant families in the South-east, the Colomb were fairly substantial notables in the late seventeenth century. Henri Colomb, marchand des Vans, who died dans la religion de Calvin in 1717,<sup>47</sup> had married Lucrece de Faget, whose family, as seigneurs du Curtil, de Bres and other hamlets in the Vivarais, hovered on the threshold of catholicism throughout the eighteenth century and gravitated towards the local administration...



royale first as sub-délégués of the Intendant and later as relatives by marriage of the military governor of the Cévennes de la Coste, ultimately to adopt the unspectacular royalisme des fonctionnaires of the revolutionary period. At least two of Henri Colomb's five sons moved to Nîmes in the early eighteenth century. In 1721 Jean-Louis Colomb, "natif de la ville des Vans habitant de cette ville depuis environ dix années," married François Gausson, the daughter of Pierre Gausson, marchand droguiste of Nîmes. His bride's dowry was the sum of 3,500 Lt. Present when the contract was signed were his brother Jean-Pierre Colomb, marchand de soye de Nîmes, and his cousins, the lawyer Antoine Lahondès and Henry Faget, a merchant at Nîmes.<sup>48</sup> During the following six decades they and their descendents were involved in a cluster of maisons de commerce - Colomb freres, Colomb & Vialla, Colomb & Maigre, Louis Maigre & Cie - of national, if not international dimensions.<sup>49</sup> The marriage of one of Benjamin Colomb's daughters to François Boissy d'Anglas, the son of the Conventionnel was the product of the connections formed in the City.<sup>50</sup>

The Colomb of Les Vans were an extension of this powerful reseau d'affaires. They, in their turn, were also members of a smaller network running into the Hautes-Cévennes and towards the calvinist enclaves of the Uzège. Henri Colomb II (1688 - 1759) was married twice - the first time to Magdeleine Triadon, who died in 1724, and the second time to Margueritte de Cheyla, the daughter of a Protestant noblial in 1729. His eldest son, the/...

Pierre Colomb who died in 1808, married Jeanne Chambon of Les Vans in 1746, while one of his daughters married a Silhol from Saint-Ambroix in 1763.<sup>51</sup> Pierre's son, Henri Colomb III, married Jeanne Servièrre, the daughter of Louis Servièrre and Marguerite de Parlier of the Pont-de-Montvert, and the brother of the Conventionnel Laurens Servièrre, in 1772. She brought him the sum of 35,000 Lt as her dowry.<sup>52</sup> Henri's sister, Magdeleine, was married to a notaire and lawyer of Les Vans in 1783 - Pierre-Francois Merle, whose father was an ancien of the Reformed church of Les Vans and a close friend of the pastor Simon Lombard.<sup>53</sup> She received 11,000 Lt as her dowry,<sup>54</sup> which would mean that her father's fortune stood at somewhere around 88,000 livres. Her two sisters also married locally: Marguerite to Jean-Louis Ribot, bourgeois des Vans, whose uncle, Pierre Ribot was a pastor and whose cousins were négociants at Nîmes - and Marie to her cousin Jean-Louis Silhol, the son of Pierre Silhol and Marguerite Colomb of Saint-Ambroix. Present at this latter marriage in 1790 were Leyris Colomb, négociant of Nîmes, Louis Silhol, négociant of Montpellier, Pierre Fabre négociant of Saint-Ambroix, Pierre-Francois and Louis Merle, notaire and expert from Les Vans.<sup>55</sup>

The close connection between the Colomb of Les Vans and the Silhol of Saint-Ambroix was typical of the wider relationship between the Protestant notability of the two towns. With a population of about 2,300 in 1788, of whom some 700 were Protestant, the town was something of an entrepôt between the Bas-Vivarais/...



and the metropolis. Its notables - the Silhol, Servier, Guisquet, Guiraud, Ginhoux, Deleuze, Fabre, Roure, Joubaud and Escoffier - were entirely Protestant and both independently, and through their relatives the Lahondès, the Chambon, and the Colomb, were members of a profoundly metropolitan system of exchanges and connections.

The Ginhoux, relatives of the Guizot of Nîmes were lawyers and négociants. In 1773 Louis Ginhoux was given 8,992 Lt by his brother Pierre, seigneur de la Liquière, of which 3,892 Lt was provided in corn "pour faciliter ledit Sr Louis Ginhoux dans son commerce."<sup>56</sup> Their cousin Jean-Baptiste-François-Guillaume de Ginhoux, the son of François de Gignoux of Nîmes, returned to France in 1774 after a period with his relatives in Holland. He succeeded his uncle Guillaume de Ginhoux d'Aubord in 1779 and ceded the demesne of Aubord in the Vaunage to Jean-Antoine Guizot, whose aunt, Suzanne-Henriette de Ginhoux had married the pastor Jean Guizot in 1761.<sup>57</sup> This tight association between commerce, the liberal and military professions and the Reformed church itself was typical of the circle. The lawyer François Domergue was married to Françoise DePossac, whose sisters were married to Daniel Farel of Montpellier, Henri-César Vincens of Nîmes and Jean-Baptiste Arndt of Lyon.<sup>58</sup> His son, Jacques Domergue, who was also an avocat, married a nîmoise de Marseille, Elisabeth de Malbois in 1768 and was therefore the brother-in-law of Jacques Fornier of Marseille, and through his mother-in-law, a relative of the Liquier of Nîmes, who traded at Naples under the raison/...

sociale of Liquier & Falconnet and opened a cotton works at Montpellier, towards 1776, under the name of Pierre Seymandy, Liquier & Cie.<sup>59</sup>

Principally, however, these links with Nîmes were the result of the commerce in silk and corn. François Guisquet left Saint-Ambroix to settle in Nîmes (where he dealt in silks under the name of François Guisquet & Cie) in 1771. In 1781 he married Jeanne Girard of Nîmes, whose father had been a member of the firms Antoine Girard, Cavailon & Cazeing freres and Antoine Girard, d'Huc & Cavailon which were liquidated in 1779.<sup>60</sup> The Guisquet of Saint-Ambroix were relatives of Louis Silhol de Saint-Julien, whose daughter Jeanne was married to the lawyer Vincent Guisquet  fils. They thus had access to a compact group of partnerships formed between the Silhol and their relatives the Servier - to whom the Colomb of Les Vans were also related.<sup>61</sup> Louis Silhol de Saint-Julien was married to Marguerite Servier. Her sister, Marie Servier married his cousin Louis Silhol, the son of Antoine Silhol and Louise Lahondès in 1779.<sup>62</sup> This latter Louis Silhol was associated with his brothers-in-law Pierre and Louis Servier in the silk and corn trade. His elder brother Jacques, who married Suzanne Joubaud, the daughter of Jean Joubaud and Suzanne Servier, in 1773, was given 12,000 Lt as his portion by their father, of which 6,000 Lt was to be paid "le jour que la société qu'ils se proposent de traiter de jour en jour pour fait de leur commerce sera dissolue."<sup>63</sup> In 1782 the family became relatives of the Fabre of Uzès by the marriage of the bourgeois Pierre-Guillaume Fabre to Anne-Henriette Joubaud.<sup>64</sup>



To the west of Saint-Ambroix lay Alès, Saint-Jean-du-Gard and Anduze, authentically cévenol towns whose population throughout the eighteenth century remained overwhelmingly Protestant. In 1738 the parish of Saint-Etienne d'Anduze was said to have a population of 500 Catholics out of a total of some 4,000. The proportion was similar in the larger town of Alès and at Saint-Jean-du-Gard there were only "un petit nombre de catholiques" among the town's two thousand inhabitants.<sup>65</sup> In 1778, Rabaut Saint-Etienne estimated that the proportions were similar.<sup>66</sup> Around the three towns lay dozens of villages and hamlets - Lasalle, Mialet, Saint-André-de-Valborgne, Le Pompidou, le Pont-de-Monvert - tiny gilded outposts of the major centres of eighteenth century commerce. Uzès, Alès, Les Vans and Saint-Ambroix were the most important links in this chain linking Nîmes to its hinterland. As this sketch shows, it would be wrong to think that the history of any one of these places could be written independently of the history of Nîmes.

This sketch also reveals a double ambiguity. The Protestant notability of the hinterland was, on the one hand, an autochthonous élite. It was the product of a dense complex of capital and influence accumulated locally over generations. Its power was experienced locally by its debtors, by its tenants

and by the men and women to whom it gave work. At the same time, however, the process of accumulation was accompanied by a range of association - both personal and cultural - which transcended the local and the particular. By the 1780's the leading Protestant families of the hinterland belonged as much to the world of the trente demoiselles de Genève, as they did to the austere elegant little towns on the threshold of the Cévennes. The relationship between these groups of families and the Protestant elite of Nîmes was fundamental. The city was the pole to which they were drawn. Its lodges and salons were duplicated at Les Vans by the Colomb, the Lahondes and the Chambon, at Uzès by the Verdier-Allut group, at Alès and at Saint Ambroix.<sup>67</sup> High in the Cévennes, in the tiny village of Le Pompidou, lay the Auberge du Palais-Royal, which belonged to the Parlier, whose connections with the H.S.P. nîmoise dated back to the early eighteenth century.<sup>68</sup> The name alone is a commentary upon a social world.

Secondly, it was an elite which, despite the legal disqualifications to which it was subject, had access to almost all areas of social power. Only the highest echelons of the royal administration fell outside of its immediate sphere of influence.



In traditionally Calvinist enclaves, like Saint-Hyppolite or Saint-Jean-du-Gard the integration was monolithic, but even at Les Vans or Saint-Ambroix, where the Protestant community was in a minority, there were notaires, procureurs, avocats and médécins whose children were regularly baptised in the Desert.<sup>69</sup> Essentially this was a reflection of the distribution of wealth. In all of the cévenol towns running from Le Vigan to Les Vans, Protestants controlled the largest proportion of property and revenue. At Saint-Hippolyte in 1788, the Protestant community paid a total of 22,544 Lt in annual taxation (taille, capitation and vingtième); the catholics paid 5,328 Lt. At Saint-Jean-du-Gard the proportions were 16,653 Lt to 2,295 Lt.<sup>70</sup> At Alès a "Liste des MM les citoyens d'Alais qui sont dans le cas d'être élus aux charges municipales" drawn up in 1767, and from which Protestants were excluded automatically, contains no négociant, no tanner and only two marchands de soie.<sup>71</sup> Commerce was thus overwhelmingly Protestant, as, to a lesser extent, it was at Nimes.<sup>72</sup>

Nimes thus lay at the centre of a web of relationships which led from a town or village in the Gévaudan or the Bas-Vivarais to the world of commodity production. "Quand vous trouverez Madame de Merde," a woman in the village of Grospierres was said to have shouted about a neighbour in 1754, "dites-lui d'aller au bordel de Nismes où l'on l'attend."<sup>73</sup> She was unconsciously echoing the same orientation.

Notes - Chapter 13

1. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 1087 8-4-1780.
2. D. Fabre, "Une Maison de Commerce nîmoise au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle: Fornier & Cie". Mémoire de Maîtrise, Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier, 1970. pp.72-84.
3. A.D. Gard. 1E (unclassified) Fonds Chapelain, 43. Boudon to Chapelain, 5-12-1789.
4. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>37</sup> 270 fo398.
5. Id. 2E<sup>39</sup> 207 fo82v<sup>o</sup>
6. B.M. Avignon Mss 1868 fo200.
7. A.N. F<sup>12</sup>1439, 7-6-1780. See also A.D. Hérault. C2295, for the importance of Privas and Chomerac as silk producers in the Haut-Vivarais. This close connection with Lyon has been greatly overemphasised by the historian of the silk industry in the Vivarais - E.Keynier, La Soie en Vivarais, Largentière, 1931 - so that the close connection between the industry of the Bas-Vivarais and Nîmes is almost entirely ignored.
8. A. Doyon & L. Liaigre, Jacques Vaucanson: Mecanicien de Genie. Paris, 1966. J. Charay, "La Manufacture de Soie à Aubenas au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle." Actes du XLIV<sup>e</sup> Congrès de La Fédération historique du Languedoc-Roussillon. Montpellier, 1972 pp.207-214.
9. A.D. Ardèche. L 1297. The liasse contains two cahiers, running from 1791 to 1793. They are un-named, but a copy of a receipt in Cahier A fo73 indicates the name of their owner.
10. An Alexis Roche of Jaujac, assesseur de juge de paix, owned a "fabrique de soie qui peut monter 50 quintaux de soie" in 1810. "Il fait des affaires pour 100,000 F." A.D. Ardèche 5M 3.
11. 1 quintal = 100 pounds.
12. A.D. Ardèche. L 1297 Cahier A. fo27.
13. Arrondissement of Largentière (Ardèche).
14. Silk made from double cocoons.
15. Broken threads of silk.



16. See above p.186-7.
17. A.D. Ardèche. J422.
18. A.D. Gard. C1865-1700 (rolls of the vingtième d'industrie, diocese of Uzes). A.C. Alès IJ2.
19. M.E. Germer-Durand, "Fragments de Biographies Académiques." Mémoires de l'Académie du Gard, 1864-65. pp.340-355.
20. A.D. Hérault. 2E<sup>57</sup>849 fo551v<sup>o</sup>.
21. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>42</sup>248 fo238; 2E<sup>42</sup>255 fo229v<sup>o</sup>.
22. A.N. MC XLIII 450 3-3-1768, Union des Créanciers de la Manufacture de Ruelle. See also J. Proust, L'Encyclopédisme dans le Bas-Languedoc au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle. Montpellier, 1968, p.54.
23. B.N. Fonds Benedictins T.22 fo32.
24. A phrase repeated in many descriptions, see A.D. Hérault. C2635.
25. A.C. Uzès. HH I.
26. A.D. Hérault. C2635.
27. A.D. Gard. G1057.
28. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>44</sup>11 ff205 & 383.
29. B.N. Fonds Benedictins. T.22.ff.63-116.
30. J. Schnetzler, "L'Evolution Religieuse d'Une Communauté Cévenole aux Temps modernes: Les Vans." Cahiers d'Histoire, XI, 1966 pp.37-46. A.D. Hérault C4680.
31. A.D. Ardèche. L923.
32. A.D. Gard. C1637 Capitation of Les Vans, 1788.
33. On the Vernède, see above p. 89 and D. Fabre, op.cit.
34. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup>206 fo63v<sup>o</sup>
35. See above p.231
36. B.M. Bar-Le-Duc. Mss 197F; A.D. Ardèche L1248
37. A.D. Gard. C1868.

38. J. Villain, La France Moderne: Dictionnaire généalogique, historique et biographique, T.II. (Drôme & Ardèche). Saint-Etienne, 1908.
39. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>44</sup> 10 fo323v<sup>0</sup>.
40. A.D. Gard. 1E 2085.
41. A.C. Les Vans Registres protestants for the baptism of a child 8-3-1751.
42. A.D. Gard. C1637.
43. See L. Dermigny, "De Montpellier à La Rochelle: Route de Commerce, Route de Medicine." Annales du Midi, T.67.1955.
44. A.C. Les Vans Reg.Prot. 13-1-1783, 12-4-1783.
45. J. Chambon, Un Couple d'Emigres sous la Révolution. Montpellier, 1964.
46. A.D. Ardèche. 5M 3.
47. A.C. Les Vans Reg.Prot. I am grateful to M. Henri Strohl of Les Vans, a descendant of the Colomb, for his help in reconstructing the family's genealogy.
48. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 768 fo356.
49. See above p.170.
50. A.D. Ardèche. J238.
51. A.C. Les Vans. Reg.Prot. 11-1-1729, 8-5-1751, 5-8-1763.
52. A.D. Lozère. IIIIE 4483 20-10-1772.
53. C. Dardier, La Vie des Etudiants au Désert d'Après La Correspondance de l'Un d'Eux: Simon Lombard. Geneva, 1893.
54. A.D. Ardèche. 3Q 3140; A.C. Les Vans. Reg.Prot. 19-5-1783.
55. A.C. Les Vans. Reg.Prot. 17-6-1771, 12-10-1779; 19-4-1790.
56. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>51</sup> 644 fo765.
57. C. Pouthas, La Jeunesse de Guizot. Paris, 1934.
58. A.D. Gard FFC.71.
59. A.C. Nîmes UU 117fo64v<sup>0</sup>. On these families see L. Dermigny



Cargaisons Indiennes (q.v.) and H. Lüthy, La Banque Protestante en France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siecle (q.v.).

60. A.D. Gard. 2E 39 207 fo 302v; A.C. Nîmes, UU 149 fo 210.
61. A.C. Saint-Ambroix. GG 18, 13-6-1775.
62. Id. 22-1-1779.
63. A.D. Gard. 2E 51 644 fo 812.
64. A.C. Saint-Ambroix. GG 18, 10-1-1782.
65. A.D. Gard. G 1317.
66. See N. Weiss "Le Nombre des Religionnaires des Diocèses d'Alais et de Mende en 1778..." B.S.H.P.F. T.37, 1888, pp.683-6.
67. On this local "enlightenment", see M. Tallon, Histoire Civile, Politique et Religieuse d'Une Ville du Languedoc: Les Vans. Privas, 1884-1888.
68. Journal de Nîmes, 26-1-1786.
69. The Lahondès, Merle and Baissac of Les Vans, for example.
70. Bibliothèque de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français. Mss 340.
71. A.C. Alès. IKI.
72. See above p.194, 231.
73. A.D. Ardèche. 44B 25.

Chapter 14    The Village Economy and the  
Development of the Silk Industry



Two roads led from Nîmes into its hinterland. The first ran westwards towards the Cévennes, passing through Anduze, Saint-Jean-du-Gard and Alès. The second ran northwards to Uzès - then northwards again to Saint-Ambroix, Barjac and the Vivarais. These were the great arteries of popular migration into the City. A thirty year old carpenter named Louis Christophe, from Sabuscles in the commune of Malbosc in the Ardèche, who was arrested near Les Vans on July 12th 1792 on suspicion of complicity in Saillans' rebellion, stated that he had left his village on April 1st to travel to Beaucaire, "pour faire les vers à soie chez M. François Bannave, teneur de ladite ville":

"J'arrivai vers le 4 dudit mois et je partis le onze juin de Beaucaire pour me rendre à Nîmes où je vendais la soie que j'avois eu de mes cocons. De là, je passai à Manduel pour moissonner; de Manduel je me suis rendu de nouveau à Nîmes, où je fis moissonner au mas de la Tour appartenant au beau-frère du Sr Bousquet, marchand de soie à Nîmes et de là je fus moissonner chez ledit Sr Bousquet, jusqu'au huit du courant, jour duquel je partis pour me rendre chez moy."

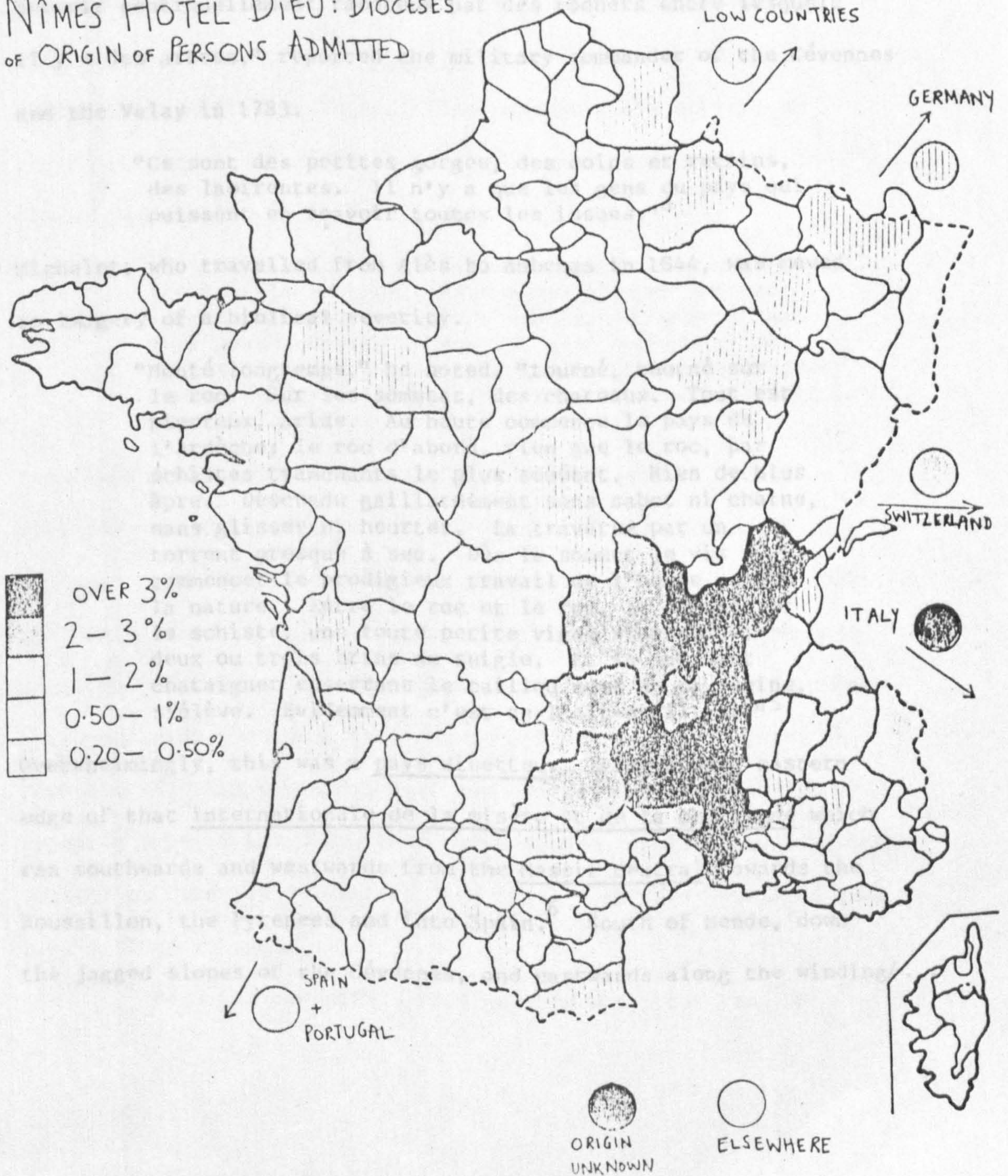
He was able to produce five witnesses to verify his statement, and was acquitted.

This itinerary was followed seasonally, or for longer periods, by hundreds of men and women from the villages to the north of Nîmes. Between 1789 and 1799, 6.7% of the 1,781 individuals who died at the Hôpital-general or at the Hôtel-Dieu of Nîmes, had come from the Ardèche; 5.2% had come from the Lozère, and 18.9% from the Gard (both north and south of Nîmes). Only 1.7% were from the Hérault.<sup>2</sup> The geographical origins of those admitted to



These indications disclose a zone of poverty, a zone the Hôtel Dieu of Nîmes throughout the eighteenth century reveal a similar pattern. The poor, who made up the great mass of the itinerant population were overwhelmingly natives of the dioceses of Uzès, Viviers and Mende, of the garrigues and hills of the Vivarais and the Gévaudan.<sup>3</sup>

NÎMES HÔTEL DIEU: DIOCESES OF ORIGIN OF PERSONS ADMITTED





These indications disclose a zone of poverty, a zone which corresponds to the catchment area of the greater metropolitan economy. This area, which was bounded by the dioceses of Uzès, Alès and Viviers between 1694 and 1790, was notoriously infertile and traditionally deficient in corn. It was a wild and often remote region. "Il y a, en coupant tout droit des Assions à Bane, un terroir continuellement raboteux par des rochers entre lesquels il y a des arbres," reported the military commander of the Cévennes and the Velay in 1783.

"Ce sont des petites gorges, des coins et recoins, des labirentes. Il n'y a que les gens du pays qui puissent en sçavoir toutes les issues."<sup>4</sup>

Michelet, who travelled from Alès to Aubenas in 1844, was moved to imagery of a biblical severity.

"Monté longtemps," he noted, "tourné, tourné sur le roc. Sur les sommets, des châteaux. Tout est pierreux, aride. Au haute commence le pays de l'Ardèche; le roc d'abord, rien que le roc, par schistes tranchants le plus souvent. Rien de plus âpre. Descendu gaillardement sans sabot ni chaîne, sans glisser ni heurter. La traverse par un torrent presque à sec. Dès le sommet je vis commencer le prodigieux travail de l'homme contre la nature. Entre le roc et le roc, le schiste et le schiste, une toute petite vigne s'accroche; deux ou trois brins de seigle. Et le puissant chataigner enserrant le caillou même de sa racine, s'élève. Evidemment c'est de l'air qu'il vit."<sup>5</sup>

Overwhelmingly, this was a pays disetteux, lying on the eastern edge of that internationale de la misère et de la châtaigne which ran southwards and westwards from the Massif central towards the Roussillon, the Pyrenees and into Spain.<sup>6</sup> South of Mende, down the jagged slopes of the Cévennes, and eastwards along the winding/...

valleys of the Chassezac and the Gardons, chestnuts replaced rye as the staple of peasant diet.<sup>7</sup> They were harvested in October, dried, and used to make a gruel which served as a substitute for bread. From Villefort, as far east as Pont-Saint-Esprit, and as far south as Uzès, chestnuts were the predominant source of local subsistence. "Comme nous pensons et nous sommes même persuadés que le nombre des habitants du Bas-Vivarais est de cent-soixante mille," the sub-délégué at Aubenas reported in 1786, " (et) qu'il faut selon l'idée commune trois setiers de grains pesant chacun cent-trente livres pour la nourriture de chaque individu ...

"il s'en suit qu'il en faudroit quatre cent quatre-vingt mille setiers. Mais comme l'expérience nous apprend que tout ce qui est peuple, ou du moins un très grand nombre, se nourrit avec des châtaignes au lieu de pain pendant une grande partie de l'année, nous pensons qu'il faut réduire cette quantité à trois cent mille setiers."<sup>8</sup>

Chestnuts thus accounted for almost a quarter of the annual subsistence consumption in the Bas-Vivarais. In particular villages, the proportion could be considerably higher. But even with this alternative, the region remained permanently dependent upon imported corn. The Bas-Vivarais produced enough corn to feed its population for about five and a half months of the year; the Cévennes for only two and a half months. The diocese of Alès required between three and four times as much grain as it produced locally to feed its population; the diocese of Uzès nearly one and a half times as much.<sup>9</sup>

These are averages. Real poverty was a function of/...



the particular - of the death of a husband, or the birth of a fifth or sixth child, of a hail-storm or a sudden frost or a flood which washed away the terraces built up the slopes of the hills. In 1767, when the setier of chestnuts cost 4 Lt on the market of Les Vans and 4 Lt at Villefort after a bitterly cold winter,<sup>10</sup> over half the population of most of the villages of the Bas-Vivarais was in need of charitable relief.<sup>11</sup> Poverty was a function of the arid, stony, infertile ground upon which so many of the villages of the arrière pays nîmois were situated. Here is a description of the economy of the tiny community of La Figère, the village in the mountains to the west of Les Vans whose seigneur in 1789 was Joseph Lahondès.

La paroisse de la Figère ... est située sur un sol extrêmement en pente ... Son terroir est soutenu par des murailles qui forment ce qu'on appelle vulgairement des acols d'environ deux cannes de largeur ... Les murailles, qui s'éboulent très souvent d'elles-mêmes, coutent des travaux immenses aux habitans ... Souvent meme les torrens des eaux qui dessendent des Rochers superieurs dans des tems de pluye et de neige faisant ébouler les murailles emportent toute la terre et ... il ne reste que les rochers ...

Les denrées qui se cuillent dans la paroisse consistent en vin, chataignes, feuille de meurier, jardinage et quelque peu de foin.

La principale récolte est en vin ... Le vin est d'une qualité si mediocre que si on le comparoit à la piquette du Vivarais à coup sur elle seroit trouvée meilleure ... Pour en faire la vente, il faut attendre au mois d'aoust tems où le vin devient rare en Vivarais ... Alors chaque particulier est obligé d'aller lui-même ou d'envoyer un exprès au Petit-Paris qui dessendent en Vivarais ou qui en reviennent ...

Ce n'est qu'en faisant une condition tres avantageuse aux voituriers qu'on peut les obliger de venir a La Figere a cause de la mauvaise qualite de vin et parce que le chemin est presque impracticable ... Il arrive souvent qu'on est oblige de faire cinq ou six voyages au Petit-Paris pour vendre un tonneau de vin ... Cette denree, quoyque la principale est d'un bien petit secours et ... elle ne peut jamais fournir a l'achat du bleds que chaque particulier consomme.

Les habitants de La Figere n'ont d'autres ressources pour vendre leurs denrees que de les porter sur le dos aux marche de Villefort ou des Vans ... Pour les y porter, on est oblige de manger la moitie du produit desdites denrees - ce qui est aisee a prouver en ce qui un particulier va au marche des Vans porter deux quartes de chataignes. Il en tire un trentaine de sols, meme cette annee (1790) que les chataignes se vendent beaucoup. Ce qui luy fait trois livres. Distrasons en trente sols pour sa nourriture ou pour sa journee, il luy reste donc trente sols de ses deux quartes.<sup>12</sup>

This was clearly a far cry from the Lauraguais, still more from the Beauce. Each parish, and the cluster of hamlets around the central nucleus, had its own economy. At La Figere, on the eastern slopes of the Hautes-Cevennes, it was based upon viticulture. At Prevencheres or Brahic, to the East, it was based upon the chestnut, as it was invariably along the Cevennes to Le Vigan and Ganges. Still further eastwards, in the garrigues of the Uzege, the chestnut gave way to rye, and on the better soil of the west bank of the Rhone towards Bagnols, to wheat, whose average price throughout the eighteenth century rose the further northwards and westwards from Nimes a community was located.



Generalisation, however qualified, conceals as much that is particular as it indicates an overall pattern of agricultural production and distribution into which each local economy was integrated. Here the patchwork of tiny plots of land was turned over to vines and rye, there to olive trees and rye: prés, terres et vignes, vignes et hermes, terres et oliviers, terres et hermes, hermes, jardins, oliviers, vignes are noted with greater or lesser regularity in the compoix terrien of each community, changing in their frequency from taillable to taillable as the size and the nature of the soil of each piece of land determined what was grown upon it. At Le Pin, in the garrigues of the Uzège, 21% of the land was given over to viticulture in 1735; at Chusclan, on the Cèze near Bagnols, the proportion was 55% in 1736; at Saint-Hilaire-d'Ozilhan in the valley of the Gardon, 15% of the terroir was turned over to viticulture in 1750.<sup>13</sup> It was a polyculture whose variety was a function of the poverty of available resources, and whose basic units of production formed a mosaic of tiny pieces of land of between one and five hectares each, scattered over the garrigues.<sup>14</sup>

The famous compoix of the Languedoc offer an image of rural production and the social distribution of property at a given moment of time. They offer an opportunity for comparison between different epochs by the juxtaposition of the images which they present. They offer an image of change, but they fail to disclose the mechanisms by which such mutations were effected. By the eighteenth century, land had become a commodity. It was leased, subjected to rentes of an infinite

complexity, sold and re-sold. Ideally a study of the registers of the bureaux de l'enregistrement, were they continuous or complete, would make it possible to describe the rhythms of this process of accumulation and déchéance at a local level.<sup>15</sup> A second approach, however, is offered by the rural silk industry. For it was through its development during the eighteenth century - and the extension of the mechanisms of exchange, credit and monetary circulation which this development entailed - that capital locked into poverty and permanently distorted the structure of seigneurial society.

This process lies at the core of eighteenth century French society. Power in rural society was essentially seigneurial power, manifested in the homage of a vassal to his seigneur, exercised through the institutions of seigneurial authority, seigneurial patronage and seigneurial discretion, and underpinned by the body of customary obligations and monetary dues which transferred scores of individual incomes to a single lord. Ideally it was a self-contained system, extending vertically from seigneur to vassal, so that seigneurial appropriation was complimented by seigneurial justice and seigneurial protection. Material base and institutional function coincided. In the eighteenth century, however, this coincidence became less frequent, and this fundamental ambiguity lies at the heart of the long and often acrimonious debate over the meaning of feudalism in eighteenth century France.<sup>16</sup> By now, the fact of seigneurial appropriation - its place as an element (and, in certain regions, the major element)/...



in seigneurial revenues, and as a proportion of peasant expenditure requires little demonstration.<sup>17</sup> It can be shown that the seigneur of a particular demesne enjoyed a certain annual revenue, of which a certain proportion was made up of feudal dues, which represented a certain proportion of a peasant's annual income. This has been the method employed by M. Soboul and M. Mazauric.<sup>18</sup> It is one which is, essentially, limited to analysis of a single social relationship - that between a seigneur and his vassal. The wider relationships which mediated the bond between the two, and the mechanisms by which the seigneurial appropriation was effected are ignored. For, if it can be argued that the fact of appropriation discloses the 'fact' of feudalism, it can be argued equally that examination of the mechanisms of appropriation discloses the 'fact' of capitalist accumulation. In the Bas-Languedoc the growth of the rural silk industry introduced a new element into the process by which peasants incomes were transformed into seigneurial revenue. Elsewhere (and the West of France, that great reservoir of commodities produced for the colonial markets is a case which requires further investigation) other commodities were integrated into local economies with similar effects. The resultant distortion of the seigneurial system gave rise to a strange dialectic between the masque of feudal power and the material reality of capital accumulation, which conditioned attitudes and responses towards the notions of seigneurial authority, seigneurial justice and seigneurial obligation.

Notes - Chapter 14

1. A.D. Ardèche. L 314.
2. M-P & J-M. Ambrosino. Démographie et Subsistances à Nîmes: 1789-1799. Mémoire de maîtrise. Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier. 1970. p.163.
3. I am grateful to Mr. Colin Jones of Exeter University for this material, which we collected from the registers of admissions to the Hotel-Dieu of Nîmes. The full results of this survey will be available in his D.Phil. Thesis on poverty and charity in Montpellier 1750-1820.
4. A.D. Hérault. C 6644, to de Cambis, 25-8-1783.
5. J. Michelet, Journal. 4 Edn., Paris, 1959.p.567.
6. The phrase is from E.Le Roy Ladurie, Les Paysans de Languedoc. Paris, 1966.
7. Cf.R-J.Bernard. "L'Alimentation paysanne en Gévaudan au XVIIIe siècle." Annales. E.S.C., 1969. pp.1449-1467.
8. A.D. Hérault. C47.
9. G. Frêche, "Etudes Statistiques sur le Commerce céréalière de la France méridionale au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle." R.H.E.S.T.49, 1971 pp.10-14.
10. A.D. Ardèche. L 893; A.D. Lozère. E 987. On the winter of 1767, see E.Le Roy Ladurie, opcit.T.2.p.755.
11. A.D. Ardèche C1511.
12. A.D. Ardèche. L 897 (1790).
13. A. Chabaud, L'Uzège et la Région Bagnolaise: Etude de Géographie physique, économique et humaine. 3 Tomes, Uzès, 1966-1967, t<sup>2</sup>pp.104-105.
14. The question of the size of the unit of rural production is studied fully in A. Chabaud op.cit. and in P.Bozon La Vie Rurale en Vivarais, Etude Géographique. Privas, 1963. and more generally by D. Faucher "Campagne française et Campagnes Méridionales: A Propos d'Un Livre Récent." Annales du Midi t.45, 1933, pp.400-410. On the growing



density of population in the Bas-Vivarais in the eighteenth century see A. Molinier "Dénombrements, recensements de population et peuplement du Vivarais dans la seconde moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle." Rev.Viv. T.77.1973, pp.113-131, 161-175; T.78, 1974, pp.5-18, 65-81.

15. Cf. P.de Saint-Jacob, "Le Mouvement de la propriété dans un village bourguignon à la fin de l'ancien regime. (1748-1789) R.H.E.S.t.27, 1948.pp.47-52., and the article by the same author "La propriété au 18e siècle, une source méconnue ... Annales E.S.C. 1946, pp.162-166. Dr.T.J.E. Le Goff's unpublished thesis on "A Social and Economic Study of the town of Vannes and its region during the eighteenth century". (London University, 1970). contains a fine analysis of the movement of property in the west of France.
16. The literature on the debate is now large. A bibliographical summary can be found in C. Mazauric. Sur La Révolution française. Paris.1970. See also F.Furet. "Le Catéchisme de la Révolution française". Annales E.S.C. 1971. pp.255-289.
17. The most intelligent statement of this position is by G.Lemarchand, "Le féodalisme dans la France rurale des temps modernes." A.h.R.f., 1969, pp.77-108.
18. Cf. C. Mazauric. op.cit., and A. Soboul. "La Révolution française et la "féodalite": Notes sur le prélèvement féodal." Revue historique. T.CCXL. 1968. pp.330-56.

Chapter 15 The Rural Silk Industry



Until the eighteenth century the silk industry at Nimes was essentially an extension of that of Avignon, Piedmont and Savoy, and was limited to the production of finished cloth from imported spun silk.<sup>1</sup> Baille noted in 1698 that its main products were "grenades, qui se mettent en franges ou broderies, guipures et passements .. soies à coudre qui se débitent dans tout le Royaume et beaucoup en Espagne ... et divers étoffes, savoir ... taffetas moindres que ceux d'Angleterre, appelés florences, armoisins ou taffetas d'Avignon, étoffes à fleurs ... rubans, gazes, jupons, ferandines, grisettes et autres petites étoffes".<sup>2</sup> During the first half of the eighteenth century, the structure of the industry changed entirely. Imported silk was replaced by silk produced in the Uzège, the Cévennes and the Vivarais, so that the entire hierarchy of the productive process - from the sale of the eggs of silk-worms upwards - was brought together into one geographic and economic unit. This transformation was the product of the widespread plantation of mulberry trees, upon whose leaves the silk-worm feeds before it spins its cocoon and which give the cocoons their characteristic pale yellow colour.<sup>3</sup> Mulberry trees could be planted virtually anywhere, and in no way did they displace more traditional objects of agricultural production. At Jonqueyroles, for example, the compoix of 1743 mentions "une vigne de ha complantée de jeunes mûriers," "une terre de 24a complantée de quelques oliviers et mûriers," or "un clos de 62a avec des treilles complanté d'arbres frutiers et de plusieurs

gros mûriers."<sup>4</sup> By 1759 some three quarters of all the mulberry trees planted in the Languedoc were to be found in the dioceses of Uzès, Alès and Viviers.<sup>5</sup>

Silk production was domestic and seasonal.

"Vers la mi-avril, on voit les laboureurs et les journaliers abandonner leurs charrues et leurs bêtes, et les artisans quitter leurs boutiques pour s'attacher à cet objet essentiel. L'éducation des vers à soie dure un peu plus d'un mois et demi."<sup>6</sup>

It was followed immediately by the process of spinning the raw silk from the cocoons:

"La filature commence avant la mi-juin et se continue plus au moins longtems jusqu'au milieu du mois d'août."<sup>7</sup>

This was domestic work, done by women and children sitting around a spinning machine. The silk threads from about half a dozen cocoons placed in a bowl of hot, nearly boiling water, were wound onto a reel, to form a continuous thread.<sup>8</sup>

Each of these stages involved a certain division of labour. Firstly, the leaves of about twenty to twenty-five mulberry trees were required to feed the worms produced by an ounce of silk-worm eggs. "Il est essential," warned a Mémoire of 1779:

"que ceux qui entreprennent des nourrisage s'assurent avant des qualities de feuilles suivant la quantité de vers à soie qu'ils élèvent, et qui, consomment par once, d'après des épreuves réitérées, 50 sacs de<sup>9</sup> feuilles depuis la naissance jusqu'a la montée."

Secondly, if an ounce of eggs, carefully tended could produce between 100 and 120 Lbs of cocoons, a minimum of ten pounds of the best cocoons were needed to produce a pound of silk.<sup>10</sup> These proportions were, however, attained only rarely. Pierre Roche, the silk-dealer



of Jaujac, noted in 1791 that:

"le total de cocons que j'ay fait filer cette annee se porte a 83 quintaux, 38 livres, 2 onces ... Cette quantite de cocons m'a fait de soye 691 livres 9 onces soye nest, de sorte que y entre pour faire la livre de soye 12 livres 1 once cocon."<sup>11</sup>

Thus the process of producing raw silk could be undertaken by one individual only on a very large piece of land. But the size of plots of land in the Bas-Languedoc was, in general, very small. In 1743 59.6% of the 804 pieces of land mentioned in the Compoix of Uzes were under 1 Hectare in size; 30.6% were under two hectares.<sup>12</sup> The only surviving rolls of the taille in the Vivarais indicate similar proportions in 1750. At Banne some 78% of the population paid between 0 and 10 livres on the taille; at Brahic the proportion was over 80%.<sup>13</sup>

These tiny pieces of land were the units of silk production:

"Il n'y a presque pas .. de maison dans laquelle on ne trouve au mois d'avril un atelier du ver a soie. L'industrie de tous les habitans est tournee de ce cote la, et ceux qui n'ont point de bien fonds ne se livrent pas moins a cette education, que ceux qui, ayant beaucoup de feuille de meurier dans leur possessions, sont necessites a elever des vers a soie pour la faire consommer.

Les educations finies, et les cocons etant derames, les filatures couvrent la campagne. Chaque habitation a la sienne. Il n'est presque point de menager qui ne tienne a l'honneur d'avoir aupres de sa maison un tour a filer la soie. C'est un usage hereditaire. C'est aussi un signe d'aisance."<sup>14</sup>

The silk producer was first and foremost a journalier, a travailleur de terre, an artisan or someone with a little more land - a fermier, a metayer or a menager. The widow of Jean Portel,

a journalier of the parish of Banne to the north of Saint-Ambroix, whose property was inventoried in 1780, declared that "les vers à soye de la chambrée que celui-cy faisait de compte et demy avec Joseph Deleuze du lieu de Ribières paroisse de Grospierres étoient parvenus à la quatrième maladie, qu'elle les fit monter, et la moitié des cocons qui en provinrent qui avoient appartenu audit Portal furent vendus (sic) pour la somme de 78 Lt.<sup>15</sup>

This was typical of the scale of local production. Yet the demand was vast. In a normal year one large nîmois silk dealer (Marc-Antoine Colomb) spent between 40,000 and 60,000 livres on his filature alone.<sup>16</sup> Allowing for a deduction caused by wages (which are not specified) and for raw materials (coal, which was used to heat the water), but remembering that the price of a pound of cocoons was between 20 and 30 sols in a normal year, the quantity of cocoons which he must have bought ran into tens of thousands of pounds, and the quantity of mulberry leaves required to produce this amount must have been far greater.

The rural production of silk on a scale to meet this demand was organised inevitably around a complex series of exchanges and local transactions - involving mulberry leaves, cocoons and the eggs of the silk-worms themselves - through whose mechanisms the metropolitan economy was relayed into the economy of the hinterland. A map of monetary circulation in the dioceses of Uzès, Alès and Viviers after 1730 (were it possible to establish one) would probably correspond to a map of the distribution of



mulberry trees.

Rural poverty and an extended network of exchange were thus co-extensive, and locked into one another in a manner which was thrown into relief at a moment of crisis. Here, for example, is the village of Grospierres in the Vivarais. In 1767 its curé reported that the parish

"est composée de vingt deux villages ou hameaux, lesquelles renfermant soixante et dix-huit maisons et environ trois cent cinquante communiants, et au delà des enfants, fut (sic) réduite à une grande misère par la gelée du 21 au 22 avril, laquelle emporta toute la feuille de meurier qui en fait le principal revenu et la seule ressource des habitants pour subvenir aux charges qui sont fortes et à la nourriture de la plus grande partie, attendu que sous l'esperance des cocons ils trouvoient a emprunter, ressource qui manquant a par consequent fait presque autant des miserable en y celle comme il y a habitants."<sup>17</sup>

In 1790 the commune of Les Assions, in the same region, claimed that:

"dans le courant du mois d'avril des fortes gelées emporterent la feuille de meurier ... La récolte des cocons a été si modique qu'à peine le produit a suffy pour payer les frais pour élever leurs vers. Tout le monde sçait que les malheureux habitants n'ont que cette ressource pour avoir un peu d'argent pour payer leurs charges et pour parvenir à leurs affaires."<sup>18</sup>

In August 1792, after Saillans' rebellion, Louis Thibon, percepteur des deniers publics of the commune of Berrias, reported that the royalists had taken the sum of 2,700 livres, which he had recently collected as taxes.

"Vous ne serez pas étonnés, Messieurs," he informed the officials of the District, "que cette recette fut aussi considérable quand vous sçavez que les habitants de Berrias n'ont d'autre ressource pour le payement de leurs impoistions que le prix de leurs cocons, qu'ils venoient de retirer à l'époque où la maison de l'exposant fut pillée ..."<sup>19</sup>

In 1769 the bureau de charité of the village of Saint-Andre-de Valborgne in the Cévennes decided to plant mulberry trees around the cemetery "dont le produit sera affecté pour toujours au soulagement et à l'entretien de nos pauvres".<sup>20</sup> In the course of the eighteenth century the population of the Bas-Languedoc, like that of the rest of France, appears to have escaped from the Malthusian cycle of growth, harvest failure and demographic crisis of the age of Louis XIV. The construction of the Canal Royal des Deux Mers, which permitted a freer circulation of the corn of the Haut-Languedoc to Montpellier, Nîmes and their hinterlands, was probably partially responsible for this.<sup>21</sup> The rural production of silk enabled peasant communities in the Bas-Languedoc to have the means of payment for this corn. At the same time, however, it served to produce profound changes within rural society itself.



Notes - Chapter 15

1. See above p. 134 et seq.
2. Cited by L.Dutil, "L'Industrie de la Soie à Nîmes." R.H.M.C., 10. 1908., p.323.
3. It is unnecessary to describe the more technical details of production here. The best leaf was that of the white mulberry, introduced to the Languedoc in the seventeenth century. See R.H. Noailles, Le Ver à Soie, Paris, 1960.
4. A.Chabaud op.cit., p.105.
5. A.D. Hérault. C 2251.
6. B.M. Nîmes. Mss 650. Mémoire sur la Ville d'Alais, sur ses Productions et son commerce, July 1786.
7. Id.
8. See above pp.260-200 on the fileuses employed by a silk-dealer at Jaujac. The temperature of the water was about 60 oC. The number of cocoons used determined the quality of the silk- the more cocoons, the thicker the thread and the richer the silk.
9. A.N. F10 218. Cf. also E. Reynier, La Soie en Vivarais, op.cit. p.15.
10. It has been calculated that 39,168 eggs would weigh an ounce: A Treatise on the Origin, Progressive Improvement and Present State of the Silk Manufacture. London, 1831.p.117.
11. A.D. Ardèche. L 1297 Cahier A.fo.30. Also B.M. Nîmes Mss.650: "On compte que 10 livres de cocons doivent rendre une livre de soie. Mais cela n'arrive pas communément, et il faut que les cocons soient d'une bonne qualité."
12. A. Chabaud, op.cit., p.73.
13. A.D. Ardèche C 1136.
14. B.M. Nîmes. Mss 650.
15. A.D. Ardèche. 2E 3557 fo 93v<sup>o</sup>.
16. A.D. Gard 1E (unclassified). Grand Livre de M-A Colomb.
17. A.D. Ardèche C1511
18. A.D. Ardèche L897.
19. A.D. Ardèche L1197.

20. A.D. Gard IIIE 170, 17-1-1769.
21. cf. G. Frêche, Toulouse et la Région Midi-Pyrénées au Siècle des Lumières. Paris, 1974.



Chapter 16 The Structure of Credit and the Rural Silk Industry

The production "des entrailles de la terre le thrésor de soye qui y est caché" drew the economy of the village into the field of commodity exchange. Most apparently, this occurred at the point of sale. The main outlet for the silks of the Cévennes, the Vivarais and the Uzège was the fair held at Alès in the last week of August, which began on Saint Bartholomew's day - August 24th.

"Elle est principalement renommée par la vente qui s'y fait ... d'une très grande partie des soyes des diocèses d'Alais, Nismes et Uzès, du pays de Vivarais et de la partie du Gévaudan qui est située dans les Hautes-Cévennes. On estime que la quantité des soyes qui se vendent ... à cette foire est beaucoup plus considérable que celle des soyes qui se vendent à la foire de Beaucaire, dont la tenue est trop avancée relativement à cette marchandise, puisque la filature des soyes ne finit que vers la mi-août ... On croit que le prix des soyes qui se vendent annuellement à la foire d'Alais se porte année commune à 3,000,000 livres."<sup>1</sup>

Where silks were concerned the more celebrated fair at Beaucaire was principally the outlet for the spun silks of Provence. The prices quoted at the fair were mainly those of silks from Grasse, Salernes, Salons, Forcalquier, Eygalieres, Maunes, Manosque, Eyguières, Lourmarin, Arles, Montfrin and Aramon - centres beyond the eastern bank of the Rhone, where mulberry leaves budded early enough for silk to reach the fair by the last week of July. Over a hundred thousand pounds of silk from Provence were brought annually to Beaucaire, while only fifty to seventy thousand



Quantities of Silk Brought to the Fair of Alès

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount (Quintaux)</u>	<u>Source</u>
1742	1500	A.D.H.C 2452
1746	800	C 2260, 2455
1747	1050	C 2457 C2261
1748	1200	C 2261
1750	400	C 2456
1751	1000	C 2458
1752	1200	C 2458
1758	1400	C 2539
1759	1200	C 2539
1760	1100	C 2539
1761	1200	C 2539
1764	1600	A.N.F <sup>12</sup> 1229
1765	1300	A.N.F <sup>12</sup> 1229
1766	1250	A.D.G.FFC 360
1770	1000	A.N.F <sup>12</sup> 1229
1778	1000	F <sup>12</sup> 1230
1779	1000	id
1780	1700	id
1783	300 (+ 700 sold at Anduze)	id
1789	1000	id
1785	1800	Journal de Nîmes
1786	1330	A.D.H. C 2339
1787	700	A.D.H. C 2340
1788	1115	C 2340
1789	1100	A.N.F <sup>12</sup> 1228

pounds arrived there from the Uzège, the Cévennes and the Vivarais. This region exported over a hundred thousand pounds to the Alès fair each year.<sup>2</sup> Most large silk houses in Nîmes bought at Alès. "Il nous sembleroit qu'il seroit plus à propos pour vos intérêts de faire vos achapts d'Alais à la foire d'Alais par préférence de la foire de Beaucaire," Fournier & Cie informed a Parisian client in 1768.

"et cela pour deux raisons - la première, que nous avons toujours reconnu que les poils d'Alais de ce canton sont supérieurs par la qualité à ceux qu'on achète à Beaucaire, la seconde est que les soyes s'y trouvent<sup>3</sup> plus sèches et que le poids en est plus avantageux."

The silk fair at Alès - known simply as lou feirou - was the point at which the economies of scores of villages converged. Usually between 100,000 and 120,000 pounds of silk were brought to it. "Dans les bonnes années il arrive pour l'ordinaire à cette foire 15 ou 1,800 quintaux de soie," reported the Journal de Nîmes in 1787. The few, scattered indications that it has been possible to piece together suggest that this average was attained by the mid-eighteenth century and remained fairly constant until the Revolution.<sup>4</sup> The silk brought to the fair was sold either directly, or through the mediation of courtiers accredited to the bureau de police of Alès. It was weighed on the poids du Roy and the names of the buyers were recorded by the bureau de la subvention of the town. Regrettably, the papers of this institution have disappeared. But an Etat des Particuliers et de la quantité de soye qui a été déclarée de la subvention et achetée en foire



de Saint Barthelémy which was drawn up in 1746 offers an outline of the geography of the market for silk brought to Alès, and illustrates the importance of the Protestant silk houses of Nîmes within this market. It is reproduced in full.<sup>5</sup>

Nîmes

André	4,500 lbs	A.Lacoste	3,721
Badouin	50	Lacoste ainé	5,570
Bastid	1,000	Laine	320
Bousquet	398	Jean Lafon	800
Bresson	1,420	Laugier (or Larguier)	492
Cassagnes	212	Lunel & Seyt	375
Castanet	258		
Chabanel	4,824	Moutet	2,100
Chauvin	104		
Colomb & Maigre	1,925	Paris	886
		Pourrat	3,350
Daumon	310	Puechegut	300
Domergue	46		
Dufague	3,037	Ribot	1,400
Dumazel &		Roussel & Malane	2,250
Ducayla	850	Roux	94
Fabre &			
Dupin cadet	430	Dlle Sourbière	75
Hugues	34	Antoine Valz	950
Jourdan	200	Henry, César &	
		Pierre Vincens	2,410
		Vincens & Cie.	1,480

Alès

Arbouet	3,574	Les frères Genoyer	706
Atteyrac &		Martin	6
Gibert	700	Maurin	224
Barjac	40	Plantier	725
Daniel	35	Pages	307
Antoine Ducamp	19	Pelet	150
Durand	4,200	Sales	1,920
Fabre	650	Sugier	1,180
Fages	80	Salyndres	25
Félines	100		
Froideveau	448		

<u>Lyon</u>		<u>Vivarais</u>	
Betenau	800	Didier (or Deydier)	1,200
Duculty	1,120	Perillier (de Joyeuse)	1,900
<u>Miscellaneous</u>			
Les freres Aigoin (of Alès?)	930		
Bastide de Mialet	16		
Cabanis de Mialet	6		

Some 66% of the silk sold at the fair of 1746 was bought directly by the major commercial houses of Nîmes. Of the remainder, it is probable that a large proportion of the silk bought by individuals or partnerships in Alès was re-sold, either immediately or after it had been milled, to firms in the city.

The silk fair at Alès was not the only point at which the village economy intersected with its metropolitan counterpart. The sale of cocoons operated within the same nexus. In theory the seller was able to meet the buyer on fairly favourable terms, since it was possible to refuse a low offer and to spin the silk oneself:

"Quant à eux (qui) ... ne déterminent pas à faire filer les cocons, ils en font porter la montre, c'est à dire, un rameau de bruyère qui en est garni aux marchés des villes et gros lieux. On voit quel est le prix offert par les négociants et par les spéculateurs, soit pour l'aliment de leurs fabriques, soit pour des combinaisons de commerce (qui) ont établi des filatures. A cette époque, le vendeur n'est point encore à leur merci. Si le prix qu'ils offrent des cocons n'est pas raisonnable, on a la ressource d'élèver soi-même une filature, ce qui n'est ny bien embarrassant ny bien long, et on a plus de temps qu'il n'en faut pour cela, car d'ordinaire on présente la montre <sup>6</sup>... quelques jours avant de déramer la chambre."



Nonetheless, it was evidently in the interest of the buyer to reduce the price of cocoons as much as possible. The advice given by the firm of Ourson frères of Nîmes, which specialised in the trade in spun silks, to one of its buyers, was typical of standard commercial practice:

"Nous vous prions d'agir de concert avec Srs. Naugier et Maurin et de ne pas vous croiser, puisqu'il y va de notre intérêt. Composez entre vous trois, et que le caprice ne vous fasse rien opperer. Vous proposerez donc à vos parties le prix de dix-neuf sols, et vous les tiendrez quelques temps suspendues. Si ce prix ne les fait point déterminer, vous vous étendrés jusqu'à vingt sols, marchés ferme ... Vous nous fairés plaisir de menager les choses de facon que vous puissiez les obtenir à quelque chose de moins."<sup>7</sup>

In 1784 the Intendant, Saint-Priest, sent a circular to his subdelegates in regions which produced silk which explained how this manoeuvre worked:

"Il y a MM depuis longtemps des plaintes sur les ruses pratiquées par les entrepreneurs des filatures de soyes et autres acheteurs au préjudice des cultivateurs, et surtout des petits particuliers pressés de vendre leurs cocons. On prétend qu'ils achètent à l'avance pour payer au prix qu'auront les cocons à une certaine époque, et qu'alors se rendent maitres du prix par des manoeuvres fort illicites, ce qui leur donnent des profits très considérables."<sup>8</sup>

The practice was longstanding. In 1745 twenty-three inhabitants of Vallon, on the Ardèche, complained that the price of cocoons was being fixed. Tavernol de Barrès, the sub-délégué at Villeneuve-de-Berg reported that "les marchands de soye font des assemblés dans divers lieux où ils se donnent rendez-vous pour y convenir de ne donner qu'un tel prix des cocons."

The inhabitants of Vallon stated that price-fixing would ruin the town "car il peut y avoir années communes audit lieu autour de 300 quintaux de cocons."<sup>9</sup> In 1786, the Conseil municipal of Largentière complained "qu'il s'exerce un monopole effroyable de la plus part des marchands acheteurs des cocons envers les particuliers malaises," and suggested an official minimum price for cocoons.<sup>10</sup>

At an even more profound level, however, commodity exchange entered the rural economy through the mechanism of peasant debt. It is probable that very few commercial transactions were settled immediately by payments in speciae.<sup>11</sup> Bills of exchange (used mainly by the major commercial houses) and (more commonly) promissory notes were used as instruments of credit in almost any exchange.<sup>12</sup> Even the payment of wages was irregular, and suggests that many wage earners, particularly in the smaller cevenol towns, had access to sources of revenue outside of the cash nexus. In 1766 the silk firm Delpuech, Soleirol & Decombe of Alès was sentenced to pay 170 days of unpaid wages to its workers.<sup>13</sup> In 1789 Etienne Monteil, a travailleur de terre, was accused of having insulted the négociants Jacques and Antoine Silhol of Saint-Ambroix in public. He was said to have shouted at Silhol fils "qu'il était un mange-pauvre et un miserable, qu'il lui avait volé quatre cens livres." The incident occurred because Monteil claimed that he had not been paid in full for work which he had done three years previously.<sup>14</sup> Clearly, these were extreme cases,



but they suggest that money entered a transaction only after a certain period of time. Eventually, however, it did. Or, when it did not, it was replaced by silk, cocoons or mulberry leaves.

Small scale credit could be fairly straight-forward. In 1770 Louis Clément, of Cabiac in the parish of Barjac, promised 66 quintaux of mulberry leaves to Jean-François Roman of the parish of Saint-Andre-de-Cruzières "à prendre dans son domaine audit lieu de Cabiac dans quatre années et quatre cuillettes prochaines" at a price of 3 livres 15 sols a quintal. The sale was worth a sum of 214 livres "laquelle somme ledit Clément se trouve debiteur envers ledit Sr Roman, sçavoir 177 Lt du contenu en une obligation qu'il consentit en sa faveur devant Déslèbres notaire ... et le restant pour prêt verbal."<sup>15</sup> In this instance only two parties were involved. Frequently, however, there were more. In 1772, Andre Lacroix of Les Mounèdes in the parish of Banne, in the same region, promised to sell "son entière feuille de meurier du domaine qu'il jouit ... dans la taillable de Bane en quoyquelle consiste pour deux années et deux cuillettes" to François Robert of La Sarrazine in the parish of Berrias. As payment, Robert promised to liquidate a debt of 102 L 11s 6d which Lacroix owed to the négociant Louis Silhol of Saint-Ambroix.<sup>16</sup> Longer-term obligations were used to repay a multitude of debts. In 1761 Louis Deffobis, of Champerier

in the parish of Les Assions, agreed to sell all the mulberry leaves in his possession to Pierre Joannem and Augustin Terraube of the parish of Saint-Genêt-de-Bauzon for a period of eight years at a price of 100 L a year, in order to liquidate the debts which his father had left. The product of the sale was to be used to repay six creditors:

"scavoir 300 L à André Labre de la psse de Rozières, que led. Deffobis lui doit pour les causes mentionnées au contrat passé entre lui, François Deffobis son père et ledit Labre ... 35 L au Sr Souchere de la ville de Joyeuse ... 199 L 9s 6d au Sr Jacques Roure, marchand des Vans à luy due pour le contenu d'une obligation dud, François Deffobis ou pour marchandises livrées postérieurement ... 51 L 5s 9d à Jean Granier de la paroisse de Payzac ... incessamment à luy due pour les condamnations portées en l'appointement par luy obtenu contre ledit Deffobis de la Cour ordinaire du marquisat le 17 juillet 1760 ... 113 l à Pierre Croze de la ville de Joyeuse ... en justifiant par luy de sa créance ... et à nous Baissac, notaire de la ville des Vans, 105 L à nous dues, scavoir 80 L pour reste de celle de 100 L délégués à notre profit par Jean-Baptiste Borne sur feu François Deffobis, son beau-père, 10 L 5s 4d pour ses cottes de taille et capitation imposées en ladite paroisse des Assions en l'an 1759 quand Antoine-Alexis Baissac mon fils étoit collecteur <sup>17</sup>. et le restant provenant de quelques autres prêts ..."

For the creditor, the debt itself became a commodity.

Jacques Durand of Le Vignal in the parish of Chambonas, paid 240 L to Jacques Chalmeton in 1768 for "toute .. la feuille .. qui fut baillé en payement audit Chalmet par Alexis Evesque, son beau-frère .. pour la terme de dix annees." <sup>18</sup> Michel Tastevin, a ménager from Chassagnes in the parish of Chambonas acknowledged a debt of 140 L to Jacques Roure a merchant from Les Vans "descendant de vente de marchandises ou pour cause de prêt." At the same time he paid a



further 48 L "et une livre cocons vers à soye" for the mulberry leaves belonging to Jacques Clapier of the parish of Naves "de laquelle le Sr Roure a droit de jouir pendant plusieurs années."<sup>19</sup>

When a debt was contracted, the debtor mortgaged all, or part, of his property to his creditor. If the obligation was not met, the debt could be turned into a rente or a pension annuelle until the capital was extinguished. These could be inherited by the creditors legatees, sold, re-sold, leased and sub-leased so that the web of credit accumulated within a village community was drawn insidiously into the more impersonal relationships of commodity exchange.

Debts were incurred at any of the moments at which a peasant encountered the money economy. These moments were, as has been said, not very frequent. Francois Malint, an inhabitant of the town of Villeneuve-les-Avignon, which was far less remote than the villages of the Vivarais, recorded only 13 items under the rubric of his expenditure in 1748. These included payment for a hat, a piece of linen at the Beaucaire fair to make a shirt, 6 chairs, three bleedings by a doctor and his annual subscription to the Mercure de France<sup>20</sup> In the towns and villages inland from the Rhône normal transactions were often paid in kind. In 1786, a notaire in Saint-Ambroix recorded the receipt of "3 livres et 1 emine chataignes fines petites" from an inhabitant of the village of Bessèges "sur les frais de son mariage du 14 novembre 1778."<sup>21</sup> Payment by recognisances of debts, which circulated as a form of paper credit was equally common.<sup>22</sup> Major expenditure of an exceptional kind was the most usual reason for having recourse

to credit. Dowries - of between 50 and 500 L in most cases - were major commitments, rarely paid at once and only partially paid in money. So too was the payment of the terms of a will. Jacqueline Grollier, the widow of Claude Rivière of Les Vans sold all the mulberry leaves she owned on land in the parish of Chambonas to Jean Tourrel of Les Assions for 200 L "laquelle somme ladite Grollier charge led. Tourrel de payer au Sr Joseph Borelly négociant des Vans ... en acquittement de ce que Jeanne Riviere sa fille veuve de Louis Engelbert doit au Sr Borelly tant de son chef que comme heritière dud. Engelbert."<sup>23</sup>

Rentes and pensions constituted on the sale or lease of land formed the basis of similar arrangements. Antoine and Jean Gras père et fils of the parish of Courry sold all their mulberry leaves to a Sr François Perrier of the same parish for three years, to begin in 1774. The sale was for a price of 20 L a year, "ce qui revient à 60 L, en laquelle somme lesdits père et fils sont debiteurs envers le Sr Perrier en reste de la ferme qui fut passé (sic) de la part de feu François Perrier son père à Catherine Riviere, belle-mere et aycule desdits Gras, le 27e avril 1727."<sup>24</sup> The same François Perrier also bought all the mulberry leaves belonging to Vincent Chevalier of Courry for a period of four years, at a price of 10 L a year. This was in fact repayment of a sum of 40 L "provenant des censives des biens de Louis Fontanier auxquels ledit Chevalier a droit," which he owed.<sup>25</sup>



The payment of the taille, the capitation, the dîme or a seigneurial obligation constituted another zone in which the mechanism of debt was integrated into the peasant economy. Andre Vedel of the parish of Sanilhac, near Largentière, acknowledged a debt of 67 L 5s to André Béranger, a négociant en soie, "dessendant de vray et reel prêt d'argent." It was to be repaid on the following St-John the Baptist's Day "sans prejudice à celluy des arrérages de rente qu'il reste devoir audit Sr Beranger ou à son associé comme fermier de Mr le Comte de Brison des années 1771 à 1779."<sup>26</sup> The widow of Pierre Sevenier of Les Teissiers in the parish of Grospierres sold all her mulberry leaves to a Sr Jean Fabre of Comps "pour quatre années consecutives et révolues à commencer par la récolte de l'année prochaine, 1774," for 108 L which was to be paid to the seigneur of Le Puzet "à compte des arrérages de pension à lui du et du moins priviligié par la condamnation prononcée contre elle le 24 novembre 1767."<sup>27</sup>

Finally, through the traffic in corn, credit was relayed into the core of rural poverty. In 1776 Jacques Jullian of the parish of Saint-André-de-Cruzières acknowledged a debt of 280 L to Jean-Francois Roman, bourgeois of the same parish "procédant de vente de bled que ledit Roman luy a delivré," and promised to supply him with 10 quintaux 75 livres of mulberry leaves a year for the next eight years.<sup>28</sup> Jean-Baptiste Gautier of Courry sold all his leaves to Jean Pages, a négociant, to repay a debt of

45 L "procédant de fournitures en grains qu'il lui a faittes pour s'alimenter et sa famille l'année dernière ou la présente année 1779."<sup>29</sup> Jean Deleuze of La Blachère owed 149 L in 1783 to André Dupont, a négociant from Vallon "provenant de fournitures de bled faittes par ce dernier ... pour s'alimenter luy et sa famille," which he promised to repay "en cocons la récolte prochaine au prix courant de la Blachère."<sup>30</sup> In this area, the mediation of the towns was more marked. Simon Poidevigne of La Blachère owed 340 L to the négociant Simon Guiraud of Saint-Ambroix "dessendant de vente de bled touzille, seigle, baril de sardes ou prêts d'argent que ledit Sr Guiraud luy avoit fait depuis le 26 aoust 1782 jusqu'au 29 may 1783."<sup>31</sup> Three peasants from Grospierres acknowledged debts of 113 L 10s, 208 L 4s and 86 L respectively to a Sr Guillaume Chante another négociant, from Vallon, arising from sales of corn made in 1776 and 1777.<sup>32</sup> The geography of the traffic in corn followed the contours of commercial association, and the intermediaries are familiar names - the Colomb, Lahondès, Servier and Chambon in the north of the Uzège; the Servièrre, Soulier, Génoyer and Bros in the vicinity of Alès and Anduze. Jean Roussel dit Boulanger of Mentaresse in the parish of Banne owed 126 L 12s 6d to Antoine Crégut in 1781 for corn which he had bought. Crégut, in his turn, had acquired the corn from Silhol père & fils of Saint-Ambroix.<sup>33</sup> Antoine and Jean Charrier of the Petit-Brahic in the same parish owed 363 L 6s to Louis Servier the négociant of Saint-Ambroix and agreed to supply him with seventeen quintaux of mulberry leaves a year for the



nine years between 1780 and 1788 in order to liquidate the debt.<sup>34</sup> Recognisances of debts with commitments to repay them in the form of mulberry leaves tended to increase in the wake of increases in the price of corn. In the village of Saint-Jean-de-Valériscle the number of recognisances recorded in the register of its two notaires increased sharply in years in which the price of corn had risen.

Recognisances of Debts involving Sales of Mulberry Leaves at  
St. Jean de Valériscle (1777-1789)

1777	16
1778	19
1779	17
1780	23
1781	16
1782	30
1783	17
1784	13
1785	10
1786	17
1787	7
1788	9
1789	15

(Source: A.D.G. 2E<sup>51</sup>719, 2E<sup>51</sup>777)

This is particularly noticeable in 1782.

In this way the ostensibly enclosed, parochial and intimate network of exchange common to any rural community was absorbed by a system whose rhythms and whose exigencies were immeasurably greater, both in scale, and in the intensity of its demands. Superficially, the rural silk industry only encountered its metropolitan homologue at the point of sale; more profoundly, however, the union occurred within that area on the fringe of poverty in which credit was inserted into the regular seasonal cycle of rural production. The two areas overlapped, to produce

a situation weighted in favour of the large buyer. The number of sellers bringing silk or cocoons to the fair at Alès was vastly superior to the number of buyers. Many of the sellers had debts to be paid from the proceeds of their sales:

"Les acheteurs, se voyant entourés, provoqués par une quantité prodigieuse de fileurs dont le très grand nombre est forcé de vendre, se tiennent en conséquence plus réservés, plus froids ... Un jour, deux jours se passent dans cette indifférence affectée. Momens précieux ... La terme de la foire approche! Les fileurs ont des créanciers qui les suivent de l'oeil. Ils craignent de ne pouvoir remplir leurs engagements. Il faut de toute nécessité qu'ils procurent de l'argent et quoyque dans le prix qui leur est offert, ils ne voyent point ou presque point de profit ... il faut qu'ils subissent la condition que l'acheteur leur impose."<sup>35</sup>

In itself, the structure of rural indebtedness is banal, common to the Franche-Comté<sup>36</sup> or the Lyonnais<sup>37</sup> of the sixteenth century as much as to the Vivarais of the eighteenth. Qui étudie la campagne aboutit inévitablement à la ville voisine.<sup>38</sup>

Indebtedness in the Uzège and the Vivarais in the late eighteenth century was somewhat different. Indirectly through the production of silk it became enmeshed with commodity production. It was bound up with the production of silk as a commodity, and consequently was affected by changes in the workings of the market.



Notes - Chapter 16

1. B.M. Nîmes. Mss 650. The phrase cited above is from Olivier de Serres, Théâtre de l'Agriculture (1610).
2. Journal de Nîmes, 24-9-1787..
3. A.D. Gard FFC 356.
4. The figures in the table are those reported by the inspecteurs des Manufactures. There is no reason to doubt their validity as broadly accurate estimates of the quantities of silk brought to the fair.
5. A.D. Hérault C2260.
6. B.M. Nîmes. Mss 650.
7. A.D. Gard. Serie B. (unclassified) Livre de Copies de Lettres of Ourson freres, to La Combe, Vergèze 20-6-1748.
8. A.D. Hérault. C2295.
9. A.D. Hérault. C 2263.
10. A.C. Largentière. HH 7.
11. The question is a large one and a function of the volume and circulation of speciae in eighteenth century France. All indications are that the problem of the shortage of speciae was permanent. Cf. L. Dermigny, "Pour une Carte monétaire de la France au XVIIIe Siècle." A.E.S.C. 1955. and, more generally, J. Meuvret, Etudes d'Histoire Economique. Paris., 1971.pp.127-152.
12. This is apparent from any collection of private papers: Cf. A.D. Ardèche J 402 or A.D. Gard IE Fonds Deleuze.
13. A.C. Alès IJ 2 30-10-1766; see above pp.
14. A.D. Gard Serie B (unclassified) Justice de Saint-Ambroix, 18-5-1789.
15. A.D. Ardèche. 2E 3548 fo34 (3-11-1770).
16. Id. 2E 3540 fol12v<sup>o</sup> (22-7-1772).
17. Etude Perrussel, Les Vans, Registres de Baissac, 20-3-1761.
18. A.D. Ardèche. 2E 3671 fol71.
19. Etude Perussel. Reg.Baissac 7-4-1752.

20. A.D. Gard Serie B (unclassified). Livre de raison of Francois Malint.
21. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>51</sup>838. Journal of a notaire of Saint-Ambroix.
22. Id. for several examples.
23. Etude Perussel, Les Vans. Registres de Baissac 12-4-1761.
24. A.D. Ardèche. 2E 3551 fol48 (9-9-1774).
25. Id. fol49v<sup>o</sup>.
26. A.D. Ardèche. Minutier Largentière. 2E 501fo558.
27. A.D. Ardèche. 2E 3550 fo 122
28. Id. 2E 3552 fo 240.
29. Id. 2E 3557 fo 32.
30. Id. Minutier Joyeuse, 2E 458 19-2-1783.
31. Id.        Id.        2E 279 fo 219.
32. Id.        Id.        2E 215 ff408-412.
33. Id. 2E 3560 25-11-1780.
34. Id. 2E 3556 fol66.
35. B.M. Nîmes Mss 650
36. L. Febvre, Philippe II et la Franche-Comté. New Edn. Paris, 1971.
37. R. Gascon, Grand Commerce et Vie Urbaine au XVI Siècle: Lyon et Ses Marchands. Paris, 1971. T.2 pp.836-841.
38. P. Goubert, Beauvais et le Beauvaisis. Paris, 1958 p.220.



Chapter 17 The Silk Market in the Eighteenth Century

**PAGE**

**NUMBERING**

**AS ORIGINAL**



At the level of the village, the production of silk was part of the seasonal cycle of local production, forming a bridge between the seeding of the winter and early spring and the harvest and vendange of the late summer. "Les jeunes garçons et les jeunes filles ... sont tous partis pour aller monter sur les arbres mûriers pour s'y occuper à ramasser la feuille servant à nourrir les vers à soie," noted Pierre Prion of Aubais in his Chronologiette.

"Les cocons qui en proviennent, ils les vendent ensuite. Ils ont, et les uns et les autres, grand soin d'en conserver l'argent pour payer toutes les années les hautbois et autres instruments avec lesquels ils se divertissent tres somptueusement."<sup>1</sup>

The position of the silk houses at Nimes was different. The production of silk was seen there as part of an intricate and delicate system of exchange, tied as much to the economies of Cadiz, Lyon or Turin as to the economy of the hinterland. At this level, the quantity and price of silk in a given year (primordial questions at the level of the village) had to be set against other variables - opportunities in particular markets, variations in the rate on bills of exchange at different centres, the amount of money in circulation, rumours of war or peace, and news from the court - which also affected the demand for silks and silk hose. Ourson frères' advice to the firm of Pierre and Barthelemy Huber of Lyon in 1765 was a veritable discourse upon method:

"Il résulte des avis que vous recevez de l'Italie et de l'Espagne ... que la speculation sur les Alais est la plus sure dans les circonstances présentes ... cet article est epuisé et doit supplier aux trames d'Italie et celles d'Espagne qui vraisemblablement n'abonderont pas, à moins d'un découragement dans les fabriques ... Ce n'est pas à dire pourtant qu'il faille tout de suite et sans autre réflexion taper sur les Alais. D'abord notre sentiment est qu'il convient, avant que d'opérer, être instruit de l'objet de la récolte dans tous les endroits dont on a à craindre la concurrence, et promptement avisés et instruit, prévenir, la lenteur de ceux qui veulent y voir trop clair."<sup>2</sup>

Such preoccupations were typical.

News of variations in the supply of silk from the countryside, and of variations in demand for silk hose or silk fabrics from Cadiz, Versailles or the markets in Lyon, Tours and beyond the Rhine, dominated the information circulated by the commercial houses of Nîmes. It is possible to use this information to follow the movement of the market in silks over much of the century.

"Les soyes ont aussy fort aumanté dans ce pays-ci,"

Isaac Mirabaud informed Specht, Gonzbach & Cie of Lyon in February, 1714.

"Nous avons achaité depuis environ un mois et demy en société de Mrs de Massureau, Oriol & Cie et une autre maison de cette ville pour quelques mille livres de feuille de meurier, laquelle nous baillerons à faire à des paysans à moitié. Elle a fort aumante depuis c'est achapt, et nous comptons avoir fait une bonne affaire."<sup>3</sup>

In May he was informing his correspondents that failures of the harvest in Italy and Piedmont had raised the price of cocoons in the Uzège and the Cévennes to 40s a pound. He suggested a



joint venture in Spanish silk, to be sent from Valencia, via Marseille to Nîmes. "Vous pourrez en commetre pour environ 18,000 Lt," he suggested.<sup>4</sup>

The price of cocoons in the early summer months partially determined the magnitude of adjustments made to the price of silks over the following year. Until the mid-eighteenth century they averaged between 20 and 25s a pound in normal years, varying from place to place and according to quality. In the second half of the century they tended to sell for 25s a pound in normal years, and for over 30s when the harvest failed. The table appended indicates the pattern of price movements in a broad sense.<sup>5</sup> The poor harvests of 1749 and 1750, 1756, 1766 and 1767, and 1787 produced price increases of between 20 and 25%, giving rise to reductions in the number of looms and stocking frames working in and around Nîmes. The state of the harvest was gaged at the Beaucaire and Alès fairs, and the level of sales closely scrutinised and set against other information. "Les affaires sont sy tristes que nous ne vendons rien," Pierre Larguier informed Roux freres of Marseille in 1733. "J'attend des nouvelles d'Espagne incessamment au sujet de nos marchandises sy les affaires s'ouvrent un peu."<sup>6</sup> In July 1740 Lapiere & Cie of Nîmes informed the same firm that there had been a large harvest, bringing down the price of unfinished silk by 50s a pound over that of the previous year.

"Par là nous estimons que les soies de Valence seconde qualité ne sauroient valoir à Marseille douze livres la LP, et celles de Murcie à proportion

d'autant mieux que les fabricants de Paris, de Tours et de Lion ne manqueront pas d'en tirer de ce pays avec d'autant plus de raison que les droits ou le poids font une différence de vingt sols par livre."<sup>7</sup>

Four months later they were less optimistic, fearing that the scarcity of corn would affect manufacture, "et que par contre coup les soyes ne soient plus sy recherchées."<sup>8</sup>

The harvest of the following year was poor, although the corn harvest had been abundant. "Mais comme les fabriques en général vont très lentement les trames d'Alais ordinaires ne vallent que 12 Lt à 12 Lt 10s la livre, et la belle qualité de 13 à 13 Lt 5s, sans apparence d'augmentation."<sup>9</sup>

In 1742 the situation was reversed. A poor corn harvest was followed by an abundant harvest of silk. "Les trames d'Alais qu'on avoit pu vendre il y a un mois de 12 Lt 15s à 14 Lt 10s ont déjà baissé de 20s par lp et personne n'en veut."<sup>10</sup> The price of best quality silk at the fair of Alès fell by 4% against its price at Beaucaire, and second qualities fell by 6%, further encouraged by the absence of demand for silks created by the war. Little more than half of the 1500 quintaux brought to Alès was sold:

"Les marchands de Nîmes, n'ayant à cette foire aucun étranger pour concurrent, ont pris leur temps pour faire plus avantageusement leurs emplettes."<sup>11</sup>

The harvests of the following two years were both relatively poor, with the price of cocoons stable at up to 26s a pound.<sup>12</sup> In 1745, a better harvest reduced cocoon prices by a quarter, and the arrival of quantities of silk from Spain encouraged prices of silks to fall further at Lyon.<sup>13</sup> A cold



spring in 1746 produced a late harvest. Ourson frères informed Huber freres, Bordier & Cie of Lyon that "cette année les soyes nous reviendront à plus de trois livres dix sols que l'année dernière, par la cherté et par la fectuosité des cocons."<sup>14</sup> The death of the King of Spain and the Dauphine leading to a period of six months mourning, further depressed the market. The late harvest ensured that the silk which normally was sold at Beaucaire arrived at Alès in large amounts. Despite this, and the period of mourning at court, news of a prohibition upon exports of silk from Spain and the determination of sellers to avoid losses, contributed to maintaining price levels.<sup>15</sup>

In 1747 the amount of silk brought to the fair at Alès was some 300 cwt less than that brought in 1746. This was not the result of a shortfall of supply, but rather of individuals buying up silk before it reached the fair, in anticipation of a rising demand. The harvest of 1748 was equally substantial, if somewhat late, causing damage to some cocoons, but ensuring adequate supplies to the manufacturers of Nîmes. 1749 and 1750, however, were disastrous years. There was already a shortage in the early months of 1749. "Nous ne sommes pas surpris que les fabriques chaument déjà ches vous," Ourson freres reported to a silk dealer in Privas in March.

"La rareté des soyes fines est cause de cela et la fabrique des bas fins les a toutes presque absorbées icy,"<sup>16</sup>

The harvest was only half as large as it had been in the previous years.

"Tout le monde est dans l'allarme et le pauvre paysan qui avoit acheté à prix d'or la graine de la feuille se trouve ruiné," Ourson frères informed their correspondents at Lyon.<sup>19</sup>

The harvest of 1750 was even worse - a third less than that of 1749 - and the price of cocoons reached 40s to 41s a pound. At these prices, the commercial houses were reluctant to buy.

"Par conséquent l'on peut dire que les fileurs n'ont pas eu une année favorable, puisque l'augmentation de huit sols par livre sur le prix des cocons n'a produit aucun effet sur celluy des soyes en général. Le débouché peu avantageux que les marchands ont eu de leurs marchandises fabriquées les a refroidi et rendu moderés dans l'achat des soyes."<sup>18</sup>

Normality returned in 1751. In all, some 2,400 qtx. of silk were sold at either Beaucaire or Alès. There were suspicions that much of it was exported. Complaints were made that commercial houses in Nîmes were sending unfinished silk to their correspondents in Lyon and Paris, from where it was sent to Geneva, Switzerland, Prussia, Germany and Holland. The suspicions were based upon the high price of silk and the small quantities available in the Languedoc despite a substantial harvest.<sup>19</sup> The silk merchant David Pastre informed a correspondent at Tours that most of the purchases had been made by commercial houses in Lyon through their correspondents in Nîmes. "On fait compte qu'ils en achetèrent y compris nos Mrs de Nîmes par commission pour plus de 4 millions. Ceux qui en ont besoin à présent, il faut qu'ils achèttent de la seconde main, et qu'ils



en payent au moins de 17 Lt à 17 Lt 5s.<sup>20</sup> A similar manoeuvre occurred in the following year, resulting in a continuing high level of prices.<sup>21</sup> "La cherté des trames m'a déterminée cette année à faire des papelines," Pastre informed a merchant in Bordeaux.

Manoeuvres such as this reflected the developing prosperity of silks in the decade between 1751 and 1760. Even the renewal of hostilities with England failed to disrupt the demand for silks.<sup>22</sup> "La fabrique des bas va au mieux," Alexandre Manoël informed his nephew in Turin in 1759.

"Il s'en fait un débit extraordinaire: l'Allemagne et les pays du Nord en tirent beaucoup. C'est la seule branche du commerce de cette province qui ne souffre pas des disgrâces de la guerre."

Demand for silks was equally heavy in 1760 and prices at the fair at Alès were 5s to 7s a pound higher than at Beaucaire.<sup>23</sup> "Il s'est déjà beaucoup acheté d'organsin de nos filages pour la fabrique des bas et les prix ont roulé depuis 16 Lt 10s jusqu'au 18 Lt selon leur degré de finesse. Ces prix ne pourront que se soutenir en regard au peu qui reste invendu," Ourson frères informed their clients in Lyon in July. Purchases by the major commercial houses of Nîmes were substantial:

"Mme Lacoste et Mr Charles Lacoste son neveu n'ont point discontinués d'en enlever tout ce qui a paru dans cette ville en soyes de Valabrègue et autres soyes basses et les ont poussés jusqu'à 14 Lt ... Mr Pourrat paroissoit observer tranquillement tous ces mouvements tandis qu'il a fait acheter à St. Hippolyte et à Alais. On dit que ce dernier a déjà reçu beaucoup de fonds de Lyon, que son fils qui vient en foire luy en apporte ... Les Mrs Vincens

font de gros achats à Ganges et dans les Cévennes conjointement avec le Sr Quatrefages, et les Mrs d'Alais ne demeurent pas court de leur côté. Nous avons encore une maison en ville qui a beaucoup fait/soyes fines de Provence, Valabrègues et autres. C'est la maison Bedos, Jalaguier et Fabre sous la comandite de Mr Julien de Paris que vous pouvez connoitre. On dit aussy que le fils à Madame Lacoste arrive incessamment de Paris avec des fonds immense. Il est certain que cette dame a beaucoup tiré de fonds de Montpellier et qu'elle se prépare à de grands achats."<sup>24</sup>

Fears that the harvest of 1761 might be poor pushed up the price of cocoons to 27 to 29s a pound and, even when the harvest was relatively normal prices at Alès continued to remain at the previous year's level.<sup>25</sup> Rumours that the war with England would soon end, contributed considerably to the heavy demand. In 1762, despite an abundant harvest, prices remained extremely high, as commercial houses speculated upon a future boom in the wake of the end of the war.<sup>26</sup> Four commercial houses from Nîmes - Jean Montaud & Cie (a branch of Fornier & Cie) Vincens & Cie, Vve Lacoste & Cie and Isaac Pourrat - were accused of buying up 100 qtx. of silk at the fair of Alès, almost the entire amount exhibited, for the purpose of sending it abroad.<sup>27</sup> Accusations of this nature, which had already been made in 1747 and 1751, testified to the purchasing power of the city's commercial elite.

Continuing heavy demand and a series of average harvests ensured a high level of prices over the following three years. 1763 seemed a critical year to Ourson frères in August - "Dieu veuille qu'elle ne soit point la soeur de 1750" - but by September



they were able to report an easing of prices at the fair

"Deux choses s'y opposèrent: c'étoit la quantité de soyes qu'il y avoit d'une part et de l'autre le peu d'argent qu'on avoit monté ... Le 10<sup>e</sup> et le 11<sup>e</sup> le beau s'établit à 19 Lt. Les secondes rodoient alors à 18 Lt 5s et 10s et les troisième de 17 Lt 10s à 15s ... Il s'est beaucoup acheté à credit et il nous a paru qu'il restoit encore des soyes invendus."<sup>28</sup>

The relaxation of demand continued during 1764, but a smaller harvest in 1765 gave rise to increases of 24% at Alès. "On estime notre recolte inférieure d'un tiers à la precedente," Fornier & Cie informed Antoine and Jean-Louis André at Lyon.<sup>29</sup> All the silk brought to Alès was sold, despite news of the death of the Holy Roman Emperor. "Les Mm Vincens sont ceux qui ont fait les plus gros achapts," Ourson frères reported.<sup>30</sup> A normal harvest in 1766 failed, however, to bring down prices at the fair. Fornier & Cie wrote that they expected prices to be higher at Alès than at Beaucaire.

"Les fabriques sont cependant dans un état bien triste et la cherté des soyes est d'autant plus dangereuse qu'elle n'est fondée que sur l'abondance d'argent et les espérances d'un retour de consommation auquel cette meme cherté fera opposition."<sup>31</sup>

After a slow start, sales were rapid at Alès and prices ranged from 18 to 21 Lt 10s according to quality, only 4% less than they had been in 1765 when the harvest had been smaller by 25%.<sup>32</sup>

The harvest in 1767 was a poor one. Cocoon prices rose by 12 to 15%, to between 34s and 36s a pound. The high prices at Alès which followed affected the amount of work in Nîmes and precipitated a recession there. A memorandum on the silk industry written late in 1767 stated that

"Les soyes ayant été à bas prix en 1762 par l'abondance de la récolte, elle (i.e. the silk industry) s'accrut et fit des progrès considerables. Mais depuis cette époque les vers à soye ayant mal réussi et le prix des soyes étant monté fort haut, elle a décliné tous les jours, intimidée d'ailleurs par la multiplicité des faillites et des pertes qu'elle a essuyé surtout à Paris qui est son grand débouché, et actuellement elle n'occupe pas les deux-tiers des métiers qu'elle faisait travailler en 1762."<sup>33</sup>

The harvest of 1768 was abundant and the price of cocoons fell by a quarter. The fair at Alès was heavily attended. "Ce qui est certain, c'est que de longtemps il n'y étoit monté tant d'argent. L'on prétend qu'il y aura trois millions d'espèces."<sup>34</sup> Another substantial harvest in 1769 produced a slight easing of prices, as cocoons fell by 1s to 2s a pound.

Information on the early years of the next decade is limited. The three years between 1770 and 1773 were relatively normal, but high prices caused by poor harvests in 1774 and 1775 led to a slump in production.<sup>35</sup> In July 1774 Charles Gervais & Cie of Nîmes reported that silks were exorbitant.

"Vous ne devez pas ignorer que notre récolte des cocons a manqué cette année. Nos organcin reviennent aux fileurs à 24 Lt 10s et les trames d'Alais se sont vendues, 2<sup>e</sup> qt<sup>e</sup> avantagée, à 20 Lt 10s."<sup>36</sup>

Prices improved in 1776 but rose again in 1777. "Les trames ont esté sy chères en foire de Beaucaire et d'Alès que je n'en ay acheté que pour remplir les engagements que j'avois et point par spéculation, crainte d'y manger mon brin s'il y avoit une diminution, comme la fabrique de bas va tres mal," François Fabre-Lichaire informed a correspondent in Paris in September.



By January 1778 prices had risen further, and silk was being imported from the Levant.<sup>38</sup> The harvest of 1778 was a good one however, and the large amount of silk available, coupled with rumours of war, brought the price of organsins down from 21 to 19 Lt.<sup>39</sup> Sales at the fair of Alès were high. "Ceux qui ont coté leurs prix sur l'espoir qu'ils avoient d'acheter grand marché à la dite foire en seront duppes."<sup>40</sup>

The outbreak of war, and news of the prohibition upon imported silk hose by the Spanish monarchy cast a shadow over the market in the early months of 1779.<sup>41</sup> The harvest was good, if the quality of cocoons was lower than usual, and the fairs of Beaucaire and Alès well stocked. Despite the war and the embargo, sales were buoyant, "chose étonnant vu la nature de toutes les fabriques," Fabre-Lichaire wrote.<sup>42</sup> In 1780, the harvest was a little smaller than usual and cocoon prices rose by 20%. The absence of demand for bills of exchange on Paris in August limited the supply of money available to commercial houses in Nîmes and resulted in prices remaining stable at Ales:

"Les Vivaroises sy sont vendues de 17 Lt 10s à 19 Lt 10s. Les Alais 2<sup>e</sup> qte de 16 Lt à 17 Lt 10s; les 3<sup>e</sup> de 14 Lt 10s à 15 Lt 10s et les douppions qui servent pour la fabrique des soyes à coudre de 9 Lt à 11 Lt en sorte que toute combiné revient au prix de l'an passé ..."

Fabre-Lichaire informed a client in Toulouse.<sup>43</sup> The period of mourning which followed the death of the Queen Mother in December

1780 further contributed to the absence of demand.<sup>44</sup> The harvest of 1781 was poor and prices of fine quality silks rose. Supplies were exhausted at the fair of Alès: "nombre d'acheteurs s'en sont retournés sans en avoir pu acheter le quart de ce qu'il en falloit."<sup>45</sup> Rumours of an end of the war stimulated production in Nîmes during the winter of 1781-82, but they proved to be premature, so that the demand for silk in 1782 remained stable. The war continued to produce shortages of cash:

"Les espèces sont devenues si rares dans cette province par les envois qui se font tous les mois à Toulon pour la marine que si les vendeurs ne donnent point quelque aide aux acheteurs les matières vendront à vil pris. Nos fabriquans démontent journellement les ouvriers rapport à cette rareté."<sup>46</sup>

The harvest of 1783 was worse than that of 1782, and sales were affected by a dispute between buyers and sellers at Alès.<sup>47</sup> Demand for silk revived as the hosiery industry resumed sales to Spain, and a poor harvest in 1784 pushed prices up by 10 to 12%.

"Il se fait de gros achats depuis la foire de Beaucaire en 2<sup>e</sup> et 3<sup>e</sup> sorte. On presume que les Espagnols ont fait acheter beaucoup. Je ne suis pas éloigné de le croire, vu que leur récolte de soie a totalement manqué chez eux,"

Fabre-Lichaire reported in September.<sup>48</sup> The harvests of 1785 and 1786 were average:

"On avoit annoncé une récolte médiocre dans les Cévennes et Vivarès. Les Suites nous a prouvé le contraire. Toutes les qualités de soyes y ont abondi, Nonostant les gros achats qu'on y a fait, et les fileurs y ont perdu gros."

Fabre wrote in 1785.<sup>49</sup> The harvest of 1787 was a disaster. Cocoon



prices rose by 45% and sales plummeted. At Beaucaire the price of silks rose by 6 lt or more a pound. "A cet prix je suis décidé à n'acheter que ce qu'on me demandera," Fabre informed his clients in Paris.<sup>50</sup> At Alès, "les matières ont été si rares et si chères et si recherchées ... que je n'en ay pas acheté une livre, là où j'en achettois ordinairement de 40 à 45 quintaux."<sup>51</sup> Prices were 80% above the level of the fair of 1786. The repercussions of this failure of supply upon manufacture in Nimes were severe, and were aggravated by a renewed prohibition upon imported silks by the Spanish crown. Although the harvest of 1788 was normal and cocoon prices fell, the recession in the hosiery industry continued to affect prices, and demand at Alès only improved when news of Necker's recall arrived, encouraging prices to rise by 20-30s a pound and ensuring<sup>a</sup> a satisfactory level of sales.<sup>52</sup> In 1789, however, a good harvest and high demand produced a satisfactory situation for sellers. Prices were stable, tending to rise and the level of sales at Alès was high. The situation began to deteriorate from October, when the court moved to Paris, and the events of the revolution began to affect the market. "Il n'est pas possible dans cette circonstance facheuse de songer à vendre," Fabre wrote in November. "Les fabriques ne font rien du tout et l'argent est si rare qu'il ne se demande rien."<sup>53</sup> Shortage of money

aggravated the stagnation. "Nous n'avons la ressource de quelques capitalistes, qui suffisent à peine aux besoins d'une ville de fabrique comme la notre."<sup>54</sup> Although the harvest was a good one, the level of sales was low. "Les soyes fines n'ont aucun prix dans le moment parce que personne n'achette," Fabre wrote in June.

"Les fileurs et les négociants ont presque toutes leurs soyes de l'année dernière, ce qui fait qu'il n'y a pas beaucoup de courage pour acheter les cocons."<sup>55</sup>

This was the situation facing rural producers of silk in the summer of 1790. The market was depressed, pressure upon debtors was thus the greater. By this time too, a series of events had led to considerable tensions within the peasant economy. These events were the product of the pressure exerted by commercial houses in Nîmes and elsewhere to impose relations of commodity production upon the societies of the hinterland.





20. A.D. Gard Serie B (unclassified). Papers of David Pastre. Livre de Copies de Lettres, to Lehon, Tours, 24-9-1751.
21. Id. to Poursin aîné, Bordeaux. 23-10-1752.
22. A.D. Gard. 1E 2079, to A. Manoel, 5-2-1759.
23. A.D. Hérault. C2539.
24. A.D. Gard. Serie B. (unclassified). Ourson frères, Livre de Copies de Lettres, to P & B. Huber, Lyon, 14-7-1760.
25. A.D. Hérault. C8245, C2539 and A.D. Gard Serie B. loc.cit. Ourson frères to P & B Huber, 15-6-1761.
26. A.D. Herault C2541.
27. A.D. Herault C2281.
28. A. D. Gard. Séries B. loc.cit. Ourson frères to P & B Huber, 12-8-1763, & 16-9-1763.
29. A.D. Gard. FFC 259 fo3, 5-8-1765.
30. A.D. Gard. Série B. loc.cit. Ourson frères to B. Huber, 10-9-1765.
31. A.D. Gard. FFC 360 fo 34v<sup>o</sup>, 1-8-1766.
32. Id.
33. B.M. Nîmes Mss 66, and see above, p. 181.
34. A.D. Gard Série B. loc.cit. Ourson frères to B. Huber, Lyon. 31-8-1768.
35. See above p. 181.
36. A.D. Gard. Serie B (unclassified). Papers of Charles Gervais & Cie. Livre de Copies de Lettre, 18-7-1774.
37. A.D. Gard Serie 1E (unclassified) Papers of F.Fabre-Lichaire, Livre de copies de Lettres, 26-9-1777.
38. Id. to Gachon, Paris, 12-1-1778.
39. Id. to Gibert neveu, Alès, 13-7-1778.
40. Id. to J. Soulier & Cie, Toulouse, 10-9-1778.



41. On the prohibition, see above, p. 183-4.
42. A.D. Gard Serie 1E. loc.cit. F. Fabre-Lichaire to P.Fabre, Anduze, 31-7-1779.
43. Id. to Cornu cadet & Cie, Toulouse, 21-9-1780.
44. Id. to Pierre Fabre, Anduze, 30-12-1780.
45. Id. to Cornu cadet & Cie, Toulouse, 11-9-1781.
46. Id. to D. Régis, Cotignac, 30-9-1782.
47. See below, p. 365 et seq.
48. A.D. Gard Serie 1E loc.cit. F. Fabre-Lichaire to Mortemard & Cie, Paris, 6-9-1784.
49. Id. to L. Tempié & fils, Cotignac, 12-9-1785.
50. Id. to Mortemard & Cie, Paris, 1-8-1787.
51. Id. to J. Claverie, Sauveterre, 4-9-1787.
52. Id. to J. Delachanel, Lyon, 8-9-1788.
53. Id. to Vassas aîné, Ganges, 2-11-1789.
54. Id. La Bretonnière frères, Montélimar, 174-1790.
55. Id. to Rocamus fils, La Tour d'Aigues, 11-6-1790.

Chapter 17 - Appendix ACocoon Prices in the Eighteenth Century: Nîmes and Region

<u>Year</u>	<u>Price (in sous)</u>	<u>Source</u>
1709	13	A.D. Rhône
1710	17	A.D. Rhône, Specht, Gonzebach & Cie
1714	40	Id.
1719	25-32	A.D.G., Reynaud & Guiraud
1720	35-36	Id.
1721	22	Id.
1725	20-22	LR Malint
1726	17-18	A.D.H.C. 2449
	14-18	LR Malint
1727	20-22	LR Malint
1729	20-22	Id.
1731	22	Id.
1737	17-21	OF
1738	24-27	Id.
1739	c.29	LR Malint
1742	17-18	OF, ACCM LIX 436
1744	23-26	A.D.H. C2453
	c.26	CL Ourson frères
	24-25	OF
1745	17-20	A.D.H. C2453
1746	+25-30%	A.D.H. C2455
	+20-25%	OF
1747	20-22	Id.
1748	19-20	Id.
1749	40-41	Id.
1750	38-40	Id.
1752	27-30	Id.
1753	28-33	Id.
1754	20-22	Id.
1755	26-28	Id.
1756	30-32	Id.
	+5-6/ livre	Id.
1757	20-23	Id.
	24-25 @ Alès	Id.
1758	19-22	Id.
1760	23-24	Id.
1761	28-29	Id.
	28-29	A.D.H. C8245
1762	20-22	OF
	20-22	A.D.H. C8247
1763	28-31	OF



<u>Year</u>	<u>Price (in sous)</u>	<u>Source</u>
1764	27-30	OF
1765	31-35	Id.
	35-36 @ Alès	Id.
1766	29-30	FFC
1767	33-38	OF
	34-36	FFC
	35-38	A.D.H. C6817
1768	24-27	OF
	less 25%	FFC
	30-33	Id.
1769	24-25 @ Alès	A.D.H. C8254
1777	28-30	FL
1778	24-25	Id.
1779	20-21	Id.
1780	27-30	Id.
1781	26-28	Id.
1782	26-28	Id.
1783	24-25	Id.
1784	21-24	Id.
	28-29 @ Alès	Id.
1785	26-29	Id.
	30-32 @ Alès	Id.
1786	24-27	Id.
	28-30 @ Alès	Id.
1787	30-33	Id.
1788	26-27	Id.
1789	20-24	Id.
	28-30 @ Alès	Id.
1790	22-25	Id.

Abbreviations:

A.D. Rhône	= Papers of Specht, Gonzebach & Cie (letters from I. Mirabaud)
Reynaud & Guiraud	= A.D. Gard Serie B. Journaux of R. & G.
LR Malint	= A.D. Gard Serie B. <u>Livre de Raison.</u>
OF	= A.D. Gard Id. Papers of Ourson frères.
FFC	= Id. Fonds Fornier de Clausonne.
FL	= Id. Papers of F. Fabre-Lichaire, Livres de copies de Lettres.

Chapter 18 Town and Country and the Regulation of the  
Division of Labour in Silk Production



The production of silks in the eighteenth century was based upon a very complicated division of labour. Given the variety of factors affecting the market for silks, it was logical for commercial houses to seek to extend their control over as much of this division of labour as possible. One way of doing so was to centralise the production of silk as highly as available techniques and control over productive labour allowed. Thus, over the latter half of the eighteenth century, the regional division of labour of silk production which has been outlined above, changed fairly considerably.<sup>1</sup> Spinning reels were distributed fairly widely over the Uzège in 1751, but by 1787 they were distributed over an area much nearer to Nîmes.<sup>2</sup> Since the emuneration of reels in 1787 was made by a native and resident of Alès (Alexandre Silvain de la Bitarelle) it is unlikely that the numbers listed were falsified by administrative negligence. In 1787 all the tours à filer la soie enumerated in the area around Les Vans, to the north of Saint-Ambroix, in 1751, had disappeared. This was probably the result of the growing practice of establishing spinning centres by the commercial houses themselves. Bresson & Cie had a filature at Valensoles in Provence; Cazeing de la Graulet, Im-Thurm & Cie had a large one at Cotignac, also in Provence. Vincens-Devillas & Cie and Jean-Louis André both

maintained filatures in the Uzège. In 1786 the sub-délégué at Uzes complained that:

"les soies qui ont fait pendant longtemps la richesse de toutes ces contrées n'enrichissent plus aujourd'hui que quelques maisons de négociants de Nismes qui en ont accaparé exclusivement tout le commerce."<sup>3</sup>

This trend towards geographical centralisation was a way of exercising greater control over one component of the division of labour involved in the production of silk. But the spinning of silk also depended upon the supply of coal, and the distribution of silk depended upon the regulations governing the fair of Alès. The formation of a smoothly functioning market for unfinished silks required the imposition of a greater control over these other two components of the division of labour.



Notes - Chapter 18

1. See above pp. 140-149.
2. A.D. Hérault. C2263; A.N. II 748<sup>221</sup>.
3. A.D. Hérault. C2295 to Ballainvilliers, 4-8-1786.

Chapter 19 The Coal-Mines of Alès and its Region



The rhythms of the production of coal from the mines of the Bassin alésien duplicated the rhythms of the production of silk. Coal was used by silk spinners for heating the water in which the cocoons were placed in order to unravel the fine thread of silk. The highest monthly sales of coal from the mines acquired by the Marquis de Castries in 1777 were in June, July and August, when the saison des vers à soie ended and the filatures began work.<sup>1</sup> "Vous serez surpris de la modicité de ce produit, qui dans cette saison devoit être considérable," his agent informed him in July 1787, "J'en attribue la cause au manque de la récolte des cocons qui est très modique."<sup>2</sup> Although coal was also used for the distillation of eau-de-vie, and for burning lime, most of those who used it were small fileurs. The supply of coal formed another element within the structure of credit upon which the production of silk rested. Thus, while the Marquis de Castries preferred to have the accounts of the revenue from his mines presented on a monthly basis, his agent insisted that this would be impossible "à cause des ventes faites à credit aux consommateurs d'Alais et des environs à l'égard desquels je n'ai pas cru devoir déroger à l'usage qui est de leur faire crédit jusqu'à la vente de la soye."<sup>3</sup>

There were some four dozen coal mines in the region around Alès, stretching from the mine at La Pigère in the parish of Banne, to the east of Les Vans, to the mines at Rochebelle, just west

of Alès itself.<sup>4</sup> Most of these were tiny affairs, owned and exploited by a single family. The largest was the mine of the Grand'Combe which produced somewhere between 150,000 to 200,000 quintaux of coal a year and (as surveys made in the 1770's and 1780's showed) was capable of producing twice or three times this amount for at least another hundred years. In 1772, an arrêt du conseil provisionally conferred the rights to these mines to a Norman entrepreneur, François-Pierre Tubeuf, a man whose career has been followed in two biographies, neither of which has managed to capture a career redolant of the sinuous, elegant corruption of the worlds of high politics and high finance of Paris and Nîmes.<sup>5</sup> Tubeuf's own brief moment of power was a fragile, picaresque affair which ended in emigration to Virginia where he was murdered in 1795. He was a speculator - who invested none of his own money in his ventures and whose position rested entirely upon his connections with the world of finance on the one hand, and with the haute banque protestante on the other. A genealogy, of somewhat dubious accuracy, would have him descended from one of Colbert's ministers and the cousin of a Simon-Charles de Tubeuf, baron of Tubeuf, Ver and Blauzac in Normandy, seigneur of Berbeck and a conseiller privé of the Margrave of Brandenburg. A second putative cousin, Simon-Claude de Tubeuf married an Elisabeth Richard, the daughter of Jean-Louis Richard, conseiller du Roi, greffier en chef at the Chatelet and trésorier ordinaire at the Parlement of Paris.<sup>6</sup> In the light of François-Pierre's connections, this is certainly the milieu that one would expect. François Pierre Tubeuf was



married in 1768 to Marie-Marguerite Brochet, the daughter of a tireur d'or from Lyon, who lived in Paris with her great-aunt Marie Mazières de Montverou. His brother was the prior of the abbey of Ariel in the diocese of Bayeux. One of his sisters - Marie-Anne - married a Sr. Pierre de Laporte, baron de Laporte et Saint-Cels.<sup>7</sup>

On March 24th 1774 Tubeuf was confirmed in his rights to the exploitation of the mines of the Bassin alésien. The area covered by the concession was bounded by the towns of Pont-Saint-Esprit, Laudun, Uzès, Anduze, Villefort, Aubenas, and Viviers, with the town of Barjac as its centre. This coup concluded three years of negotiation and intrigue in which the key figure had been a certain Jerome-Thomas de la Barbérie, premier-commis of the Minister and former Controleur-général Bertin. La Barbérie had had an interest in a mining venture which Tubeuf had operated at Cransac in the Rouergue, and was ceded a quarter share of the profits in the new undertaking, by a secret transaction.<sup>8</sup> A further tenth share in the profits was ceded to the son of the Inspecteur général des Mines in the Languedoc, de Gensanne, in return for his patronage at Montpellier.<sup>9</sup> The costs of exploiting the mines were met by two men - a Jew from Nîmes named Cavillon, who accepted the deficit of 20,000 L that Tubeuf had accumulated by the spring of 1775 at a rate of 6% and an interest of a sou in each quintal of coal sold at Nîmes, Lunel or Montpellier; and a Sr Ode, seigneur de Chusclan from Bagnols, who advanced 13,500 L

to the entrepreneur at the Beaucaire fair of 1774. A cosmopolitan group of commercial houses - Thomas Price & Caffarel at Montpellier, Bouquet at Lunel, Paulhan at Nimes, Ricard, Piel & Cie at Sète and the sugar refinery at Montpellier - were engaged to purchase the output of the mines.<sup>10</sup> By November 1775 Tubeuf had three mines in production - the first at La Pigère, near Banne; a second at Molières in the parish of Meyrannes near Saint-Ambroix; and a third near Alès at the foot of the mas de Boat. Their output, however, was derisory - of the order of 50 to 60,000 quintaux a year - and there seemed to be little prospect of improvement. The position by the winter of 1776 was such as to raise misgivings among his patrons and creditors.

In addition, the concession produced a certain disquiet among other parties interested in the mines of the region. Firstly, the comte du Roure, the seigneur of the community of Banne, claimed an annual revenue of 256 L from the ferme of the mine at La Pigère and refused to recognise Tubeuf's claim. Eventually, in January 1777, after three years of negotiation, he accepted the validity of the concession in return for an annual payment of 200 L, and a further payment of compensation to his former fermiers. Secondly, most of the mines in the vicinity of Alès fell within the demesnes of the comté of Alès, which belonged to the Prince de Conti. They were leased by a small consortium of minor nobles and local notables at the rate of 3,500 L a year. The richest mine of the region at the time - the mine of La Forest - fell within their control. Thirdly, the mines of Trouilhas and the



Grand'Combe - in the same valley as the mine of La Forest - belonged to Joseph-Mathieu Deleuze, seigneur de Trouilhas, and were, in their turn, sub-leased to another group drawn from the notabilité alsésienne at a price of 1,500 L a year.<sup>11</sup> This cluster of local interest was reinforced at Montpellier by Arthur-Richard Dillon, the powerful bishop of Narbonne, whose own interest in the coal mines at Bise, near the Canal du Midi, brought him into competition with Tubeuf's outlets at Montpellier and Sète.<sup>12</sup>

The situation was complicated in the spring of 1777, when - on March 27th - Louis-François-Joseph de Conti sold the comté of Alès for 600,000 L to the future Ministre de la Marine, the marquis de Castries.<sup>13</sup> On December 9th 1777, the sous-fermiers of the mine of La Forest - Francois Sugier of Les Salles du Gardon, Jean-Antoine Silvain de Brugas, Alexandre Silvain de la Bitarelle and Etienne Sirvan de la Maison-Neuve - and their counterparts at the adjoining mine of Trouilhas - Jean Largillier, a négociant, Jacques-Antoine Sugier, a notaire and Largillier's brother-in-law, François Faure - decided to merge their interests in order to prevent competition between the two mines. In addition, the notaire Sugier, who became the marquis de Castries' homme d'affaires, ceded his portion in the mine of Trouilhas to a Sr Pignol, who in turn resold it to Cabanis père & fils of Alès. Largillier ceded half of his interest to his brother-in-law François Faure, and the other half

to a Sr Pradel, also of Alès, while Sugier of Les Salles ceded half of his share in the mine of La Forest to Jean-Michel L'Hostellier, who was to become de Castries' agent in 1783. The new lease was fixed at the rate of 6,000 L "chaque année pour chaque partie qui devait recevoir cette somme sur le produit et payer sa ferme primitive et particulière relativement aux baux à ferme et le surplus du produit ... devait être partagé."<sup>14</sup>

This group with its rich experience of the politics of Alès and its region, and its solid connections within the intimate network of influence of the comté of Alès - formed the core of the local opposition to the concession. In July 1777, armed with an authorisation from Saint-Priest, the Intendant at Montpellier, Tubeuf ordered twenty one small mine owners operating near his mine at the mas de Boat to abandon their excavations on the side of the mountain. On August 11th, his agent Allès, reported that "un homme de loi, à ce qu'on m'assure, se mit aux troupes des charbonniers et des chauffourniers pour les presser à former une cavalle (i.e. cabale).

"Ils se portèrent tous à l'Hotel de Ville. Il y eut un conseil, ce qui ne servit qu'à les enhardir de plus fort. Les chauffourniers ont cessé de faire de la chaux pour en laisser manquer à tous les travaux publics ..."<sup>15</sup>

The lime-burners claimed that they could not use the coal from the mas de Boat because its quality was inferior. In addition they stated that Allès had raised the price of coal at the face from 2s per charge to 2s a quintal. The dispute was referred by the bureau de police at Alès to Saint-Priest at Montpellier,



as a case of monopoly. At the end of August, with no decision as yet from Montpellier, Alès informed the Intendant that "tous les charbonniers sont rentrés dans leurs trous et tirent du charbon a grand'force ... Verdun, le syndic de tous ces mineurs, appuyé de quelques chapeaux noirs de la ville, crie qu'il répond de tout."<sup>16</sup>

On September 2nd the assiette of the diocese of Alès, whose members were closely associated with de Castriès' fermiers, through offices in the seigneurial court and municipality of Alès, condemned the attempted eviction, and implicitly confirmed the unorthodox return to the status quo.<sup>17</sup>

This incident was the prelude to a more elaborate struggle, conducted both at Versailles and at Alès, where a carefully organised campaign of intimidation accompanied the flux of high intrigue. It arose out of an agreement made in 1778 between Tubeuf and a large, Parisian société par actions - the Compagnie d'épurement de charbon de terre en France. The company was a fusion of capital drawn from both the haute banque protestante of Paris and from within the royal bureaucracy. It was formally established on August 13th 1778, six days after an arrêt du conseil had conferred upon a Sr Jean-Pierre Ling, a native of Saarbruck, "ses heritiers ou ayant cause," the exclusive right over a period of fifteen years "de préparer et faire préparer suivant sa méthode, dans toute l'étendue des provinces de Normandie, Dauphiné, Provence, Languedoc et dans les généralités de Lille et de Valenciennes, le charbon de terre de manière à le rendre propre à la fabrication des fers et autres usages auxquels s'emploie le charbon de bois."<sup>18</sup> The company, which

was to have a fonds d'avance of 1,200,000 livres had fourteen actionnaires. It was thus similar in its composition to the Compagnie d'Anzin or the huge Manufacture des Fonderies royales d'Indret et du Montcenis et des Cristaux de la Reine founded in 1782.<sup>19</sup>

Article X of the Acte de Societe established the bankers Sellonf (or Schlumpf) & Perronateau as the company's caissiers. In return, it was agreed that

"il sera bonifié à MM Sellonf & Perronateau demy pour cent de commission sur toutes les sommes qu'ils recevront pour le compte de la Compagnie jusqu'à la concurrence de deux millions par an, et un tiers pour cent sur les deux millions suivants ... Et à cause de l'importance des operations il ne leur sera alloué qu'un quart pour cent de commission sur les autres sommes qui excéderont quatre millions dans l'année."

The bank Sellonf & Perronateau (which was one of the first group of administrators of Panchaud's Caisse d'Escompte) had been established in 1776 with a capital of 300,000 L to succeed the partnerships Sellonf, Brenner & Cie and Sellonf & Cie. Paul Sellonf (or Schlumpf) was a native of Saint-Gall, whose family had been involved in commerce at Lyon and Marseille for several generations. His partner, Jean-Pierre Perronateau, was another Protestant, originally from Montauban.<sup>20</sup> Their interest in the Compagnie d'Epurement was typical of the speculative eclecticism of the haute banque protestante. A discreetly named enterprise known as the Compagnie Francois-Guillaume Roussel formed in 1734 to exploit the mines of the dioceses of Alet, Narbonne and Pamiers was, in fact, capitalised by the wealthy Protestant bankers, Tronchin and Thellusson, who were probably also involved



in the exploitation of the lead mines at Bahours, near Mende in the 1730's and 1740's.<sup>21</sup>

The shareholders in the Compagnie d'Epurement were obliged, by article VI of the acte de société, to pay an initial 200,000 L to Sellonf & Perronteau as the first installment of the company's capital. This sum was intended to meet the terms of an agreement which had been made between the company and Tubeuf on June 4th 1778 and which was incorporated as article XXVII of the contract. Under its terms, Tubeuf promised to supply the Company with 300,000 mesures de houille, weighing a hundred pounds each, every year for a period of 24 years. In return he would be paid 6 sols a 100 Lbs for the first twelve years of the contract and 8s a hundred pounds for the second twelve years. The agreement was to begin on April 1st 1779. Article 10 of this agreement stipulated that:

"Aussitot que le Sr Tubeuf sera parvenu à faire fermer les mines de M. Le Prince de Conty et de M. le Marquis de Castries, (il) sera libre à la Compagnie de prendre les cent mille mesures d'Alais sur les mines de Portes, et audit cas, elle s'oblige de prendre cent mille mesures de plus, et de payer pour une fois seulement et à l'avance audit Sr Tubeuf la somme de 6,000 livres ..."<sup>22</sup>

This undertaking was, obviously, a close secret. But, when the company presented a mémoire to the Estates of the Languedoc in December 1778 proposing to construct a canal along the River Ceze which would be used to carry coal which it hoped to obtain from Robiac, a little to the south of Les Vans, and when Tubeuf

announced his intention to evict all mine owners in the parish, it became clear what was happening. Cabane de Camonts, the syndic, of the diocese of Alès and an ally of the group associated with the comté of Alès announced that the new monopoly of the production of coal might be extended to the traffic in corn. "Comme l'importation des blés, dont les Cévennes manquent absolument, se fait à la faveur de l'exportation du charbon, bien des gens craignent ici ... que les privilèges exclusifs obtenus par les Srs Tubeuf et les Srs Ling ... ne deviennent par le fait entre leurs mains des privilèges exclusifs pour la vente des grains..."<sup>23</sup> This was a skilful piece of alarmism, which assumed greater credibility when the incriminating Article 10 of the agreement was leaked in May 1779.

The attempt to evict the mine-owners of Robiac was referred to Saint-Priest at Montpellier, who in turn referred the dispute to Versailles. Since the parish was in the diocese of Uzès, the syndic of the diocese, Charles-François Trinquelague, who had an interest in a glassworks at Collias near Uzès and was therefore doubly concerned about any variation in the price of coal, was drawn into the orbit of the group associated with the marquis de Castries.<sup>24</sup> A deputation was sent to the minister Bertin, who referred the matter back to Montpellier. Eventually, in October 1779, the Intendant accepted Tubeuf's right to close the offending mines. "Amassez du charbon pour la Compagnie," the exultant entrepreneur urged his brother-in-law, Laporte de



Saint-Cels". "Il faudrait en ce moment 40,000 quintaux en magasin."<sup>25</sup>

The delay had left the venture desperately short of capital, and it is probable that a second undertaking, which Tubeuf began in the spring of 1779 was designed to overcome this shortage. On April 9th 1779 he obtained the right to mine coal in an area between Chantilly, La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, Rocroi, Corbeil, Chevreuse and Mantes, with Paris as its centre. On June 7th, he formed a company to exploit the mines at Luzarches.<sup>26</sup> This, somewhat unorthodox, société par actions was to have a hundred shares. Sixty of them - none of them to be capitalised - were allocated to Tubeuf. The other forty, which were to produce a capital of 400,000 livres, were divided among nine actionnaires. The largest number of shares - fifteen - was allocated to Jacques-Abraham Aufric, marquis de Chaulieu, a former naval officer, who was probably a Norman, but lived in Paris, on the Place Royale. He had already advanced over 100,000 livres to Tubeuf.<sup>27</sup> The other eight were from a similar Norman-Parisian milieu.<sup>28</sup> Unsurprisingly the mines at Luzarches remained unexploited, and in 1785 the rights to the concession were transferred to the Compagnie Thouvenal & Pyron, which was backed by the Wendel.<sup>29</sup>

Despite this further injection of capital, Tubeuf was unable to raise the output of the mines in the Languedoc. In July 1779 the Compagnie d'Epurement began proceedings against him over his failure to produce the promised 40,000 quintaux of coal a month. This dispute finally confirmed the existence of their secret agreement to the fermiers of the mines at Touilhas and La Forest.

Throughout the autumn of 1779, and during the spring and summer of the following year, they continued their pressure at Versailles, where the marquis de Castries was an influential intermediary, to secure the annulment of the concession. Tubeuf in his turn, engaged one of the royal chamber maids to further his cause.<sup>30</sup>

In May 1780, forty-nine owners from the parishes of Portes, Saint-Andéol-de-Trouilhas, Robiac, Castillon et Courry, Saint-Jean-de-Valériscle, Sénéchas, Notre-Dame de Laval, Sainte-Cécile d'Andorge and Notre-Dame de Meyrannes elected a Sr Pierre Gilly, who owned a glassworks in the parish of Saint-Jean-de-Valériscle, as their syndic.<sup>31</sup> Their position was strengthened by news that the Chatelet of Paris had declared that the agreement between Tubeuf and the Compagnie d'Epurement was void. In the course of <sup>the</sup> autumn of 1780 the opposition to the concession was further consolidated when ten mine owners - including Pierre-Eugene Boissier de Sauvages, the mayor of Alès - sold their mines to the marquis de Castries.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, the marquis began negotiations with Deleuze de Trouilhas for the acquisition of the demesne of Trouilhas, and hence of the mines of Trouilhas and the Grand'Combe. The sale was eventually concluded in 1782, for the sum of 200,000 livres.<sup>33</sup> "M. Trouilhas m'a dit lui-même qu'il vienne Tubeuf, avec son arrêt, je l'attends avec une opposition qu'il ne vuidera jamais," reported an apprehensive Allès.<sup>34</sup>



The arret, when it appeared on August 8th 1780, was equivocal, and provisionally confirmed the validity of the concession. Tubeuf travelled from Paris to Alès to propose a compromise with his opponents. By now, however, most of the mines in the area belonged to the marquis de Castries, and Cabane de Camonts, the syndic of the diocese of Alès reported that a compromise was out of the question. Tubeuf therefore decided to seek an agreement with the Prince de Conty, who still owned the marquisat of Portes and the coal mine that it contained. The procureur-fiscal of the marquisat, and the Prince de Conti's agent, was a notaire from Alès - Jean-Antoine Soustelle - who was also seigneur of the parish of Sainte-Cécile-d'Andorge and the owner of the coal mines in the parish. He was one of the members of the syndicat formed in May 1780 to oppose the concession.<sup>35</sup> Tubeuf's initiative was an inevitable failure. He attempted again to order the closure of the mines which now belonged to the marquis de Castries, and merely achieved a new outburst of condemnation.

On November 19th 1782, the Conseil du Roi arrived at its final decision. It declared that the mine of La Forest belonging to the marquis de Castries was to fall outside of the area of the concession, and ordered Tubeuf to ensure that the glassworks owned by Gilly at Saint-Jean-de-Valériscle received an adequate supply of coal. Apart from this, however, the terms of the concession were unchanged. "Faites fermer Trouilhas," urged an exultant Tubeuf, "et faites fermer toutes les mines de ce canton - Saint-Jean, Meyrannes, Robiac ..."<sup>36</sup> But the mines

remained open. An attempt to evict the mine owners was met by force. "Les paysans menacent de coups de fusil quiconque veut les empêcher de travailler comme bon leur semble."<sup>37</sup> From Versailles Joly de Fleury ordered the arrest and trial of anyone who contravened the arrêt, but at Montpellier Saint-Priest procrastinated, and the affair remained at an impasse.

Another avalanche of mémoires and petitions was sent up to Versailles. The Etats du Languedoc, and the syndics of the dioceses of Alès and Uzès again condemned the concession as a privilege exclusif which infringed both the rights of property and the freedom of commerce.<sup>38</sup> On January 22nd 1783 the communauté of Saint-Ambroix met in an assemblée extraordinaire. It warned that

"on éprouve déjà une augmentation exorbitante sur le prix du charbon, ce qui rendra les frais de filature des cocons plus considérables et operera nécessairement une diminution sur la feuille des meuriers qui fait le principal revenu de la contrée et par suite sur la prix des cocons, diminution qui rejallira principalement sur la classe recommandable des ménagers dont la plus part se trouve dans la détresse."<sup>39</sup>

The deliberation was signed by the consuls and conseillers politiques of the town. On February 2nd the communauté of Banne demanded the revocation of the concession:

attendu le damage réel qui résulte pour la communauté de l'execution d'iceux ... On n'a que du charbon de pierre pour bouiller dans les coconniers et pour filler les cocons, les habitants seront dans l'impossibilité d'en acheter; et ... d'ailleurs la chareté du charbon ne peut que faire diminuer considerablement le prix des cocons, et par suite décourager lesdits habitants de la culture des meuriers, leur seule ressource."<sup>40</sup>



The communautés of Castillon et Courry, Saint-Florens, Saint-Jean-de-Valériscle, Meyrannes and Robiac issued similar warnings. They claimed that the price of coal had risen from between 6 to 9s a quintal in 1774 to between 10 and 15s in 1782. The fileurs were thus forced to spend more on coal and less on cocoons, "et cette branche de culture et de commerce ... qui forme la principale ressource de cette vaste contrée reçoit l'attente la plus dangereuse."<sup>41</sup>

Tubeuf was unable to enforce the arrêt of 1782. Effective control of the mines of La Forest, Trouilhas and the Grand<sup>e</sup>Combe remained in the hands of the marquis de Castries and his fermiers. The mine at Portes was purchased by the Comte de Provence in 1785. In the same year, Tubeuf sold his rights to the concession to a cleric, a certain abbé de Bréard. He was never paid, and the transaction gave rise to yet another long legal dispute. Tubeuf claimed to have lost 715,000 livres in the venture.<sup>42</sup> His successor was no more successful. On March 29th 1787 the marquis de Castries inserted a notice in the Journal de Nîmes that "dans un placard qu'il a fait imprimer et afficher dans ... la ville de Nîmes, le Sr abbe de Bréard s'est qualifié propriétaire des mines de charbon de pierre ... de la comté d'Alais." The claim, he announced, was entirely false,

"et on continuera d'en delivrer (i.e. coal) comme par le passé à tous ceux qui se presenteront pour en acheter ... et à cet effet tous acheteurs peuvent s'adresser ... tant au Sr Coulet commis au magasin de M.le Marechal à Alais ... qu'aux Srs Puechlong & Dubois commis de mondit Seigneur aux mines mêmes."<sup>43</sup>

Between 1783 and 1788 the marquis de Castries enjoyed an annual revenue of between 25,000 and 30,000 livres from his mines.<sup>44</sup>

The attempt to centralise the production and distribution of coal had been defeated by the armed opposition of the owners and fermiers of the mines to Tubeuf's project. The centralisation of the distribution of unfinished silk was another area in which the town sought to impose a more perfect market upon rural society. Events surrounding this process also came to a head in the same year, 1782.



Notes - Chapter 19

1. A.N. 306AP 485-492. I am grateful to M. Le Marquis de Castries for allowing me to consult his private papers in Paris, where they were being microfilmed by the Archives Nationales.
2. A.N. 306AP 490, to de Castries, 4-7-1787..
3. A.N. 306AP 489, to de Castries 2-7-1787.
4. See J-R Galy, "L'Exploitation des Houillères en Languedoc au 18<sup>e</sup> Siècle," Annales du Midi, T.81, 1969, pp.163-195.
5. M.Rouff, Tubeuf: Un Grand Industriel français au 18e Siècle d'apres Ses papiers personnels. Paris, 1922. (See also Id. Les Mines de Charbon en France au XVIIIe Siècle. Paris, 1922) and A.Bardon "L'Exploitation du Bassin houllier d'Alais sous l'Ancien Regime." Mém. Ac. de Nimes, 7e Série, T20.1897.pp.133-516.
6. A.N. ABXIX 1320 d5.
7. M. Rouff.op.cit. pp.12-17, and A.D. Gard. 1F 179. (notes made by A. Bardon for his article cited above.)
8. A. Bardon. op.cit. pp.206-7.
9. Id. pp.218-219.
10. Id. pp.218, 230-232.
11. This information is based upon a long letter written to the Marquis de Castries' agent in Paris in 1789, which describes the situation as it was before the comté of Alès was purchased by de Castries:  
A.N. 306 AP 491, to de Fraisse 10-10-1789.  
In 1759 the lease was about 3,000L., Cf. A. Bardon, op.cit.p.190.
12. A. Bardon, op.cit. p.245.
13. A copy of the contract is reproduced by A. Bardon, op.cit. p.268. De Castries borrowed 500,000 Lt. to pay for it.
14. A.N. 306 AP 491.
15. B.M. Nîmes. Mss 487, 11-8-1777.
16. Id. Mss 652, 29-8-1777. Verdun, the syndic was a maitre-perruquier: A. Bardon, op.cit. p.252.

17. A.N. F14 7682.
18. A.D. Isère. B2 531 ff116-124v<sup>o</sup>. The development of techniques of producing coke is examined in B.Gille, Les Origines de la Grande Industrie métallurgique en France, Paris, 1947.
19. A.N.MC XXXIII 638 13-8-1778. The shareholders were drawn from two sociétés en commandite, Richard & Cie and Carouge & Cie, and the shares were distributed as follows:

Richard & Cie

Louis-Thomas Richard, <u>Administrateur général des Postes</u> rue Saint-Honore, Paris	28 <u>sols</u>
Estienne Richard <u>Directeur des Postes at</u> Montpellier	12s
Joseph-Francois-Laurent Fournier, <u>négociant at</u> Toulon	29s
George-Louis Leclerc, <u>Intendant du Jardin du Roi</u> at Versailles	12s
Julien Bazin avocat <u>Secrétaire général du</u> <u>gouvernement at Versailles.</u>	6s
Paul Sellonf & Jean-Pierre Perronseau <u>banquiers</u> rue du Mail, Paris.	4s
Jean L'Eschevin de Pressec <u>Conseiller du Roi,</u> <u>Controlleur général de la</u> <u>Maison de Monsieur at Versailles</u>	29s

Carouge & Cie

Louis-Charles Carouge <u>des Bornes, avocat en</u> <u>Parlement, maitre des forges</u> <u>et fourneaux at Guegnon in the</u> Charollais, rue de Savoye, Paris	40s
Rene Poulitier, <u>Conseiller, secrétaire du roi, maison</u> Couronne de France, rue Saint-Martin, Paris	16s
Joseph-Gabriel de Brouquens, <u>Receveur général</u> <u>des Finances de Champagne of</u> Bordeaux	10s
Marie-Joseph-Caignart de Rotoy, <u>Conseiller du Roi</u> <u>au Baillage de Saint-Quentin,</u> formerly <u>majeur commandant</u> of Saint-Quentin and <u>seigneur</u> of the <u>vicomté of Mailly en</u> Laônnais, Heurthebise, Pommery, etc.	20s
Gabriel-Francois Dageville, <u>écuyer, chargé des</u> <u>affaires de S.A.S. Mgr le Prince</u> <u>de Nassau-Saarbruck of Paris</u> au Louvre.	12s
Jacques-Antoine Angot of Paris, rue Pavée.	8s
Charles-Henri de Bauclas <u>écuyer, of Versailles</u>	14s



Of these 240 shares, only 180 were to be capitalised. A hundred were divided among the members of Richard & Cie at 6,000 livres each; the remaining eighty were shared among the members of Carouge & Cie at 7,500 L each. Twenty of the actions held by Richard of Paris, Fournier and L'Eschevin de Pressec, and a further forty of the shares allocated to Carouge were not to be capitalised.

20. H. Luthy, La Banque Protestante ... Paris, 1963. T.2. pp.450-451.
21. Id. pp.188-190 and L. Dermigny, "Circuits de l'Argent et Milieux d'Affaires au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle," Revue historique, 212, 1954. pp.260-262.
22. A.N. MC XXXIII 637 4-6-1778.
23. to Rome, syndic of the Estates of the Languedoc 21-1-1779 cited by A.Bardon, op.cit. p.286.  
The compagnie d'épurement was also known as the Compagnie Ling, after the inventor of the coking process Pierre Ling (or Leng). Ling was paid 5,000 L by the Company for the right to his process and a share in its profits.
24. A.N. F<sup>14</sup> 7682. On his glassworks, see A.N. BB<sup>16</sup> 253.
25. A. Bardon, op.cit. p.299.
26. A.N. MC XXXIII 646 7-6-1779.
27. M. Rouff op.cit. pp.28-29.
28. A.N. MC XXXIII 646 loc.cit. They were:
- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| François de la Douëpe <u>écuyer, seigneur de Fougerais</u><br>in Poitou, of Bordeaux   | 5 sols |
| René Joseph Vincent de Billy <u>écuyer</u> of Paris,<br>rue Poissonière  | 5s     |
| Dame Hyppolite de Maucouvenant de Sainte Suzanne,<br><u>chanoinesse de Largentière, Hôtel de Richelieu,</u><br>rue de Richelieu, Paris | 4s     |
| Dame Elizabeth de Gourgues, widow of Jean-André<br>de Pommereux, <u>conseiller au Parlement de Paris,</u><br>of Paris, Place Royale    | 3s     |
| Dame Marie-Jeanne Demellet, marquise de Salvvert-<br>Montrognon, widow of Guillaume, marquis de<br>Salvest-Montrognon                  | 2s     |
| Dame Marthe Hellouen widow of Hyppolite de<br>Maucouvenant de Sainte-Suzanne, of Beserville,<br>near Valogne in Basse-Normandie        | 1s     |

Dame Jeanne-Francoise de Littinière du  
 Sancey, widow of Guy-Francois du Sancey, rue de  
 Richelieu, Hôtel de Richelieu, Paris 1s  
 Nicholas Perchet of Dijon 1s

29. D. Ozanam, Claude Baudard de Saint-James, Trésorier général de la Marine et Brasseur d'Affaires. Paris, 1969, pp.80-81.
30. A. Bardon, op.cit. p.317.
31. A.N.F. 14 7682.
32. A.D. Gard 2E<sup>7</sup> 128 fo.457 et.seq.
33. A.N. 306AP 485.
34. B.M. Nîmes. Mss 487, to Richard 21-6-1780.
35. A.N. F<sup>14</sup> 7682.
36. A. Bardon, op.cit. p.384.
37. Id. p.389.
38. A.N. H 1103; H931.
39. A.N.H 931.
40. Id.
41. B.M. Nîmes Mss 652.
42. Id.
43. Journal de Nîmes, 29-3-1787.
44. A.N. 306 AP 485-492. Various fragmentary accounts.



Chapter 20 The Struggle to Control the Fair at Alès

On August 30th 1782, as the fair of Saint-Bartholomew was drawing to an end, nine men - from Vagnières, Saint-Jean-de-Valérisclé, Saint-Ambroix, Rivières de Theyrargues, Vallon, La Blachère, Courry, Comps and Ribes - lodged formal complaints at the bureau de police of Alès over the terms on which they had sold their silk. In each case, the formula was the same. Jean Besse, from La Blachère in the Vivarais, demanded the repayment of the sum of 4 livres 1 sol from Jean Barre, a merchant from Nîmes, "pour la restitution de retenue de ladite somme que le Sr Barre luy a faite injustement en sus de celle de une livre soye seulement , que luy étoit due par l'usage sur le montant de 2,332 Lt 5s du prix de 121 livres soye que ledit Besse luy a vendu à raison de 19 Lt 5s la livre."<sup>1</sup> Identical complaints were made against the firm of Verdier & Abauzit of Uzès, a Sr Arbus of Nîmes, a Sr Nicolas, marchand of Anduze, Jean André of Nîmes, Bresson & Cie of Nîmes, and a négociant named Roux also of Nîmes. The names are familiar.<sup>2</sup> The complaints brought to a head a dispute over the terms upon which silk was sold at the fair.

For many years, it had been customary for anyone who brought less than a quintal of silk to the fair to keep the last pound for himself - although this pound was included in the price of the total weight sold. This pound was known as the livre du dessous. From the point of view of the seller, the right to the livre du dessous was a substantial one. Effectively, it guaranteed him an income from two pounds of silk more than he brought to the fair. At the same time, it encouraged the sale of small quantities of silk, to the disadvantage of the buyers.



From the early 1770's, however, the buyers had begun to pay a retainer of 1% on quantities of silk weighing over a hundred pounds.<sup>3</sup> Gradually, this practice was extended to cover all amounts of silk brought to the fair - even those of under a hundred pounds. This meant that less was left to the small seller than before, and that the buyers were in a better position to control the market through the payment of retainers.

This development impelled the members of the Bureau de police of Alès to take action to restore the customary right. Accordingly, on August 29th 1782,

"informé que par un abus nuisible au public, les marchands de cocons, de soie et autres marchandises, fondés par l'usage à ne pas payer la livre pesant dite du dessous des parties des marchandises qu'ils achèttent lorsqu'elles sont du poids d'un quintal et au dessus, ont converti cet usage en une retenue d'un pour cent du prix des achats des marchandises quelqu'il soit, meme quoiqu'audessous d'un quintal ..."

it forbade the payment of a retainer and ordered a return to the practice of the livre du dessous.<sup>4</sup> The complaints of the nine sellers (all of whom were large sellers, who would previously have benefited from a retainer) were therefore in the nature of a test case.

The members of the Bureau de police of Alès were the town's mayor, Firmas de Periès, his deputy, the avocat Soustelle, Boissier de Sauvages and the third consul Destre. They were closely associated with the opponents to Tubeuf's concession. Their ruling provoked immediate opposition from Nîmes, and on April 26th 1783, they met to revise their position. The procureur du Roi moved that the prohibition on a retainer be modified. Accordingly,

the Bureau announced "qu'il n'a nullement entendu empêcher les acheteurs et les vendeurs de convenir entre eux de la retenue."

This was clearly a retraction. But it was qualified by the stipulation that any such arrangement must involve the agreement of both parties to the transaction, and that if there was no such agreement, the Bureau would continue to uphold the right to the livre du dessous.<sup>5</sup>

This concession was rejected at Nîmes, whose silk merchants announced their intention to boycott the forthcoming fair at Alès and buy their silk at Anduze. On August 4th, the Bureau met again, and agreed to withdraw the ordonnance of the previous year in its entirety. The buyers, however, pressed for more. "Le commerce n'est pas satisfait," reported the procureur du Roi on August 14th;

"Il a fait de nouvelles representations prétendant que ces différentes ordonnances donneront lieu à de nouvelles contestations, qu'il doit être de la sagesse du bureau de les prévenir en ordonnant par une nouvelle ordonnance que le don de un pour cent (qui) tient sur l'achat des soies que sur les autres matières provenant des vers à soie sera accordé de droit à l'acheteur."

He warned of "la sensation frapante qui peut faire dans cette ville la perte d'une foire dont tant de personnes du peuple tirent leur subsistance, sur le profit de laquelle ils ont compté pour l'acquit de leurs dettes," and urged the Bureau to admit defeat:

"Ne craignez pas de nouvelles lumières. Nous connaissons le dessein des marchands. Si à votre exemple on les condamne partout, si tous les tribunaux se conforment à votre jurisprudence, ils s'y soumettront. Mais ils n'abandonneront point pour cela la proportion qui leur est trop chère. Ils la réclameront dans leurs marchés et dès lors personne n'en sera exempt. Le fardeau n'en sera pas moins pesant au peuple. Votre fermeté ne peut les empêcher."<sup>6</sup>



The Bureau gave way and announced that it had "formellement autorisé l'usage de la retenue d'un pour cent sur le prix des ventes de soye et cocons sous le nom de proportion."<sup>7</sup>

But the capitulation was too late. The buyers from Nîmes had already announced their intention to go to Anduze. "Le succès d'une tentative aussi étrange, favorisée d'ailleurs par les seigneurs des villes voisines qui désireroient l'établissement d'une foire à la même époque ruineroient ... les habitants de la ville d'Alais," warned the marquis de Castries, who received the leude on the articles brought to the fair.<sup>8</sup> At Alès, when the news began to circulate, "beaucoup de gens auxquels elle (the fair) fournit un grand secours pour faire subsister leur famille allèrent faire des représentations à l'hôtel de ville et demandèrent quelque moyen d'accomodement."<sup>9</sup> Seditious placards appeared on the streets. "On disait publiquement que quatre ou cinq cents hommes d'Alais iraient le vingt huit du côté de Ledignan à la jonction des chemins d'Anduze et d'Alais pour forcer les marchands de Nîmes à venir à Alais."<sup>10</sup>

The fair opened on Thursday August 28th. "Le vendredy la vente se fit avec la plus grande rigidité," reported the sub-délégué, Dhombres.

"Il y avait à Alais un négociant à Paris, un à Lyon, un de Saint-Chammont et quatre de Nîmes qui sont d'Alais et qui y ont des relations tres particulières. Tous ces négociants, et surtout ceux d'Alais, firent des achats extraordinaires. Ils forcèrent leurs operations. Les soyes se vendoient pour le moins 15s par livre de plus qu'a Beaucaire. Les vendeurs étoient tres contents et le peuple dans la joie, d'autant plus lorsqu'on savoit que les marchands de Nîmes se malfondoient à Anduze, où il n'y avoit pas un brin de soie."<sup>11</sup>

On the evening of the 29th, several courtiers were discovered in the town. Apparently, they had been sent from Anduze to persuade the sellers to leave Alès. A woman who had been trying to engage some sellers from the Vivarais to go to Anduze was ordered to leave. On the following morning, a number of sellers, headed by a notaire from Vallon, began to leave Alès for Anduze. Their way was blocked by some porters, who claimed that they alone were entitled to transport silk. At that moment, three fabriquants from Nîmes appeared and announced the imminent arrival of the other buyers. But seeing the group of sellers about to set out for Anduze, they changed their minds, and led the convoy, which included all the sellers from the Vivarais, back to Anduze. "Pendant le reste de la journée, la consternation fut extrême parmi le peuple," reported Dhombres.

"Dans la nuit de samedi à dimanche on a coupé environ cent cinquante arbres fruitiers du Sieur Aigoïn, négociant d'Alais. Le peuple l'accuse d'avoir contribué à faire manquer la foire en faisant par commission des achats de soye très considérable pour certain marchands de Nismes, ce qui les dispenseroient de venir le faire eux-mêmes."<sup>12</sup>

The sous-ayde-majeur of the garrison of Alès suffered a similar misfortune. He was a nîmois, whose family dealt in silk. "on prétend qu'il a beaucoup agi en faveur des négociants de Nismes pour déterminer les gens du Vivarois à porter leur soye à Anduze."<sup>13</sup> Consequently, 70,000 Lbs of silk were sold at Anduze; while only 30,000 Lbs were sold at Alès.<sup>14</sup>

In 1784, the silk fair returned to Alès, but the right to the livre du dessous had gone, and the payment of a retainer of 1% on any quantity of silk brought to the fair was established



as a legal practice. The fair of 1783 had passed without incident. But the possibility of an émeute was not remote. The procureur du Roi referred to the latent menace when he urged the Bureau de Police of Alès to capitulate. "Nous nous sommes flattés en vain que les marchands ne réaliseront point leurs menaces," he informed the meeting of August 14th.

"Mais qui en sera le garant - et si la chose arrive que n'avez vous point à craindre d'une populace indiscrette ... l'histoire peut représenter Messieurs des seditions, des troubles, dont les commencements moins considérables ont occasioné de grands maux."<sup>15</sup>

This would seem to be an oblique reference to a rebellion which had in fact occurred six months previously in the region a little to the North of Alès, near to Les Vans, a rebellion which has come to be known as the révolte des masques armés.

Notes - Chapter 20

1. A.C. Alès. IJ2 Registre du Bureau de police.
2. See above p. 107 et seq.
3. The deliberations mention that the practice had begun eight to twelve years earlier, i.e. in the early 1770's.
4. A.C. Alès. IJ2, 29-8-1782.
5. Id., 26-4-1783.
6. Id., 14-8-1783. (all citations).
7. Id.
8. A.N. F<sup>12</sup>1438; A.D. Hérault. C2294.
9. A.N. F<sup>12</sup>1438; D'Hombres to Saint-Priest, 21-8-1783.
10. Id.
11. Id. D'Hombres to Saint-Priest 2-9-1783.
12. Id.
13. Id.
14. A.D. Hérault. C2294.
15. A.C. Alès. IJ2.



Chapter 21 The Révolte des Masques Armés of  
1783 in the Vivarais

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Echoes of the uncertainty that affected the production and distribution of coal and silk in the winter of 1782-83 appear as both a prelude and a postscript to the révolte des masques. The deliberations of the communities of Banne, Saint-Ambroix and the other communities of the diocese of Uzès in the last two weeks of January 1783 immediately preceded the first appearance of the rebels. The syndics of the dioceses of Ales and Uzès both argued that Tubeuf's concession had been instrumental in provoking the unrest, and a statement attributed to one of the leaders of the rebellion, François Labillerie, the procureur fiscal of the community of Malbosc, who informed his followers "qu'ils marchaient pro bon ordre (sic) et qu'ils avaient l'appui de M. le Prince de Conti et du Comte du Roure," suggests that at least some of the masques believed that they would benefit from protection in high places.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the dispute over the sale of silk at Alès coincided with a particularly severe winter. At Nîmes, over 750 men, women and children were given charitable work between September 11th and 20th 1782, as a measure of relief.<sup>2</sup> The price of corn on the markets of Alès, Saint-Ambroix, Les Vans and Villefort all rose. At Alès, the Bureau de Police forbade any dealing in chestnuts before eleven in the morning of market days:

"Les revendeurs et revendeuses de cette ville enlèvent les chataignes et autres marchandises qui sont portés au marché ... dès que les étrangers arrivent soit à la place du marché soit aux avenues de cette ville, en sorte que les habitants vont nullement au marche ... et sont obligés d'acheter des mains desdits revendeurs à un plus haut prix."<sup>3</sup>

The impact of the disette is most clearly reflected in the registers of the Bureau de Charité of the village of Saint-André-de-Valborgne in the Hautes-Cévennes, where the amount of money allocated to buy corn for its inhabitants was higher than at any time until the



winter of 1788-1789.<sup>4</sup>

Annual Expenditure of the Bureau de Charité

St. André de Valborgne

Year (July to July)	Rye (cartes)	Chestnuts (cartes)	Money	
			Lt	s
1748-49	72	72	166	4
1749-50	75	91	124	5
1750-51	74	80	183	
1751-52	77	73	119	12
1752-53	75	88	130	
1753-54	62	88	70	
1754-55	91	71	69	10
1755-56	73	76	61	10
1756-57	72	75	103	17
15/8/1757-29/3/1758	68	43	95	13
29/3/1758- 2/8/1758	9	35	39	
2/8/1758-16/8/1759	72	80	133	17
6/8/1759- 3/8/1760	72	75	202	1
3/8/1760- 2/8/1761	80	90	124	6
2/8/1761- 3/8/1762	72	75	173	
3/8/1762-21/8/1765	72	78	101	15
21/8/1763- 5/8/1764	73	76	145	1
5/8/1764-28/7/1765	72	72	132	
28/7/1765- 1/8/1766	78	72	290	14
1/8/1766-26/7/1767	56	105	275	13
26/7/1767-27/6/1768	85	69	210	14
Juillet - Aout 1768	6	3	15	18
1/8/1768-31/7/1769	7 septiers 7 cartes	10 septiers 4 cartes	127	7
31/7/1769-29/7/1770	75	90	145	9
29/7/1770-26/7/1772	119	141	364	16
26/7/1772-28/7/1778	403	421	977	18
1/8/1778-28/7/1780	140	166	356	17
28/7/1780-28/7/1781	85	85	287	12
28/7/1781-28/7/1782	93	97	633	11
28/7/1782-28/7/1783	72	75	889	2
28/7/1783-28/7/1784	72	79	322	13
28/7/1784-28/7/1785	72	83	227	11
28/7/1785-28/7/1786	64	74	169	4
28/7/1786-28/7/1787	79	123	340	
28/7/1787-11/4/1788	72	42	206	3
11/4/1788- 1/1/1789	51	73	165	17
1/1/1789-28/7/1789	52	119	280	16
28/7/1789-15/5/1790	96	101	739	6

Source: A.D.Gard IIIIE 170

The révolte des masques was not, however, an episode of taxation populaire, although in its last phase there are traces of the demand for corn at a just and commonly accepted price. In late March 1783, nearly six weeks after the rebellion had ended, placards were posted in the village of Saint-André-Cruzières announcing that:

"Le pauvre public et averty que tous ceux qui seront dans l'indigence et dans l'extreme nessesité n'ayant pas dequoy alimenter et faire substanter leurs familles qui ne sont pas fait pour mandier leur pain et malheureusement cette année esterille a faché plusieurs familles et ces marchands usuraires ne veulent pas donner du bled trover vous tous les gens qui auront besoin du bled à St Ambroix le 21 marsvendredy ou en cas du tems le 25 mardy ensuite au gras à Saint Ambroix ou à roquepine sans déguisement ny armes sinon un saq ou monture suivant leurs besoins. Bane y sera, St. Sauveur, Coury et autre lieux ayant bonne intention de payer et vous aurez du bled ..."5

The rebellion, itself, however, was limited to more specific grievances. On February 14th 1783, a large crowd - estimated at between two and five hundred - gathered outside the walls of the town of Les Vans to watch the arrival of a detachment of troops sent into the region to restore order. A letter was presented to the sub-délégué, Joseph-Ignace Chalmeton, in which the insurgents' demands were voiced:

"C'est aveque respect que lon pren la liberté de vous faire par de la présent letre pour avoir l'honneur de vous écrire des événement quil peut arrivés dans ce momant dans la ville des Vans atandu que tous les Bourgeois quil ville se révolte contre un bienetre que lon cherse amettre pour bien de monde insy l'on sans raportera à votre voir vous prenant pour un homme dans le cas de rendre justize nous à vous prenons de vouloir bien nous donner le pain d' y venir vous parler à fine de mettre cous à se desordre



"sanes pas contre la ville que nous en voulon seta quatre procureur qui sont M Monteil, et Moutet et (illegible) et andres et pelet et baisat ..."<sup>6</sup>

The révolte des masques was thus directed against certain notaires, procureurs and gens d'affaires in Les Vans and the villages nearby. The choice was not accidental. For the position of the homme de loi within a rural community was at once more sensitive and more profoundly ambiguous in its relationship to the social whole than any other. It encapsulated the latent contradictions implicit in the term féodalité as used in the context of eighteenth century France. The words, notaire, procureur, avocat en Parlement or simply licencié des droits, have a misleading neutrality. They cover so many activities, so many conflicting personal and institutional allegiances, so many different styles of behaviour and different milieux. Here, for example, is the notaire suppléant, writing in a language that reeks of the exaggerated deference and the careful insinuation of the court:

"J'ose vous demandé pour moy la continuation de l'affection que vous aviés pour feu mon Beau-père et me laisser faire tout comme luy la levée de vos revenues. Je ny suis point entrepris (sic) ayant toujours eu cognaissance de toutes les affaires de feu mon Beau-pere ... D'ailleurs je ne suis point tout a fait insolvable tout comme pourroit être celui pour qui l'on fait tant des efforts afin de luy procuré ce que je vous demande."<sup>7</sup>

Here on the other hand, is another homme de loi, writing in his capacity as fermier of the commanderie de Jalès, a position that carried great power over the tenants of the demesnes belonging to the Knights of Malta in the parishes of Banne, Malbosc, Brahic

and Berrias, and deep insight into the constellation of rights, dues, obligations and institutions which formed the seigneurial system.

"La justice seule d'une terre ou d'un fief dependait plus de l'étendue et de la fantaisie de l'acquéreur que sa valeur intrinsèque ... la valeur des fiefs sans justice s'estimaient à trois pour cent de la valeur des censives ou des fonds qui le composent et que pour la fixation on prenait la valeur des denrées des dix années précédentes dont on fixait la valeur sur le dixième sans avoir égard à la production du casuel des lods ... Le fief de Pazanem enclave dans une paroisse de la commanderie de Jalès vient de se vendre 4,000 Lt. Il rendit environ 95 Lt. L'acquéreur l'a revendu et s'est joui du fief: il en a tiré 6,000 Lt. ... Il est vrai que le dernier acquéreur en avait grande envie et que le jeu des fiefs en a augmenté le prix ainsi que la justice."<sup>8</sup>

A rural community was made up of a conseil politique, composed of one, two or three consuls and a certain number of notables, elected or nominated as custom and the law proscribed, a seigneurial court - haute, moyenne, or basse, again as custom and the law proscribed - and a cluster of other, more or less formal institutions - a Bureau de Police, a Bureau de Charite, a fabrique, and possibly, a certain number of confraternities - if the village was Catholic. Ideally, the whole formed a hieratic complex of exchange, service and obligation, in which the notaire intervened at a number of sensitive points. The Languedoc was a pays de droit écrit. Thus any formal arrangement - a will, a marriage, an agreement to sell, lease, or divide up a piece of land, a public settlement of a dispute, a recognisance of a debt or a seigneurial obligation, a receipt, a public declaration or transaction, in fact any action that was to be legally binding - was made publicly before a notaire. The office itself was public. A notaire was obliged to be confirmed in office



by a Royal Court - either by the Présidial of Nîmes, or by the sénéchaussés of Villeneuve-de-Berg and Annonay after 1781. The office could, however, be ceded or sold. In itself, it was of little value. The "office de notaire et les notes en dépendant," belonging to Joseph Chalbos of Cubières in the diocese of Mende, was valued at 400 livres in an inventory drawn up in 1785.<sup>9</sup> Thomas Marron, gradué ès droits, notaire royal du lieu et mandement de Banne, sold the office of notaire of the community of Saint-Bres for 499 Lt. 15s in 1777.<sup>10</sup> Francois-Scipion Déslèbres, of the parish of Saint-André-de-Cruzières, and notaire of the parishes of Comps, Chandolas and Beaulieu in 1772, estimated that his office was worth 500 livres.<sup>11</sup> Between 1777 and 1790 the notaire Jean-Antoine Polge of Saint-Jean de Valérisclle enjoyed an annual income of between 700 and 800 Lt.<sup>12</sup> A notaire in a larger town appears to have been rather more prosperous. The gross annual income produced by an étude in Saint-Ambroix between 1783 and 1792 varied from between 1317 Lt in 1783 to 5886 Lt. in 1789, with the average falling at between 3,000 and 3,500 Lt.<sup>13</sup> Since the journal from which these figures come contains no accounts of expenses, the real income produced by the étude is not measurable. Generally, however, the income produced by the étude belonging to Polge was probably the more typical. The amounts involved were small, at least by the standards of Nîmes, or even of Uzès or Alès. In this instance, however, they conceal more than they disclose. For the office was more than a commodity. It was at once the sum of a discreetly accumulated reservoir of personal and financial patronage, and an avenue into other areas of accumulation - as fermier of the taille, the capitation, or the dîme, as a commissaire en droits seigneuriaux,

as the juge or the procureur of a royal or seigneurial court, as the agent of a large land-owner, as fermier du cens, fermier de la leude, or simply as the procureur of a third party in a matter involving legal expertise.

The members of the legal profession were not all inhabitants of the towns. This fact was a reflection of the social physiognomy of the bourgs and villages of the Uzège and the Vivarais, where, both physically and culturally, the midi méditerranéen began.<sup>14</sup> The gradations between a town like Uzès or Alès, and a village like Grospierres or Saint-Alban-sous-Sampzon in the Vivarais, were not only indistinct, but, in purely quantitative terms, often entirely absent. The towns of the region to the north of Nîmes were usually defined as Uzès, Saint-Ambroix, Bagnols, Barjac, Pont-Saint-Esprit, Alès, Anduze, Les Vans, Joyeuse, Largentière, Villeneuve-de-Berg and Aubenas. Apart from Alès and Uzès, with their populations of almost ten thousands by the late eighteenth century, there was little to distinguish the size or the social composition of a town like Joyeuse, Les Vans or even Saint-Ambroix, with its population of some 3,500 in 1790, from the size and social composition of Genolhac, Banne, Saint-Jean-de-Valérisclé, or any of a dozen other bourgs in the Uzège. Even a village as small as Saint-André-de-Cruzières housed a population whose social composition was fully 'urban' in its variety:<sup>15</sup>

	<u>Village</u>	<u>Hamlets</u>
Juge, avocat, chirurgien, bourgeois.	5	1
Rentiers.	1	9
Artisans.	5	5
Laboureurs & ménagers.	7	10
Travailleurs & journaliers.	5	18
Unspecified & widows.	12	25



Such precision is rare, since very few of the rolls of the taille, the capitation, or the recensements of 1789-90 contain more than a list of names. It does, however, make it possible to place a notaire within a context which is more complex than that implied by the habitual town-country antithesis.

In a rural community, the office of notaire was frequently accompanied by other positions of wider influence and power. If, in Nîmes, a notaire performed a distinct function, which differed entirely from those performed by a procureur or an avocat at a more exalted level, or by a huissier, a greffier or a praticien at a lower level, his counterpart in the smaller towns and villages of the Uzège or the Vivarais was unhampered by such formal distinctions. In addition to the management of his étude, a notaire in a bourg like Génolhac or a town like Saint-Ambroix, might also act as a procureur in cases brought before the local seigneurial court, and might also exercise a more permanent office as juge, lieutenant de juge or procureur-fiscal of a particular community. Technically, this pluralism of office was illegal. Until 1784, however, there were few attempts to establish a more formal and differentiated system. Accordingly, a multitude of connections, created by this variety of function and reinforced by a dense undergrowth of family alliances, cut across the somewhat artificial division between villes et villages. The accumulated compound of wealth and power to which it gave rise, formed something of a distinct social entity, which extended from the many subaltern positions in the seigneurial courts of the

hinterland and the Royal Courts of Nîmes and Villeneuve-de-Berg on the one hand, to the more valuable offices of procureur, avocat or even conseiller at one or other of the Royal courts. The dimensions of the whole transcended town and country and existed within the formal structure of the seigneurial system in a manner that ensured that no particular individual, or no seigneurial unit, was an entirely independent social entity.

The case of the notaire Francois-Scipion Déslèbres, of the village of Saint-André-de-Cruzières, is exemplary. His father, Antoine Déslèbres, was also a notaire. Through his mother, Marguerite Champetier, he was related to a second family of legal practitioners in the village of Rivières de Theyrargues in the Uzège.<sup>16</sup> His uncle, Joseph-Martin Déslèbres, and his cousin, Joseph Déslèbres, were successively conseillers and judges of the comté of Alès, at Alès. In 1775, his niece, Henriette Déslèbres, was married to Jean-Joseph Channac, an avocat, the son of Antoine Channac, juge de la commanderie de Jalès and Henriette Déslèbres, of the village of Berrias.<sup>17</sup> He, in his turn was married to Anne-Victoire de Faget de Casteljou, whose father was one of seven co-seigneurs of the town of Les Vans and the mandement of Naves, and whose uncle, Antoine de Faget, seigneur du Curtil, was the viguier of the adjoining marquisat de Chambonas.<sup>18</sup> The marriage provided a further and more distant clan of relatives - the Martin, seigneurs de Sauveplane, and avocats at Les Vans, the de Blou, the Chalbos, of Anduze and Nîmes<sup>19</sup> - forming an expanding circle of allies and clients, a source of capital and influence and a deep reservoir of security against financial misfortune. When



Jean-Joseph Channac married Henriette Déslèbres, his father-in-law promised to keep the couple in his house at Alès, and in return, Channac père agreed to pay off Déslèbres' debts, worth 20,229 livres, in the form of a long-term, interest-free loan.<sup>20</sup> The Channac, in their turn, were left all the property belonging to the avocat Pierre Fabregat, from the parish of Banne, who had married Marie-Henriette Channac in 1774.<sup>21</sup>

A notaire was thus involved in a much wider series of relationships than those implied by his title alone. He might perform a range of functions extending from the formal registration of legal deeds to the exercise of seigneurial power itself. Between these two functions lay a history of careful accumulation and discreet manoeuvre designed to increase his wealth and power. The fragmentation of seigneurial authority in the Bas-Languedoc encouraged these activities. In the Bas-Languedoc, the terroir of a town, a bourg, or a village was made up of a central nucleus and a number of smaller, outlying hamlets. Thus the terroir of the community of Grospierres was formed by the larger nucleus and the hamlets Les Teissiers, Les Guignons, Les Ferriers, Monteils, Vezias and Belvezet; that of Malbosc included the hamlets of Malbosquet, Aubrias, Chabannes, Sabuscles and Mourèdes. Occasionally, these tiny communities were entirely separate seigneurial entities; or they might fall within the jurisdiction of a seigneurial court in another village. In all, there were 346 seigneurial courts in the Vivarais alone, and probably as many again in the Uzège.<sup>22</sup> This extensive apanage of office and influence was an important agent of social mobility, and an object of competition and rivalry conducted

with all the guile that was bred of intimate association. "Je connois depuis longtemps les gens d'affaires des Cévennes," the comte de Périgord informed the vicomte de Cambis in the summer of 1783,

"et ils se haïssent la plupart autant les uns les autres qu'ils sont odieux au peuple. C'est pourquoi je suis toujours en garde contre tout ce qui me vient de leur part sur le compte de leurs confrères."<sup>23</sup>

An undated Mémoire contre les usurpateurs de la noblesse en Vivarès was more outspoken:

"Point de petits bourgeois qui n'y s'y croit gentilhomme et qui n'en prenne impunément le titre; point de paisant un peu opulent qui en devenant bourgeois ne se flatte de valoir bientôt autant que son seigneur. De cette dégradation s'ensuit nécessairement le renversement de toute espèce de subordination et le discredit de cette partie de la nation seule capable de contenir une populace naturellement insolent et républicaine."<sup>24</sup>

By the late eighteenth century, a village with one seigneur, who controlled both direct and justice, was rare. Antoine Fuzet, the agent of the Order of Malta, was not exaggerating when he wrote of the jeu des fiefs. Les Vans, which fell within the domains of the marquis de Chambonas, had seven co-seigneurs. The language of homage and recognisance, infeudation and sub-infeudation, concealed a more animated reality, in which tortuous intrigue and long-standing rivalries were sharpened by the disparity between formal function and current practice.

The fragmentation of property throughout the hinterland, and the juxtaposition of poverty and an extended network of credit, distorted the ideal of an ordered devolution of authority and power.

"Il est aisé de concevoir que plus les possessions sont morcellées, plus les intérêts divers sont sujets à se choquer. Que de bornes! Que de servitudes! Quelle fréquence de mutations par ventes, échanges, successions, partages. Que de contrats de toute espèce! Et par conséquent, que de matières à procès,"



wrote the future conventionnel, Saint-Martin, in 1784.<sup>25</sup> As we have seen, an extreme dispersion of property obtained at all levels of society.<sup>26</sup> Even the property of the church and the nobility (which rarely accounted for a large proportion of the land under cultivation) was often made up of a multitude of small units. Here, for example, is the property of the Chapelain, a Catholic family, comfortably established on the fringes of the more prosperous landed families of the Hautes-Cévennes. In 1791, the family owned property in the parish of Génolhac, consisting of "prés, jardin, deux petits bois de chataignes, quatre vignes, un petit champ, quelques meuriers, (et) un jardin joignant la maison." The mulberry leaves - some 17 quintaux a year - were leased at the price of 3 Lt. 10s. The troisième herbes des pres were also leased, to an aubergiste, for 30 Lt a year; and the products of the garden were also farmed out, for 15 Lt. The family also owned five demesnes in the parishes of Saint-André-Capcèze, Pomaret, and Malons, which were leased for terms of six years at a time, at rates of between 292 Lt to 1,100 Lt a year, together with a certain amount of rent in kind. A further 945 Lt was produced by the lease of the cens on property in the parishes of Villefort, Saint-André-Capcèze, Pontails and Malons. The Chapelain also received annual payments from eighteen of their debtors in the form of pensions annuelles, paid both in money and in kind; a certain Reboul, of the parish of Sénéchas, paid a pension annuelle of 20 Lt, three charges of wine, half a carte of nuts and forty pounds of grapes; another

debtor paid 39 Lt a year, and four salmées of fresh chestnuts; a third, in the parish of Cubières, paid 115 Lt and four pounds of butter of year. They also owned rentes on the diocese of Uzès, and could look forward to repayment of a number of short-term loans.<sup>27</sup>

This mosaic of particular units was duplicated, on a smaller scale, in most of the villages of the Uzège, the Cévennes or the Vivarais.

The fragmentation of property was probably accentuated by the growth of population during the eighteenth century. The process cannot be measured with much precision, since most of the rolls of the taille and the compoix of the Uzège have not survived. It is, however, possible to illustrate the movement in the case of the village of Berrias, where the rolls of the taille survive for the years 1745 and 1788. Since the taille in the Languedoc was real, the rolls are a reasonable reflection of the social distribution of property.

The Distribution of Landed Property in the  
Village of Berrias as Reflected on the  
Livres de Taille

Property assessed at:	1745 (%)	1789 (%)
0-1-19-11 <sup>d</sup>	22	27
2-4-19-11 <sup>d</sup>	24	17
5-9/19/11 <sup>d</sup>	14	15
10-14/19/11 <sup>d</sup>	9	8
15-19/19/11 <sup>d</sup>	9	9
20-24/19/11 <sup>d</sup>	5	5
25-29/19/11 <sup>d</sup>	5	4
30+	12	17
(Total number:	234	230)

(Sources: Livre de Taille of 1745 - Archives of M<sup>e</sup>Bastide de Malbosc at Berrias, to whom I am grateful for consultation; 1789:A.D.G.C 1714



Between 1745 and 1789 there was an increase in the fragmentation of property, at the expense of those pieces of land assessed at between 2 Lt and 5 Lt and probably resulting from the growth of population.

The seigneurial court remained the institution through which the frequent conflicts of interest that arose from this fragmentation of property were resolved. A dispute between Pierre Trouillas and Alexis Moutet, which was brought before the court of Les Vans in 1782, is fairly typical. Moutet had blocked the path which ran between their respective plots of land with a large stone.

"Trouillas ayant dit audit Moutet que s'il ne venoit point enlever cette lause il le feroit lui-même. A quoy celui-ci repondit qu'il s'en gardat bien, et que s'il le faisoit il le mettroit bientot en justice, ce qui n'empecha pas ledit Trouillas de prendre une pioche et d'ouvrir ledit passage, en prenant à temoins ceux qui travailloient chez lui. Alors ledit Moutet s'emporta, l'apellant viedase, le traitant de galarien et ajoutant qu'il avoit six francs pour le faire pendre et dix écus pour payer le bourreau."<sup>28</sup>

Disputes over rights of way, over rights to pasture sheep, over damages to a wall or a hedge, over payment of a will or marriage contract, a rente or a pension foncière, all came before a seigneurial court. So too did disputes over credit. In itself, credit was neutral, sanctioned by the morality of Christian charity and confirmed as one of the obligations of a seigneur to his vassals. When, however, the structure of the relationship was altered by the interposition of the rural silk industry, credit edged into that nebulous area defined as usury, or less anachronistically, as

capital accumulation. Since a notaire or procureur was the agent through which a debt was transformed into a saisie, it was thus possible for members of the liberal profession to accumulate capital in a manner similar to a négociant. The words notaire, procureur and avocat could therefore be subsumed within the generic term gens d'affaires.

The career of Etienne Paysac of Nîmes, who accompanied Rabaut-Saint-Etienne to the guillotine in September 1793, testifies both to the reality of this situation, and to the variety of sources available to the legal profession for the accumulation of capital.<sup>29</sup>

Etienne Paysac was a Catholic. His father, Jean-Louis Paysac, married the daughter of a maître cardeur de filoselle in 1749. Her dowry was a modest 1,000 livres. Jean-Louis Paysac was a praticien, one of about twenty men with some legal training to be found in Nîmes at any time during the eighteenth century serving as greffiers, postulants or huissiers before they had the capital and the opportunity to acquire the office of notaire royal, procureur des cours or avocat en la sénéchaussée.<sup>30</sup> Jean-Louis Paysac held the office of huissier des cours, which he combined with the position of garde en la connétablie et maréchaussée de France en la sénéchaussée de Nîmes. In 1762, he was admitted to the lodge "Anglaise, écossaise et hollandaise de la Modestie." When he died, in 1778, his widow ceded the office of Garde en la Connétablie to his eldest son, Etienne, for the sum of 1,199 L 19s, which was to be paid off over a period of three years.



Etienne Paysac was confirmed in his offices in February 1779, and exercised his functions as greffier ès Cours until July 1787, when he left Nîmes to settle in Paris. In October 1783, he obtained the office of Garde à Pied et à Cheval of the demesnes of the Baron Imbert de Saint-Paul in the parishes of Saint-Théodorit-de-Généran and Saint-Martin-de-Sauvignargues for his brother, Joseph. He also obtained a débit de tabac from the ferme général at Nîmes for his mother. In November 1785, he formed a partnership with five huissiers which was to last for a period of nine years. Article 2 of their contract stipulated that:

"toutes les significations, saisies, descentes, arrestations, emprisonnements, enchères, affiches, actes d'offre, banniments et autres actes, de quelles juridictions qu'elles émanent seront mises en masse, sauf les protestations, assignations et commandements qui seront par nous dressés seulement - pour lesquels ils sera mis en masse par celui de nous qui les fera 10s".

This partnership was complimented by a second association which Paisac formed in June 1785, with his brother-in-law Louis Castan, "pour le commerce en gazes, blondes, rubans et autres étoffes de soye". It was a small affair, with an initial capital of only 1,000 L, which was to last for six years and trade under the raison of Paisac & Castan. In February 1787, the name was changed to Louis Castan, and in July, the partnership was brought to a premature end, leaving the sum of 8,567 L 9s due to eight creditors - in Saint-Etienne, Lyon, Nîmes, Le Puy and Craponne.



At this point, Etienne Paysac left Nîmes for Paris.

He had become an influential and powerful man, whose social world extended from the commercial and administrative elite of the city to the semi-urban melange of silk-workers, artisans and travailleurs de terre, which formed much of his clientele. His friend Brunel de la Bruyère, the Procureur du Roi at the Presidial was surprised by his decision to abandon "un état qui quoique désagréable par ses fonctions, vous donnoit abondamment de quoi vivre," and it is possible that his decision to leave Nîmes was connected with the political intrigue of the time.<sup>31</sup>

He re-emerges in Paris, chez M Aubanel, secrétaire de M. de Vallongue, directeur général des Postes, rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth in January 1788. By March, he had moved to the rue du Temple, on the edge of the Marais and in the heart of the quartier commercant of the capital. In October, he became a secretary to the Intendant des finances and Directeur du Bureau des Subsistances, de Montaren. His bureau in the Hôtel de l'Intendance, on the corner of the rue du Temple and the rue de Meslée, also served as a comptoir for dealing in bills of exchange, mainly from Nîmes, and as an agency for the recovery of debts due to some of the major commercial houses of Nîmes - including Antoine Lacoste fils & La Carrière. By January 1789, he was well established within the Bureau des Subsistances. A letter from Renouard de la Brune of Nîmes requesting an office (je me trouve encore trop jeune à 46 ans pour rester les bras croisés) suggest access to considerable influence:



"Ce seroit de l'obtenir dans l'une des trois parties - de M Necker, de M de Puysegur ou de M de Forges - une place de directeur ou de trésorier, ou de receveur ou d'inspecteur soit dans les fermes générales, soit dans les domaines et bois ... et je donnerai mille écus d'épingles ... à une femme ou à un premier commis qui m'en accélèrerait l'obtention."

Etienne Paysac remained at the Bureau des Subsistances until September 1791, when the Bureau was absorbed by the Ministry of the Interior. In September 1792, according to his certificat de civisme he became a commis in the sixth division of the Ministry of the Interior. His association with Rabaut-Saint-Etienne, who was arrested in his house after the collapse of the Federalist insurrection, can be dated with some accuracy to November 1790, when Brunel de la Bruyère mentions their connection in a letter, but it is possible that Rabaut, who was in Paris in 1787, may have served as his protector when he arrived in Paris.

Thus, from a point of departure much lower on the social scale, Etienne Paysac had followed a career similar in its course, and in the milieu through which it led, to that of a négociant like Arnail Fornier of Nîmes. He had ascended dans le sillage de l'élite protestante, and, symbolically, died at the moment of its temporary eclipse.

Paul Monteil, the first on the list of procureurs denounced on February 14th, 1783 by the masques armés, achieved a more durable and less spectacular eminence within the circuits of exchange which ran from Les Vans into the villages of Banne, Courry, Les Assions, Chambonas, Grospierres and Berrias. "Mauvaise moralité sous le rapport d'homme d'affaires," reported the sub-Prefect of

Largentière in 1810. "Ses vexations donnèrent lieu en 1783 à la formation des bandes masqués composées de paisans qu'il avait ruinés qui se portèrent chez lui (et) incendièrent ses papiers sur la place publique."<sup>32</sup> By this time, Monteil was in his fifties. He enjoyed an annual revenue of 28,000 F from his land and his rentes, and his youngest daughter's dowry was estimated to be worth 50,000 F. "Il a des inscriptions faites contre des malheureuses pour une somme de 400,000 F. Il n'exige que 5% d'intérêt, mais il sait le doubler et tripler par des poursuites judiciaires. Il se fait faire à bon marché des vents."<sup>33</sup>

This fortune had been accumulated through a range of activities which extended well beyond those normally associated with a notaire. The Monteil had moved to Les Vans from the nearby village of Naves in the 1730's. Jacques Monteil, a notaire and procureur, the son of Louis Monteil and Marie Froment of Naves, whose ascendants were probably Protestants, married Jeanne Delavie, the daughter of a bourgeois of Les Vans, in 1737.<sup>34</sup> During the 1750's, he acquired a number of rentes and pensions annuelles from his relatives, the Froment of Naves, who seem to have been in financial difficulties. When he died, in 1787, he left four children. His only daughter, Jeanne, was married to a nîmois, Jean-Pierre Larguier, a procureur at the Présidial. His eldest son, Paul, inherited his estate and his etude, while the two younger sons - Louis and Jacques - moved to Alès and Saint-Ambroix respectively,



where they dealt in silk, cocoons and corn.<sup>35</sup> Paul Monteil's fortune was founded upon this small network. He advanced money as loans, received payment in cocoons or mulberry leaves, and multiplied the size of his credit by legal proceedings when his debtors defaulted. He acquired a certain notoriety, "on dit que le nommé Monteil, procureur aux Vans ... n'avait aucun bien il y a quinze ans, et qu'il a gagné à son métier 150,000 Lt," wrote a member of the Commission of the Parlement de Toulouse in 1784.<sup>36</sup>

Monteil was, at the same time, the procureur and agent of the Comtes de Blou, who lived in Les Vans, but were closely connected by marriage to the nobility of Nîmes - to the de Rochemore and the de Vogüé, in particular.<sup>37</sup> These ties probably explain his election to the office of procureur of the royalist commune of Les Vans in June 1791, and his membership of the short-lived royalist société populaire of Les Vans in the year III.<sup>38</sup> It was an unflamboyant royalism, limited to discreet conspiracy within the town. "Opinion politique nulle," reported the sub-Prefect in 1810. "Il ne s'occupe que de ses affaires." He died in 1828, a prudently supple man, whose career may well have served as a model for the character of Moloch in Hippolyte de la Forêt's novel Le Vengeur, a fantasy on the theme of usury, published in 1843.<sup>39</sup>

The range of activities upon which these two careers impinged suggest the tensions which lay behind the rebellion in the Vivarais of 1783. It was a rebellion which was directed ostensibly at that section of rural society most closely associated with the seigneurial system. Yet, the careers of men like Paisac and Monteil, had very little to do with the formal functions of the institutions

in which they served. Thus, in a paradoxical way, the masques armés of 1783 were able to invoke the rhetoric and symbols of seigneurial justice against the agents of seigneurial authority.

In 1784, the Commission of the Parlement of Toulouse, which was sent into the Cévennes and the Uzège to examine the causes of the rebellion, reported that the formal structure of the judicial institutions of the seigneurial system was deformed by pluralism of office, undifferentiation of function, and unscrupulous legal profiteering, conducted with a finesse and cunning which a small community was able to observe at close quarters.

"Leur maison est l'atelier monstrueux de tous les acteurs nécessaires pour l'administration de la Justice. Elle est le dépôt de la greffe, duquel ils sont souvent les fermiers, de la pratique de leurs clients comme procureurs; des notes des actes comme notaires; et des registres de droits domaniaux comme contrôleurs. Le bail à ferme des droits seigneuriaux, qu'ils laissent arranger pour avoir la barbare prétexte de vexer et nuire y fournit une mine abondante de procès, dont ils ne rougissent pas d'être les juges. Ils y sont, par eux-mêmes ou par leurs clercs, juges, lieutenants de juges, procureurs fiscaux, greffiers, procureurs ou postulans, experts, notaires ou contrôleurs."<sup>40</sup>

From this perspective, an analysis of social relationships in rural communities as a function of féodalité, and of the rights and dues with which it is associated, becomes inadequate. It is insufficient to calculate the proportion of the total value of rural production absorbed by feudal dues and, thence, to describe this expropriation as evidence of the reality of something called feudal society. A cens consisting of "argent, deux sols; siegle, trois boisseaux; trois quarts; avoine, cinq boisseaux et demy; chataignes blanches, cinq boisseaux trois quarts;" when unpaid



for three years, becomes a debt of 18 L 4s 9d. another cens consisting of "argent 2s 2d; siegle, un cart; avoine, cinq boisseaux; vin, treize pots;" becomes a debt of 20 L 3s 6d.<sup>41</sup>

And the debt itself could be transformed into a rente or a pension annuelle, whose payment was a function of the money obtained from the sale of mulberry leaves, cocoons or silk. The marquis de Castries' agent recognised as much when describing the rhythms of the payment of the lods due to comté d'Alès on a sale of land:

"Les plus fortes et les plus nombreuses ventes des biens fonds se font ordinairement à la foire de St. Barthelemy et pendant les mois suivants. Les lods de celles-la sont bientôt acquittés parce que c'est une époque où il y a un grand mouvement d'espèces. Quant aux autres ventes, qui se font du mois de janvier au mois d'aoust, on me prie d'ordinaire d'attendre le paiement des lods jusqu'à la foire, et je n'ai pas cru jusqu'ici devoir les refuser parce que j'ai pensé qu'il étoit de votre intérêt de faciliter les mutations, et il est certain qu'on les rendroit plus rares si on ne donnoit cette facilité."<sup>42</sup>

In this sense, the vast and infinitely varied number of dues which sustained the seigneurial system, had moved into a parasitic relationship with commercial capitalism. Feudalism was a myth in the sense that the material base upon which it rested, had moved from the mouvance to the metropolis. This ambiguity, and the range of responses that it implied, lay behind the rural rebellion which began in the winter of 1783. In a memorandum written in 1785 in favour of the establishment of a Mont-de-Piété at Les Vans, a lawyer from the town outlined the situation from which the rebellion developed,

"Il y avait quelques années que les récoltes ne répondoient point aux travaux des cultivateurs. Celle de 1782 mit le comble à la misere. Les vers à soye notre première et principale production ne réussirent pas. C'était l'époque de plusieurs paiements. Les lettres de change furent protextées. Il se fit des emprunts payable à la récolte des grains, du vin, des chataignes et de l'huile qui manquèrent encore. Les prêteurs se virent alors au même niveau que ceux qui leur avoient emprunté. Chacun voulut recouvrir ses fonds. De là les contraintes par corps, les enlèvements des meubles, les saisies générales, les encands, les discussions. Enfin nos montagnes furent semblables à un pays ennemy ravagé par les incursions des suppôts de justice, qui donnèrent à leur profession toute l'énergie qu'elle peut avoir."<sup>43</sup>

The rebellion which followed drew upon the symbols of seigneurial authority to assert the autonomy of the victims of rural credit.

At between nine and ten in the morning of January 30th 1783, thirty three armed men entered the town of Les Vans.<sup>49</sup> They had apparently come from the village of Banne, and were carrying guns, axes and other weapons. Their faces had been blackened with soot or charcoal. They made for the house of the procureur Jacques Monteil - the father of Paul Monteil - where:

"jurant et blasphémant, la troupe enfonça la porte de son cabinet, lui vola de l'argent et autres effets, enleva tous les papiers de son étude, en brula partie d'ycelui, enleva les deux draps de son lit, les remplit des papiers qui restaient et les fit bruler le long des rempars (de la ville)."<sup>45</sup>

As they left, they threatened to return and burn Monteil himself. They fired two shots at the house belonging to the lawyer Jacques-Antoine Roure, but caused no damage.

On the following day, bills were distributed in the village of Banne. They were signed by la bande angloise and



parodied the formulae of a legal contract:

"Le Sr ... donnera au porteur la somme de ... pour fournir à l'entretien et la subsistance de la troupe angloise qui a pris les armes contre les procureurs."

Several of the wealthier inhabitants of the village were obliged to contribute sums of money to this effect.<sup>46</sup>

The next incident occurred on February 5th, when some two dozen men burst into the house belonging to Jacques Castanier, another procureur, of the parish of Malbosc. They burned his papers and took 15 livres, a watch and a ring. Castanier's nephew, who was in the house at the time, attempted to escape and was shot and wounded. Later on the same day, a maître d'école in the same parish was assaulted. His assailants accused him "d'avoir professé contre eux l'état des procureurs," and one of them added "qu'il lui avoit couté cent écus."<sup>47</sup> In the evening Vincent Ginhoux a notaire and procureur was visited by another group of men in disguise. They burned some of his papers and left, taking several bottles of wine and 4 L 4s. During the following two weeks, similar episodes were reported at regular intervals. Most of them took place on the nights of February 8th, 11th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 19th. On February 14th a detachment of 120 troops arrived at Les Vans from Uzès. On the night of February 19th thirteen men were arrested in a cabaret at Aubrias in the parish of Malbos after a brief siege. There were no further incidents in the area around Les Vans after this.

The rebellion thus lasted for three weeks. It covered some two dozen parishes in an area bounded by Joyeuse and Les Vans to the North, and Barjac and Saint-Ambroix to the South. In all, there were forty-eight 'victims' of the groups of masked men. Half of them were lawyers, procureurs and notaires, whose papers were burned, or who were ordered to provide food and drink for their unexpected visitors. The remaining two dozen were cabaretiers or prosperous householders at whose expense the masques would eat and drink after a day's (and often much of a night's) exhausting travelling. Jean Lapierre owned a cabaret at Les Crottes in the parish of Les Assions. He was woken towards midnight on the night of February 8th,

"par environ trente cinq à quarante hommes, masqués et déguisés, les uns vetus avec des chemises blanches par dessus leurs habillements, les autres avec des jupes de femme, ayant le visage couvert ou barbouillé de suie ou autre couleur afin de ne point être connus. Ils l'obligerent à se lever et lui demandèrent du vin et du pain, ce qu'il leur donna. Ils restèrent environ quatre heures déguisant leurs voix et plusieurs d'entre eux se jettèrent sur son lit pour se reposer."<sup>48</sup>

During the afternoon and evening of that day, raids had been made upon Jean-Louis Morier, a notaire at Ponges in the parish of Chambonas, Jean-Andre Deschanel, a notaire at Chazalettes in the parish of Gravières, and Jean Salel, a notaire at Les Serres in the parish of La Blachère.

The tone of the insurrection was intimate and familiar. It was the work of men who knew one another, who frequented the same cabarets and heard the same rumours, who knew, and were known



by, their victims. The men who marched into Les Vans and burned the papers belonging to the Monteil, stopped at a cabaret before leaving. One of the men shouted to its owner, Marie Bonnet, "Grenadière, allez nous chercher du vin et de la viande. C'est moi qui vous payerai. Vous me connaissez bien ...". On the following day, a man came into the cabaret and said, "Hé bien dragone, comment trouvez-vous ce que nous avons fait hier."<sup>49</sup> The style is shrewd, humorous and deeply knowledgeable. It reflects the gradual osmosis which transformed scores of private grievances, told and re-told, by neighbours, in cabarets, on market days or on chance meetings, into a generalised sense of injustice. The rebellion was the product of an accumulation of particular incidents. In 1780, for example, Joseph Plagnol, a lawyer from Les Vans complained about a dispute that had arisen between himself and one of his debtors - a man called Froment, from Les Assions. He had sent Froment a note in August ordering him to repay the debt. Froment replied that he would settle the debt on the 27th, at the fair of Saint-Genêt-de-Beauzon, but failed to appear. Plagnol then obtained power to seize Froment's property. Froment engaged the procureur Paul Monteil, "le fléau de la contrée ... chassé de la juridiction de Banne où il a fait tant de ravages," to oppose the saisie. They secretly arranged to cede Froment's property to a fictitious third party, and, having thus obtained a suspension of the seizure, they appealed to the Présidial of Nîmes. On September 7th, the Présidial ordered a suspension of the saisie, but condemned Froment to pay all the legal expenses. Monteil concealed the judgement. A few days later Plagnol went to visit another

lawyer - Esprit-Joseph Bellon - to engage him as his legal representative. He was carrying the papers relative to the dispute. When he entered Bellon's house, he found Monteil waiting for him, in what appeared to be a carefully prepared trap. Monteil had an iron bar, and was joined by Froment, who had a knife and by Bazile Coste, Monteil's greffier. They held Plagnol down and Monteil took the papers and left. "Il n'y a pas d'exemple de guet à pens et d'un enlèvement aussi prémédités que les susdits," Plagnol complained.<sup>50</sup>

Similar disputes could reach back for years. In December 1782, the lawyer Jean-Andre Deschanelis protested that his neighbour, Jean Turrel of the parish of Paizac, had been insulting him continually for eighteen years. He claimed that Turrel had recently shouted at him that:

"tous les notaires étaient des ... cochons, de j ... f ..., de viedases."

Turrel had also warned him that:

"il étoit un jean foutre, qu'il faisait des coquinerie, qu'il l'avoit fait assigné pour dix-huit livres, mais qu'en venant à compter ledit Me Deschanelis se trouveroit son debiteur. 'Tu es comme ce j... f.... de notaire qui se plaint que tout le monde lui fait tort, tandis qu'il fait lui-meme tort à tout le monde. C'est un foutu coquin, qui avoit volé tout le pais et s'étoit vetu de leurs dépouillés."<sup>51</sup>

The incursions of the masques were therefore selective and rational. The men who visited the notaire Francois-Scipion Déslèbres at Saint-André-de-Cruzières stated:

"qu'ils marchaient pour une bonne cause et pour chatier les gens d'affaires qui vexaient et ruinaient les habitants de campagne, qu'il savaient cependant qui étoit en règle, et ne faisait du tort à personne, mais qu'il fallait que chacun se prêta à leur donner le moyen de subsister, et que c'étoit la seule raison qui les menait chez lui pour qu'il y contribua."<sup>52</sup>



The notaire Antoine Graffand was told that:

"ils marchaient par bon ordre, qu'ils étaient les procureurs des pauvres et qu'ils n'en voulaient qu'aux praticiens et procureurs, qu'ils les ruinaient, qu'ils savaient bien que lui Graffand n'était point du nombre et qu'ils ne lui feraient aucun tort, mais que les courses leur coutait (sic) beaucoup ..."53

Antoine Deschanel's stated in his deposition that several of the men who entered his house:

"lui dirent à l'oreille en lui mettant la main sur l'épaule qu'ils connaissaient sa famille, et qu'il n'avait rien à craindre. L'un d'entre eux lui dit en même temps, 'demain votre frère aura de vos nouvelles.' Je suis son plus proche voisin."54

The insurrection was bloodless and reasonable. It was a debtors' rebellion, a movement which fed upon the bitterness of private grievance and merged into the more familiar response to a crise des subsistances. It stood for the rupture of the intimate, durable, personal relationship between the rural poor and their creditors. Inevitably, the distinction between a private dispute and a public scandal was frequently blurred. Jean Gras, a travailleur de terre of the parish of Courry, claimed that:

"ayant acheté chez le Sr Monteil des Vans ... et à crédit pour environ dix-huit livres de ratine, et ayant été hors d'état de le payer, ledit Monteil chargea son fils procureur ... de le poursuivre, et ce dernier lui fit en conséquence sept à huit cents livres de frais, ce qui a causé son entière ruine, se trouvant aujourd'hui dans la dernière misère."55

Antoine Merle, ménager, of the same parish, stated that because of a dispute with his brother-in-law, he owed Paul Monteil 2,400 livres for legal expenses:

"Il est au moment de se voir entièrement dépouillé, ledit Monteil ayant porté l'infamie jusqu'à profiter de la circonstance pour le forcer de luy donner pendant plusieurs années consecutives l'entière récolte de ses cocons, dont il n'a jamais voulu lui imputer la valeur qu'a raison de douze sols la livre, quoiqu'ils se sont toujours vendus de vingt sept à vingt huit sols la livre au moins, et ledit Monteil ne lui ayant jamais donné à cet egard ni argent ni recu."<sup>56</sup>

Instances such as these were probably widely known and became part of the context of the rebellion. Equally, however, the broad sense of injustice could be used for more private purposes. The notaire Thomas Marron was visited by Antoine Chabassut early in February 1783. Chabassut ordered him to write to a lawyer in Toulouse and instruct him to end proceedings against two inhabitants of the village of Banne. He warned Marron, "que si cet affaire avoit plus de suites, sa vie n'étoit plus en surêté."<sup>57</sup> Jean Berard, a notaire and feudiste of Chandolas, was told by one of the masques "de remettre une procedure qui est entre les mains du greffier de Jalès, fait à la requête d'Antoine Tournaire et de Louis Serre ... contre le nommé Julien de la Rouveyrolle et autres de la paroisse de Banne pour crime d'assassinat, et que s'il ne la faisait remettre promptement, ils feraient une autre descente chez lui."<sup>58</sup> Joseph Pages, ménager of the parish of Saint-André-de-Cruzières, claimed that "le nommé Pierre Thoulouze, ménager du lieu de Mentaresse paroisse de Bane qui est son débiteur, avoit engagé les masques de faire une descente chez lui."<sup>59</sup>

The example of Vincent Malignon, a fairly prosperous landowner in the village of Saint-André-de-Cruzières, offers a more detailed instance of the manner in which such local feuds were absorbed by a larger process. The notaire François-Scipion Déslèbres



deposed that Malignon had accused him of withholding a receipt of a sale made in 1764 "et lui dit en jurant 'comment tu voudrais me nier que tu as reçu trois écus de six livres. Mais nous sommes dans le tems de la vengeance ..." Malignon was said to have been visited twice by groups of men in disguise and was reported to have told them "à chaque fois d'aller mettre à la contribution le Sr Déslèbres."

Four months later, on June 22nd 1783, Malignon himself was the victim of a riot, when he attempted to have a certain Martin Chevalier arrested for assaulting his son. "Cette émeute ne seroit pas arrivée si les derniers troubles n'avoient presque ôté du peuple le seul frein peut-être capable de le contenir," reported the sub-délégué Chalmeton.

"C'est un malheur sans doute, mais il n'existe trop encore. Les paysans de Saint-André ne s'avisèrent pas d'examiner si les huissiers étoient porteurs d'un mandement de justice et ils se livrèrent à la fougue de leur prévention contre les gens d'affaires."<sup>60</sup>

There was more to the affair than this. Malignon had engaged two lawyers from Saint-Ambroix - François Perrochon and Pierre-Théophile Guiraud - to arrest Chevalier. The two men were well known in the village. The office of judge of the seigneurial court of Saint-André was hereditary, and belonged to the Boisson de la Roche, a family of minor nobles. The current occupant of the post was a retired soldier, who was entirely ignorant of the law. He had therefore engaged Perrochon and Guiraud as his agents and they had alternated as procureur and postulant of the court. Malignon was a wealthy man "ce qui explique le motif de ce zèle

trop ardent de la part du Sr Perrochon à le servir contre Chevalier." In addition, Chevalier had attacked Malignon fils because he had discovered him committing adultery with his wife in a field. Malignon had therefore committed the double offence of engaging two lawyers from Saint-Ambroix to arrest a man, who in the eyes of the community had done no wrong.

Over ten years later, on 12th Germinal II, Vincent Malignon, now the agent national of the municipality of Cruzières-Superieur was murdered. The members of the municipality - including the mayor, François-Scipion Déslèbres - and the newly formed comité de surveillance, were arrested and charged with complicity in the murder. Vincent Malignon became a minor martyr de la liberté.<sup>61</sup>

The size of the bands of the insurgents seems to have varied. A crowd of between three and five hundred gathered outside Les Vans on the morning of February 14th when the detachment of troops arrived from Uzès. Most witnesses, however, report groups of anywhere between a dozen and a hundred and twenty in their depositions. It is difficult to discover the amount of organisation and the degree of planning that preceeded a raid. Clearly there were meetings, in cabarets like the one at Aubrias in the parish of Malbosc where thirteen men, some of whom were still covered in soot, were arrested on the night of February 19th. There were also attempts to recruit active supporters - either by the outriders of the main body, or by minor hommes de liason like the travailleur de terre Antoine Deschamps, who travelled to the parishes of Sablières, Dompnac and Saint-Mélanie to raise support for the insurgents.<sup>62</sup>



In all, 157 men were named in witnesses' depositions.<sup>63</sup>

All of the 138 of them whose places of residence can be identified were natives of a score of villages in the area around Les Vans.<sup>69</sup>

Of the 67 who were also given an occupational label, 28 were described as travailleurs de terre, and a further six as journaliers, ménagers and fermiers. Most of the others were rural artisans.<sup>65</sup> There

was also a semi-permanent nucleus of leaders and spokesmen. The notaire Deschanelis stated that "celuy d'entre eux qui paroissait être le chef n'avoit que la moitié du visage couvert et son chapeau abbatu et couvert de rubans de différents couleurs."<sup>66</sup> Etienne Rivere,

an aubergiste, claimed that on February 14th, he had spoken to a man who seemed to be the leader of the masques. "(Il) etoit vetu d'un habit canelé portant une jupe ceinturée sur ses habits en étoffe de bourette couvrante ses jambes, un chapeau abattu sur ses yeux et un mouchoir commun qui lui couvrit le bas du visage." The man had said

"qu'ils n'en voulaient ni aux bourgeois (des Vans), ni aux militaires, mais bien à quatre procureurs de cette ville, et que si l'on ne lui rendit pas justice il reviendrait en peu de temps avec 800 ou 1,000 hommes s'il le falloit."<sup>67</sup>

This figure could have been the procureur-fiscal of the community of Malbosc, François Labillerie. "Ce Labillerie possède, dit-on, un bien honnête, mais le libertinage qui lui avoit fait contracter une foule de dettes dont il trouvoit plus aisé de chercher à se liberer par le pillage qu'en réformant sa conduite," noted the Intendant, Saint-Priest.<sup>68</sup> More probably, however, it was a rather more picaresque individual, a smuggler and marchand-

colporteur named Jean-Baptiste Degout dit Lachamp, whose occupation was perhaps more appropriate to the role of chef de bande, in the full, extravagant sense of the term. Lachamp had the misfortune to say too much to the wife of a lawyer from Les Vans. Anne-Victoire Baissac, whose brothers were also lawyers,<sup>69</sup> was a resourceful woman. She began to make inquiries after the incident of January 30th. "Elle parlait souvent à la femme dudit Lachamp avec une aire de confiance et d'amitié, et en faisait de même à ses enfants qui elle donnait de tems en tems quelque fruit." The unsuspecting marchand-colporteur informed her that he had had a dispute with the notaire Paul Montéil, who had tried to charge him 28 livres for giving him a copy of his marriage-contract. He had, she said, told her that "à Saint-Ambroix les procureurs et les marchands de blé auroient aussy leur tour, et que les procureurs et tous ceux qui avoient de l'argent seroient malmenés."<sup>70</sup> She stated that Lachamp was often absent when the raids occurred, and that she had seen groups of men from the villages of Banne and Saint-Mélanie visit his house.

Unlike Labillerie, who was publicly executed at Les Vans for his part in the rebellion, Degout-Lachamp evaded arrest. He seems to have left Les Vans for the village of La Souche, where he was born, and where he had three brothers, to disappear behind the protective barrier of local and familial complicity.<sup>71</sup> He reappeared in the autumn of 1789 to set fire to the property of one of the judges of the masques armés, Francois Alméras de Brès, and was subsequently involved in an abortive royalist conspiracy in the Year III.<sup>72</sup>



It remains difficult to define the character of the episode. The tone of accumulated rancour born of the longstanding ties between creditor and debtor place it firmly within a context in which the accepted relationship between rich and poor in a village community had been undermined. Monteil, Baissac, Pelet and the other notaires de village were known to have violated normal practice. They were usurers. Their activities were examined critically not only by those of their victims who testified before the sénéchaussée of Villeneuve-de-Berg, but also by all of the royal officials concerned with the administration of the Vivarais and the Uzège. The Bishop of Uzès echoed a general opinion when he stated:

"que l'émeute qui vient de désoler une partie de son diocèse a deux causes essentielles, toujours prettes à la faire renaître dès que les forces militaires n'en imposerait plus. La première est les vexations des procureurs et autres gens d'affaires. La seconde, qui est celle dont l'action est la plus forte et la plus journallière, est la misère affreuse qui désolle ces contrées: toutes les productions y ont manquée cette année et il n'y a ni denrées ni argent."<sup>73</sup>

The phrase les vexations des gens d'affaires recurs constantly in the correspondence related to the affair and suggests a certain hostility towards the local notability.<sup>74</sup>

At the same time, however, more than one official appears to have suspected that the rebellion had benefited from a discreet protection. "Je suis convaincu que quelqu'un parait avoir un intérêt d'allumer le feu pour se donner le mérite de l'avoir éteint,"

reported Grasset, the procureur du Roi at the sénéchaussée of Villeneuve-de-Berg in March. "Je commençai de constater cet objet, mais les circonstances étaient trop dangereuses pour pousser les choses plus loin ..." <sup>75</sup> Brunel de la Bruyère, the procureur du Roi at the Présidial of Nîmes, who was well placed to know of many secrets, seems to have shared these suspicions. "Je n'ai pas négligé le soupçon que vous m'avez présenté sur celui que l'on croit être le chef de ces attroupements," he was informed by the comte de Périgord, the military commander of the Languedoc, in the same month. "J'ai du reste informé M. Le Garde des Sceaux de cette affaire et lui ai fait l'observer." <sup>76</sup>

The attack upon the property of the Monteil on January 30th was not the first occasion on which armed men had appeared in disguise in the region of Les Vans. On September 30th, 1781, and again on January 8th 1782, the newly appointed lieutenant de juge of the seigneurial court of Banne was prevented from taking office by forty or fifty masked men who blocked the road from Les Vans to Banne. <sup>77</sup> These two incidents appear to have taken place with the connivance of a minor noble, whose activities, both during the winter of 1783 and during the first and second camps de Jalès in 1790 and 1791, lent some substance to the suspicions of the royal officials.

Louis-Joseph Bastide had added the suffix 'de Malbosc' to his name in 1767, when his father purchased the seigneurie of the community of Malbosc from the widow of the marquis de Chambonas for 24,900 livres. <sup>78</sup> He was born in January 1743. <sup>79</sup> His father,



Louis Bastide, who died in 1781 at the age of 86, was a lawyer. By 1742 at the latest he had acquired or been appointed to, the office of juge général de la commanderie de Jalès, which he combined with the position of fermier de la commanderie de Jalès.<sup>80</sup> Both these offices were lucrative. The commanderie de Jalès, which belonged to the knights of Malta, was one of the largest seigneurial units in the Bas-Vivarais. Its jurisdiction covered half a dozen communities lying between Brahic and Malbosc in the west, and Grospierres and Chandolas in the east. By 1754, when his youngest daughter Agathe was baptised, Louis Bastide had acquired the co-seigneurie of the community of Berrias, where he lived and a part of the seigneurie of Chandolas, on the opposite side of the Chassezac.<sup>81</sup> If Roussel, the sub-délégué at Bagnols was exaggerating when he claimed that Louis-Joseph Bastide "est fils d'un ancien domestique qui devint ensuite fermier de la commanderie de Jalès ou il gagna quelque bien,"<sup>82</sup> the ascension was, nonetheless, rapid. The Bastide were originally from the village of GrosPierre. Paul Bastide, who died there in 1729, and was Louis' uncle or father, is described as a lieutenant de juge. Another uncle and a cousin, both named Joseph, were nicknamed La Tourasse, presumably because of their height. An aunt, or a cousin, Suzanne Bastide, was married to a cardeur de laine at Grospierres in 1736.<sup>83</sup> The connections which led to Louis Bastide's marriage to Marie Morier in 1742 are obscure, but it is certain that they extended well beyond the narrow circle of association that the villages of Grospierres and Berrias could sustain.

Maurice Morier, who became Louis Bastide's brother-in-law through the marriage, was, if not an authentic noble, the seigneur of the communities of Saint-Felix, Saint-Julien, Mourin, and Coussinal in the diocese of Toulouse. One of his descendants - Barthelemy-Robert-Maurice Morier, who was executed in 1793 - left a fortune of 283,024 livres, tied up almost entirely in landed property.<sup>84</sup>

Most of Marie Morier's dowry was probably invested in the acquisition of the seigneurie of Malbosc in 1767. When their youngest daughter, Agathe, was married in 1775, to Louis Reboul of G nolhac, a doctor with aspirations towards nobility who owned the seigneurie of Amelot, her dowry was a mere 1,800 livres.<sup>85</sup> Their three sons - Louis-Joseph, Louis-Hyacinthe and Louis-Joseph-Scipion - were dispatched along the traditional avenues of social ascension open to the catholic noblesse. The cadet, Louis-Hyacinthe - entered the church. The third brother, Louis-Joseph-Scipion, known as Bastide de Chabannes, joined the army and became a Garde du Corps du Roi.<sup>86</sup> In 1770, Louis-Joseph, the eldest son, was married to Marie-Marguerite Aubert, the daughter of an Inspector of the Royal Demesnes in the g n ralit  of Montpellier. They were married at Aubenas, where Louis-Joseph seems to have lived until 1773.<sup>87</sup> His bride brought him a dowry of 30,000 livres, a substantial sum by the standards of the Vivarais.<sup>88</sup> Present at the marriage were Francois de Goudar, chevalier de l'ordre de Saint-Michel,



the director of the Manufacture royale de Soie at Aubenas, and one of the few authentically catholic entrepreneurs in the Vivarais. Jean-Louis d'Alamel de Bournet avocat, juge régent du duché de Joyeuse and seigneur de Valoubières, of Grospierres, François-Guillaume-Barthélemy de la Forêt, from Joyeuse and two former army officers from Aubenas - Guillaume de Chanaleilles, marquis du Villard, seigneur de Montpeyrac, le Roux and Colombier in the Gévaudan, and Antoine-Francois Benoit comte de Colonne, seigneur de Belenet, perverange etc. also in the Gévaudan.<sup>89</sup>

This little cluster of individuals were fully representative of the core of the administrative élite of the Bas-Vivarais at any time from the mid-eighteenth century until the Revolution. Their families constituted an extended cousinhood which stretched from Les Vans - with the de Faget du Curtil, the de Blou and the Alméras de Brès - westwards into the Gévaudan and the civil and spiritual administration of the diocese of Mende; or eastwards, into the administration of the sénéchaussée of Villeneuve-de-Berg, the Etats du Vivarais and the diocese of Viviers. As judges in the seigneurial courts, procureurs in the royal courts, conseillers in the sénéchaussée of Villeneuve-de-Berg, sub-délégués of the Intendant, officers in the army or the maréchaussée, abbots, abbesses, priors, canons and clerics, the Alamel de Bournet, the Barthelémy de la Forest, and their relatives - the Tavernol de Barrès, the Barruel, the Barthelémy Deschadenèdes, the Alméras de Brès, the du Faget du Curtil and the du Faget de Casteljou - represented an immensely resourceful accretion of experience, influence, power and patronage.

Moreover, through his wife, Louis-Joseph Bastide was the brother-in-law of noble Jean de Bernardy, baron des Eperviers and seigneur of Saint-Cirgues-en-Montagne, near Pradelles, on the edge of the Velay, who was the nephew of the Jesuit Louis de Bernardy, rector of the college of Aubenas from 1742 to 1745 and Professeur de theologie morale at the university of Toulouse until his death in 1760.<sup>90</sup> A second brother-in-law, Jean-Louis-Augustin Besquet, who married Marie Rose Aubert in 1776, was a native of Le Puy.<sup>91</sup> In February 1784, his cousin, Jean-Francois Bastide, co-seigneur of the mandement of Grospierres and a conseiller du Roi at the sénéchaussée of Villeneuve-de-Berg married the daughter of Simon-Pierre Tavernol de Barrès, lieutenant-général-criminel of the sénéchaussée and governor of the town of Villeneuve-de-Berg. His bride's dowry of 20,000 livres included 1,000 livres from her uncle Jean-Pierre de Roqueplane, baron de Montbrun. The signatories to the contrat de mariage include two conseillers du Roi - Jean-Baptiste-Louis Vacher and Antoine-André Vincent, one of Jean-François Bastide's uncles - five officers in the army and two clerics - Jean Baptiste Richard, abbé de Beaufort, whose brother, Joseph-Victor Richard de la Beaume, garde du Corps du Roi, also signed the acte, and Jean-Baptiste de Roqueplane, who served the cathedral of Viviers.<sup>92</sup>

Louis-Joseph Bastide de Malbosc was thus firmly entrenched within a protective web of influence that reached into the most powerful areas of the local administration. The suffix 'de Malbosc'



which he adopted, was therefore commensurate with his milieu.

In his case, however, it would seem to have had a deeper significance.

His will, which he drew up in 1785, is replete with phrases that would not be out of place in Loyseau:

"Je recommande à tous mes enfants, le croyance au Dieu supreme qui a crée cet univers, l'amour trop rare de la religion et de la patrie, une constance soutenue à remplir leurs devoirs, un respect noble et dégagé de toute bassesse pour leurs superieurs qui seront dignes par leurs vertus du rang qu'ils occupent dans la société, une déférence prévenante pour leurs égaux, des égards et de la complaisance envers leurs inférieurs, et enfin une commisération active pour les malheureux.

This was more than mere verbiage. "Les paysans l'appellent Monseigneur et il en prend le ton, qui en impose au point qu'il est assez rare que les pauvres gens refusent de souscrire à ses decisions," reported Roussel.<sup>94</sup>

In 1784, Louis-Joseph Bastide petitioned Versailles for his lettres de noblesse, claiming that he had been responsible for ending the révolte des masques by persuading the rebels to revert to legal methods in order to obtain justice. His petition was referred to the Intendance at Montpellier, from where it was referred to Roussel, the sub-délégué at Bagnols. Roussel reported his surprise at the request, and produced an entirely different version of De Malbosc's role during the events of 1783:

"Le Sr Malbos avait eu en 1780 des démêlés tres vifs avec le Sr. Fustier avocat qui pretait son ministère contre lui; il était aussi tres mécontent du Sr Monteil autre avocat des Vans. C'était une guerre ouverte. Le Sr. Fustier devint lieutenant de juge de Banne. Ce petit evenement a été le germe de tous les troubles,"

he informed the Intendant.

"Je ne dis pas que ce fut le Sr Malbos qui imagina de faire masquer cinq ou six paysans le jour que le Sr Fustier devait s'y rendre pour s'y installer, mais la vérité est que ce particulier allant à Banne dans le mois de septembre 1781 avec les postulans des Vans pour se trouver à l'audience ils furent forcés de revenir sur leurs pas, se voyant couché en joue par cinq ou six masques. Le Sr Malbos qui fréquentait journellement le lieu de Banne qui se trouve à demi lieu de Berrias ... ne fit pas la moindre démarche pour faire cesser ce qu'il appelait un badinage."<sup>95</sup>

His activities during the rebellion itself offered some grounds for these insinuations. Early in February 1783, he wrote to the military commander of the Languedoc, the comte de Périgord, apparently to explain the causes of the rebellion. On February 19th, de Perigord replied, in a letter that was not without menace:

"J'ai informé M le Garde des Sceaux de cette affaire et que les attroupements étoient en haine contre les procureurs et gens d'affaires du pais auxquels on impute des vexations très criminelles si elles sont vraies. On pourra dire cependant que ce n'étoit ainsi qu'il falloit les dénoncer, mais j'ignore le parti qu'il jugera à propos de prendre pour reprimer et contenir les gens d'affaires et pour punir les auteurs d'une vengeance concertée dont les misérables paisans me paroissent n'avoir été que les instrumens."<sup>96</sup>

On February 14th, a letter, signed by La Lezion Honnête du Vivarais, had been presented to the sub-délégué Chalmeton at Les Vans. It announced that "tous ceux qui composent cette troupe ont été désespérés par les gens d'affaires, les marchands de bled usuriés de ce pais-ci," and proposed - "les larmes aux yeux" - that the King should establish a bureau de pacification which would restore order. The author suggested "qu'il plaise à sa majesté y nommer MM Thoulouze, maire de Saint-Ambroix, Bastide de Malbos, Mamejan, M. Perrochon de Saint-Ambroix, juge de Lussan, Messieurs Chalmeton et Ducurtil



des Vans, Meissieurs de Leirette de Villefort, Polge des Mages et aussi le député de M. le maire de Saint-Ambroix."<sup>97</sup> The author of the letter, who claimed to have been deputed by the mayor of Saint-Ambroix, was another minor noblial. Louis-Antoine Delbosc was also the son of a lawyer. His father, Joseph-Antoine Delbosc, avocat d'Auzon, left six children from his marriage to Marie-Thérèse Champetier, the daughter of another family of local notables, who owned the seigneuries of Galinier and Ribes, and were judges and notaires at Rivières de Theyrargues to the south of Saint-Ambroix.<sup>98</sup> Two of his daughters were married to hommes de loi. The eldest, Rose-Agathe Delbosc, married a Sr. Louis Durand, greffier en chef de la juridiction de Robiac; her sister, Genevieve, married François Perrochon, a notaire from Saint-Ambroix. In February 1770, his eldest son, Louis-Antoine, was married to Marie Bastide, of Berrias. Louis-Antoine Delbosc thus became Louis-Joseph Bastide's brother-in-law.<sup>99</sup>

The alliance, was, again, not entirely a matter of random choice. Through the Champetier, the Delbosc were distantly related to the Darasse of the village of Grospierres. Louis-Antoine Delbosc was the god-father of Magdeleine-Clothilde-Blanche Darasse, the daughter of Jacques Darasse, co-seigneur of the community of Planzolles, and Rose Champetier, who was baptised at Grospierres in 1766.<sup>100</sup> The Darasse, in their turn, were distantly related to the Bastide, who were also natives of Grospierres. Thus, behind the apparently recondite details of marriage alliance and connection, it is possible to distinguish a more significant pattern of a

gradual accretion of capital and influence, transmitted between the branches of scattered clans by dowries and bequests, which encouraged social ascension.

Louis-Antoine Delbosc was promised 10,600 livres as his bride's dowry. This sum, together with portions of the estates of his father and grand-father, Antoine Delbosc, who died in 1769, encouraged him to buy a seigneurial demesne. In March 1777, he acquired the terre, fief et seigneurie of Auzon, in the mandement of Allègre, near Saint-Ambroix, from the then baron de Ledenon, for the sum of 32,000 livres.<sup>101</sup>

The decision was a disastrous error. A little more than a year later, he defaulted upon his payments to the Baron de Ledenon, who began proceedings at the Présidial of Nîmes. In an attempt to raise money, he appears to have embarked upon a venture in horse-dealing, through the mediation of a number of Jewish marchands de chevaux from Nîmes. By 1779, he owed some 3,000 livres to Moyse Vidal, a similar sum to Salon Vidal and 1,503 livres to Abraham-Jacob Lyon, all of Nîmes. In addition, he was now heavily in arrears on the interest on a number of rentes which he had contracted with his relatives the Champetier, and had accumulated a further cluster of debts with three négociants from Alès. The acquisition of the seigneurie of Auzon also involved the payment of some 6,000 livres to the fermier of the commanderie de Jalès as lods. Bankruptcy was inevitable, and on April 6th 1781 the demesne of Auzon was seized and put up for auction. A year later, his property in the parishes of Auzon, Arlendes, Navacelles, Rivières de Theyrargues and Saint-Denis



suffered the same fate. He was, literally, a ruined man.

His bankruptcy also ruined his brother, Philippe Delbosc, who had settled at Saint-Ambroix as a négociant. In 1779, he had married Agnès Masméjan, of Saint-Ambroix, whose brother, together with two of the Delbosc's other relatives by marriage - de Malbosc and the lawyer François Perrochon - were named as members of the proposed bureau de pacification in 1783. Philippe Delbosc defaulted upon his debts in the autumn of 1784. His creditors were three Protestant houses - Silhol père & fils of Saint-Ambroix, for 1,748 Lt 15s; Charles frères & Cie of Nîmes, for 1,252 Lt 18s; and Pascal aîné of Nîmes, for 957 Lt.<sup>102</sup>

The distribution of the revenue from the sale of Louis-Antoine Delbosc's estate was concluded in April 1785. He was left to survive upon his wife's dowry and the generosity of his relatives. The experience was sufficient to promote a sympathetic response to the grievances of other victims of the debtor-creditor relationship. He claimed that he had written his anonymous address after addressing several letters to the masques de Vivarais in which he had offered to act as their spokesman. The explanation seems more than a little ingenuous, but it is not possible to establish anything other than this somewhat ambivalent connection with the insurgents. The vicomte de Cambis was clearly surprised by the summons issued upon him by the senechaussee of Villeneuve-de-Berg on July 20th:

"Il est certain que le Sr Delbos, seigneur d'Auzon a été decretté d'ajournement personnel, et qu'il y avait plusieurs voix pour le decret du corps ... Tout cela m'a fort surpris, parce que le croyant très capable de commettre des étourderies ou des imprudences, mes soupçons ne s'étoient jamais portés au dela."<sup>103</sup>

The summons does not, however, seem to have been executed, and there is no trace of any proceedings against him. His brother-in-law had, as Roussel put it, "de bons amis" at Villeneuve-de-Berg.

It is improbable that all of the eight men whose names were put forward to form a bureau de pacification were acting together. Some of them probably knew nothing of the existence of the project. But there was certainly some collusion between Delbosc and Bastide de Malbosc, and between these two and the notaire François Perrochon, their brother-in-law, who was present when the address was written.<sup>104</sup> Delbosc also claimed that he had been deputed by Jean Thoulouse, the mayor of Saint-Ambroix and juge-général of the vicomté of Alès. This may not have been false. Early in February 1783, Thoulouse reported that he had been unable to call out the town's milice bourgeoise.<sup>105</sup> Since the membership of the militia was made up of the town's prosperous bourgeoisie, and since the municipality of Les Vans was able to assemble its own milice immediately after the raid on January 30th, the claim is surprising.<sup>106</sup> In 1784, Thoulouse petitioned for the right to represent Saint-Ambroix at the Estates of the Languedoc. He was supported by the vicomte de Cambis, but his candidacy met with opposition from within Saint-Ambroix. On January 1st 1786, he informed de Cambis that,

"(une) cabale ... s'est intriguée à la Cour des Aides, et Mr de Monclar, un de ses conseillers arriva hier à midi pour prendre des renseignements contre l'administration tenue à l'occasion des masques."

Its purpose, he stated, was to prevent him from entering the Estates.



"De pareils républicains n'aiment point d'être surveillés, ny que vous et M. Le Cte de Perigord aiez ici un correspondant aussi zélé que je le suis toujours."<sup>107</sup> This oblique reference to the Protestants of Saint-Ambroix suggests that the révolte des masques cannot be entirely divorced from the political intrigue which followed the municipal reorganisation of 1769 and the acrimonious debate over the morality of speculative exchange which it had entailed.<sup>108</sup> In 1773 a Servier and a Silhol had been expelled from the conseil municipal of Saint-Ambroix because they were Protestants.<sup>109</sup> It is probable that the cabale formed to oppose Thoulouze in the light of his behaviour during the winter of 1783, represented their interests.

At this level, the révolte des masques merges into the obscure bye-ways of local intrigue and particular rivalry. The competition for power in some of the villages around Les Vans appears to have produced a body of opinion that was, at the least, not unsympathetic to the rebellion, and was prepared to adopt the role of the paternal archetype to the extent that this also offered more concrete possibilities of power and influence. An incident in the spring of 1784 offers an excellent illustration of this process.

In May 1784, the new judge of the seigneurial court of Banne, Pierre Fabregat, complained that he was unable to convene the court without the consent of Louis-Joseph Bastide de Malbosc. "J'ay là un terrible antagoniste qui ne cherche qu'à me tracasser et me nuire," he informed Chalmeton.

"Il s'est fait un parti dans Banne, où il voudrait établir sa domination, et il a pour lui les consuls qu'il gouverne comme il lui plait. Rien ne se fait ici sans M. de Malbos ..."<sup>110</sup>

Malbosc was the seigneur of the community of Malbosc, and co-seigneur of that of Berrias. Legally, he had no influence in the village of Banne, which was part of the demesnes of the comtes du Roure, of Barjac. Apparently, however, he had made use of his equivocal attitude to the révolte des masques in order to attract a following. "M. Fabregat, quoique doué de toute la probité d'un bon juge n'a pas encore cette expérience qui donne de la fermeté, et M. de Malbos en a quelque fois cruellement abusé depuis les troubles pour établir sa domination dans Banne," reported Chalmeton.

"Mais il n'a pas en cela grande merite. Son règne n'auroit pas été bien long s'il s'y étoit conduit avec le patriotisme de M. le Chevalier de la Vernède.<sup>111</sup> Que de maux n'avoit-il pas évite même à ses paysans de Banne. Cette expression lui est familiere ..."<sup>112</sup>

In February, de Malbosc had written an ingratiating letter to the vicomte de Cambis, describing how he had prevented an attempt to victimise the notaire Thomas Marron:

"Les femmes, filles et enfants de Banne conjointement avec quelques hommes mariés ont chanté dans la nuit des chansons insultantes sous les fenêtrés du Sr Marron ... Le consul avoit essayé d'appaiser ces mouvemens qui sont une suite du peu d'harmonie qui règne entre le peuple et les gens d'affaires. On lui avoit répondu que c'étoit une plaisanterie de carnaval trop innocente pour qu'elle lui deplut."<sup>113</sup>

He had, he stated, visited the village and threatened the miscreants with punishment. "J'ay cru devoir ne pas vous laisser ignorer ce qui vient de passer ...," he continued. "J'ay craint que les nouvelles ne vous parvinssent d'une façon à vous faire craindre



des suites de sedition ... , que nous ne devons pas redouter, j'ose l'assurer. Le peuple n'aime pas les gens d'affaires, mais il chérit la main qui l'a secouru et me parait très repentant des crimes des masques."<sup>114</sup> This was only one of several attempts to exert his influence in the village. In July 1784, Guès, the comte du Roure's homme d'affaires, complained that de Malbosc had called several assemblies of the community on the pretext of engaging the inhabitants to work upon his harvest. Soon afterwards, the comte du Roure obtained an arrêt from the Parlement of Toulouse which integrated the seigneurial court of Banne to that of Barjac, so that the village came directly under his control.<sup>115</sup>

Two years later, Bastide de Malbosc was involved in another incident, in which the rhetoric of seigneurial obligation was used again for less altruistic purposes. In January 1787, he complained that a certain Louis Bérard, "boucher, boulanger, cabaretier, etc. habitant dans mon village de Berias," had been charging 5s for a twelve pound loaf of bread.

"Il excédoit de coups les pauvres gens qui alloient boire ches lui à la moindre contradiction qu'il éprouvait sur le prix des comestibles. Il manquait aux consuls dans leurs visites d'auberges ... J'ai trouvé le moyen d'arrêter une partie de ses extorsions en lui faisant des frais de procédure. Hier ... il m'assura que sans sa femme et ses enfants il n'y auroit point d'excès où il ne se fut porte contre moy et que tôt ou tard il me fairait repentir des parties que je luy avais faites éprouver par les réglemens de police."<sup>116</sup>

De Cambis accepted that the complaint was justified, but ordered Chalmeton to urge de Malbosc to:

"se renfermer désormais dans ce qui peut le regarder, sans vouloir être en même temps dans Berrias seigneur juge, avocat et consul, d'autant qu'au lieu d'en imposer aux habitants, il finirait par n'être utile, ni agréable à personne."<sup>117</sup>

On February 24th, Chalmeton reported that he had sentenced Bérard to two days' imprisonment. "M. de Malbos, satisfait par le petit éclat, s'est hâté de m'en prévenir et demander que Bérard fut dispensé des deux jours de prison." Chalmeton agreed and passed on de Cambis' warning, "mais je crains fort que cette maladie ne soit pour lui difficile à guerir,"<sup>118</sup> Not surprisingly, Louis Bérard - "homme brutal, violent et malfamé" - reappears in the year II as the mayor of the municipalité régénérée of the commune of Berrias, and was one of the small group of Robespierriéristes who bore much of the brunt of the white Terror in the period after the 9th Thermidor.<sup>119</sup>

In these circumstances, the apparatus of local authority represented by the seigneur, the consuls and the seigneurial court, formed an area in which the rhetoric of seigneurial obligation (mon village, mes paysans etc.) retained a certain meaning. When, on the other hand, the court was used to collect unpaid debts and to order the seizure of property, it has no longer a component of the hieratic chain of service and obligation to which its existence attested. The révolte des masques would seem, therefore, to have been a re-affirmation of local control over an area which had fallen outside of the traditional means of enforcing sanctions. It was a response to a situation in which the institutions of local authority had become the instruments of capital accumulation. It merges with the informal, but often equally effective, community sanctions associated with charivari and the institutions of the jeunesse de village.<sup>120</sup> The relatively small size of the groups



of masques armés, the blackened faces and womens' clothes, the eating and drinking that accompanied each excursion and the persistent sense of a long-standing intimacy between insurgents and their victims, evoke something that is closer to an extended charivari, than it is to a rural rebellion.<sup>121</sup> The harassment of the notaire Thomas Marron in 1784 was described by the inhabitants of Banne as "une plaisanterie de carnaval."<sup>122</sup> One of the men arrested after the revolte of 1783 was said to have urged two travailleurs de terre to join the insurgents "pendant tout le reste du carnaval."<sup>123</sup> The révolte des masques was a drama, sanctioned by the apparent anonymity of blackened faces and macabre robes.

On the fringes of this collective action lay more discreet areas of control. Here it becomes impossible to separate private feuds from communal reprisal. This was the domain of the anonymous letter, of the selective destruction of property and of the threat of violent attack. On April 12th 1783, Thoulouse, the mayor of Saint-Ambroix was sent a letter marked De la Retraite Generale.<sup>124</sup> Its author appears to have assumed that Thoulouze was not unsympathetic, and warned him that action was expected to reform the courts:

"Moy et ma troupe avons été très surpris que a près la parole qui nous a été donnée à vous et à M. les commandants que tout étoit fini et soumis vous m'avez pas voulu vous en tenir à nous et que vous laissiez prendre à des placards que votre f ... canaille à fait mettre pour nous diminuer les bonnes intentions de ceux qui disposent l'autorité. Nous vous prions faire attention au piège qu'on vous tend et d'être convaincu de nos sentiments d'honneur avec autant de persuasion que vous tetes des coquinerie qui nous ont été faites par vos f ... fripons ... Si nous n'étions réellement convaincus de la correction qu'ils vont subir nous aurons attaqué les quelques villes peuplées de coquins avec autant

de front et de fermeté qu'Alexandre le Grand attaqua Darius."'

A month later, after the execution of three men at Les Vans, a second letter was sent to the judge Boissin de la Roche at Saint-André-de-Cruzières. If its language is confused, its meaning is clear enough:

Des Sévennes le 12e may 1783

"Comme nous sommes obligés de faire une décente à St.-André-de-Cruzières vous êtes averti de communiquer la présente aux prêtres de ne point se servir d'artifice de faire sonner les cloches. Autant de masques pendus autant des autres pendus.

Qui cogitaveront suppliciter grecus meos absconderont superbilaqueum mihi et fines extenderont in laqueum juste iter scandalum posuerunt mihi ne tardas me domine se desirerio meo peccatori cogitaverunt contra me ne forte exaltatum e caput circuitas degit. Mon regiment elevan Toujours."<sup>125</sup>

These letters - and the placards announcing a distribution of corn at Saint-Ambroix - had been written by a maître d'école of the parish of Banne, named Pontet, and a travailleur de terre from Saint-André-de-Cruzières, named Jean-Baptiste Cordier. Cordier was arrested, but appears to have been acquitted. Pontet left the region and settled at Saint-Hippolyte, on the southern edge of the Cévennes. On November 1st, 1790, after the first Camp de Jalès, he wrote to the municipality of Banne asking to return, since the situation at Saint-Hippolyte seemed menacing:

"Nous sommes dans un quartier dangereux par rapport à la religion parcequ'ils sont tous Protestans et s'il survient quelque révolte j'appréhende parcequ'ils se méffient des catholiques quoy que je suis estimé mais cest par rapport à ma plume et à mon talent,

He had, he said, lived at Banne for three years,



"et j'aurois désiré di rester toute ma vie sans une petite chose qui mest arrivé pour un peu decriture qu j'avois écrit sans aucune mauvais parole ni signature mais comme sétoit du tems de ces masques on a pris cella pour suspect; chose de badinage de rien. Jay eu des ennemis à St. Andre. Donc j'ay parti."

He offered his, and his son's services to the community "et nous montrerons avec zèle à lire à écrire et l'arithmetique pourvu que nous puissions vivre ainsy comme bon patriote et paire de la Patrie amy des bons citoyens."<sup>126</sup>

It is almost impossible to penetrate the opaque world from which such sentiments emanated. The obscure and very personal rivalries to which they point only become visible when they reach the courts. The proceedings against the rebels offer some examples. One of the most important witnesses in the proceedings was the cabaretier, Antoine Pagès, who claimed to have seen nine men carrying arms and still in disguise in his cabaret on three occasions. No less than six of the accused stated that his evidence was entirely unreliable. "Le père du témoin avoit eu des accès de folie et ... on avoit été obligé de l'attacher plusieurs fois ... Ledit témoin avoit été une fois à Saint-Ambroix à raison aussi de folie, et ... il avoit voulu tuer ses père, mère et son épouse."<sup>127</sup> Pierre Poitevin, another of the accused, claimed that the testimony of Joseph Moutet was invalid because they had been involved in a dispute:

"L'année dernière ... ledit témoin enleva pendant la nuit plusieurs lauze du toit de sa maison, tomba la cheminée et enfonça la porte et les fenêtres de ladite maison ... Il tira ensuite un coup de fusil par une fenêtre à sa mere et à ses soeurs, ... (et) à raison de ce il fit des poursuites en justice à la suite desquelles le témoin fut décrété de prise de corps, et ... c'est à raison de ce qu'il a cherché à l'écrouer ..."<sup>128</sup>

Two more of those arrested stated that they had testified on Poitevin's behalf. Another witness was said to be "un voleur qui a volé quatre quarterons de poudre ... au Sr Roure marchand à Chandolas, son maître."<sup>129</sup> The relatives of three of the men who were arrested were accused of having cut down another witnesses' trees.<sup>130</sup>

These allusions suggest the intimacy of an immediate past in which the multiple associations which separated those who took part in the rebellion from those who did, were formed. At the same time, however, the révolte des masques also suggests a more remote past, which reaches back to the Camisard rebellion and the révolte du Roure of 1670. One of the men who broke into Jacques Monteil's étude was said to have carried "une masse de fer appelée Roure."<sup>131</sup> Possibly this may be no more than an orthographical error; but the language of the letter of the Lezion honnete du Vivarois written by Louis-Antoine Delbosc, the marginal involvement of the group of minor nobliaux to which he belonged in the révolte des masques and the dramatic extravagance of the episode as a whole, evoke a temporal sequence that transcends the immediate context of the rebellion. Echoes of the guerre des Camisards appear in the administrative correspondence of 1783, despite the exclusively catholic composition of all of the villages affected by the revolt. References to the 'republican' proclivities of the region are not infrequent, while the title la bande anglaise which the insurgents adopted suggests a certain unconscious appropriation of the camisard past.



It is worth noting that in September 1785 the Commission of the Parlement of Toulouse issued an order "pour défendre de célébrer les fêtes locales des lieux de Vallabrègues et Comps qu'aux seuls jours indiqués, fait diffenses aux jeunes gens desdits lieux de s'atrouper en un ou deux parties, et sous la dénomination de Français et d'Anglais."<sup>132</sup>

In November 1783 the lawyer Délichères, of Aubenas, noted in his journal that "les commissaires (sic) pour venir examiner la source de la camisade et la conduite des gens d'affaires ont ouvert leur séances à mende."<sup>133</sup>

At the time, however, the events of the winter of 1783 offered themselves as a point of departure from which the relationship between debtor and creditor, the function of the local judicial institutions within this relationship and the effects of the intrusion of an economy of speculative exchange upon the patriarchal hierarchy of the village community, might be called into question. The révolte des masques revealed an area in which the aspirations of a certain élite noblial intersected with the rancour of the dispossessed. On August 17th 1790, two days before the first Camp de Jalès, two men from the parish of Saint-Julien-de-Valgalgue were arrested for distributing a handbill entitled Adresse d'Un Soldat de la Garde Nationale à l'Assemblée fédérative de Jalès. It runs as follows:

"Le démagogue escroc ennemi de la patrie voit seul sans allarme l'état déplorable de peuple qui sapauvrit tous les jours, persuadant les chers hommes de campagne d'une égalité. Mais voudrat-il luy-même s'égaliser avec luy. Voyant l'aristocratie à lagonie il veut par sa fortune s'élever sur ses ruines. Il le fera effectivement, se servant de vos forces, adroitement empruntées. Mais en serez vous plus heureux dès que vous aurez pour despote votre tiran, celui qui vous aura ravy votre



"tranquillite, enleve la nourriture de vos familles  
fait mourir par chagrin votre infortune pere, brouille  
votre menage par ses vexations desastreuses. Cessez  
d'etre dupe chers camarades. Mefiez vous de cette bande  
de brigands, gens d'affaires ..." 194.

Its author was Louis-Antoine Delbosc.



Notes - Chapter 21

1. A.N. H931. A.D. Ardèche 25B 79, deposition of Jean Chamboredon; id. C896.
2. A.C.Nîmes 00 102.
3. A.C. Alès. IJ 2, 3-10-1782.
4. See Table below.
5. A.D. Ardèche. 25B 81.
6. Id. 25B 80.
7. Id. J402. Fontaines to d'Agrain des Hubas, marquis de Chambonas, 1758.
8. A.N. AB XIX. 3063, Fuzet to ?, 29-10-1774.
9. A.D. Gard. Serie 'E (Unclassified) Fonds Chapelein. "Inventaire et estimation des biens de feu Me Joseph Chalbos."
10. A.D. Ardèche. 2E 3553 fol75.
11. Id. 2E 3549 fo l.
12. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>51</sup> 744.
13. Id. 2E<sup>51</sup> 838.
14. On this, Cf. M. Agulhon. "La Notion de Village en Basse-Provence." Actes du 90e Congrès des Sociétés savantes, Paris, 1965. t.I, pp.277-301.
15. A.D. Gard. C 1607.
16. Jacques Champetier (1703-1782) was a notaire and lieutenant de juge of the vicomté of Theyrargues. He was also seigneur of Galinier. His son, Pierre-Paul, another notaire, moved to Uzès. He bought the seigneurie of Ribes, in the parish of Saint-Florent. In 1783, he married the daughter of Jean-Joseph Goirand de la Baume, seigneur de la Baume, co-seigneur of the mandement of Aigaliers, of Nîmes.
17. A.D. Ardèche. IVE Berrias. 28-11-1775.
18. A.C. Les Vans. Reg.parroissiales. 3-3-1778. Her dowry was 4,000 Lt. (A.D. Ardèche. 2C 3140. 2-3-1778. Coren notaire).
19. On these families, see below pp. 508 et seq.

20. A.D. Gard. IIIF (Collection des factums) 18.fo.238.  
"Procédure entre Henriette Déslèbres veuve de Me J-J, Channac et Anne-Rosalie Déslèbres, veuve de Me Pierre-Francois Thuec."  
(1818)
21. A.D. Ardèche. 4E Berrias, 19-10-1774; Id. 2E 3566 fo.236v.  
Testament de Pierre Fabregat.
22. Cf. N. Castan. "Caractéristiques criminelles des Hautes régions du Languedoc oriental: 1780-1790." Actes du XLIVe Congrès de la Fédération historique du Languedoc-Roussillon. Montpellier. 1972. pp.229-246.
23. A.D. Hérault. C 6869. 4-7-1783.
24. Bib. de l'Arsenal. Mss.6085. (undated. Probably c.1750).
25. A.D. Ardèche. C1084.
26. See above p. 286-7.
27. A.D. Gard. 1E (unclassified) Fonds Chapelain. "Journal general des affaires de la Maison de Chapelein, ledit journal datant du mois d'octobre, 1791."
28. A.D. Ardèche. 134B Justice des Vaus.
29. A.N. T85. doss.Paysac.
30. On this section of the legal profession, see L.R. Berlanstein, The Barristers of Toulouse in the 18th Century. Johns Hopkins, 1975. pp. 32 & 35.
31. See below, p.450 et seq.
32. A.D. Ardèche. SM 3.
33. Id.
34. A.C. Les Vans. Reg. Paroissiaux.
35. Etude Perussel, Les Vans. Reg. Baissac, 1752.; A.D. Ardèche. 2E 3562 fo.99; 2E 3558 fo.60;
36. A.D. Ardèche. Fonds Mazon, F67.; Id., 2E 3558 fo.28 et.seq.
37. Id. J402 On the de Blou, Cf. pp.508-9.
38. Id. L 1248.
39. H. de la Forest, Le Vengeur, Nouvelle ardechoise. Alès, 1843.
40. A.D. Ardèche. C1084.



41. A.D. Ardèche. 133B. Plunitif des audiences du Mandement de Malbosc.
42. A.N. 306 AP 486, to de Castries, 17-11-1785.
43. A.D. Hérault. C7903 "Réflexions sur la Revolte du peuple dans les Cévennes et dans le Vivarais arrivée le 30<sup>e</sup> Janvier 1783." I am grateful to Ms. R. Kindelberger for this reference.
44. The narrative that follows is based upon: A.D. Hérault C 47 "Journal de ce qui s'est passé en Cévennes et en Vivarais lors des Atroupements masqués et armés dissipés par M. Dampmartin." (published by J.Regné as "Les Prodrômes de la Révolution française dans l'Ardèche." Revue d'Histoire de la Revolution française, 1914. It will, I hope, be apparent from this examination of the rebellion, that the révolte des masques was not a prelude to the Revolution.)  
B.M. Avignon. Mss 2100 fo.188 Précis des Evenements concernant Les Masques armés fait par M. de la Coste. A.D. Ardèche 25B 80 Relevé des faits relatifs aux masques. A.D. Ardèche Fonds Mazon F 67.  
 There are two unpublished studies of the rebellion, both factually accurate, but analytically unreliable:  
 D. Hebrard, "Les Soulèvements populaires dans le Département de l'Ardèche au 18e siècle." D.E.S. Montpellier. 1969  
 P. Nègre "La Révolte des Masques Armés de 1783." Thèse de Droit. Montpellier, 1950.
45. A.D. Ardèche. 25B 79.
46. A.D. Hérault. C 47.
47. A.D. Ardèche. 25B 79 Dep. of J. Villard.
48. A.D. Ardèche. 25B 80.
49. A.D. Ardèche. 25B 79.
50. Id. 134B, Justice des Vans.
51. Id. 131B, Justice de Chambonas.
52. Id. 25B 79.
53. Id.
54. Id.
55. Id.
56. Id.

57. Id.
58. Id.
59. Id.
60. A.D. Hérault C 6890 (all citations).
61. A.N. N° 478; A.D. Ardèche Fonds Mazon F65; B.N. L<sup>e</sup> 38 1938, "Rapport et Projet de Decret ... présentés par Couthon sur l'assassinat du patriote Malignon." Paris, s.d. (an II).
62. A.D. Ardèche. 25B 79 Information de Deschanel.
63. Only 30 of them were arrested and convicted. Two were acquitted and warrants were issued for the arrest of a further 32. Three men were finally executed and five others were sentenced to seven years in the galleys. The others were pardoned in 1784 by a Royal edict. Cf. Ardèche. C 1084; Fonds Mazon F.67.
64. The full list is as follows:  
 Les Assions 41; Banne 21; Malbosc 15; Courry 12;  
 Sablières II; Gravières 10; Berrias 6; Faugères 4;  
 St.-André-de-Cruzières 4; Laurac 4; St.Genêt de Beauzon 2;  
 St.-André-Lachamp 2; Brahic 2; Meyras 2; La Souche 2;  
 Chandolas I; Valgorge; Aujac, Planzolles and Thueyts  
 1 each.
65. The full list is as follows:  
 travailleurs de terre 28; cardeurs de laine 4;  
 cordonniers 4; soldats ou déserteurs 4; ménagers 3;  
 courtiers, cabaretiers, domestiques, journaliers,  
 tailleurs de pierres, marchands colporteurs - 2;  
 charpentier, serrurier, tisserand de draps, maréchal,  
 charrier de bois, cardeur de filoselle, menuisier,  
 muletier, maître-maçon, sabotier, fermier, procureur  
 fiscal - 1 of each.
66. A.D. Ardèche. 25B 79.
67. Id.
68. A.N. H 931 Suite du Journal de Saint-Priest. Cf. A.D. Ardèche. 133B Justice de Malbosc; Numerous assignations on Labillerie for non-payment of debts.
69. See above p.265.
70. A.D. Ardèche 25B 79.
71. A. D. Hérault. C 6645 for the attempts made to track him down by de la Coste, the military commander of the Cévennes.



72. A.D. Ardèche. 25B 82; Fonds Mazon F.67.
73. A.N. H 931.
74. A.N. H931, H1103; A.D. Hérault C6564, C6869.
75. A.D. Ardèche. 25B 81, to Sarralier, lieutenant du roi dans le Velay, 9-3-1788.
76. A.D. Hérault. C6564, de Perigord to De La Bruyere 3-3-1783.
77. The incident is reported in A.D. Hérault. C47 and in A.D. Ardèche 25B 81 "releve des faits ..."
78. A.D. Ardèche 2E 3568 ff 35-53.
79. Id. 4E Reg. de la Par. de Berrias 24-1-1743. The details that follow are based upon a partial reconstruction of the family from the parish registers of the villages of Berrias and Grospierres, and the notarial registers to which I have had access. Unfortunately, many of the registers of the notaires of the Bas-Vivarais are still in private hands in Les Vans. The poor condition in which they have been kept has prevented me from achieving a full reconstruction of the family.
80. A.D. Ardèche 44B 17. Registre des appointements de la Duché de Joyeuse. A.D. Gard IIF Collection des Factums. (non-classés) Mémoire pour Joseph-Guillaume de Chanaleilles
81. A.D. Ardèche 4E Berrias 5-2-1754.
82. A.D. Hérault C 1826 Roussel to Saint-Priest 15-9-1784.
83. A.D. Ardèche. 4E Grospierres 3-5-1729; 3-7-1736.  
4E Berrias 24-1-1743; 12-1-1743.
84. J. Sentou, Fortunes et Groupes Sociaux à Toulouse sous la Révolution. Toulouse, 1969.p.190.
85. A.D. Ardèche. 2C 3140.
86. There may have been a fourth brother, Alexis. An uncle, Paul-Joseph Bastide, the son of Joseph Bastide de La Tourasse, was also a cleric. Cf. A.D. Ardèche. 2E 3557 fo.112.
87. Their two eldest children were baptised there.
88. A.D. Ardèche. 2E 1027 ff. 25-27, 30-1-1770.
89. On the other families mentioned see the genealogies in : R. de Gigord, la Noblesse de la Sénéchaussée de Villeneuve-de-Berg, en 1789. Lyon, 1894. J. Villain, La France Moderne: Dictionnaire généalogique, Historique et Biographique. TII (Drôme et Ardèche.,)St. Etienne, 1908.

90. Cf. E. de Gigord S.J., Les Jesuites d'Aubenas 1601-1762. Paris, 1910. pp.305-306. A.D. Ardèche. 4E 31 26-11-1772.
91. A.D. Ardèche. 4E 31 25-6-1776.
92. Id. Minutier Joyeuse. 2E 217 23-2-1784.
93. A.D. Ardèche. 2E 3568 ff.23-26.
94. A.D. Hérault. C1826.
95. Id. Roussel to Saint-Priest, 15-9-1784. See also A.D. Ardèche. 25B 80. Deposition of Pelet.
96. A.D. Hérault C6564., 19-2-1783.
97. A.D. Ardèche. 25B 80.
98. A genealogy of the Champetier can be found in R. Delavenne, Recueil généalogique de l'Ancienne bourgeoisie. Paris, T.I. P.103.
99. A.D. Ardèche. 4E Berrias, 27-2-1770.
100. Id. 4E Grospierres, 25-2-1766.
101. These, and subsequent details are taken from A.D. Gard, IJ 330 "Sentence du Présidial de Nîmes sur la Distribution des biens du Sr. Louis-Antoine Delbosc." (Nov. 1786), 22ff.
102. A.D. Gard IJ 330.
103. A.D. Hérault. C6869.
104. A.D. Ardèche. 25B 80. Informations de Delbosc, Perrochon & Ginhoux.
105. A.D. Hérault. C 6564.
106. A.C. Les Vans. Delib. du Conseil municipal. 30-1-1783.
107. A.D. Hérault. C 6872, to de Cambis.  
See also id. C6870.
108. On the reorganisation of the municipal institutions of the Languedoc, see below pp.450-486.
109. A.D. Hérault. C409.
110. Id. C 6870, to Chalmeton 11-5-1784.



111. de la Vernède had arrested 13 masques in the cabaret at Aubrias.
112. A.D. Hérault. C6870.
113. Id. to de Cambis, 28-2-1784.
114. Id.
115. A.D. Gard. 1E 108.
116. A.D. Hérault. C6873, to de Cambis 30-1-1787.
117. Id.
118. Id.
119. A.D. Ardèche. L1197.
120. See M. Agulhon, Pénitents et Francs-Maçons de l'Ancienne Provence. Paris, 1968; N.Z. Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule; Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth Century France." P & P. No.50., 1971. pp.41-75.
121. For similar episodes, see the studies cited above, and H. Hours, "Les Fayettes de Saint-Just d'Auray: Puissances et Limites du sentiment de solidarite dans un Communauté rurale en 1774." Bulletin de l'Académie de Villefranche, 1970, pp.83-90.
122. A.D. Hérault. C6870.
123. A.D. Ardèche. F. Mazon. 67.
124. A.D. Hérault. C 6645.
125. Id.
126. A.D. Ardèche. L1195.
127. A.D. Ardèche. 25B 80.
128. Id.
129. Id.
130. Id.
131. A.D. Ardèche. 134B. Justice des Vans.
132. A.N. E 3707 f<sup>o</sup> 217.
133. A.D. Ardèche. Fonds Mazon. F5. f<sup>o</sup>252.
134. A.D. Gard. L421.

Part IV Royalists and Patriots



Chapter 22 Credit, Usury and Political Power

Early in 1785 a lawyer from Les Vans composed a long analysis of the rebellion which had occurred in the Vivarais. After discussing the immediate causes of the event, he went on to propose the establishment of a Mont-de-Piété, whose purpose would be to advance funds to the rural poor to enable them to clear land and establish themselves as independent citizens. There was a time, he wrote, when

"Le pauvre qui languit dans l'indigence fut toujours un objet intéressant aux yeux de l'humanité... Mais par un renversement affreux une certaine classe d'hommes sourds aux cris de la nature ferment leur coeur à de si nobles sentiments et par un cruel artifice en sont les fléaux en feignant d'en être les protecteurs..."

This reversal was synonymous to the deformation of charity. "C'est l'usure que j'attaque," Michel wrote, "ce sont ces forfaits que je veux mettre au jour, ainsi que les stratagemes dont elle se sert pour parvenir à ses noirs succès."<sup>1</sup>

The révolte des masques armés raised the question of the definition of usury in acute form. It is a question which historians preoccupied by the origins of the Revolution and the émotions populaire which, ostensibly, anticipated the event, have neglected. Nonetheless, the subject gave rise to a large pamphlet literature throughout the eighteenth century, running from Thomassin's Traité de Négoce et de l'Usure of 1597, to the anonymous L'Usure considéré relativement au Droit naturel, ou Réfutation de Grotius, Puffendorff, Noodt, Wolff et autres Jurisconsultes étrangers, de Dumoulin, du "Traité des Prêts de Commerce" et de la "Théorie de l'Intérêt de l'Argent" published in 1787. If much of the literature on the subject emanated from largely clerical circles, the problem



of the distinction between credit and usury retained the interest of even the most sophisticated commercial entrepreneurs. "Toute ma vie j'ai entendu agiter cette question," the négociant Roux, of Marseille informed his son in 1798. "Maintes et maintes fois j'ai entendu raisonner sur les systemes opposés. Mais ni de part ni d'autre, je n'ai rien entendu de satisfaisant."<sup>3</sup> If Roux's reply was predictably pragmatic, there were others prepared to advance a more definite hostility. "L'usure est comme le ver rongeur de toutes les sociétés," warned a pamphlet written in 1784 in response to Turgot's Mémoire sur les Prêts d'Argent.

"On le trouve dans toutes les conditions. Un paysan manque-t-il de quelque sac de blé pour semer ou pour vivre, il ne le trouve ordinairement qu'à un intérêt d'autant plus fort qu'il est lui-même moins aisé, et c'est un autre paysan, son voisin, c'est un bourgeois riche, c'est un marchand qui le traitent ainsi dans sa détresse. Un artisan ne peut-il monter son atelier sans quelque avance? Il faut qu'il paie ce léger secours et qu'il devienne tributaire de celui qui le lui fournit. Il arrive de là que l'amour de l'argent devient la passion dominante chez tous les citoyens, qu'éteint les sentiments honnêtes et patriotiques, qu'il change les membres de l'union d'abord en étrangers, puis en ennemis, et c'est ainsi qu'arrivent les révolutions et la destruction de toutes les sociétés humaines..."<sup>4</sup>

If the figure of the accapareur has become a familiar one after the many studies of gain riots and episodes of taxation populaire both before and during the Revolution, the body of formal and customary regulation designed to limit his activities during the eighteenth century remains largely unexplored. Much of it was concerned, necessarily, with the traffic in corn.

"En général, l'usure se commet dans l'échange et dans la vente des blés & grains, quand on se convertit le prix de l'argent en obligation pour vente de grains, ou en se prêtant du bled pour un certain temps et en le vendant, à cause de cela, beaucoup plus dur que son prix, ou en s'en conservant le retour et paiement en espèces de mêmes grains, dans un temps où ils peuvent

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valoir davantage, ou en achetant du bled en verd à vil prix... ou en se reservant de prendre les grains dans un temps plus éloigné que celui ou on les achète, ou enfin en tirant du profit du prêt du bled,"

wrote Jousse in 1771.<sup>5</sup> These practices were prohibited by Colbert's Ordonnances de Commerce, which were renewed by subsequent arrêts throughout the eighteenth century. In addition, only recognised marchands de blé were permitted to deal in corn. Article 5 of a royal arrêt of 1699 stated that

"tous laboureurs, officiers, soit de Nous, soit des Sieurs hauts justiciers, ou des villes de Notre Royaume et... tous receveurs et fermiers de Nos Droits, commis à Nos recettes, caissiers et... tous autres intéressés dans le maniment de Nos finances ou chargez du recouvrement de Nos deniers,"

were forbidden to participate in the trade.<sup>6</sup> This stipulation was reiterated in an arrêt of 26 September 1773 forbidding "le commerce des grains aux officiers royaux de justice et de finance, aux fermiers, laboureurs, meuniers et boulangers."<sup>7</sup>

All treatises on the criminal law, from de la Mare to Guyot, also defined loans at high rates of interest, fictitious sales at inflated prices (prêts à perte de finance), increases of price on sales at credit and price-fixing by monopoly, as usurious transactions. Penalties for the offences were imprecise, and varied according to the court which dealt with the offence. The subject demands fuller investigation that it is possible to accord here. It is worth noting, however, that a lawyer from Dijon was convicted of lending money at a rate of 50%, and sentenced by the Parlement of Paris to banishment in 1777. A saddler, convicted of the same offence in 1782, was sentenced to five years exile from Paris "et sa prévôté" by the same court.<sup>8</sup>

The regular repetition of arrêts and regulations governing the traffic in corn and prohibiting usurious practices in general,



leads easily to the conclusion that restrictions were universally ignored and that prohibited practices were uncontrollable. It may however be argued that the survival of such restrictions reflects a continuing pressure, not only from below, from the victims of speculation, but also from those responsible for the preservation of public order, for whom the regulations governing usurious transactions, in the widest sense, offered an area in which the rhetoric of seigneurial obligation could be transformed into benevolent and disinterested reality. In this context, the role of the seigneurial court or the urban bureaux de police was frequently crucial. Thus at Saint-Ambroix in 1774, a négociant from Uzès named Soubeiran complained that he had been insulted at the market on January 18th. It emerged that he had bought a quantity of fresh chestnuts, "au coucher du soleil." The manoeuvre was immediately understood, and the sellers complained to the first consul of Saint-Ambroix, who was then François Ferrochon, a man who we have already encountered, and will encounter again...

"Alors le Sr Consul ... traita le suppt (Soubeiran) de drolle et de bavard pillard et de f... coquin et ordonna de son autorité propre que les vendeurs des chataignes étoient entreposés pour les reprendre ... lui donnant de Broquâ et continuait de le traiter de drôle."

At the same time, "il se rassemblera ... une troupe d'enfans qui crièrent audit Sr Soubeiran qu'il étoit un vendeur double, et ils se moquèrent de lui."<sup>9</sup> The institutions of local control thus served to reinforce and to define the barrier which separated credit from usury in a manner which transcended social division. Effectively, these institutions could embody the peculiarly Southern concepts of honour and honnêteté. It was not accidental that the masques armés of 1783 chose to describe themselves as the legion honnête

du Vivarais

The boundary between orthodox exchange and usury was defined by a collective moral perception. Usury was a transgression of this morality, of the particular morality of small communities, in which most exchanges took place between people who shared other, more durable ties. The inverse of this deformation of the credit relationship was an active and instinctive appreciation of the virtue of charity. Lay charity in the villages and towns of the Midi was entrusted to a bureau de charité, which was administered by an elected procureur des pauvres, whose function was to accept, manage and distribute sums left to the community. The funds of the bureau de charité provided alms for the destitute, the maimed and the blind, and offered temporary relief to the poor during années disetteuses. The expenditure of a local bureau fluctuated in accordance with the state of the harvest: the annual expenditure of the bureau of the village of Saint-Andre-de-Valborgne is a case in point.<sup>10</sup>

This body of attitudes which surrounded relationships of exchange and credit, formed part of the context which awaited the two special commissions of the Parlement of Toulouse ordered into the Bas-Languedoc after the disturbances in the Vivarais. The atmosphere in the area affected by the unrest remained tense. Early in 1784, the vicomte de Cambis informed the Comte de Périgord that an inhabitant of Anduze,

"a porté l'insolence au point de répondre au propriétaire du bois dans lequel il fut trouvé faisant des dégâts sur les plaints que faisait ce propriétaire de ce qu'on s'entendait à ravager les possessions des honnêtes gens, qu'au contraire on ne s'entendait assez ce que seroit bien dommage, car avec un peu d'intelligence entre eux,



ils pourroient faire dans ce pais-ci ce qu'ont fait aux Vans et aux leurs voisins les Bagaras ou gens qui s'y sont masqués et attroupés vers le commencement de l'année dernière."

In November of the same year, there was a seditious assembly at Aujac, where several procureurs from Villefort had arrived to attend the seigneurial court. They were warned that "à l'avenir il ne se tiendrait qu'une auditoire par mois, que si quelque procureurs'avaient de faire des saisies, ils ne se masqueroient point comme à Banne, mais .... ils iroient dans son étude lui couper la tête."<sup>12</sup> The sub-délégué Chalmeton reported that incidents such as these would be inevitable, since peasants found that "toutes poursuites en justice, même les plus modérées de la part des créanciers lui seront toujours odieuses par rapport aux frais inevitables."<sup>13</sup>

The first Commission of the Parlement, which was sent out during the winter of 1783-1784, only skirted the zone affected by the masques. It travelled to Mende and on to Villefort, and from there proceeded to Aubenas, Villeneuve-de-Berg, Privas and Annonay. A second Commission, sent out in the autumn of 1785, covered a larger area. It travelled southwards from Annonay to Privas, Villeneuve-de-Berg, Joyeuse, Pont-Saint-Esprit and Uzès, and completed its inquiries at Nîmes.<sup>14</sup> Between elaborate civic receptions, its members heard complaints, arbitrated on instances of disputed proceedings and received depositions on suspected cases of malpractice. Regrettably, the minutes of the first Commission have disappeared. Those of the second Commission are too summary to offer much information.<sup>15</sup> But when this latter Commission reached Nîmes, it began hearings on a case involving several unidentified "usuriers." On October 29th 1785, it pronounced sentences on no less than

ninety-eight individuals. Writs of arrest were served upon seventeen of them; twenty-eight were served with summonses, and the remaining fifty-three were invited to travel to Toulouse to give further evidence.<sup>16</sup>

The names of the individuals involved in the case do not appear in the minutes of the Commission, and investigations elsewhere have been fruitless.<sup>17</sup> The notarial registers of Nîmes, however, offer some assistance. On December 17th, 1785, a merchant named Henri Serres, of the rue de l'Espic, "actuellement detenu dans les prisons royales de Nîmes," issued a procuration en blanc to petition the Parlement of Toulouse for his release because of his ill-health to nominate a lawyer to receive his deposition on the matters which had led to his arrest.<sup>18</sup> On May 13th, 1786, a lawyer named Joseph Paradan de Cabrières, of the rue du Collège, near the Hôtel de Ville, instructed a procureur to the Parlement to present a medical certificate proving that he was unable to travel to Toulouse to give evidence to the Parlement in accordance with the sentence of October 29th, 1785.<sup>19</sup> Another lawyer, Charles de Sobeiran, "ancien avocat du Roi de Nîmes," and a Jewish merchant named Lion Maneim, made identical procurations.<sup>20</sup>

A declaration made before the notaire Charles Marignan in December 1785 offers additional information on the case. Two courtiers from Nîmes, "pour rendre hommage à la vérité," stated that:

"Le vingtième mars dernier, ils achetèrent ... pour compte de Me Esperandieu, procureur es cours de cette ville, de MM Charles frères & Cie négociants de



Nismes quarante sept salmés bled qu'ils lui payèrent en une lettre de change de Me Dames procureur cedée par ledit Me Esperandieu de la somme de 1800Lt. ... Lequel bled ils revendirent par ordre dudit Me Esperandieu à eux porté par M. Mazoyer avocat, au Sr Archinard, négociant de cette ville qui le leur paya et dont ils remirent le montant audit Me Mazoyer faisant pour ledit Me Esperandieu."<sup>21</sup>

It was, as we have seen, illegal for members of the legal profession to speculate on corn in this way. One of the early historians of Nîmes mentions that the case also involved prêts à porte de finance, or barats as they were known locally. In this instance a loan was disguised behind a fictitious sale, in which the interest was concealed in the difference in price between the original price and the "re-sale" price.<sup>22</sup>

The proceedings produced consternation among the city's commercial and legal notability. "Tout cela fait grand bruit et consterne bien de familles honnêtes," the procureur Antoine Bonicel informed his cousin in Montpellier. In December 1785 he informed him that the property of a number of those for whom warrants for arrest had been issued - "tels que M<sup>r</sup> Charles, Flandin, Lachat, Traissac et de plusieurs juifs" - had been surveyed.

"Mais je ne crois pas qu'on fasse vendre, soit parce que il y a apparence que les décrétés se ruineront, soit parce que le Parlement toujours indulgent pour les malheureux ne poussera pas sans doute la poursuite à toute rigueur."<sup>23</sup>

The négociant François Fabre-Lichaire was anxious to have the "unfortunate" affair forgotten as quickly as possible by the Parlement and allow calm to return to "des familles malheureuses... jettées dans la désolation:"

"Je crois MM les commissaires se sont laissés un peu trop entrainer par le penchant de la justice qui les

animoit, et qu'ils ont trop écoutés des gens perdus par leur mauvaise conduite que la misère portoit à des extrémités honteuses.<sup>24</sup>

These reactions indicate that the proceedings against the barateurs were unpopular amongst the city's commercial and professional communities.

Yet the affair remains mysterious. Who denounced so many individuals? And why did they do so? The names of the few individuals that it has been possible to identify make it clear that this was not a group of small, back-street money lenders, making exorbitant profits out of short-term loans. Why then had the question of the distinction between credit and usury touched upon the worlds of commerce and the professions? In 1784, the pastor Rabaut Saint-Etienne had dwelled upon the matter in a memorial article dedicated to the late Bishop of Nîmes, Charles-Prudent de Beccelièvre.<sup>25</sup> The article appeared anonymously. It was, as Rabaut informed a friend, addressed to an audience within Nîmes itself. "Outre que je ne croyais pas qu'il se répandit hors de la ville, j'avais dessein de garder l'anonyme."<sup>26</sup> Somewhat oddly, the pamphlet is an extended panegyric of the value of commerce. Foremost among the late Bishop's virtues was a deep recognition of the merits of commerce:

"Il aimait les commercants; il les regardait comme un ordre essentiel dans un royaume vaste et tres peuplé ... Le négociant qui répand les ouvrages de notre industrie chez les nations étrangères, en retire l'or qui vient circuler dans l'état, et porter l'aisance dans toutes les conditions.

He was charitable, but charitable in an acceptably rational manner:

"L'exemple d'Italie, où il y a tant de charités, tant



d'hôpitaux, tant de repas distribués aux portes des couvents et des ecclésiastiques et où l'on voit néanmoins tant de paresse et de crapule, prouve assez que le pays le plus riche et le plus vertueux n'est pas celui où le pauvre reçoit le plus d'aumônes, mais où il est le plus sédentaire et le plus occupé."<sup>28</sup>

The Bishop was, moreover, a Sabbatarian, and had moved several holidays to the Sabbath:

"Il laissait à chacun la liberté de chômer la fête ou de se livrer au travail; il ôtait également des prétextes à l'indévotion et la paresse, et accordant ainsi les intérêts de la religion avec ceux de l'état, il fournissait des aliments à la piété des uns et à la subsistance des autres."<sup>29</sup>

In short, Rabaut Saint-Etienne had transformed his subject into the very incarnation of rational utilitarianism. Given Rabaut's milieu, the terms of the eulogy are not surprising.<sup>30</sup> But the choice of a Bishop as a vehicle for such a treatise is considerably more surprising. Here it is necessary to break the narrative and look back a decade, to an affair which lies at the heart of both Rabaut's extraordinary Hommage à la Mémoire de M. L'Eveque de Nîmes and of the case of the barateurs de Nîmes of the autumn of 1785.

Notes (Part IV): Chapter 22: Introduction

1. A.D. Hérault C 7903.
2. The only study of this pamphlet literature is to be found in B. Groethuysen Origines de l'Esprit Bourgeois en France. T.I. Paris, 1927. pp.236-279. The second, two volume work mentioned here can be found in the Cambridge University Library. (Acton d.48.679-80).
3. Cited by C. Carrière "Prêt à Intérêt et Fidélité religieuse." Provence Historique, 1958.pp.105-121.
4. Nouvelles Considerations sur l'Usure et le Prêt à Interet. Bordeaux, 1784.p.57.
5. D. Jousse, Traité de la Justice criminelle. Paris, 1771.t.4. p.273.
6. L. DelaMare, Traité de Police. Paris, 1722. t.2.p.63.
7. Cited by G.Frêche. "Etudes statistiques sur le Commerce céréalière de la France méridionale au VIIIe Siècle." R.H.E.S., T.XLIV.1971.pp.183-4.
8. G. Aubry, La Jurisprudence criminelle du Châtelet de Paris sous le Règne de Louis XVI. Paris, 1971. pp.144-5.
9. A.D. Gard. Serie B (unclassified). Justice de Saint-Ambroix, 1775.
10. See above pp.375-6.
11. A.D. Hérault. C 6870.
12. Id.
13. Id.
14. Some trace of their activities can be found in A.D. Ardèche. C 1084 and A.N. H 1103.
15. A.N. E 3707. I am grateful to M. Henri Michel, of the Université Paul Valéry at Montpellier, for this reference.
16. Id. fo 345.
17. It is possible that the full dossier of the case may be found among the famous sacs de procédures in the Archives of the Haute-Garonne. Since this mass of papers has never been classified, selective research becomes impossible. The papers of the Présidial of Nîmes are, at the time of writing, in an even greater state of chaos.



18. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 232. (17-12-1785).
19. Id. 2E<sup>37</sup> 347 f<sup>o</sup>248.
20. Id. 2E<sup>37</sup> 347 ff.143 & 265.
21. Id. 2E<sup>36</sup> 848 f<sup>o</sup>776.
22. P.L. Baragnon, Abrégé de l'Histoire de Nîmes de Ménard continué jusqu'à nos jours. Nîmes, 1831. T.III., p.379.
23. A.D. Hérault. IE 995, to Parlier, 12-12-1785 & 17-12-1785.
24. A.D. Gard. IE (unclassified) Papers of F. Fabre-Lichaire, livre de copies de lettres, to Dugas de Pieremale, Toulouse, 4-3-1786.
25. Rabaut Saint-Etienne, Oeuvres. Paris, 18 27, t.2. pp.115-133.
26. to C. de Vegobre, 5-6-1784. cited by C. Dardier, "Notice sur Court de Gebelin." Mém.Ac.de Nîmes, 7<sup>e</sup> Serie, T.13. 1890. p.Lxxiii, n.61.
27. Rabaut Saint-Etienne, loc.cit. p.125.
28. Id. p.123.
29. Id. p.121. The merits of sabbatarianism were also advanced in the cahier of the third estate of Nîmes in 1789. The decision to move the fêtes of Saint-Jean Baptiste and Saint-Pierre et Saint-Paul to a Sunday was taken in 1777. Its purpose was to "entretenir toujours la dévotion des fidèles, sans interrompre cependant au travail nécessaire pour le besoin particulier et indispensable pour le besoin commun." (A.C. Nîmes FF 29, 17-6-1777). Two canons at the Cathedral - de Now and Chassain - protested, see A.D. Hérault C 499).
30. On Rabaut's milieu, see above p. 208 et seq.

Chapter 23 The Struggle for Power in the Municipality of Nîmes  
and the Origins of the Royalist Leadership



The conflict within the municipal government of Nîmes, which began in the early years of the 1770s, and, by the middle of the following decade, had envenomed almost all areas of civic life, was symptomatic of the manner in which a certain politique de cloche, banal in its frequency, could raise wider questions and provoke reverberations in areas which had little direct connection with the causes of the original dispute. The affair, despite the acrimony which it produced, is often obscure. Ostensibly, the most important question at issue was clear enough. It was the familiar question of the right of Protestants to hold municipal office, a question that had already arisen at Saint-Ambroix. As in the smaller town, there was much talk of cabales, parties and associations, guarded references to division and discord within the corps municipal, and skillful manoeuvre by each faction to involve the power of a superior authority, at Versailles or at Montpellier. This interplay between the local and intimate on the one hand, and the national and impersonal, on the other, is a theme which should already be apparent from Froment's mémoires and the alignments which formed over the disputes surrounding the coal mines of the bassin alésien and the control of the silk fair at Alès.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the political dispute at Nîmes, the first dimension, the local and intimate dimension, is frequently hidden. It is possible to identify the contending factions, but only rarely is it possible to measure the real chain of association which lay behind their public positions. It appears spasmodically, in a passing

reference to an obscure dispute within the financial administration of the Chapter of the Cathedral, to a hitherto undisclosed family connection, or to less tangible ties formed by the topography of civic experience.

Geographically, the conflict was limited to a small area. Its context was the prosperous heart of the city, reaching back from the quartier des Arènes along the narrow rue de l'Épice, towards the Fountain, and, more specifically, the informal institutions of opulent social intercourse - the salons, the Academy, the Theatre, the Lodges - which that particular world sustained. This was the world of the Plauchut, the Pleyre, the André and the Vincens. It was also the world of the high dignitaries of the Présidial, the Cathedral and the Royal administration, and their own retinues of relatives and clients. Innuendo, gossip and delicately worded threats carried as much weight here as did farandoles, crude insults and anonymous placards in less elevated circles. Behind the public hostility of each faction lay a certain identity of milieu, of style and language, and a tactical flexibility which belies the immutability of their rhetoric. The question of Protestant representation in the municipal government of Nîmes embraced issues which transcended the sectarian frontier and, raised the question of the power of capital, and of the morality upon which such power rested, in a manner which merged with the questions raised in the Vivarais by the révolte des masques armés.

The municipal institutions of Nîmes, like those of most of the towns of the Midi, retained the character first accorded

to them by Roman colonisation. Municipal offices were originally elective. A complex system of selection and ballot designed to eliminate intrigue was formally recognised by a transaction between the Crown and the City in 1476. It remained the model against which subsequent modification was assessed. Essentially, the transaction of 1476 provided for a number of elected consuls drawn from members of a conseil politique, which was, in turn, made up of representatives of the various civic orders. Progressively, however, many of the major offices became venal.<sup>2</sup> In 1693, the jugé-maire of the Présidial, Jacques-Vivet de Montclus, purchased the office of mayor of Nîmes and, seven years later, bought the newly created post of lieutenant-général de police for 25,000 livres. In 1706, the Consulat bought back the office of mayor, which remained elective until 1733. The office of lieutenant-général de police, however, remained the property of the Montclus until the family's extinction in the mid-1730s, when it reverted to the Consulat. At the same time, a new office, that of lieutenant du maire, was established and bought by a Sr. Roque for 25,000 livres.<sup>3</sup> This body of venal offices was complimented by a group of subaltern elective office. On May 19th 1739, after a dispute between the Présidial and the Consulat over rights to participate in elections to the Consulat, the Conseil du Roi issued an arrêt affirming the sole right of the conseil politique to nominate candidates for election to the Consulat. The elections were to be triennial. A quorum of sixteen conseillers politiques was necessary for the election to stand. The four out-going consuls, and their four immediate predecessors, were also entitled to vote.



In 1744, a further series of venal offices were created. The offices of first and third consul accordingly became hereditary.<sup>4</sup> In 1761, the elective office of procureur du roi to the municipality was created. At this time, the institutional structure of the municipal government was formed by:

- (1) A hereditary maire, who also owned the office of lieutenant-général de police.
- (2) A lieutenant de maire.
- (3) The four Consuls.
- (4) A Conseil politique, made up of a Conseil politique ordinaire and a Conseil politique extraordinaire, each composed of twenty-four members.

Membership of the two Councils was broadly representative of the structure of urban society. Each council was divided into four échelles:

- (1) 4 gentilshommes and 4 avocats, nominated by the maire, lieutenant de maire and first consul.
- (2) 2 négociants, 2 bourgeois, 2 médecins and 2 procureurs.
- (3) 2 maître-artisans and 2 marchands en détail.
- (4) 2 ménagers and 2 jardiniers.

Finally, the mayor, his lieutenant and the four consuls were empowered to elect to various administrative offices - the avocat de ville, the procureur de la ville, the greffier de l'hôtel de ville, the trésorier, the four prud'hommes, six valets de ville, two inspectors of meat and fish, an inspector of weights and measures, a keeper of the clock and a trumpeter. In 1762, this structure was modified slightly by an agreement between the Municipality and the maire, Rouvière de la Boissière, by which the two offices of mayor and first consul were to be merged.

In May 1766, the municipality of Nîmes was reorganised in accordance with the terms of the Controller-General Laverdy's municipal reforms.<sup>5</sup> All venal municipal offices were suppressed, with compensation, and the functions of the Conseil politique

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were, temporarily, widened. The conseil politique ordinaire was empowered to nominate a further twenty four new members, "notables de mêmes classes et qualités d'habitants," to its numbers. The enlarged council then elected, by simple majority, half of the membership of the conseil politique ordinaire, and, in the same manner, the four Consuls.

The procedure was, in the case of Nîmes, something of a departure from established practice. Normally, election to the Consulat was affected by a system of selection and lot, which resembled that used in the Italian city-republics of the Renaissance. Each consul represented one of the four échelles. The names of candidates for each place were proposed by the out-going consuls and all of the members of the conseil politique ordinaire, who each nominated four candidates for each post. The four candidates for each post with the highest number of votes were then selected to be drawn by lot. Laverdy's reform thus amounted to a numerical extension of the classe politique. The membership of the councils rose briefly from 48<sup>1</sup> to 72, and the abolition of venal offices widened the area open to election and possible manoeuvre. The reform meant that more Catholics had access to influence and the apparatus of power. At the same time, Protestants were prevented from discreet, if illegal, penetration of the municipality by the purchase of a venal office.

Laverdy's reform was, however, a short-lived affair. In November 1771, his successor, Terray, re-established the venality of municipal offices, and the measure was extended to the Languedoc by a Royal declaration in May 1772. The offices of maire,

lieutenant de maire, and the four Consuls again became hereditary. The office of mayor was bought by Jean-andré Alison, the nominal Catholic, vilified in Froment's mémoires.<sup>6</sup> Two years later, by an arrêt du conseil of October 27th 1774, extended to the Languedoc by a Royal Declaration on May 11th 1775, the Estates of the Languedoc bought back all the venal municipal offices of the province for 2,500,000 livres, of which 236,000 were paid for the venal offices of Nîmes.<sup>7</sup> The elective tradition was thus restored, but the arrêt imposed certain modifications which were to remain in effect until the Revolution:

- (1) The offices of maire and first consul were to merge. The maire was to be elected for a period of four years.
- (2) The offices of lieutenant de maire and second consul were to merge. The new second consul was to be elected for a period of three years.
- (3) The third and fourth consuls were to hold office for two years, elections for each post occurring in alternate years.
- (4) Elections were to be carried out by the members of the conseil politique ordinaire, reinforced, if inquorate, by twenty four notables drawn from the four échelles.

The reorganisation of the municipality ostensibly re-opened the local administration to a wider elite. Logically, the abolition of venal office protected the City from the financial hegemony of Calvinism. But the relationship between the Consulat and the two councils (ordinaire and extraordinaire), unintentionally provided for the out-going Consulat to nominate Protestants to one of the councils in the event of a dispute. For, by nominating Protestants to membership of the conseil politique extraordinaire, a consul was effectively assured of a sympathetic block of support for himself, or his nominee, in the event of a divided, or inquorate, conseil politique ordinaire. Ironically, the Protestant community was thus



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able to occupy the position of arbitrator in a dispute between Catholics. This, in effect, is what occurred in 1775, over the nomination of the City's delegation to the annual assembly of the Estates of the Languedoc. The choice was of more than academic interest, for the deputy of the Estates automatically had access to great reserves of financial and political patronage. The election, like elections to the Consulat itself, was performed by the four consuls and the twenty four members of the conseil politique ordinaire. In 1775, according to Phélines, the sub-delegate at Nîmes, "on voulut faire tomber la députation sur le Sr Alison ancien officier municipal titulaire, et comme on craignait que le conseil politique ordinaire ne lui fut pas favorable, les consuls y appelèrent le conseil extraordinaire."<sup>8</sup> Alison was selected, but three conseillers issued public protests about the manner in which the election had been conducted.

On May 31st 1775, a mémoire, signed, according to its sponsor by "tout ce qu'il y a de gentils hommes et notables dans la ville," was dispatched to Versailles. It requested,

"qu'il plaise à sa Majesté ordonner que les anciens reglemens particuliers à la ville de Nîmes au sujet des elections consulaires et de la nomination des conseillers politiques seront exécutés selon leur forme et teneur comme ils l'étaient avant l'edit du mois de mai 1766, sauf les titres et privileges accordés aux premiers officiers municipaux."<sup>9</sup>

The petition was ignored, and when the municipal elections were held in August 1775, it seemed that the fears of intrigue voiced by certain members of the political community were groundless. "Il a été procédé le 8 et 9e de ce mois au renouvellement et remplacement de la moitié des conseillers politiques des conseils ordinaires et extraordinaires, reported the new mayor Jean-Scipion Lagarde.

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"Le bien commun nous a tous réunis, le choix des personnes qui ont été nommées a été applaudi par tous nos concitoyens d'une manière dont nous n'avons peut-être pas eu d'exemple."<sup>10</sup>

On May 6th in the following year, however, the fears were renewed. New elections, to renew the other half of the two councils, were due; they coincided with a cause célèbre in which a number of prominent Protestants were involved. This was the affaire Roux, which revived the tendentious question of the validity of Protestant marriages. In 1773 Jeanne Roubel, who had married Henri Roux au Désert, in 1765, left her husband to live with a Catholic. She announced her abjuration and called upon her husband to marry her in the Catholic church. Roux refused and was brought to trial. His lawyers, maîtres Troussel and Mazer, caused a minor sensation by publicly defending the validity of Protestant marriages. They were summoned to Versailles to explain themselves. Court de Gebelin intervened on their behalf, using his influence with the Comte de Périgord, one of the subscribers to Le monde primitif, to influence the Garde des Sceaux to moderation. Troussel and Mazer were allowed to return to Nîmes unscathed. The affair provoked a spate of pamphlets, including three by the négociant Alexandre Vincens-Devillas, which appeared anonymously in the period between 1774 and 1776.<sup>11</sup>

At least four Protestants were nominated to the conseils politiques ordinaires et extraordinaire on May 6th 1776. They included the négociant Jacques Gaillard - Boissy d'Anglas' friend - Alexandre Vincens-Devillas and Antoine Griolet, the father of the future procureur-général-syndic. Significantly, they were nominated by Jean-André Alison, the mayor and first consul in 1771 and Joseph

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Paradan, seigneur de Cabrières, who was to be arrested as a usurer in 1785.<sup>12</sup> The number of Protestants grew a year later when, in May, the other half of the council was renewed. On May 10th 1777, six gentilshommes from Nîmes dispatched a mémoire to Montpellier, inviting the Intendant Saint-Priest "de ramener le bon ordre dans l'Hôtel de Ville."

On this occasion the petition was successful. On October 18th 1777, the Conseil du Roi, "informé qu'il s'élève des divisions parmi les habitants de la ville de Nîmes," ordered a further reorganisation of the municipality.<sup>13</sup> The size of the two councils was to remain unchanged, and, as before, the four consuls and their immediate predecessors were to nominate half the members of the councils every year. But the arrêt also stipulated that their nominations were to be valid only after approval by the members of the councils. In addition, only members of the conseil politique ordinaire were entitled to propose candidates to be drawn by lot for the Consulat. Members of the conseil politique extraordinaire were entitled to nominate candidates only when the conseil politique ordinaire were inquorate. The latter council's quorum was fixed at sixteen, of whom at least ten had to represent the first two échelles. If a member of the conseil politique extraordinaire was to vote, he had to represent the same échelle as his absent counterpart. The office of procureur du Roi, tenable for six years, was also to become elective.

By letters patent issued at the time, the elective powers of the Consulat were suspended for three years. Instead, the members



of the two councils were nominated directly by the Crown. The new councils contained no Protestants. The arrêt contained two further stipulations. It required all candidates for municipal office to pay the taille, or, in other words, to own land within the taillable of the City. It also excluded the Bishop of Nîmes, or his procureur, from any of the deliberations of the conseil politique.

The Bishop, de Becdelièvre, was incensed. The arrêt, he informed de Joubert, the syndic of the Estates of the Languedoc, had been obtained by a cabale, whose members "avoient toujours affecté d'apporter dans le conseil politique un avis opposé au plus grand nombre, de le soutenir avec hauteur et par des protestations, ce qui on a ensuite présenté à l'autorité dans des mémoires secrets comme la preuve des dissensions."<sup>14</sup> He warned that the stipulation that members of the conseil politique were required to pay the taille in the taillable of Nîmes would exclude many of the most important commercial families from office, "ce dont les solliciteurs de l'arrêt ... ont pu s'occuper depuis quelques années et ce qu'ils ont réalisé par cet arrêt."<sup>15</sup>

Who then had obtained the arrêt of October 1777? The new council, according to de Becdelièvre, "a été composé des principaux auteurs de l'association et des adjoints qu'ils se sont eux-mêmes choisis."<sup>16</sup> This was entirely predictable, since, "ce sont les mêmes personnes qui avoient présenté la requête qui ont indiqué les sujets que le Roy a nommé."<sup>17</sup> The character of this 'association' became a little clearer when the new second and third consuls took office in January 1778. As we have seen, the consuls were entitled

to nominate the avocat, the trésorier and the procureur de la ville and a number of other, minor, officials. On January 22nd, the mayor, Jean-Scipion Lagarde, reported that the new Consulat had brought forward the nomination unexpectedly.

"On a précipité cette nomination et on a jugé à propos de changer l'avocat et le procureur. L'avocat qui a été change jouit de la réputation la plus flatteuse ... Il n'y a donc que l'esprit du parti qui agite malheureusement cette ville qui ait pu déterminer un changement qui a confirmé l'idée qu'on s'était faite du conseil nouvellement établi. Le second consul actuel est l'homme du parti et il s'est nommé et fait constituer procureur..."<sup>18</sup>

The second consul in question was a lawyer, named Antoine Capon, who had been selected by the reorganised council on December 8th 1777.<sup>19</sup> He was a well-established figure, whose legal career stretched back for at least twenty years.<sup>20</sup> His son, another Antoine Capon, who was also a lawyer, was the author of a Mémoire sur les causes qui s'opposent au succès des vers à soye depuis plusieurs années dans le Bas-Languedoc et sur les moyens de les prévenir.<sup>21</sup> The pamphlet argued that the failure had been caused by importation of poor quality eggs from Spain and Piedmont and proposed the creation of local Bureaux des distributions de graines to encourage local producers to produce their own supplies of eggs. The mémoire is symptomatic of a certain ambiguity towards the implications of long distance commercial exchange, which was to emerge as one of the salient characteristics of the milieu to which Capon belonged.

The authors of the petition to Montpellier in 1777, which resulted in the reorganisation of the municipality, were less obscure figures. There were six signatories - all nobles of varying

degrees of authenticity: Rochemore d'Aigremont, Paul-Guillaume de Daunant, seigneur de Serignac, de Cabrières, the Baron de Marguerittes, Novy de Caveirac and the chevalier de Merez. As a group, they formed the core of those familles de robe which dominated the civil and clerical administration of the City during the eighteenth century. It is more than probable that de Becdelièvre was referring to one of them when he mentioned that a member of the cabale was a close friend of the Intendant, Saint-Priest, and that a second was married to the Intendant's niece, Mlle de Viviers. "Il n'est pas étonnant que M. l'Intendant, prévenu par ces deux Messieurs ait donné un avis favorable ..."22

The members of this group filled the Chapter of the Cathedral, dominated the conseil of the Présidial and monopolised the local offices connected with the royal and provincial administrations. It was made up of some dozen families - the Novy, seigneurs of the village of Caveirac on the road to Beaucaire, the Teissier, barons de Marguerittes, the Pascal, barons de la Reyran glade, the Fornier de Meyrard, conseillers in the Présidial and landowners in the Rouergue, the Leyris des Ponches, the two branches of the de Rochemore, d'Aigremont and de Saint-Cosme, the Fernand de Missols, the de Possac de Genas, the de Merez, the de Rouvière de Cabrières, the de Langlade, the Rouvière de la Boissière and the Rouvière de Dions - large dynasties, forming another extended cousinhood, which spread out towards the seigneurial demesnes around the City and, through marriage alliance, reached into the aristocracy of the Languedoc.



It was a circle to which the epithet noble is not entirely appropriate. Many of its members had acquired ennobling offices and large seigneurial domains relatively recently. It was from among this group that many of the more prominent aristocratic royalists of 1790 were drawn. Two case studies illustrate the nature of the group.

The Teissier, of whom Jean-Antoine Teissier was mayor of the municipality dissolved for its complicity in the events leading up to the Bagarre in 1790, petitioned the crown for their lettres de noblesse in 1788. They had purchased the domain of Marguerittes in 1738, for 98,000 Lt.<sup>23</sup> Antoine Teissier, the seigneur of the community of Marguerittes, who died in 1751, had acquired the office of secrétaire du roy en la généralité de Montpellier from a fortune accumulated in commerce. He had been a Protestant. In 1722, when his eldest daughter, Angélique, married Raymond Novy, seigneur de Caveirac, who was later to inherit the office of lieutenant-principal en la sénéchaussée de Nîmes, he was described as a marchand-bourgeois. He endowed his daughter with a substantial 60,000 livres, of which 18,000 livres was owed to him by the Chapter of the Cathedral, and 10,000 livres by the corps des marchands de sois.<sup>24</sup> A second daughter, Marie-Rose, was married to Francois Cambon, a négociant from Montpellier, who was established at Palermo in Sicily.<sup>25</sup> His only son, Christopher-Jean-Joseph-Marie-Auguste Teissier, inherited a fortune which approached a quarter of a million livres in 1751.<sup>26</sup> The Teissier were not authentic nobles. In 1756, when Jean-Antoine Teissier, Antoine Teissier's grand-son, married Louise-Gabrielle de Génas, the grand-daughter of

the Marquis de Durfort and the daughter of Louis-Pierre de G nas, Baron de Vauvert, the contract stipulated that

"Le Sr. de Marguerittes est libre de prendre nom et armes de la maison de G nas dans tous ses titres et actes, et les enfants qui en seront procr es seront pareillement tenus de porter lesdits noms et armes pour les conserver et les transmettre   la posterit ." <sup>27</sup>

These provisions would appear to have lapsed because of his wife's early death. They do, however, seem to have allowed Jean-Antoine Teissier to adopt the title of Baron de Marguerittes, a title confirmed in 1788. He was a rentier, an urban aristocrat, whose public life was carried out within the municipal administration, the Academy and the Theatre rather than on his demesnes.

At the same time, however, the family did not entirely abandon the world of commerce. In 1780 a Compagnie des Moulins   feu, designed to replace the water-mills of the Fountain, was formed at Nimes. It was intended to mill 90 salm es of corn a day using steam power and had an initial capital of 40,000 livres divided into twenty shares of 2,000 Lt. each. Jean-Antoine Teissier was one of eighteen shareholders in the venture and one of the five shareholders elected to its directorate, along with the n gociants Jean Andr  and Laurens Bresson. The participants in the venture were drawn from both of the factions competing for control of the municipality. They included the vicar-general of the diocese of Nimes and the provost of the Cathedral, two officers in the royal engineers, seven nobles or councillors at the Pr sidental and five substantial merchants. <sup>28</sup> It would be inaccurate to characterise the cabale denounced by de Becdeli vre as one drawn from a "feudal" aristocracy. The Teissier do not conform to this model. <sup>29</sup> The origins

of many of those nobles or nobliaux associated with royalism in 1790 owed more to the capitalism of the period of manufacture, than to longstanding association with the landed nobility.

The Teissier's relatives - the Novy - are another case in point. The Novy were probably more widely known than the Tessier mainly because of the works of the abbé Novy de Caveirac (1711-1782), one of the more outspoken supporters of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.<sup>30</sup> In 1756, he published a tract entitled La Vérité vengée, ou Réponse à la Dissertation sur la Tolérance des Protestants in reply to Antoine Court's Patriot francais et impartial, published in 1751 and reprinted in 1753. It was followed in 1758 by an Apologie de Louis XIV et de son conseil sur la Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes avec une dissertation sur la Saint-Barthélemy. These pamphlets led to a certain notoriety, and in 1774, Court de Gebelin informed a correspondent that Novy de Caveirac had arrived in Paris. He hoped to arrange a meeting, but the occasion did not arise. "J'en suis fâché, parce que j'aurois été amené de le voir souvent et je l'aurois sûrement ramené par la manière dont m'en parlent les personnes chez qui je l'aurois vu et qui sont franchement catholiques, mais sans amertume et sans bigotterie."<sup>31</sup> These hopes were perhaps a little optimistic. Four years later, during the affaire Roux, Rabaut Saint-Etienne reported that a rumour that he and his father were about to abjure was circulating in Nîmes. "C'était pour échauffer les esprits et faire les disputes entre la populace des deux religions, genre de tracasserie pour lequel l'abbé de Caveirac a des talens supérieurs ..." <sup>32</sup>

"Il était né à Nîmes, dans une de ces familles que



distinguaient les doubles honneurs du Présidial et du Chapitre, et qui lia les deux corps par un esprit uniforme," commented a hostile observer in 1815.<sup>33</sup> In fact, like the Teissier, the Novy had purchased a series of venal offices towards the turn of the seventeenth century, from the proceeds of a fortune accumulated in commerce. Like the Teissier too, they were members of a commercial network oriented principally upon the Italian market, and were, for a time, in partnership with a Genoese commercial house, frères Cambiazzo, during the 1660s.<sup>34</sup> In 1663, the brothers Pierre and Léon Novy bought the office of receveur des tailles of the diocese of Nîmes, which Léon Novy was to sell for 112,000 livres in 1689. Their eldest sons - Jacques and Raymond Novy - invested 30,900 and 34,000 livres in the offices of garde-sceaux and conseiller of the Présidial in the same period.<sup>35</sup> Léon Novy had sold the office of receveur des tailles of the diocese of Nîmes in 1689 to the future financier Pierre Auvellier. In 1709, when Auvellier went bankrupt in the wake of the collapse of the Bosc-Sartre financial consortium, with which he was closely associated, the 112,000 livres which he owed Novy were still unpaid.<sup>36</sup> As a result Raymond Novy was able to acquire the demesne of Caveirac formerly belonging to the Sartre and the office of lieutenant-principal, acquired in 1698, to his son Léon.

Léon Novy, lieutenant-principal of the Présidial of Nîmes and sub-délégué of the Intendant between 1715 and 1732, was the abbé Jules-François de Caveirac's father. Three of his brothers and cousins were canons and archdeacons in the Chapter of the Cathedral

during the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>37</sup> Throughout the century, membership of the Chapter was limited to a very small number of families. It was, besides the massive Chapter of the Cathedral of Chartres with its 76 canons and 17 dignatories, a small and provincial body.<sup>38</sup> It was composed of thirteen canons and six dignatories - a Frévôt, a Grand-Archidiacre, two archdeacons, a précenteur, and a trésorier. A total of 36 individuals held these latter six offices between 1700 and 1790.<sup>39</sup> They were members of twenty families, and included most of the dozen or so families mentioned previously: Francois de Merez, trésorier from 1718 to 1750, and his nephew Guillaume-Ignace, trésorier from 1752 to 1754, second archidiacre until 1761 and prévôt from 1765 to 1776; Pierre and Léon-Ignace Novy, canons, and Mathieu and Louis-Antoine Novy, respectively grand-archidiacre from 1720 to 1726 and second archidiacre from 1785 until the Revolution; Pierre Joseph de Rochemore de Saint-Cosme, canon in 1761, second archidiacre in 1765 and grand-archidiacre in 1785; Claude de Rouviere de Cabrieres, grand-archidiacre from 1776 to 1785; Antoine-Hercule de Leyris des Ponches, canon in 1745, troisième archidiacre from 1754 until the Revolution; Jean Ferrand, précenteur from 1746 to 1773 and his nephew Jean-Thomas-Basile Ferrand, précenteur from 1773 to 1790.<sup>40</sup>

The Présidial, because of its judicial importance, was a rather more open body. Until 1780, its jurisdiction covered the Vivarais and the Gévaudan, as well as the civil dioceses of Nîmes, Uzès and Alès.<sup>41</sup> "C'était le plus étendu du Royaume et il jouissait de beaucoup de considération," recorded its last lieutenant-particulier, Louis-Etienne Ricard, who bought the office from Raymond Novy de

Caveirac in 1768.

"Les familles les plus distinguées du pays, les Calvisson, les Calvière de Vézénobre, les Rochemore et beaucoup d'autres tiraient de là leur premier illustration. Plus récemment, et de nos jours, les la Baume, les Chas, les la Calmette, avaient du leur existence à ce tribunal."<sup>42</sup>

The Présidial was composed of thirteen conseillers, a lieutenant-du sénéchal d'épee, a lieutenant-particulier, a lieutenant-principal, and a lieutenant-criminel, who was also the juge-mage and first président. All these offices were venal, and the latter three in particular were costly and prestigious titles, worth as much as 60,000 livres at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>43</sup> This fact allowed a certain number of nominal Catholics - Jean-Marie-Antoine Griolet was one - to become conseillers at the Présidial with relative impunity throughout the century, although Catholics of a more authentic pedigree remained in the majority.

Essentially, and despite the elaborate additions of suffixes based upon the names of their demesnes, the members of the families which dominated the Chapter and the Présidial formed a thoroughly urban elite. Its social calendar was regulated by the cycle of public occasions held in the City between September and July; its language was moulded by the intellectual fashions of Paris and Versailles on the one hand, and by the delicate, and more personal questions of influence and patronage to which it had access, on the other. Its relationship to the ideal of an aristocratic order as expressed by Loyseau, and revived more recently by Roland Mousnier, was distorted by the mediation of dozens of ties of credit and appropriation, with their particular imperatives and exigencies. In 1785, the président of the Présidial, Reynaud de Géras, informed



his son that the Cour des Aides of Montpellier had ordered a revision of the compoix of Nîmes. "M. Griolet est nommé commissaire et à notre quartier en département. Il m'en a déjà parlé. Je luy ai dit franchement que vous et moy avions vingt mille écus sur la place ... J'ai cru prendre le parti de la franchise parce qu'étant connu que j'avois de l'argent sur la place, une compensation mentale auroit pu être mal interprétée."<sup>44</sup> These activities, and the relationships which they implied, were to affect the destinies of more than one of the families which made up this elite.

The reorganised municipality of Nîmes was dominated by its representatives and clients. The new members of councils for the première échelle were the baron de la Baume, the comte du Roure, de Vallongue, de Cabrières, de Merez, de Biarge, de Possac de Genas and the baron de Marguerittes. Only one of the wealthy Protestant commercial dynasties - represented by the négociant Francois Lapierre-Plauchut, a distant relative of the Vincens - was nominated to represent the deuxième échelle. "On a ... affecté de ne pas prendre des sujets parmi les plus gros commercants," reported de Beedelievre. "Il est vrai qu'on a nommé un, mais on doit presumer qu'il ne l'accepteroit pas."<sup>45</sup>

The Bishop of Nîmes and the city's Protestant elite were thus drawn together in opposition to the arrêt of October 1777. During the following year, its terms were observed in every way. On December 5th, 1778, a new first consul and maire, the chevalier Francois de Merez, one of the signatories of the petition of May 1777, was elected to take office for a period of four years.<sup>46</sup> This period of calm was, however, only temporary. New elections to

replace half the members of the two councils were due in 1780.

The terms of the arrêt specified that they were to be held on the first of January and that the new conseillers were to take office immediately. But, for obscure reasons, they were postponed, and the minutes of the nominations were entered in the register of deliberations only on March 9th 1780.<sup>47</sup> Only fourteen members of the conseil politique ordinaire took part in the assembly, and only two gentilshommes du Roure and de Fosnac-Génas - were present.

Technically, therefore, the assembly was inquorate on two grounds.

Its nominations were surprising. Three of the four new representatives of the deuxieme échelle on the conseil politique extraordinaire were Protestants. They were Andre Maignre, Alexandre Vincens-Valz and François Lapierre-Plauchut.<sup>48</sup> In addition, one of the two members of the conseil politique ordinaire was the former hereditary mayor Jean-André d'Alison. There were at least two other Protestants on the new conseil politique extraordinaire: the former négociant Antoine de Baguet, now representing the premiere échelle and a lawyer Jean-Jacques Lezan.<sup>49</sup>

The nominations had obviously been very carefully prepared and prepared with the full consent of the mayor, François de Merez, who presided over the assembly. He had, in other words, entirely reversed his position. Phelines, the sub-délégué, again had an explanation:

"La ville possède un devois appelé Cros Leyron qu'afferme avec les autres biens patrimoniaux. Le Sr de Merez premier consul maire, qui possède un domaine presque limitrophe, prenait ordinairement la sousferme des herbages à bas prix. Le conseil nommé par le Roy, convaincu qu'en donnant ce devois à locaterie perpetuelle on en retirait environ 1,000 livres de rente annuelle, prit pour cela une délibération autorisée par M. l'Intendant,

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et on était en diligence pour en faire l'adjudication, lorsque le Sr. de Merez tacha dessous main à y mettre des obstacles ..."<sup>50</sup>

De Merez had therefore prepared his coup "pour mieux éluder cette adjudication; et au renouvellement du conseil ... il parvint par ses menées à faire nommer conseillers politiques la plupart de ceux qui avoient introduits les abus dont on s'était plaint et que le Roy avoit jugé à propos de changer en 1777."<sup>51</sup>

This manoeuvre raised the further possibility of nominating one of his clients to the Consulat in the next elections. The arrêt of 1777 had reaffirmed the provisions of the arrêt of 1774 establishing differing periods in office for each of the four consuls. In 1780 the offices of second and third consul, tenable for three and two years respectively, were due to fall vacant. De Merez again prepared the elections with great care. On December 2nd 1780, the other three consuls arrived to find that he had convoked both conseil politique ordinaire and the conseil politique extraordinaire to take part in the election. The outgoing second consul, Capon, immediately objected and was supported by the procureur du Roi and the outgoing third consul. He protested that the arrêt of 1777 had stipulated that only the conseil politique ordinaire was entitled to elect to the consulat. De Merez blandly proposed that the matter be put to a vote, and, unsurprisingly, the assembled body agreed that both councils should take part in the elections. Thus, instead of the normal thirty voters (the 24 conseillers ordinaires, the consuls, the procureur du Roi and his lieutenant) a total of 43 individuals proceeded to elect the two new consuls.



The new second consul was a procureur named Jean Perrin. He too was a mature, well-established figure, with over twenty years of experience in the courts behind him in 1780. In 1785, he had married Jeanne Plantier, the daughter of Jacques-Philippe Plantier ancien procureur et co-proprétaire des greffes de la cour Présidial. His bride's dowry was a relatively modest 4,000 livres.<sup>52</sup> By 1787, however, he was able to sell two plots of land to the négociant Damian Verdier de la Coste for 23,000 Lt. One of the plots had formerly belonged to Antoine Griolet.<sup>53</sup>

Perrin had been nominated to the municipal administration of Nîmes by the letters of patent of October 1777. He had, he was later to claim, accepted the position with reluctance. In January 1778 he became a member of the municipal bureau de police, the body which was empowered to judge, arbitrate and conciliate over a wide area of petty infractions and local civil disputes. This was to lead to a typically arcane dispute with the baron de Marguerittes.

In the autumn of 1778, as the new social season began, an acrimonious dispute threatened to close the municipal theatre. "Nous n'aurons point de comédie cet hiver," Gaillard informed Boissy d'Anglas in October.

"Nous serons la victime d'une animosité particulière. Un des membres de l'administration municipale est en guerre ouverte avec la propriétaire de la salle. Un des consuls est la créature et l'ami dévoué de l'administrateur ... Ils ont élevé des doutes sur la solidité de la salle. On l'a fait examiner et de la on a conclu judicieusement qu'il fallait interdire le spectacle puis qu'il était possible que la salle s'écroulât."<sup>54</sup>

The member of the municipality in question was the baron de Marguerittes, and his 'creature' the second consul, Antoine Capon. According to

Perrin, the incident had occurred because "M. de Marguerittes fils conçut l'idée ridicule de changer le moitié de l'hôtel de ville en une salle de spectacles. Je m'y opposai et il échoua."<sup>55</sup> The vendetta was carried over into the unorthodox renewal of the two councils in 1780. Perrin, in response to a request from the maire, de Merez, nominated Jean-André Alison to the conseil politique, and Alison was duly elected.

"Ce fut pour moy un crime irrémissible. La perte fut jurée. Le jour de l'élection (to the Consulat) arrive. MM de Marguerittes, du Roure et autres nobles furent de porte en porte solliciter mon exclusion du consulat, mais, sans faire le moindre démarche, j'eus en ma faveur la pluralité des suffrages."<sup>56</sup>

This last sentence was more than a little ingenious. There is no doubt that, by the terms of the arrêt of 1777, the two elections held in 1780 were unconstitutional and that Perrin and the fabricant de bas Antoine Donadilhe, the new third consul, had been elected illegally. Antoine Capon, de Marguerittes, du Roure, de Cabrières and the procureur du Roy, Martin, lost no time in protesting to Montpellier. There, as we have seen, they had an ally in the Intendant, Saint-Priest, to whom they dispatched copies of the minutes of the disputed election. The mayor, de Merez, replied by claiming that only members of the conseil politique ordinaire had taken part in the proceedings.

The dispute thus hinged upon the veracity of the minutes of the disputed election. De Marguerittes and his allies had anticipated this question by an adroit move on December 19th 1780, when Antoine Capon proposed that the incumbent greffier consulaire

Froment, should be permitted to remain in office for a further twelve years. At the same time, his son, François Froment, was appointed greffier adjoint, with rights to succeed his father after the latter's death. Perrin and his allies already suspected that Froment had been instrumental in allowing their opponents the means of obtaining the arrêt of October 1777. "Ils ont imaginé que le Sr. Froment avoit communiqué aux citoyens qui réclamèrent les titres de la ville propres à faire accueillir leurs plaintes favorablement," wrote Phélines in 1782.<sup>57</sup> They had therefore intended to install Perrin's brother-in-law, a procureur named Pierre Blachier, who had already been convicted of malpractice in the Vivarais.<sup>58</sup> The re-election of Pierre Froment was therefore a controversial decision. Perrin and Donadilhe immediately protested and withdrew from the assembly. A little later, "au moment que le greffier alloit faire lecture des délibérations, M. Viguié avocat s'est retiré sans rien dire. M. Alison s'est de même retiré ainsi que le Sr. Dardailhon, et après la lecture desdites délibérations, M. Lagarde, premier ex-consul a déclaré qu'il se retirait, ce qu'il a fait."<sup>59</sup>

The situation was anomalous. De Merez, the new second and third consuls, and many of the Protestant conseillers politiques, were faced by a greffier who was known to be a member of the opposing camp. As we have seen, unlike the Baron de Marguerittes, with his solid network of relatives and clients within the local and provincial administration, and more even than a relatively prosperous avocat like Antoine Capon, the incumbent greffier, Pierre Froment, was peculiarly vulnerable to the power of the cabale which set out to remove him from office in the autumn of 1782.



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The Froment were part of a large clan, which reached, on the one hand, towards the world of artisanal manufacture and the workshops of the faubourg des Precheurs in the North of the City, and touched the fringes of the world of bulk trade and international commerce on the other. Pierre was one of six brothers, all of whom arrived at a position of what the Prefects of the First Empire would have entitled an 'honest mediocrity'. By 1788 Joseph Froment, the youngest of the six brothers, had adopted the title négociant. He had already held the post of syndic of the corps des marchands-facturiers during the 1760s.<sup>60</sup> He endowed one of his four daughters - Antoinette-Rosalie - with the sum of 8,000 livres, when she was betrothed to Augustin Filhol, a merchant from Le Puy who had settled in Nîmes in 1771.<sup>61</sup> A second daughter, Marie-Adelaide-Sophie, married another Catholic négociant, a Sr. Vincent-Balthazar Maignon, from Saint-Alban-sous-Sampzon in the Vivarais, while his eldest daughter, Antoinette, was married to a Sr. Charles Borie. The expanding circle of relations testify to his growing fortune. When he drew up his will in 1788, he left 48,000 livres (some of which had already been paid as dowries) to his six children, and the remainder to his wife. His fortune thus amounted to some 96,000 livres.<sup>62</sup> It had not been accumulated without incident. In 1769 he issued a fraudulent declaration of bankruptcy. His chief creditor, the Genevan house of d'Ivernois and Dulac, claimed the 9,890 livres which was owed to it and obtained a warrant for his arrest and the seizure of his stock.<sup>63</sup>

If Joseph Froment was able to overcome these difficulties without suffering financially, his older brother was less fortunate.

Pierre, the greffier, belonged to a milieu strikingly similar to that of another praticien, Pierre Blanc, and their respective carrers are a commentary in themselves upon the different channels open for vertical social mobility in eighteenth century Nîmes. Pierre Blanc was a Catholic and a native of Joyeuse in the Vivarais. In 1781 when he married Anne Pascal, daughter of a procureur at the Presidial, his fortune consisted of a mere 400 Lt.<sup>64</sup> The marriage however lay behind his emergence as procureur-général-syndic of the Gard in 1792. His wife was very well connected. One of her cousins was married to a trésorier in the généralité of Orléans, Jean-Baptiste-Francois Delatour; another, Scipion Pascal, was a commis of the firm of Boyer-Devillas, Vincens & Cie, and a partner in its successor, Vincens-Devillas, Pascal & Cie, the largest commercial and banking house in Nîmes during the Directory and First Empire, with a capital of 900,000 F and an estimated annual turnover of 10,000,000 F in 1810.<sup>65</sup> His brother-in-law, Paul Clary, managed the firm of Clary & Cie at Bordeaux, a firm capitalised by the Protestant négociant Frederic-Samuel d'Oleire. Where Blanc-Pascal (as he entitled himself) was able to emerge from the anonymity of the legal underworld, Froment was not. His aspirations however, were reflected in his choice of marriage alliances for his daughters. Through them, several of the links between royalists in Nîmes and those in Ardèche in 1790 were brought into being.

His eldest daughter, Elisabeth, was betrothed to Paul Gaussard, an avocat, whose father had owned the office of maire of Clarensac.<sup>66</sup> The youngest of his three daughters, Marie-Adelaide, was married to another homme de loi, André Folacher,

"acquereur de l'office de procureur au sénéchal de Nîmes de Me Reymondon," in 1782.<sup>67</sup> She too was endowed with the sum of 6,000 livres. Folacher was a native of the parish of Les Assions in the Vivarais. In 1778, his cousin, Augustin Folacher, notaire and avocat in the adjoining parish of Naves, was married to Margueritte Veau de la Nouvelle de Fossignargues "fille de feu Me Jean Veau de la Nouvelle, seigneur de la Nouvelle et du mandement de Castillon, cosseigneur des paroisses de Robiac et Courry."<sup>68</sup> Her uncle, Pierre Veau de la Nouvelle, was, in turn, married to Geneviève Dussargues de Planzolles of Joyeuse.<sup>69</sup>

This chain of alliances led directly to the group of minor nobliaux who came to form the core of royalism in the Bas-Vivarais in the 1790s. Significantly, André Folacher acted as the procureur of the bankrupt Louis-Antoine Delbosc in the case which came before the Présidial of Nîmes in the early 1780s.<sup>70</sup> There were, undoubtedly, other connections. In 1776, Pierre-Joseph Froment, the son of the négociant Joseph Froment, married Jeanne Folge, "fille de Me Cyprien Folge, procureur au Présidial de Nîmes." One of the witnesses to the signing of the contract was Joseph-François d'Alméras de Brès, of Les Vans ...<sup>71</sup>

These alliances were complimented by a network of connections in the Church. Jacques Froment (1715-1763), Pierre's elder brother, was the curé of the parishes of Saint-Martin de la Rouvière and Montignargues in the diocese of Uzès. In 1758, he attempted to obtain the titles of dean, canon and prebend of the wealthy collegial church of Saint-Gilles, immediately to the South of Nîmes. The request was rejected by the Vicar-General of the



diocese, de Rochemore d'Aigremont.<sup>72</sup> His nephew, Pierre Froment's eldest son, Jacques, entered the chapter of the Cathedral as a canon, where he remained until the Revolution.<sup>73</sup> At least two of the families allied to the Froment - the Borie and the Castan - were also represented in the Church.

Through his connection with Cassan, Pierre Froment also enjoyed the office of receveur des rentes of the Chapter of the Cathedral.<sup>74</sup> Like the post of greffier-consulaire, the office belonged to that underworld of sinecures and minor administrative posts which formed something of a bridge between the world of the practiciens, huissiers and greffiers on the one hand, and that of the avocats and procureurs on the other. The office of greffier-consulaire had, for a long period, alternated between venality and election. In 1772, after the re-establishment of venal offices, it was acquired by the former procureur Joseph Paradan de Cabrières. His predecessor had been that other procureur, Antoine Pontier, who was also the receveur des rentes of the Bishop of Nîmes. In 1772, through the patronage of de Becdelièvre, Pontier was appointed adjoint to the syndic of the diocese of Nîmes, and a few years later became syndic of the diocese itself, with the responsibility for the financial administration of the whole area and automatic entry to the Estates of the Languedoc.<sup>75</sup> For a man like Froment, who had passed his fiftieth year, the offices offered the possibility of wealth and power, assets whose value increased as the position of some of his relatives deteriorated. The Domergue, who in 1747 could claim to be a famille de négoce, were represented by a faiseur de bas, a faiseur de burattes and a maçon a generation later.<sup>76</sup>

The Ourson, to whom he was related by the marriage of his son, Louis, to Antoinette Ourson, had been prosperous dealers in spun silk in the mid-eighteenth century. In 1751, they were said to have seventeen tours à filer la soie.<sup>77</sup> Seventeen years later, the cousins Esprit and Joseph Ourson, marchands de soye, went bankrupt in the wake of the crisis which brought down the Fornier, the Devillas and the Valz. Their assets of 116,208 livres were almost entirely wiped out in the bad debts, and they owed a sum of 133,782 livres.<sup>78</sup> The family appears to have never recovered.

The incidence of bankruptcy, or the unsuccessful practice of "moral idiom", among the more prominent members of this circle is too frequent to be overlooked. It was a theme taken up in the anonymous pamphlet Charles, frère à Pierre Romain published in Lilles in 1789, and possibly written by one of the Froment clan:

"Un Protestant qui fait une banqueroute frauduleuse est sur de trouver parmi ses sectaires des défenseurs zelés ... Un Catholique ... est assuré malgré sa bonne foi d'une entière ruine et d'un discrédit total."<sup>79</sup>

If families like the Teissier and the Hovy had arrived at a position of stability within the nobility, there were many others, like the Froment, whose progress was interrupted, or halted, by financial disaster. A list of prominent royalists who had experienced this situation included the nobliar Delbosc, the abbe Bastide de la Molette, the self-styled Baron de Teyrangues, Jacques-Francois Descombiès and many of those most prominent in the faction opposed to the Alison-Perrin group in the municipality.<sup>80</sup>

One of the leading signatories of the two memoranda which led to the arrêt of October 1777, Henri-Charles-Maxime de Pascal, baron de la Reyrenglade, belonged to a family typical of those in the process

of becoming authentic nobles who became royalist in 1790. Jean Louis de Pascal, seigneur de la Reyrenglade, had seen his domains transformed into a barronie by royal letters patent in 1729.<sup>81</sup> His son - Jean-Charles - was a founder member of the Academy of Nimes in 1752 and a mathematician of some repute. Henri-Charles-Maxime - who was also an Acadamécien - had been involved in a number of usurious transactions in the early 1760s and had been constrained to request a reduction in the capitation levied upon his property. His request was supported by the Bishop of Nimes. "Vous avez pu entendre parler des emprunts que quatre jeunes gens de Nimes avoient fait il y a quelques années à Montpellier," he informed Joubert, syndic of the provincial estates.

"Ce n'était pas de l'argent mais des emplettes d'étoffes de différentes espèces rachaptées le plus souvent indirectement par les marchands même qui les avoient vendée. Bref, ce sont de ces marchés qui peuvent conduire les uns à la potence, et les autres à l'hôpital. M de la Reyrenglade étoit du nombre de ces derniers."<sup>82</sup>

De la Reyrenglade had been forced deeply into debt to avoid imprisonment. In his will, made in 1789, Jean-Charles de Pascal instructed his son to sell whatever of his property was necessary to pay off his debts and a bequest of 100,000 L to his heir.<sup>83</sup> Poverty among this circle was clearly relative, and was more a matter of periodic crises of liquidity than complete collapse. The situation of another member of the group was similar. In 1789 Jean Claude de Rochemore, baron d'Aigremont ceded all his property to his son and instructed him to pay off debts amounting to over 80,000 L. The value of the family's estates was some 300,000 L, made up of the



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baronnie of Aigremont, worth 100,000 L, the seigneurie of Monvert worth 80,000 L and the domain at Fourques worth 40,000 L together with a house and furniture at Nîmes worth 86,000 L. Clearly, however, meeting debts on such a scale implied a substantial dismemberment of the estate.<sup>84</sup> The Roverié, seigneurs of Cabrières and Poulix, were only able to escape a similar fate by marrying into the de Cénas, after a protracted dispute within the family over a proposal to sell off a domain at Ledenon to pay off the family's debts.<sup>85</sup> Several families were heavily indebted to Jewish merchants - like the Sr. Mardochée de Montel named as one of the barateurs - of Nîmes, Carpentras or Avignon. Louis François, baron de Calvière, borrowed nearly 66,000 L from such sources between 1775 and 1780.<sup>86</sup> The de Rochemore, the marquis de Morangiés, the d'Agoult, the Labondès de la Sauzette and the Bérard de Montalet were others who had recourse to this source of credit in the 1780s.<sup>87</sup> Despite his substantial borrowings, Louis François de Calvière sold two domains - the terre of St. André de Camaragnan to Jacques Pleyre for 40,000 L and the seigneurie of Valcombe to François Surville.<sup>88</sup> Liquidity rather than the loss of real property was the problem, just as it was at a much lower level in the region which was affected by the révolte des masques. Another future royalist, Martin de Sauveplane, petitioned for a stay of a year to pay off his debts in 1777, although his property was worth some 60,000 L and his debts amounted to between 14 and 15,000 L.<sup>89</sup> Even as prosperous a lawyer as Jean-Maurice Reynaud, the purchaser of the office of lieutenant-général of the Présidial, worth 60,000 L, was obliged to resort to extraordinary measures to consolidate the family's position on the threshold of

the local aristocracy. In 1760 he married his son to the daughter of the marquis de Durfort, promising the couple 200,000 L and taking responsibility for his relatives debts of 158,000 L. "J'ay été obligé d'emprunter," he informed the syndic of the Estates of the Languedoc.

"L'année dernière je fus remboursé d'un capital de douze mille livres, mais ayant renvoyé à un autre temps le remboursement d'un second capital que je demanday, je me repliais du côté de M le Prévôt des marchands de Lyon ... J'ay du crédit il est vray mais je vous avoueray franchement que n'ayant d'autre ressource pour payer que le remboursement des capitaux, je suis en peine pour remplir mes engagements."

Access to money or to money on credit, rather than differences in aspiration or social origin, was the fundamental distinction between those competing for the municipality of Nîmes in the decades before 1789.

Notes - Chapter 23

1. See above pp. 344-372.
2. On the early history of venal office, see R. Mousnier, La Vénalité des Offices sous Henri IV et Louis XIII. Paris, 1946.
3. A.N. AB XIX. I438.
4. The office of first consul was bought by Pierre-Isaac Deydier, a doctor.
5. Cf. M. Bordes, La Réforme municipale du Contrôleur-général Laverdy et son application. Toulouse, 1968, and, on its aftermath, "Les offices municipaux de la Création de 1771 en Languedoc." Annales de la Faculté des Lettres ... de Nice: Colloque sur Villes de l'Europe moderne et contemporaine. Nice, 1969, pp.167-176,
6. See above pp.52 et seq.
7. M. Bordes, art.cit.P.172.
8. A.D. Hérault. C896.
9. A.N. H 1000.
10. Id.
11. See P. Schmidt, Court de Gebelin à Paris 1763-1784. Paris, 1908, pp.132-137.
12. A.D. Hérault. C 896. Because of the difficulty of establishing religious affiliation, the figure is a minimum. On the individuals mentioned, see above pp.
13. A.C. Nîmes. LL 43 f<sup>o</sup> 1445 et. seq.
14. A.D. Gard. C 1121.
15. Id.
16. Id.
17. A.D. Gard.C183.
18. A.D. Gard.C1121.
19. A.C. Nîmes. LL 43 ff 1458, 1462.
20. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 192 f<sup>o</sup>303 v<sup>o</sup>.



21. A.N. F<sup>10</sup> 218. The Capon were relatives of the Moustardier, also from Cabrières, who were royalists in 1790. A.D. Gard 2E<sup>39</sup>195 f<sup>o</sup>165.
22. A.D. Gard. C183, to de Joubert 24-11-1783.
23. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup>896 f<sup>o</sup>334v<sup>o</sup>; A.D. Hérault. C1826.
24. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>37</sup> 264. The firm of Jean and Antoine Teissier & Cie of Nîmes, successor to Teissier & Cambon, was probably one of the largest in the city between 1709 and 1722. (see above, p. 123 ).
25. See above, p. 123.
26. A.D. Gard. B221 (provisional cote).
27. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>40</sup> 38 f<sup>o</sup>386v<sup>o</sup> 9-2--1756.
28. Id. 2E<sup>36</sup>1086 28-1-1780.
29. A.N. F<sup>7</sup>4775<sup>26</sup> d. Teissier-Marguerittes.
30. A genealogy can be found in A. Puech, Nîmes au XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle Nîmes, 1888. pp.409-415.
31. Cited in C. Dardier "Notice sur Court de Gebelin." Mém.Ac. Nîmes., 7<sup>e</sup> série., t.13.1890.p.xxi n.8.
32. to Chiron, 21-9-1778; C. Dardier. Paul Rabaut: ses lettres à divers. Paris. 1892 t.2. p.164 n.4.
33. B.S.P. Mss 350 fo 242.
34. A. Puech., op.cit. p.411.
35. In 1663 and 1661. Id. pp.330-332.
36. A.D. Gard 2E Registers of Pontier, f<sup>o</sup>439, (1712).
37. A. Puech, op.cit.,pp.409-415. A.N. ABXIX 1418.
38. See M. Vovelle, "Un des plus grands chapitres de la France..." in Actes du 85e Congrès national des Sociétés Savantes, Paris, 1961. pp.235-277.
39. A.N. AB XIX 1331.
40. Id.
41. See above p. 252 et seq.
42. E. De Balincourt, "Les anciennes juridictions de Nîmes vingt ans avant la Révolution." Mém. Ac. Nîmes, 7<sup>e</sup> Série, T.31, 1908., p.299.

43. The value of the office of councillor at the Présidial fell from over 20,000 Lt. at the beginning of the century to under 5,000 Lt at the end. The offices of lieutenant-particulier and lieutenant-criminel were worth 16,250 Lt and 38,000 in 1772. (A.D. Gard, 2E<sup>39</sup> 202 f<sup>o</sup>70, B.M. Nîmes. Mss 663; A.D. Gard 2E<sup>43</sup> 14 f<sup>o</sup> 302v<sup>o</sup>; 2E<sup>36</sup> 897 f<sup>o</sup> 63v<sup>o</sup>; 2E<sup>39</sup> 209 f<sup>o</sup> 209; 2E<sup>39</sup> 190 f<sup>o</sup>152). The price paid by J-M-A. Griolet for his office in 1788 was thus exceptionally high (see above p. ). The office of lieutenant-general was sold for 66,000 Lt in 1758 (A.D. Gard 2E<sup>39</sup> 192 f<sup>o</sup> 252v<sup>o</sup>).
44. A.N. ABXIX 3062, 19-4-1785. For further examples of the place of credit in one form or another within the economy of the regional aristocracy, see above pp. 415 etc and below pp. 478-482.
45. A.D. Gard. C 183.
46. On de Merez, see above p.66 et seq.
47. A.C. Nîmes. LL 44 f<sup>o</sup> 85v<sup>o</sup>, et seq.
48. On these families, see above pp. 91-92.
49. On these families, see above pp. 127, 208 et seq.
50. A.D. Hérault. C. 896.
51. Id.
52. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 220 f<sup>o</sup>345.
53. Id. 2E<sup>36</sup> 851 f<sup>o</sup>254.
54. A.D. Ardèche. J 236.
55. A.D. Hérault. C 896, to St-Priest 24-1-1782.
56. Id.
57. Id., to St.-Priest, 23-3-1782.
58. A.D. Hérault. C 1301-1303.
59. A.C. Nîmes. LL 44 f<sup>o</sup> 193 19-12-1780.
60. A.D. Hérault. C 2541.
61. A. D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 842 f<sup>o</sup>75.
62. Id. 2E<sup>40</sup> 90 f<sup>o</sup>565v<sup>o</sup>.
63. Id. B23I (provisional cote.)
64. A.D. Gard. 2E Registers of A. Darlhac, 21-4-1781.

65. Id. 14M 29.
66. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 845 f<sup>o</sup> 389; 2E<sup>39</sup> 193 f<sup>o</sup> 360v<sup>o</sup>.
67. Id. 2E<sup>36</sup> 842 f<sup>o</sup> 626.
68. A.D. Ardèche. 2E 3499 f<sup>o</sup> 229 (13-5-1788).
69. Id. f<sup>o</sup> 242.
70. A.D. Gard. IJ 330 f<sup>o</sup> 22, On Delbosc, see above p. 415.
71. Id. 2E<sup>39</sup> 204 f<sup>o</sup> 191v<sup>o</sup>. The name Froment was very common in the region of Les Vans. It may be that the family was originally from the town, or the nearby parishes of Naves or Les Assions.
72. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 192 f<sup>o</sup> 163.
73. Id. 2E<sup>36</sup> 849 f<sup>o</sup> 730.
74. See above p.59.
75. A.D. Hérault. C896. On Pontier, see above p. 03.
76. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 844 f<sup>o</sup> 858; 2E<sup>36</sup> 840 f<sup>o</sup> 135 and above pp. 58-9 on his father-in-law's debts.
77. A.D. Hérault. C2263.
78. A.D. Gard. Serie B.
79. B.N. L<sup>d</sup> 176 738.
80. See above pp.415 and below pp. 480 et seq. & p.508 et seq.
81. A.N. AB XIX 1418; A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 209 f<sup>o</sup> 330.
82. A.D. Hérault. C 8244, 21-1-1761.
83. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 234 f<sup>o</sup> 23v<sup>o</sup>.
84. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 234 f<sup>o</sup> 145v<sup>o</sup>.
85. Id. 2E<sup>39</sup> 199 f<sup>o</sup> 174.
86. Id. 2E<sup>36</sup> 847 f<sup>o</sup> 902; 2C 327, 21-1-1777; 2C 340 20-7-1780; 2C 341 30-11-1780; 27-12-1780.
87. A.D. Gard. 2C 351 14-12-1783; 2C 337 19-10-1776; 2C 336 31-5-1776.



88. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 199 f<sup>o</sup>97.
89. A.D. Hérault. C 153.
90. A.D. Hérault. C 8243, to de Joubert 1-2-1760; A.D. Gard  
Serie B (unclassified) Plunitif des Audiences du Présidial  
4-2-1760.

Chapter 24 From "Cabale" to Conspiracy

In 1781, elections to renew the two conseils politiques again became due. The faction which had been ousted in 1780 attempted to recover its position. De Marguerittes, who was again its most prominent member, attempted to pack the electoral assembly with his own supporters. According to de Merez, the move was a failure:

"Le syndicat...se reduisit insensiblement à cinq, ensuite à trois et enfin à un seul qui, plus téméraire en fait de tracasserie et plus bavard, ne reconnaissant d'ailleurs d'autre autorité dans le monde que celle de Parlement jura qu'il y traduiroit bientôt les officiers municipaux."<sup>1</sup>

A new cluster of Protestant négociants accordingly entered the conseil politique.

Three months later, de Marguerittes was able to realize his threat. The new members of the Bureau de police of Mîmes, which was renewed at the same time as the conseil politique, were drawn almost exclusively from the conseil politique extraordinaire, in contravention of the arrêt of October 1777. Most of them were therefore Protestants.<sup>2</sup> In March 1781 a number of men were arrested for gambling, an offence which, normally, would have received a summary sentence. In this instance, however, the affair was taken before the Parlement of Toulouse. Since each side later produced its own version of the incident, it is impossible to establish the truth; but Perrin and de Merez both claimed that de Marguerittes had been one of the men arrested and had persuaded his accomplices to appeal to Toulouse. De Marguerittes himself claimed that Perrin had invented the indictment for political purposes. The episode served to reinforce a complaint by several conseillers of the Présidial in 1780 that "le maire et consuls de cette ville ne



cessent de multiplier leurs usurpations sur la jurisdiction civile et criminelle de la Cour."<sup>3</sup> It also brought yet another body into the increasingly tortuous manoeuvres dividing the City's social élite.

The next elections, in January 1782, were crucial for both factions. De Merez was approaching the end of his four year term as mayor, and the need to create a favourable conseil politique which would elect an acceptable successor became pressing. The elections also offered an occasion for the removal of the embarrassing Froment, and the nomination of a more pliant replacement. Thus, on January 2nd 1782, the four ex-consuls - Lagarde, Capon, Martin and Durand - discovered that de Merez had entrusted the management of the elections to the second consul, Jean Perrin, who had convoked the assembly without warning them.

Both parties attempted to use the elections to divide their respective opponents. Perrin's nominations were chosen with great care. If one of his nominees to represent the premiere échelle on the ordinary council was the Protestant comte de Catellan, his other choice was one of the supporters of the arret of 1777, Rovérié de Cabrières. His proposals for the representatives of the deuxieme échelle on the same council - two négociants, Charles and Barne, a procureur, Antoine Darlhac oncle and a bourgeois, Castanet - was equally judicious. But there were no nuances in his candidates for the deuxieme échelle of the conseil politique extraordinaire, who were all Protestant négociants - Lapierre, Ribot, Prestreau and Quatrefages de la Roquette.<sup>4</sup>

Although Antoine Capon protested at the manner in which the elections were conducted, he too was careful to present a balanced list of nominees. Among his eight nominees to represent the deuxieme échelle were the silk dealers Laurent and Henri Vialla, who were both Protestants. The choice again indicates the manner in which the question of the right of Protestants to hold municipal office could be used as an instrument to establish a body of political clients. His choice of representatives of the premiere échelle on the conseil politique ordinaire - the baron de Marguerittes and the baron de la Reyranglade - was more straightforward.

Despite these candidates, Ferrin's nominees were elected as a block.<sup>5</sup> A new flood of hostile mémoires was dispatched to Montpellier. Phélines informed Saint-Priest that at least nine of the new conseillers politiques had no right to their places. He claimed that four of the avocats elected to represent the premiere échelle were not members of the corps des avocats and, therefore, inelegible. Two, Paradan de Cabrières and Pontier, were procureurs and had never pleaded a case in court. The third - Girard -

"était fabricant d'étoffes de soye. A l'âge de plus de 50 ans, il cessa de faire le commerce à son nom, forma une société en commandite, fut prendre des grades à Orange et prêtât serment pour pouvoir se décorer du titre d'avocat, dont il est et sera toujours incapable d'exercer la profession."<sup>6</sup>

As for the fourth, Ratier, "ce petit fils d'un cabaretier n'a point de postulation et son inéptie est généralement connue."<sup>7</sup> He also stated that three of the representatives of the deuxieme échelle were, in fact, only elegible for the troisieme:

"Il est vrai que le Sr Charles (one of the three) a gagné considérablement dans son commerce, et qu'on prétend qu'il ne vend plus en détail, mais il n'est pas moins



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dans le corps des droguistes et mangonniers qui le laisse nécessairement à la troisième classe."<sup>8</sup>

The two others, Castanet and Ribot, who was nonetheless a very wealthy stocking manufacturer, were in the same situation. Two more conseillers - the négociants François Lapierre and Quatrefoies de la Roquette - were natives of Le Vigon, and owned no land in the taillable of Nîmes. More generally, Phélines noted that no procureurs had been elected to represent the deuxième échelle, and that Perrin, "qui ne doit pas ignorer que la 4ème échelle est spécialement affectée aux laboureurs cultivant leurs biens de leurs propres mains,"

"a donné la préférence à des artisans qui exercent les professions les plus viles. Sause, jardinier, est le seul nommé au conseil extraordinaire et on observe que ce dernier, qui ne possède qu'une vigne du chef de ses enfants et n'est que fermier d'un jardin potager, mène une vie scandaleuse avec une concubine qui loge dans sa maison..."<sup>9</sup>

These claims were more or less accurate.<sup>10</sup> They were buttressed by innuendo of a more debatable character. There were insinuations of corruption and underhand practice, directed principally at Perrin. "Tout le monde est persuadé qu'il est secrètement intéressé dans les fermes de la ville," reported Phélines.

"Un vitrier, son voisin, homme dans la misère, est fermier des Broues. Darlhac oncle, notaire, parent dudit Sr. Perrin, passe tous les jours beaux et fait la rente... On assure qu'on a fait sur le premier terme du bail une revenue de 7 à 800 L."<sup>11</sup>

He was also accused of legal malpractices:

"Depuis qu'il est en place il n'est occupé que de ses intérêts, ce qui a principalement éclaté dans l'exercice de la juridiction de la police. Son clerc principal<sup>12</sup> est procureur des parties, et le Sr. Perrin en est le juge, et on multiplie les frais d'une manière scandaleuse. Le Sr. Perrin, pour augmenter ses profits, passe les mêmes droits qu'au sénéchal, dans cette juridiction sommaire, et exige six deniers par livre de la taxe."<sup>13</sup>

Phélines accordingly requested the suspension of the three



men - Perrin, Donadilhe and Sauvy - who had entered the Consulat since 1780, and had been responsible for the elections of 1782. In addition, he proposed the abolition of the conseil politique extraordinaire, a body which was peculiar to the municipal institutions of Nîmes:

"On y fait toujours entrer un nombre de religionnaires qui suivent aveuglement à la volonté des consuls qui les y ont appelés en cherchant à s'y maintenir par leur complaisance. En 1781 il y en avait vingt sur vingt-quatre dont le conseil est composé, et il en reste douze outre ceux qui sont décédés."<sup>14</sup>

His proposals were supported by a series of mémoires from the gentilshommes, avocats, procureurs, ménagers, laboureurs and the procureur du Roi, Jean Martin.

De Merez replied with his own insinuations. "On a protesté contre l'élection des MM Girard, Fontier, syndic du diocese, et Ratier," he informed Saint-Priest.

"Le premier ... a été nommé avocat par le Roy, qui ne se trompe jamais. Le second ne peut être syndic du diocèse sans être avocat reconnu par tout le monde, et le troisième assiste depuis sept ans aux audiences. S'il n'a pas beaucoup de causes, c'est qu'il n'est pas permis à tout le monde d'attendre les MM Garrigue et Senovert. D'ailleurs, ils sont tous les trois ionciers, tandis que ceux qui crient le plus ne le sont pas."<sup>15</sup>

These claims were coupled with a scarcely disguised threat:

"On m'assure que M. Perrin est armé d'une très grande quantité de lettres de quelqu'un de votre connaissance ... dans lesquelles toutes les puissances de la province sont compromises. Et comme il le soupçonne d'avoir beaucoup de part à la querelle qu'on lui fait, il serait peut-être dangereux de le pousser à bout."<sup>16</sup>

Saint-Priest, however, preferred to ignore the warning, and urged the Conseil du Roi to suspend the municipality of Nîmes. Accordingly, on October 12th 1782, the council issued a third arrêt reorganising the City's municipal administration. It annulled the elections of

the consuls Perrin, Donadilhe and Sauvy and the illegal nominations to the two councils. It abolished the conseil politique extraordinaire and ordered new elections to the officers of second, third and fourth consul and to the vacant places on the remaining council. As a further measure to prevent intrigue, it reduced the quorum in the conseil politique from sixteen to twelve. If it became inquorate, additional members were only to be co-opted with the permission of the Intendant.

The elections were held early in November 1782. The new second consul was the procureur Cyprien Polge, whose son was married to the negociant Joseph Froment's daughter. The third and fourth consuls, a hatter named Reboul and a master-carpenter named Aigoin, belonged to the same group. On November 13th, the conseil politique was renewed. The electoral assembly was dominated by the victorious faction and presided over by the sub-délégué Antoine Phélines, who had been a constant opponent of the de-Merez-Perrin administration. "Vous êtes instruit ... qu'on assurait de ne faire entrer au conseil extraordinaire presque que des Religionnaires," he informed Saint-Priest after the elections.

"Les partisans de Perrin répandirent de tous côtés que ce n'étoit que pour les exclure que ce conseil étoit supprimé. Ces discours avoient fait dans une ville peuplée de protestants une vive sensation. Pour calmer les esprits, les consuls et ex-consuls ont nommé conseillers politiques Mr de Castelnau au rang des nobles, et M. Mercier avocat, tous deux des plus forts contribuables. Ce sont les seuls religionnaires. M. Mercier est meme censé catholique en sa qualité d'avocat et n'a dans aucun tems été aux assemblees."<sup>17</sup>

The elections for a new first consul and mayor followed on December 2nd. The other three consuls petitioned Saint-Priest for permission to nominate his sub-délégué, Phélines, to the office. The petition



was turned down, but an acceptable substitute was found in the avocat Jean Martin, who, as procureur du roi, had opposed the elections of 1780, 1781 and 1782. Finally, on December 24th, Pierre Froment informed the Intendant that "le conseil politique, assemblé le vingt de ce mois, a bien voulu nous nommer à la place de greffier consulaire pour l'exercer pendant notre vie."<sup>18</sup>

This further intervention from Versailles was not the end of the affair. Rabaut Saint-Etienne's memorial article on the late Bishop of Nîmes was a calculated récupération of the most important issue which the arret of October 12th 1782, and the resultant abolition of the conseil politique extraordinaire, had raised. What had begun as a manoeuvre by a Catholic noble to defeat an unpleasant proposal had become a wide ranging debate over the material power represented by the excluded Protestant elite. If, as Rabaut asserted, "ces hommes industrieux et actifs ... font la force de l'état en augmentant leur propre fortune,"<sup>19</sup> they were entitled to greater representation on the conseil politique. Each side had, in the course of the dispute, established a certain rhetorical area in which the limited nature of the real issues were absorbed by a wider series of generalisations. On the one hand, the dispute could be presented in purely sectarian terms - as a question of the legality of the admission of Protestants to the municipality; on the other hand, it could be presented as a debate upon the morality of commerce, a debate whose social implications had become more visible as the failure of the harvest of 1782 and the uncertainty over the silk fair at Alès provoked a recession at Nîmes.<sup>20</sup>



The following year was relatively calm. In April 1783 de Merez requested permission to be dispensed from attending the assemblies of the conseil politique. "Cette demande n'a d'autre motif que les changements arrivés dans l'administration en execution de l'arrêt ... du 12e octobre dernier," Phélines explained.<sup>21</sup> In December, a jardinier named Puget complained that the elections to the office of fourth consul, which had been held on December 6th, had been rigged. He claimed that the consuls had prepared a list of suitable candidates which they had distributed in advance to the members of the electoral assembly. Phélines advised Ballainvilliers, the new Intendant, to ignore the complaint. It was, he stated, "une suite de la cabale qui régnoit dans l'hôtel de ville."<sup>22</sup>

It was more difficult, however, to ignore the intervention of the Cour des Aides of Montpellier into the dispute. In the spring of 1783 Pierre Froment and the notaire Antoine Darlhac oncle (who would appear to have changed his allegiances) began proceedings against Perrin on a charge of having embezzled some of the municipal revenues raised on the droit de la subvention, a tax on goods imported into the City. The case was inconclusive and was still in progress when the Court was abolished in 1790.<sup>23</sup> But the manoeuvre rebounded disastrously for Froment. In the autumn of 1784 he was summoned to Montpellier to face an accusation mounted by Perrin and his allies, of altering the compoix cabaliste of Nîmes to the benefit of his friends and to the detriment of his opponents. The compoix, which served as the basis for the assessment of the vingtième d'industrie, was of particular interest to the City's commercial élite. In December 1784, the Court found that Froment had wilfully undervalued

the non-landed property of a number of small manufacturers, artisans and travailleurs, and issued a warrant for his arrest. Froment fled to Chambéry, in Savoy, where he was to remain for the next five years, leaving the post of greffier-consulaire vacant.

In May 1785, his youngest son, François (1756-1825), who had been elected greffier adjoint in 1780, published an anonymous, three hundred page tract, in which he claimed, with some truth, that his father had been the victim of a conspiracy.<sup>24</sup>

"Perrin-Bazille alla faire le serment de dire la vérité. On le fit prêter aussi à Ribot, Lapiere frères, Vincens, à tous ces nobles marchands expulsés par l'arrêt de 1782 ... Ils déposèrent, ces illustres faisant-fabriquer qui assomment les officiers municipaux de cette ville, les Etats de la Province, le Ministère, d'un seul mémoire fait en vingt thèmes différents, ou ils demandent, avec la Révocation de l'arrêt de 1782, le droit de rentrer à l'Hôtel de Ville et d'y marcher de pair avec la noblesse..."<sup>25</sup>

Froment's flight heralded a general attack upon the arrêt of October 1782. The arguments were now explicit, wide-ranging and posed questions of a deeper importance than the guarded references to divisions and malpractices, which had preceded the re-organisations of 1777 and 1782. In April 1785, a Mémoire du commerce de Nîmes, signed by the syndics of the corps des marchands fabriquant et faisant fabriquer des étoffes de soye, the marchands fabriquant de bas, the marchands toilliers, quincailliers et merciers, the marchands droguistes et épiciers and the marchands drapiers, was sent to Versailles. It argued that négociants of all kinds should be represented on the conseil politique as members for the première échelle, and it cited the municipal administrators of Limoux, Carcassonne, Lodève and Le Vigan as examples of municipalities in which négociants en gros were already entitled to equal status with



lawyers and nobles. "Ce que les reglements accordent aux fabriques de Limoux, de Carcassonne et de Lodève." it concluded,

"les fabriques de Nîmes sont d'autant plus autorisées à le réclamer, que le nombre des nobles residans à Nîmes est très petit, qu'il y a très peu de gentils hommes parmi eux, que ceux-ci en général vivent éloignés des affaires, que ceux qui ambitionnent de s'en emparer sont la plupart des fils ou petit-fils d'ennoblis dont plusieurs sont sortis du commerce qu'ils ont l'air de mépriser."<sup>26</sup>

This demand was rejected in a series of mémoires from the gentilshommes, avocats, procureurs, médecins and laboureurs. To the examples of towns in which commerce was included among the representatives of the première échelle, they counterposed the case of Montpellier, "où le premier chaperon appartient exclusivement aux nobles, et où le commerce infiniment plus considérable que celui de Nîmes, et même maritime, n'a ses représentans qu'à la 3ème échelle, et n'a jamais osé élever la prétention ridicule que nous sommes forcés de combattre."<sup>27</sup> They suggested that commerce in Nîmes was much less substantial than its representatives had claimed, and that its value had actually fallen since the beginning of the century. They advised its representatives to turn their attention to this unhappy situation. "Nous les invitons," they continued, "à ne point diminuer dans des tems de calamité (comme par le passé) le prix de la main d'oeuvre, ce qui ajoute à la misère et au desespoir de leurs ouvriers qui, sans les quêtes et les charités des premiers citoyens auroient subi le sort le plus affreux." This was a clear reference to the recession of 1782-1783, when "l'administration actuelle fut obligé d'établir ... un atelier public pour occuper les pauvres ouvriers de la fabrique qui périssoient de faim."<sup>28</sup>

An anonymous mémoire was even more outspoken. "Ce qu'il



y a de plus revoltant ey meme d'hodieux pour tout bon citoyen," it stated,

"c'est que les commerçants mirent, pour subvenir aux dépenses qu'ils faisoient à cause de toutes les affaires, un impôt de quarante sols par metier sur des misérables qui sont pour ainsi dire les causes premières de leurs fortunes."<sup>29</sup>

The author of the mémoire, who was probably a friend or a relative of Froment, claimed that,

"de 30,000 personnes qui tirent leur subsistance du commerce, il y en a au moins 10,000 qui sont dans le cas de mendier leur pain faute de travail."

This, he warned, in an oblique reference to the disturbances in the Vivarais, "peut être très dangereux pour le païs, comme on a failli le voir il y a environ deux ou trois ans."<sup>30</sup>

The discovery, in the autumn of 1785, that several of the representatives of commerce and members of the faction excluded by the arrêt of 1782 were engaged in usury, was a welcome confirmation of these accusations. The campaign for wider representation of commerce in the City's government came to an abrupt halt. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the investigations of the Commission of the Parlement of Toulouse were not entirely disinterested.

On May 6th 1786, the Cour des Aides of Montpellier issued a further judgement on the manner in which the compoix cabaliste of Nîmes was to be established. In an effort to find a balance between the claims of the two factions in Nîmes it ordered a complete revision of the system of assessment. It stipulated, in particular, that "les marchands négociants seront tenus de déclarer ... la quantité, qualité et valeur des capitaux, fonds de commerce, marchandises et dettes actives à eux appartenans..."<sup>31</sup> The decision implied a violation

of the traditional secrecy in which most commercial partnerships operated, and it gave rise to immediate complaints that it would "porter les atteintes les plus funestes au commerce de cette ville."<sup>32</sup> It was impossible to put the judgement into effect. To a man, the commissaires nominated to receive the declarations reported that the inhabitants of whole streets were mysteriously absent when they arrived to make their assessments. Those declarations that were made were so outrageously fraudulent that they were not even signed.<sup>33</sup> It was a massive demonstration of the power of the City's commercial elite.

Thus, by the autumn of 1780, the dispute at Nimes had produced a situation in which the problem of the ambiguous legal position of the City's Protestant community had been drawn into a wider debate about the place of commerce within the social fabric, a debate which fed upon the real social consequences of the extension of credit as a mode of social articulation. In itself, the question of the right of Protestants to enter the municipal administration was a minor one. In 1774, 1775 and 1780, Protestants were used by Catholics against Catholics for their own political purposes. Even in 1782, the group opposing de Merez and Ferrin was prepared to nominate Protestants to the conseil politique.<sup>34</sup> Only after the arrêt of 1782, the dismissal of Pierre Froment two years later, and the campaign for an unprecedented reform of the municipality could the dispute be presented in purely sectarian terms. What had begun as a banal manœuvre to obtain a deputation to the Estates of the Languedoc, had become a dispute in which two distinct rhetorical positions were established, which served to divide and to conceal the



underlying community of style, milieu and language of the two factions.

Inevitably, since the dispute involved men who shared a common social world, it envenomed almost all areas of their public lives. The winter of 1787-1788 saw an extension of the conflict to the Academy. According to Vincens Saint-Laurent, the initiative came from the Baron de la Reyrenglade. "Il vient assister à toutes les délibérations, et déjà deux ou trois fois on a été obligé de lui montrer les dents."<sup>35</sup> He had attempted to modify the Academy's procedure, so that only one member of the same family would be entitled to vote. "On vouloit que le père et le fils, le beau-père et le gendre, les frères, les beaux-frères, et l'oncle et le neveu confondissent leurs suffrages dans toutes les délibérations." This would have ensured that "M. André et M. Fornier ne faisoient qu'une voix, M. Fornier et M. Meynier qu'une voix, MM Pieyre qu'une voix, M. Pieyre et M. André qu'une voix, H. Reynaud et M. de Gébas qu'une voix et MM Vincens qu'une voix."<sup>36</sup> The new procedure was to be retroactive. This last proposition, which would have cast doubts upon the validity of the elections of several of the members of the Academy, was clearly directed at its Protestant members. Accordingly, Griolet, who had just been elected, proposed that the provisions would not affect deliberations on elections. After further opposition from the Baron de la Reyrenglade, his proposal was accepted. This meant that Vincens Saint-Laurent could put forward his application to join his father and older brother as a member in March 1788.

On July 24th 1788, before the Academy was due to reconvene in the autumn, an anonymous letter appeared in the Journal de Nîmes



accusing him of plagiarism.<sup>37</sup> "Lisez-vous encore cher confrère, une certaine feuille périodique intitulée le Journal de Nîmes," Vincens inquired of Boissy d'Anglas.

"Vous aurez vu qu'on m'y depouille inhumainement de ma précieuse inscription pour le caste du Baron de Marguerittes et qu'on l'attribue à votre defunt ami Gaillard. En vérité les hommes sont bien nuisans et la gloire nous fait acheter bien cher ses faveurs ! Moi qui m'enorguillissois d'avoir vaincu dans un combat littéraire et vous et l'ami que nous regrettons, moi qui m'applaudissois d'avoir vu mon quatrain préféré aux votres par le juge que nous avions choisi, il faut après dix ans de possession que je voie mon patrimoine envahie et que je m'entende accuse de plagiat !"<sup>38</sup>

He invited Boissy to write a letter to the Journal refuting the accusation. A week later, however, the charge was repeated, and this time, was extended to a play - "Le Jugement de Paris" - which Vincens had written and produced in the autumn of 1781.

The Journal de Nîmes, which first appeared in 1786, was edited by a Catholic named Jacques Boyer, who had added the suffix 'Brun' to his name from his wife's family. He too belonged to the same circle of merchants and minor manufacturers, lawyers and professional men, and urban nobles or 'anoblis' whose destinies were intimately bound up with the power represented by the City's commercial elite. Like the Froment, his relationship to the Protestant community was both personal and financial. Through his mother, Catherine Surville, he was related to the Colomb of Les Vans and Nîmes. Jean-Louis Colomb, the silk dealer who became an agent de change at Nîmes, was married to his aunt, Jeanne Surville. His uncle, Francois Surville, an avocat, had acquired the seigneuries of Aiguesvives and Valcombe, on the southern edge of the Vaunage, where many of the wealthiest Protestants of Nîmes owned demesnes. Another of his aunts, Françoise

Surville was married to one of the lawyer Pierre Blanc-Pascal's uncles.<sup>39</sup> One of his sisters, Louise-Marie Boyer, was married to Louis Coste, a négociant. A notarial deed of January 1790 suggests that he, himself, was in serious financial difficulties.<sup>40</sup> So too was another of his relatives, Jean-Louis Lavondès-Brun, also a negociant, whose cousin, Alexis Lavondès, was, with Boyer-Brun and Coste, to be among the more prominent Royalists in Nîmes in 1790.<sup>41</sup>

The article in the Journal de Nîmes was not, however, the work of its editor. It had, in all probability, been written by an older man, with an even more intimate acquaintance with the vicissitudes of political manoeuvre. This was the former page du Roi, Jacques-François Descombiès, who had been born in Nîmes in 1729.<sup>42</sup> Like many of his political allies, he had seen many of his early hopes disappointed in the course of a long and picaresque existence. His career is a commentary upon the cultural hegemony of Versailles, and the community of aspirations in which royalistes and patriotes were to move, in a strange dialectic.

His father, François Descombiès, was a Captain in the grénadiers royaux, garrisoned at Metz. In 1745, the sixteen year old Jacques-François Descombiès was married to Marie-Rose Ducros, "fille de Mr Jean Ducros, conseiller du Roy, juge au Cour Presidial de Nîmes, et de Dame Elizabeth de Greffulhe." His bride's dowry consisted of the sum of 15,000 livres, the expectation of all of her father's estates and half of her mother's possessions. His own portion was identical.<sup>43</sup>

The marriage was a disaster. Soon after it had been arranged, Mme Descombiès gave birth to a daughter, which explains



why the couple were married at so early an age. In January 1758, they were formally separated and the young bride was sent to a Convent near Paris. Descombiès was promised an annual pension from his father-in-law. The reasons for the separation are obscure, but it is probable that the bride's parents opposed the marriage on religious grounds. Elizabeth de Greffulhe was buried as a Protestant at Nîmes in 1777.<sup>44</sup> A letter from Ducros père to his daughter is redolent of the austere Calvinism of the Church under the Cross:

"Nous avons appris depuis quelques jours...par les papiers publics la mort de Mr le Comte...Vos regrets doivent s'étendre sur sa perte, et non sur ce qu'il est mort sans se confesser, puisqu'il étoit plein des sentimens de la religion. La véritable dévotion est dans le coeur, et les actes extérieurs n'en sont que la démonstration: ainsi l'incertitude de son état ne doit point ajouter à vos peines. Dieu sonde tous les replis du coeur de l'homme, et sa miséricorde en pesant le repentir de sa fautes y attache le pardon lorsqu'il se trouve sincère, et sa réprobation lorsqu'il se trouve faux. Profitez ma chère fille de la spectacle qui vous effraye et qui vous touche. Vous voyez ce que peut se promettre l'homme le mieux constitué, et la santé la plus ferme. Il est semblable au cèdre qui élève sa tête, superbe jusque dans les nues. L'éclair brille, la foudre part, le frappe, le renverse: il n'est que poussière..."<sup>45</sup>

The separation left Descombiès to his own devices, and for the next two decades his life was made up of a series of extravagant adventures. "Je vais vous raconter mes aventures depuis que nous nous sommes séparés," he wrote to his wife several years later.

"Depuis le jour fatal que je vous ai laissée évanouie chez votre mère, je me débarrassay comme je pus et vous ne devez jamais oublier la douceur avec laquelle j'en agis dans cette occasion. Je montai donc à cheval et je fus à Uzès. Je ne fis qu'y coucher. J'y touchai de l'argent et je partis le lendemain pour Avignon, le désespoir dans le coeur. Mon premier dessein dans cette ville fut de me mettre dans un couvent en pension à quatre lieus de là. J'avois déjà arrêté ma place... Je restay huit jours avant que tout cela fut prêt. Pendant ce temps les réflexions vinrent, et je pris fantaisie



d'aller à Lyon pour passer en Italie. Quand j'y fus arrivé on me dit que le chemin des alpes n'étoit pas sur... Je fus donc arrêté dans cette ville. Je fus à la comédie. Je me trouvai en pays de connaissance. C'étoit la meme troupe qui étoit à Nimes quand je jouai le menteur. Je devins amoureux d'une jeune fille extrêmement jolie. Nous fûmes bientôt d'accord, et nous vécûmes ensemble aussi amoureux l'un que l'autre..."<sup>46</sup>

After five weeks, they travelled to Dôle, in the Franche-Comté, and three months later, moved on to Arras, where Descombiès made the acquaintance of a certain Princesse de haulin, who offered him a part in a play:

"Je ne balançay pas - comme tu t'imagines bien. J'acceptai le rôle et quatre jours après on m'envoya une chaise de poste et je partis... Elle est si séduisante, et d'ailleurs les avantages que j'y trouvois étoient si réels, enfin je renonçay à tout, et j'abandonnay Houette (c'est le nom de baptême de la comédienne) malgré les obligations que je luy avois, et j'ay été cause qu'elle s'est précipitée dans les plus grands malheurs."<sup>47</sup>

He spent several weeks with his new mistress, and was then obliged to leave, "pour des raisons qui seroient trop longues dans une lettre." He travelled to Paris, to discover that his wife had escaped from her convent, and that his father-in-law, assuming that he had been responsible, had suspended his pension. This was something of an inconvenience:

"Si je ne me faisois quelque petite connoissance, je serois bien mal. Je fréquente des femmes qui sont généreuses. Je conçois bien que c'est l'essence des belles âmes de faire du bien à ceux qu'on aime, mais je ne souffre pas moins de n'être pas en même de pouvoir refuser leurs bienfaits."<sup>48</sup>

The resumption of Anglo-French hostilities, however, suggested new financial opportunities:

"Il y aura tant d'emplois à donner, et je ne te

cache point que j'en prendrais bien un dans les vivres. Il y en a de très bon et tres lucratif et très facile à obtenir. Parlés-en je t'en prie et ne néglige rien de ce que tu pouras pour cela. Ils ne sont point onereux d'ailleurs, et cela va bien du pair avec un emploi subalterne de finance..."<sup>49</sup>

These hope were soon disappointed, and news of his father's impending death compelled him to return to Nîmes in 1763 or 1764. For a man to whom Paris had been a revelation - "on ne vit qu'à Paris, et l'on végète ailleurs" - the provincial city was a poor substitute. "Les nouvelles de notre ville sont si stériles," he complained to his wife,

"on s'assemble une fois la semaine chez l'évêque... journallement chez Me de Ratel. Les brillantes sont Mde de Cabrière femme de Rouvière, la Présidente La Boissière, sa soeur, Mde La Reyran glade, mais la désunion qui règne dans ce pays-ci rend tout insipide..."<sup>50</sup>

This last phrase was a reference to the dispute between the Parlement of Toulouse and the duc de Fitzjames, which Descombiès followed with interest.<sup>51</sup>

"Faites-moy le plaisir de m'instruire de ce qui arrivera dans l'affaire de Mr de Fitzjames. Nous sommes ici bien parlementaires ... Notre sénéchal s'est immortalisé dans l'affaire présente et qui est sans contredit venu jusqu'a nous. Nous trouvions la conduite de Mr de Fitzjames pytoyable envers le parlemt de Thoulouse. Il a passe icy lundi dernier, fort tristement et fort vite pour se rendre à Paris."<sup>52</sup>

His earlier boredom, however, soon reasserted itself:

"Les brillantes icy sont Mde de la Boissière et la Reyren glade. Madame Flauchut de Lassagne est une des jolies, mais elle n'a pas pus se faufler avec les Dames...soi-disant de condition. La ville est des plus tristes. Quand on sort de



Paris on trouve icy un vilain vilage. L'ennuy est répandu sur tout le monde jusques sur les maisons."<sup>53</sup>

In 1764, news of Laverdy's planned reorganisation of the municipal governments of the Kingdom gave rise to renewed optimism. His wife was acquainted with the powerful comte de Saint-Florentin, and Descombiès decided to use her good offices to obtain the office of first consul of Nîmes by the somewhat unusual method of a lettre de cachet. "Votre mari desiroit fort d'être nommé premier consul de notre ville par lettre de cachet," Ducros informed his daughter in August:

"Si par l'accès que vous avez auprès de M. de St. Florentin, vous pourriez l'obtenir, cela luy fera beaucoup de plaisir."<sup>54</sup>

Again, however, he was disappointed. Laverdy's reform was not extended to the Languedoc immediately, and, when it was, there was to be no creation of a body of new offices. Ducros informed his daughter that her efforts would not be required.

"Vous sçavez sans doute que M. de Laboissière frère à M. de Dions a sur sa tête la mairie de la ville, et qu'en cette qualité il fait la police à l'exclusion du premier consul. Le Roy avoit rendu un édit qui ordonnoit la suppression et le remboursement de cette mairie. Par cette suppression le premier consul tenoit la place de maire et avoit le dévolu de toutes ses prérogatives, je veux dire de la police et l'entrée aux Etats. C'est dans ces circonstances que votre mari vous écrivit pour solliciter auprès de Mr de St. Florentin la charge de 1er consul par lettre de cachet...Mr. de St. Florentin vous avoit dit que le meme édit ne seroit point executé pour le Languedoc...les choses ont alors changé."<sup>55</sup>

This further disappointment seems to have ended Descombiès interest in public affairs. During the following two decades he would seem to have passed most of his time on his demesnes at Cabrières,



punctuated by visits to Nîmes, Arles, Avignon and Paris, and a further succession of mistresses.<sup>56</sup> From 1780, however, he became increasingly involved in the ever more tortuous affairs of his friend the Baron de Theyrargues.<sup>57</sup>

Claude-Antoine de Chalbos, seigneur de Cubières and baron de Theyrargues was also a man whose aspirations had not been entirely realised at the time of his acquaintance with Descombiès. The Chalbos were natives of the Gévaudan, with a long accumulation of connections with Nîmes and the minor nobility of its hinterland.<sup>58</sup> Like many of the members of the City's genuinely Catholic elite, their nobility was of recent origin and of doubtful pedigree. They had, however, married well. Claude-Antoine's grand-father, Antoine-Hercule de Chalbos, a native of the village of Cubières in the diocese of Mende, married a Dlle. Marianne de Garidel, from a well-established famille d'épée of the town of Les Vans. The de Garidel were extinguished in the male line towards 1750, but their estates were transmitted by the marriages of Jean de Garidel's three daughters - Marianne, Marie-Clothilde and Magdelaine - into the hands of three families: the Chalbos, the Martin and the de Blou. All were associated with the Camp de Jalès in 1790. Of these three families, the de Blou were undoubtedly the wealthiest and the most securely established. Jean-Baptiste de Blou, baron de Blou, who received 45,000 livres as his wife's dowry when they were married in 1757, owned the terres and the seigneuries of Thueyts, Chadenac, Sercour and La Charrière in the region around Aubenas in the Vivarais.<sup>59</sup> After a brief period as a captain in the régiment de Piedmont, he

retired to the life of an urban rentier in Les Vans, leaving the management of his financial affairs to the notaire Paul Monteil and another homme de loi, Paul Durand, who collected his revenues from the demesnes at Thueyts.<sup>60</sup> His eldest son, André-Francois-Xavier, died before he could enter the army, and so the choice of a military career fell upon the cadet, Antoine-Hyacinthe who had originally been destined for the Church. In May 1787, the twenty year old "officier au régiment de Piémont infanterie" was betrothed to Marie-Rose-Pauline-Venance de Rochemore, the daughter of the marquis de Rochemore and Dame Marie-Magdeleine-Barbe de Vogüé, of Nîmes. His bride's relatives included Pierre-Joseph de Rochemore, vicar-general of the diocese of Nîmes, Jacques de Rochemore, vicar-general of the diocese of Albi and grand-archidiacre of the Chapter of the Cathedral of Alès, on her father's side, and, on her mother's side, Jacques-Joseph-Félix, vicomte de Vogüé, lieutenant-general des armées du Roy, whose nephew, the Bishop of Dijon, was the future bride's god-father.<sup>61</sup> These were exalted circles, probably attained through another series of relatives, descended from Jean de Garidel's wife, Dame Marianne de Borrelly, of Les Vans. This latter family occupied a position within the clerical hierarchy of the diocese of Viviers similar to that occupied by the Rochemore in the more prestigious diocese of Nîmes. Its most notable representative was Jean-Louis Borrelly, Marianne Borrelly's brother, who was simultaneously curé of the village of Saint-Remèze, whose seigneurs were the de Rochemore, prieur of Charmes, officiel forain of Bourg-Saint-Andéol and chanoine honoraire



of the Chapter of Viviers during the 1760s. Two other members of the family were clerics at the same time: Alexis Borrelly d'Agvain served the parish of Vallon, while his younger brother, Jean-Louis, was curé of the village of La Figère.

The Borrelly were related by marriage to the de Faget, also of Les Vans, an immense clan, whose many branches straddled the religious divide and, in the course of the four generations which preceded the Revolution, became allied not only to most of the most prominent Catholic families of the region, but to the Colomb, the Lahondes and the Chambon as well.<sup>62</sup> Antoine de Faget, seigneur du Curtil, was married in his turn to Marie de la Coste, the daughter of Jean-Brunot de Trévol de la Coste, the military governor of the Hautes-Cévennes from 1745 until the Revolution. Another member of the same family, Pierre de Faget, seigneur de Casteljau, coseigneur de la ville des Vans et du mandement de Naves was married in 1770 to Jeanne-Therese de Barthelémy, whose dowry of 80,000 livres was a massive sum by the standards of the Vivarais.<sup>63</sup> Among the members of his bride's family was the syndic des Etats particuliers du Vivarais, Antoine Barthelémy de la Chadenède, whose office made him the principal intermediary between the province and the Estates of the Languedoc.<sup>64</sup>

This labyrinth of alliances, reaching back over at least three generations, was, despite its wide extensions, a coherent and active social entity. In 1787, at the height of de Chalbos' legal difficulties, de la Coste, the military commander of the Velay, the Gevaudan and the Vivarais wrote to the Baron de Breteuil on his cousin's behalf. "M. de la Chadenède, parant de M. de Chalbos, vous



en a parlé, et je ne fais aucune difficulté de vous dire qu'il est le mien aussi. Sa grande-mère, fille de condition, étoit proche parent de ma maison..."<sup>65</sup>

In June 1772, Claude-Antoine de Chalbos was married to Anne-Marie - Louise de Fontanille de Greyssac, the daughter of Jean, seigneur de Greyssac, and Dame Anne-Marie de Baune, of the village of Cornilhon, a short distance from the Font-Saint-Esprit. Present at the ceremony were Joseph-Augustin de Chalmeton, cousin du futur, curé of Barjac and seigneur of the community of Prantes, near Privas; representing Jean-Baptiste de Blou, Marie-Magdeleine de Garidel de Martin and the military commander de la Coste; and, on the bride's side, André-Placide Trou, juge du marquisat de Lafare and a former official of the justice seigneuriale of Bagnols, Joseph-Auguste de Lamote de Laura, another cleric, M. Raphael Correau, conseiller au Présidial de Nîmes, and dame Marianne de Davy, the widow of the former military commander of Barjac, Louis de Baune. The future bride stood to inherit half of her father's property and all of her mother's possessions, worth a total 80,000 livres.<sup>66</sup>

The marriage underlined Claude-Antoine de Chalbos' social arrival. He had recently been nominated to the office of conseiller at the Présidial of Nîmes, and soon afterwards, he bought the baronnie of Theyrargues, in the community of Rivières de Theyrargues, a little to the South of Saint-Ambroix. At Nîmes, he was able to represent the legal interests of his relatives in the Uzege and the Vivarais. They in turn, were able to reciprocate with favours to his new relatives. A letter to de Blou from Nîmes in July 1773 expresses deep gratitude for "tout ce que vous avez voulu faire auprès de

M. le M<sup>is</sup> de Bernis en faveur de M. de Fontanille mon beau-père."<sup>67</sup>

Another letter, in February 1775, is even more effusive:

"Je sçai tout ce que je vous dois et par les liens du sang qui heureusement m'unissent à vous et à tous égards encore. Il n'en est rien que je ne fasse pour vous. Vous pouvez et devez disposer librement de moy dans toutes les occasions. Je suis entièrement à vos ordres."<sup>68</sup>

It is likely that his ascension owed much to his connections with the de Blou. He had not bought the office of conseiller at the Présidial in the normal way, but had been nominated to it in 1771, after the suspension of the parlements by Maupeou.<sup>69</sup> Initially he had been promised an even more elevated position. "Notre auguste maître, après m'avoir honoré d'une place dans son Parlement de Paris, vient de m'en donner une de conseiller à Nîmes pour le Conseil supérieur," he informed de Blou in October 1771.

"Je n'ai rien à dire sur ce changement de destination que M. le Chancelier a fait et que mes amis ont réclamé, croyant m'obliger que de me laisser dans ma patrie. C'est le seul avantage que j'y trouve, vu surtout que je reste auprès d'un père et d'une mère que je chéris autant que je suis aimé... Nous aurons pour p<sup>re</sup> président M. de la Boissière qui a reçu aujourd'hui une lettre de M. le Chancelier qui lui annonce sa nomination de la part de notre monarque et lui donne certains ordres. M. Reynaud, notre juge mage a beau se dire le second presidt du conseil supérieur. Je sçai qu'il ne sera que le 3e et que la 2e présidence sera remplie par M. de Chazel conser de la cour des aydes de Montpellier, fils, petit-fils, arrière petit-fils etc. du procureur du Roy à Notre Présidial. M. Plauchut est nommé procureur-général. Il n'y a qu'un avocat general qui est M. Boscat de Ferrière de Montpellier. Nous aurons encore pour conseillers qui sont nommés - MM de Caveirac, de Géras, Verot, Fornier et Corraud qui l'étaient au Présidial, ainsi que MM de Massip et Faulhan qui en étaient les deux avocats du Roy. Nous avons encore pour conseillers. MM d'Alison et Phélines de Nismes."<sup>70</sup>

If the office was something of a disappointment after the possibility of a position in Paris, it was, nonetheless, a substantial promotion



for the son of a minor lawyer from the Gévaudan. Like the Martin, their other relatives through the de Caridel alliance, the Chalbos had reached the upper levels of what might be called the basoche de cloche by the middle of the eighteenth century. Alexis Chalbos, Claude-Antoine's father - was a notaire and an avocat in succession to his older brother Joseph, in the village of Cubières, near Mende. After his older brother's death, he became bailli of the demesnes of Lauzeret and Cubayrette in the same region, and towards 1740 he moved to Nîmes, where he acquired the office of procureur at the Présidial.

When Joseph Chalbos died in 1738, he left ten young children.<sup>71</sup> Alexis, Antoine de Chalbos' father, was entrusted with the management of his estates until his children reached the age of majority. In 1745, when Joseph's eldest daughter was married, it was decided to establish the value of their inheritance in order to pay her dowry. Their légitimes were accordingly evaluated at 1,000 livres each, which would mean that Joseph Chalbos had left a fortune of some 20,000 livres. Instead of paying the dowry from his brother's estate, Alexis Chalbos undertook to provide it from his own revenues, in order, he stated, to prevent the dismemberment of his brother's demesnes. This manoeuvre enabled him to retain possession of the estate until 1780, when, after thirty years in which he had encumbered it with debts arising from payments of légitimes, the taille, seigneurial dues and interest on a number of rentes, it had lost all value to its heirs. Eventually, in February 1780, after ten years of acrimonious legal dispute, Joseph Chalbos'



only surviving son was obliged to cede the entire estate, now worth some 15,650 livres, to his uncle, in return for an annual pension of 500 livres. This transaction made no provision for Joseph Chalbos' three surviving daughters, who continued proceedings against their uncle, and later, his son, Claude-Antoine, until the Revolution. Capital accumulation in eighteenth century France was frequently an incestuous affair.

The revenues from his brother's estate enabled Alexis Chalbos to cross the threshold which separated the rural legal elite from its urban counterpart. The remaining members of the family were, socially, left behind. Two of his brothers - Pierre and Jacques-Hyacinthe - had entered the Church, the latter serving as prieur of Saint-Andéol-de-Clairguemort in the Gévaudan. His older brother's only surviving son - another Alexis - entered the army, and later settled at Anduze, a career followed in his turn by his son, Alexis Chalbos, chevalier de Neyrac, officier dans la Cavalerie légère des Chasseurs de Guyenne, in 1790.<sup>72</sup> It is a banal triptych; typical of innumerable minor provincial families. The Martin, their relatives, followed a similar course as avocats at Les Vans, seigneurs of the demesne of Sauvagnone in the parish of Saint-Pierre-le-Dechausselet, and Gardeur du Corps de Monsieur. They too were natives of the eastern fringe of the Gévaudan, gravitating slowly towards the plat-pays as their fortune and the range of their acquaintances became larger. Through the de Caridel and the Gilles, a family of merchants at Les Vans who specialised in the trade in candles, they were drawn into the same dense cluster of family ties that united the de Blou, the de Faget, the de la Coste and the

Barthelémy. Through a further series of marriages, they were allied to the Portanier and the Privat, médecins and avocats at Alès.<sup>73</sup>

The gulf between this world and that of the Presidial of Nîmes was considerable. The origins of the fortune which enabled Claude-Antoine de Chalbos to acquire the demesne of Theyrargues from the Prince de Conti thus require some explanation. In 1780, Phélines, the sub-delegate at Nîmes, informed de Breteuil that de Chalbos had estimated that his property was worth 430,000 livres, excluding a total of 28,350 livres in unpaid debts. "Je suis instruit que l'état de ses dettes est exact, mais la valeur qu'il donne à ses biens est exagérée. On me demande qu'elle peut être fixée à 300,000 livres."<sup>74</sup> Of this some 50,000 livres in land, debts, rentes and pensions were 'inherited' from his uncle Joseph Chalbos of Cubières, although Joseph's three surviving daughters - "les trois furies de Mende," as their cousin described them - were pursuing their claim to a part of his estate.<sup>75</sup> The remainder, apart from his wife's dowry, three houses in Nîmes and land at Cubières inherited from his own father - was formed by the demesne at Theyrargues. Again it was a fortune made in commerce which lay behind de Chalbos' acquisition of the domain at Theyrargues. A great-uncle, Antoine Trentignan, who died on San Domingo in 1745 leaving an estate consisting of two sugar plantations worth nearly 1,500,000 livres, bequeathed 60,000 livres to Jeanne Trentignan, de Chalbos' mother, and left his estate to the Hopital-General and Hotel-Dieu of Nîmes. The family contested the will and after proceedings ended up with 115,000 livres from the Trentignan estate in 1765.<sup>76</sup> It was this



sum which was used to acquire Theyrargues from the Prince de Conti. As it transpired it was an unhappy choice.

On March 13th, 1780, de Chalbos agreed to buy all the rights and dues belonging to Jean-Adam de Molette, marquis de Morangiès, in the "lieu, paroisse, dime et taillable" of Cubières for the sum of 22,448 livres.<sup>77</sup> The fee was to be paid in installments for a number of reasons. In the first place, de Chalbos had yet to complete his payments for the baronnie de Theyrargues, and was therefore still in debt to the Prince de Conti. Secondly, it was necessary to confirm the authenticity of the dues and cens of the demesne of Cubières, a process which entailed a careful examination of the seigneurial titles. The first installment fell due in 1783, and de Chalbos was obliged to turn to nîmois house of Affourtit frères for accomodation.<sup>78</sup> In May, he informed his cousin de Blou that his situation was desperate.

"Il m'est absolument impossible avec la meilleure volonté du monde d'accéder à la proposition que vous me faites. Les engagements que j'ay contractés pour mes deux terres de Cubières et de Theyrargues sont immenses et infinis. Ils m'épuisent. Pour finir quant au numéraire de M. Roussel de Bagnols, agt de son alt. Mgr le Prince de Conty, tous mes fonds ne m'étant pas rentrés, j'ay été nécessité en échange de papiers sur Paris que MM Affourtit banquiers de cette ville m'ont fournis, de luy bailler les miens propres jusques et à la concurrence de mieux de 50,000 L que je m'empresse de retirer au fur et à mesure qu'il me rentre de mes fonds, pour ne pas laisser courir ma signature sur la place, ce qui le Roy a de nouveau et plus expressement prohibé aux officiers de robe à peine d'interdiction perpetuelle par une declaration du mois de dec. 1781."<sup>79</sup>

A few weeks later, Affourtit frères refused to honour a bill of exchange drawn by de Morangiès, agent upon him, and which he had endorsed to their order. The firm took the case to the Bourse



of Montpellier, which ordered de Chalbos to meet his obligations.<sup>80</sup>

De Chalbos' attempt to raise cash by resorting to the money market came to the attention of the Commission of the Parlement of Toulouse when it reached Nîmes. Technically, his activities were in breach of the provisions of the Royal declaration of December 1781. The Commission began taking depositions in September 1785, and in December it issued a writ for his arrest.<sup>81</sup> He was imprisoned in Toulouse, pending a trial by the Parlement, and remained there for the next four years. During this interval his affairs were handled by Jacques-François Descombiès.<sup>82</sup>

The case itself raises a number of questions.<sup>83</sup> It is difficult to believe that de Chalbos was the only officier de robe in Nîmes to have contravened the Royal declaration on bills of exchange. In 1785, the président of the Presidial himself admitted that he had "vingt mille écus sur la place."<sup>84</sup> Why then was de Chalbos prosecuted? And, perhaps more importantly, from where did the information presented to the Commission of the Parlement emerge? De la Coste, the military commander in the Vivarais and the Gévaudan, offered one explanation. "Des ennemis occasionés par sa fortune (l') ont si cruellement persecuté d puis un temps infiny. C'est la jalousie, le vray tiran des hommes qui occasionne tant d'injustices."<sup>85</sup> It is tempting to suppose that these enemies had been made during the course of the long political conflict in Nîmes. It is certain that his father, Alexis Chalbos, was one of the twenty four men nominated to the reorganised conseil politique by the Letters patent of October 18th 1777. But given the fluidity of political alliance during

that decade (the procureur Ferrin was also among those nominated), this is not in itself proof of his adhesion to the faction which formed around the baron de Marguerittes, the avocat Capon and the Froment.<sup>86</sup> His choice of the former page du roi Descombiès as his procureur général et special is more revealing. Descombiès was well acquainted with the Novy, the de Marguerittes, the Pascal de la Reyranlade and the other figures aligned against the City's commercial elite by 1785.<sup>87</sup> Between 1785 and the time when de Chalbos returned from Toulouse, he handled all his friend's legal affairs. The two men both became Royalist leaders: Descombiès in Nîmes itself; de Chalbos as commander of the Royalist national guard of Rivière de Theyrargues and as one of the most active members of the Etat-major of the Camp de Jalès.<sup>88</sup>

If these particular questions must remain unanswered, the affair does point to a more general conclusion. The theme of credit, usury and bankruptcy which emerged as one of the major areas of rhetorical debate in Nîmes by 1785, was one which, in varying degrees, was founded upon the experience of numerous families both in the City and in its hinterland. It was a theme which reflected a profound modification in the material base upon which social relationships were established. Credit - in the form of a dowry, a rente foncière, a pension, the sale of land in installments, or any other transaction involving deferred payment - had been drawn into the field of market economy. A comparison between the career of a man like Boissy d'Anglas, and that of Claude-Antoine de Chalbos, magnifies the importance of the transformation. Both of the two men emerged from the relative anonymity of the basoche, or the



professions, on the proceeds of landed demesnes acquired by somewhat dubious means; but, where Boissy d'Anglas could call upon the reserves of a cluster of Protestant commercial houses, and notably those of Vincens & Cie, de Chalbos was obliged to rely upon the revenues of his demesnes.<sup>89</sup> By August 1786, it was clear that these alone would not be enough. "Je n'ignore point toutes les bontés que vous avez pour H. de Chalbos," his lawyer informed Descombiès.

"C'est le moment où il faut malgré lui, l'obliger et, pour trancher le mot, il faut nous procurer sans dire pourquoi du papier à vu, soit par les souscriptions qu'on pourrait trouver à Montpellier dans les caisses des receveurs, ou autrement, pour une somme de 12,000 L. et cela au plutôt. Peut-être même n'y en aurait-il pas assez, mais cet acompte donnera de confiance pour le restant... Il faut dans des affaires importantes prendre toutes les précautions possibles. M. de Chalbos s'y est déterminé, mais il voudrait ne pas ébrecher sa fortune, et pourvoir à ces objets avec son revenu, ce qui n'est pas possible."<sup>90</sup>

Yet, at this time, de Chalbos had assets which were worth more than ten times the amount of his debts.<sup>91</sup> The problem, essentially, was one of liquidity. As land, feudal dues and the system of exchange upon which they rested were absorbed by the resilient, flexible and corrosive structure of credit, the balance between the resources of a seigneurial demesne and the exigencies of the market, became increasingly fine. In purely formal terms, a man like de Chalbos was in the language of the Revolution, "un noble orgueilleux," "Un ci-devant," with the connotations of féodalité which the phrases imply. In fact, he was a parvenu, a man who, like Jean-Marie-Antoine Griolet or Boissy d'Anglas, had reached a position of stature and influence in the last decades of the ancien regime through a combination of personal alliances and credit. In his case, family



alliance led from Nîmes to the Vivarais, to the de Blou, the Martin, the de Faget, the Delbos, the Champetier, the Déslèbres. The ties which connected the Royalist elite in the South-East were already in place by 1785.

Notes - Chapter 24

1. A.D. Hérault. C 896 to Saint-Priest, 17-2-1896.
2. The members of the bureau were: de Merez and de Possac, gentilshommes; Lezan and Vigier, avocats, F. Lapierre and A. Vincens-Valz, negociants; Demian, marchand de bas and Rouveïrol, jardinier.
3. B.M. Nîmes. Mss 660 f<sup>o</sup> 253v<sup>o</sup>.
4. On these individuals, see above pp. 165-176
5. A.D. Hérault. C 896.
6. Id.
7. Id.
8. Id.
9. Id.
10. The only real points of contention were that Charles and Ribot were both effectively negociants, and that the former silk manufacturer Girard had been nominated to the Conseil politique as an avocat by the letters patent of 18-10-1777.
11. A. D. Hérault. C 896.
12. This was Courbis, the future mayor of Nîmes during the year II. Cf. A.C. Nîmes. 00 21.
13. A.D. Hérault. C896, to St. Priest 16-1-1782.
14. Id.
15. Id., to St. Priest, 19-1-1782.
16. Id.
17. Id. to Saint Priest, 16-11-1782.
18. Id. to Id. 24-12-1782.
19. Rabaut Saint-Etienne, loc.cit. p.126.
20. See above p.365 et seq.
21. A.D. Hérault. C 896, 15-4-1783.
22. Id., 13-12-1783.
23. A.C. Nîmes. 00 21.

24. A.N. AB XIX 1438. Mémoire pour le Sr Froment, secrétaire-greffier de l'hotel de ville de Nîmes. Nîmes, 1785. On the author's identity, Cf. A.A.E. France. Corr.pol.636.
25. Mémoire cit. On the nature of the compoix cabaliste of G. Frêche. "Compoix, Propriété foncière ..." R.H.M.C. t. XVIII., 1971., p.326.
26. A.N. H 801. On the accuracy of these assertions, see pp. 463 et seq.
27. Id.
28. Id.
29. Id.
30. Id.
31. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>37</sup> 347 f<sup>o</sup> 299.
32. A.N. H 1000 "Memoire des syndics et deputes des corps de Commerce de Nîmes".
33. See A.C. Nîmes. pp. 14 & 15 for the register containing the declarations (or lack of them).
34. See above p.490.
35. A.D. Ardèche. J 236, Vincens to Boissy d'Anglas, 24-2-1788.
36. Id.
37. Journal de Nîmes. 24-7-1788.
38. A.D. Ardèche. J 236, to Boissy d'Anglas n.d.
39. A.C. Nîmes. UU 127 fo, 256v (10-3-1784). A.D. Gard 2E<sup>39</sup> 208 fo. 347v (Testament de Jeanne Surville). Id. 2E<sup>36</sup> 853 fo.531.
40. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 853 fo 531 main levée.
41. A.C. Nîmes. II I. Alexis Lavondès and his two sons, Jean-Pierre-Castor and Louis, were partners in the firm of Lavondès freres, which was dissolved in 1781. (A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 841 fo 905).
42. Cf. A.D. Gard. Préliminaire de la Défense de Jacques-François Descombiès, citoyen de Nîmes ... contre M.le Procureur du Roi. Nîmes. 1790.
43. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 184 f<sup>o</sup> 237v<sup>o</sup> (22-12-1745).
44. A.C. Nîmes. U 126 f<sup>o</sup>267. (19-12-1777).



45. A.D. Gard. 10J 4 8-7-1764. The identity of the Count in question has been impossible to discover.
46. A.D. Gard. 105 3 (n.d.).
47. Id.
48. Id.
49. Id.
50. Id. On these families, see above p.462 et seq.
51. On the affair, see J. Egret, Louis XV et l'Opposition Parlementaire. Paris, 1970.
52. A.D. Gard. 10J 3.
53. Id.
54. Id., 10J 4.
55. A.D. Gard. 10J 4.
56. His name does not appear in the various municipal reorganisations in Nîmes during the following decades.
57. A.D. Gard. 10J 5. (Liasse containing some 200 letters from de Chalbos to Descombies during the 1780's).
58. These, and the following details have been pieced together from A.D. Gard. Fonds Chapelain (unclassified); A.D. Ardèche. J 402 (papiers de la famille de Blou) unclassified. A.D. Gard 2E<sup>39</sup> 201 f<sup>o</sup> 261v; 2E<sup>36</sup> 849 f<sup>o</sup> 15 et seq.
59. A.D. Ardèche. 2C 3140. notaire Baissac. 16-2-1757.
60. Id. J 402. On Monteil, see above pp.391-393.
61. Id. 13-5-1787. Her dowry, of 82,000 livres, was made up of donations from these six relatives.
62. Id. On these latter, Protestant, families see above p.265-270.
63. A.D. Ardèche. 2C 3140 (18-4-1770). By the standards of the Vivarais, a dowry of 10,000 Lt was substantial.
64. He too inhabited Les Vans.
65. A.D. Hérault. C 158 to Breteuil, 27-1-1787.
66. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>57</sup> f<sup>o</sup> 64. 29-6-1772.
67. A.D. Ardèche. J 402 to de Blou. 2-7-1773.

68. Id. to Mme de Blou, 15-2-1775.
69. Cf. J. Egret. Louis XV et L'Opposition parlementaire. Paris, 1970. pp. 182 et seq.
70. A.D. Ardèche. J 402, to de Blou 3-10-1771.
71. The details which follow are contained in a long transaction registered with the notaire Darlhac at Nîmes (24-2-1780).
72. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> fo 261v (6-11-1771); A.D. Ardèche. 2E 3566 fo 219 Id. Fonds Chapelain. Livre de Mémoires sur les Biens de Lafonts. fo 138.
73. Etude Perussel, Les Vans. Registres de Baissac. Testaments de Marie Martin (4-4-1752) et d'Antoine-Joseph Martin (6-4-1752). A.D. Ardèche. 2E 3566 fo 48 22-2-1789. Id. J. 402 Inventaire des Biens de feu Me Martin, mari de Magdeleine de Garidel. Id. 5M 3. "Gilles."
74. A.D. Hérault. C158, 1-12-1786.
75. Id. and A.D. Gard. IE Fonds Chapelain, "Estimation des biens délaissés par feu Me J. Chalbos." The value of the estate had thus increased by 100%.
76. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>39</sup> 197f<sup>o</sup> 363v<sup>o</sup>; Serie B (unclassified) Register of Insinuations of the Présidial, 9-4-1745. Testament A. Trentignan.
77. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 849 f<sup>o</sup> 15 et seq.
78. Affourtit frères appears to have been a fairly substantial banking house in the 1780's. See above p. 165
79. A.D. Ardèche. J 402 30-5-1783. It has not been possible to discover the nature of the project in question.
80. A.D. Gard. 2E<sup>36</sup> 849 f<sup>o</sup> 15.
81. A.N. E 3707 f<sup>o</sup> 227.
82. A.D. Gard. 10J 5.
83. The dossier of the case may yet be found in Toulouse. The state of the archives of the Parlement prevents selective search.
84. See above pp. 469 et seq.
85. A.D. Hérault. C 158., to de Breteuil 27-1-1787. In this case, he is referring to the proceedings brought by de Chalbos' three aunts, over Joseph Chalbos' estate.

86. A.C. Nîmes. LL 43. Cf above pp.
87. A.D. Gard. 10J 3 & 10J 5.
88. See above pp. 11-13 . A.N. W. 256 Notice submitted for inclusion in Moreau de Mersan's Almanach des Trois Ordres on de Chalbos "dans le chateau duquel devait se tenir le comité central des sociétés royalistes d'Alais, Uzès, Barjac, et Villefort."
89. On Boissy d'Anglas, see above pp. 218 et seq.
90. A.D. Gard. 10J 5., to Descombiès, from Toulouse, 7-8-1786.
91. See above p. 515.



CONCLUSION

The political alignments of 1790 were the product of the relationship between the city and its hinterland, and the manner in which this relationship was understood. The disturbances in the Vivarais in 1783 and their protracted aftermath; the seditious assemblies of framework-knitters and silk workers in Nîmes in the summer of 1787; the long period of manoeuvre and intrigue within the city's municipality, all served to raise a question-mark over the relationship between changing forms of wealth and the nature of the social order. The revolutionary crisis and the project for major reforms of the institutions of monarchical government gave rise to an intense debate over these issues.

In the autumn of 1788 Jean-Marie-Antoine Griolet, who was shortly to become procureur-général-syndic of Gard, informed Boissy d'Anglas that their mutual friend Rabaut Saint-Etienne - "le savant" - was about to produce his contribution to the debate:

"De toutes les nouveautés que j'ai lues jusqu'à ce moment, aucune ne me paroît approcher de celle-ci. Depuis votre départ l'auteur y a ajouté une chapitre importante sur les puissances intermédiaires dans une monarchie. Il avance une opinion diamétralement opposée à celle de Montesquieu, et l'établit avec beaucoup de force et de raison."<sup>1</sup>

According to Vincens Saint-Laurent the work was "un livre qui renferme tous les vrais principes, un livre digne de Montesquieu, un livre qui semble de la main de cet auteur de l'Esprit des Lois, écrivant pour le peuple."<sup>2</sup>

The Montesquieu "pour le peuple" which was Saint-Etienne's Considérations sur les Intérêts du Tiers-Etat,<sup>3</sup> was, as Griolet said, a Montesquieu turned on his head, a Montesquieu whose idea

of the social order was based upon the dynamic development of civil society as the source of the circulation of experience and the extension of rationality. Instead of the ordered hierarchy of corporate bodies of De l'Esprit des Lois, Rabaut Saint-Etienne envisaged society as a lateral space, through which the ideas generated in the course of private activity were circulated by representative institutions. There was no place in this vision for any "puissance intermédiaire":

"Un homme tenant à un corps est deux hommes à la fois...Il a deux pensées: celle qu'il montre dans le monde et celle à laquelle il souscrit dans son assemblée."<sup>4</sup>

The political order envisaged by Rabaut Saint-Etienne was entirely transparent, free to adapt itself to the flux of behaviour produced in private activity. "Vous ne faites pas corps," he informed the Third Estate, "l'assemblée séparée, vous retournerez chacun dans vos foyers."<sup>5</sup> The classical distinction between the public and the private had been transcended.

Some months later, in July 1790, Louis-Joseph Bastide de Malbosc produced a substantially different assessment of the relationship between the public and the private. "La constitution te paraît sublime," he wrote to his son, from Berrias:

"Voilà l'excès dans ce jugement. Elle est l'ouvrage des hommes et elle se ressent par suite de la fragilité qui en est inséparable...Une monarchie aussi étendue que la notre a besoin d'une gradation, d'une subordination qui unissent sous les membres du corps national. La prospérité d'un état tient à la confiance et aux rapports qu'une bonne législation établit entre les individus qui le composent. Tirer de la poussière les classes qui y sont traînées, sans les mettre à la place de celles qui les y ont précipités, composer l'édifice social de manière que chacun y figure harmonieusement, voilà le grand acte des législateurs. Si les pierres de la maison tu habites étaient animés et qu'elles eussent chacune une



volonté...les chocs, les mouvements continuels  
 auraient bientôt bouleversé l'édifice."<sup>6</sup>

This was a vision of society at the opposite pole to that embodied in Rabaut Saint-Etienne's Considérations. The language of the one encompassed both social order and social change; the language of the other rigidly excluded the one from the other. For Bastide, "animation," "volonté," "chocs", "mouvements," were incompatible with "harmonie". Harmony was equated metaphorically to the stability of a building. For Rabaut Saint-Etienne, as for the authors of the Topographie de la Ville de Nîmes, harmony was equated to the free movement of experience and ideas. In these two perceptions of the social order, the ambiguities and tensions within Montesquieu's discourse upon society disintegrated. The resultant fissure amounted to a recognition of two substantially different images of the State, two competing claims upon the society which these images sought to explain. It was this fissure which was embodied in the frontier dividing royalists from revolutionaries in 1790.

And yet there is a paradox here. For, as we have seen, it was not the case that the material interests and "socio-professional" composition of royalism distinguished it from the faction to which it was opposed. The members of the Froment clan, the merchants or lawyers like François-Scipion Chevalier, the rural notables like de Chalbos or Louis-Antoine Delbosc, the nobles and anoblis, like de Marguerittes, Descombiès or de la Reyranlade all had their counterparts within the opposing faction. There is a symmetry of background and aspiration between "royalistes" and "patriotes" which cannot be ignored. Even the claims of "conspiracy" produced by

royalism can be set against the network of private connection which bound together the leaders of the royalism. A final example is offered by another component of the group involved in the royalist assemblies at Jalès, this one centred upon the figure of Claude Allier, prior of the parish of Chambonas, adjoining the village of Berrias.

Allier was a native of Mende, whose father, Jean, a cabaretier, moved to Nîmes in 1753 where he acquired an inn and eventually became a maître de la poste, before moving in 1782 from Nîmes to Pont Saint-Esprit, where he exercised the same two functions. Claude Allier received his lettres de sous-diaconat in 1766 at the age of 18 and was ordained as a priest in 1770. In 1772, as a deacon of the diocese of Nîmes, he was provided with the rectory of Saint-Etienne-du-Chemin in Nîmes and the benefices of the chapels of Saint-Mathieu and Saint-Véronique in the Cathedral.<sup>7</sup> In 1779 he was collated to the priory and cure of the village of Chambonas, on the northernmost edge of the diocese of Uzès.<sup>8</sup> A year later, he attempted to have Louis-Hyacinthe Bastide, the brother of Louis-Joseph Bastide de Malbosc, who was at that time vicar of the parish of Saint-Etienne at Uzès, nominated to one of the places in the chapel of Notre-Dame de Lavergne at Nîmes, of which, as rector of the rectory of Saint-Etienne-du-Chemin, he was one of the co-patrons.<sup>9</sup> Bastide, in his turn, had been sponsored at Uzès by the abbé Charles-Clément Bastide de la Molette, a canon of the Cathedral at Uzès, who had previously been secondaire of the



parish of Chambonas, and had sponsored Allier there. Bastide de la Molette, who was among the more prominent members of the quartier-général at Jalès, belonged to the cadet branch of a legal family from Villefort, which had acquired a number of seigneurial domains around the cévenol town and in the village of Les Assions near Les Vans from the ruins of the estates of the marquis de Morangiès from which the Chalbos had also profited. Like many of the nobliaux involved in royalism, the Bastide were seeking to establish themselves, rather than to avoid déchéance.<sup>10</sup> Charles-Clément Bastide was 43 in 1790; Claude Allier 42 and Louis-Hyacinthe Bastide 44. They were not untypical of that provincial "sub-intelligentsia" lying between the worlds of manufacture on the one hand, and the successful professions and prosperous merchants on the other, of which, in its way, Pierre Froment's mémoires were a chronicle. Patronage, connection, clientage served to structure their careers as it did the careers of those individuals who, in 1790, emerged as patriotes.

The sociological materialism of the recent historiography of the French Revolution has little explanatory power here. Lists of occupations, tables of the distribution of wealth, series of prices and wages offer no more than a number of external categories which fail to appropriate the content of the visions of the social order embodied in Froment's mémoires and Vincens' Topographie, or in Bastide's letter and Rabaut Saint-Etienne's "homage" to the Bishop of Nîmes. Such statements were not reflections of different "material" interests, but two different discourses upon the



monetarisation of social relations taking place in the late, eighteenth century. They shared a common problematic, concerned with the relationship between the accumulation of capital and the social order in the late eighteenth century. The anonymous mémoire contre les usurpateurs de la noblesse en Vivarès expressed the problem with clarity:

"La licence et l'impunité sembloient jusques à ce jour avoir fait de cette partie du Languedoc l'azile des abus et des crimes ... L'une des principales (causes) ... c'est la confusion qui y règne dans les différentes ordres de l'état."<sup>11</sup>

Statements such as this were relatively banal. They were the stock in trade of the Mazarinades of the mid-seventeenth century, or the lampoons of the fermiers-generaux of the eighteenth. The novelty is to be found not in the intuition of the disaggregation of a certain social order, but in the vision of the new social order embodied in the works of Rabaut Saint-Etienne or Vincens and Baumès. This vision was one which transcended the equation between social mobility and "licence"; between "opulence" and "le renversement de toute espece de subordination".<sup>12</sup> As such it was able to transcend the crisis of "connection" of the late eighteenth century, and, through the institutions of the modern state, envisage a form of social power mediated by money.

This vision of the social order was not something that was always-already there. It was not "carried" by a class. It was the means by which a class was able to constitute itself, in the course of a dynamic historical process. In Nîmes and its region, it was the product of the different places occupied by

"royalists" and "patriots" within a developing structure of commodity exchange. It was the product of the developing pressure "from below" - from the révolte des masques armés of 1783, from the insubordination of the silk weavers and travailleurs de terre of Nîmes in 1787 - upon the mechanisms of paternalism and clientage of the eighteenth century monarchy. It was this pressure which made it possible for a parvenu like Bastide de Malbosc to appropriate the language of Loiseau against the gens d'affaires of the Vivarais, and which equally made it possible for a parvenu like Boissy d'Anglas to appropriate the language of political economy against the pretensions of "the aristocracy". Royalists and patriots were divided not by occupation or aspiration but by the mechanisms of social power embodied in their perceptions of the social order.

These perceptions were the product of the different places which each group came to occupy within the hierarchy of circuits of exchange articulated around the city. The careers of so many of the figures who emerged as royalists in 1790 testify to an inability to preserve the credit and ties of association which would have allowed them to escape their "bas état", as Pierre Froment had sought to do. The patriotes of 1789 had done this. The institutions of the new political order which they created offered a different mode of organisation of this trajectory, and a different relationship to the mass of those seeking to create the material independence and future accumulation, which the institutions and symbols of the old regime were unable to provide. Royalism,

in this sense, was the product of a long interrogation of the implications of social mobility, an interrogation which the crisis of 1789-1790 served to resolve.



Notes - Conclusion

1. A.D. Gard. J 236, 14-11-1788
2. Id., 2-12-1788.
3. British Museum. R.48(2).
4. Id. p.53.
5. Id. p.105.
6. A.D. Ardèche. L311; Fonds Mazon, Chr.13.f<sup>o</sup>44.
7. A.C. Mende. 99 09 f<sup>o</sup>19v<sup>o</sup>, baptism, 6-7-1748, A.D. Gard 2E<sup>3o</sup>843. f<sup>o</sup>103; 2E<sup>3o</sup>909 f<sup>o</sup>16v<sup>o</sup>; 2E<sup>3o</sup>920 f<sup>o</sup>62; 2E<sup>3o</sup>919 f<sup>o</sup>235; G 925 f<sup>o</sup>131, 2E<sup>4o</sup>873 f<sup>o</sup>142v<sup>o</sup>.
8. A.D. Gard. G 944, 12-8-1779.
9. Id. G929, 21-7-1780.
10. Id. 1E Chartrier de Vielvic, 32.
11. Bibl. de l'Arsenal Mss 6085.
12. Id.

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1B 96, 24B 9-10, 25B 69, 79-81, 44B 17-18, 131B, 133B, 134B. These papers contain a mass of information on rural credit and the disturbances of 1783.

Serie C. (Administration Générale). 62, 372, 509, 715, 1079, 1083-84, 1087-1090, 1135-36, 1511, 1514-15.

Serie IIC. (Centième Denier and Tables de Contrats de Mariage).

The registers of the centième denier have not survived for the Bas-Vivarais. My use of this series was limited to sampling for the purposes of retracing genealogies.

Serie IE.(Familles), classified alphabetically. No large collections survive relevant to this thesis. Two small liasses labelled Bastide and Folacher were of limited use.

Serie 2E. (notaires). A large proportion of the notarial registers pertaining to the region around Les Vans remain in private hands. I am grateful to M<sup>e</sup> Perussel of Les Vans for allowing me to use the registers housed in his étude. Detailed references are provided in the text. Registers pertaining to the regions around Joyeuse and Largentière are classified in the archives of the Ardèche under the cotes 2E Minutier Joyeuse or Largentière; detailed references are given in the text to specific deeds involving rural credit. The registers of Thomas Marron, 2E 3548-3568 were also examined in detail.

Serie 3E. (communes): 203/2.

Serie 4E (état-civil). The registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials of the parishes of Banne, Berrias, Grospierres, Gravières, Les Vans, Malbosc, Saint-André-de-Cruzières and Saint-Sauveur-de-Cruzières were examined for the purpose of retracing family alliances.

Serie F: 15 & 22.

Serie J: 180, 236, 239, 248, 283, 402, 423. The côtes J236 and 239 contain a valuable collection of letters sent to Boissy d'Anglas, mainly by friends in Nîmes between 1772 and 1790.

Serie K: 4K8 (dossier on prophets in the 100 days).



Serie L: In addition to providing the basic information on the personnel of the camps at Jalès, this series also contains a mass of material arising from obscure local conflicts.

276; 277; 281; 292; 93; 94; 95; 311, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. 342; 402-10; 541; 654; 719; 779, 780; 893; 895; 897; 901; 909; 923; 925; 933; 937, 941; 980, 81; 1193; 1195; 1197; 1202; 1209; 1212; 1213; 1216; 1218; 1222; 1223; 1241; 1242; 1248<sup>1</sup> & 1248<sup>2</sup> 1256, 57, 58; 1267, 68; 1270; 1272; 1288; 1527; 1528.

Serie M: 5M 3-4, 5M 7, 6M 26.

Fonds Mazon. This is a vast collection of original documents and transcriptions of documents made by Albin Mazon in the early years of the Third Republic. The following volumes were used: Chronologie 11, 12, 13.

Miscellany 25-26, 34, 65-68, 72.

Unclassified: Papers of the Johannot, paper manufacturers, at Annonay.

A.D. Gard

Serie B. The papers of the Présidial of Nîmes have not as yet been classified. They appear, however, to be of considerable value. Thanks to the kindness of M.J. Sablou and M.Y. Chassin du Guerny, I was able to make as much use of them as their current state of disorder allowed. The material used consisted of:

A) A series of 30 liasses of inventories running from the 1680's to the early 1770's. These were particularly full for the period 1690-1730, containing a number of very detailed inventories of the papers and stock of some of the city's merchants. After 1740, these liasses also contain a number of bilans of bankrupt merchants.

B) 12 Registers of Insinuations of wills and other transactions at the Présidial, running from 1748 to 1790.

C) The fragments of the commercial papers of a number of partnerships which ended in bankruptcy during the eighteenth century. The following were represented among these papers:

- Chabaud & Pison, c.1695-c.1717: The papers consisted mainly of brouillons, of little use, together with a livre des achats and a livre de lettres de voiture.

- Reynaud & Guiraud, c.1719-1737: Two Grands-Livres, and 2 Journaux.

- Bousquet & Cie, c.1732-1736: a livre de copies de lettres and several livres des ouvriers.

- Ourson frères, c.1740-1769: numerous livres d'achats de cocons and livres de filature, and 2 cahiers de copies de lettres.

- David Pastre, c.1752-1763: livre de copies de lettres.

- Jacques Gervais, c.1770's: livre de copies de lettres.

- Sagnier & Lozeran, c.mid-eighteenth century: Grand Livre.

- Isaac-Antoine Allutt, c.1789-1799: Grand Livre.



D) A livre de raison c.1720-1757 belonging to an inhabitant of Villeneuve-les-Avignon, named Francois Malint.

E) A liasse containing papers belonging to Pierre Froment, greffier, of the municipality until 1785.

Serie C: 178, 183, 769, 772, 798-9, 1072-3, 1121, 1338, 1595-7, 1605-11, 1615-1631, 1637, 1639-41, 1684-1698, 1710, 1714, 1866.

Serie IIC: (centième denier): 305-361.

Tables de contrats de mariages: 101, 206, 465-467, 586, 659, 763, 817, 835.

Serie IE. (Familles): 53-66, 78, 81, 84-87, 89, 90, 93, 95, 108-9, 115. (seigneurie de Barjac), together with IJ 137; 1029; 2073-2090 (Papers of the Manbel of Nogaret); 2107; 173, 876, 992 (miscellaneous).

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a) Chartrier de Clausonne: containing the commercial papers of the Fornier family. Detailed references to this source are provided in the text.

b) Papers of the merchant Francois Fabre-Lichaire, containing two livres de copies de lettres, 1777-1792, and two bilans of his affairs.

c) Fonds Colomb de Daunant: containing the Grand-Livre of Marc-Antoine Colomb, 1744-1782.

d) Chartrier de Vielvic: containing papers related to the Bastide de la Molette and Chapelain families.

Serie 2E.(notaires): The registers of all the notaires who practised in Nîmes during the century survive and are housed in the archives of the Gard. All the registers covering the periods 1705-9 and 1785-9 were examined during a collection of all the marriage contracts covering these years. In addition, all the registers of the notaires Montfaucon, Tempié, Seguin, Nicolas and Marignan were examined in detail. Extensive soundings were also made in notarial registers of Uzès, Saint-Ambroix, Saint-Jean-de-Valériscle, Robiac, Castilhon-et-Courry and Alès. Precise references to particular deeds are given in the text.

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Serie IVE. (état-civil): soundings were made for genealogical purposes, and precise references are given in the text.

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Serie IIIF. (factums): 5, 18.

Serie G. 57, 687-739, 911-928, 943-944, 1056-1061, 1305-1306, 1317.

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