

Chapter 9

Huguenot and Medieval Families

When one looks at the Boileau charts on pages 145 and 146 one sees that the Boileau de Castelnaud were connected, as one might expect, to a range of other French families, such as de Vignolles, Collot d'Escury, de Calvière and de Montcalm, each of which had an extensive lineage of their own. We have already dealt with the Jessups in Chapter 8. In this chapter we deal with some of the other French families, mostly Huguenot, to which the Boileau were connected. Realistically, it's not possible to do a complete job of this, as the connections are too extensive, and not all that well known. Neither do I have good sources for most of them, mostly just Chesnaye-Desbois [21], the French equivalent of Burke, and just as error-ridden. However, every so often a brighter light shines, which makes the effort worthwhile.

At the end of this chapter I provide a brief pointer to the medieval families in our ancestry. They quickly become far too complicated for anything more than the most cursory consideration, but they are also very well known. Any interested reader can easily find them out for themselves.

Desbrisay

On the 6th of August, 1741, Simeon Boileau (my 6G grandfather) married Magdalena Elizabeth Desbrisay (surprisingly enough, my 6G grandmother) and proceeded to have 16 children (see page 158, and the chart on page 145). As it happens, Magdalena came herself from a most interesting family. However, although it's interesting it's also highly confusing; there is very little information about her father and grandfather, and great uncertainty over their exact birth and death dates. Lart [46] gets his Desbrisay dates completely and utterly wrong. He has, for example, Magdalena Desbrisay being born one year before the birth of her father. Even for Huguenots, this would be tricky. At least one spurious generation is inserted by Lart, and other sources seem sometimes to follow him blindly. So what you are about to read is an informed guess only.¹

Magdalena's grandfather was **Captain Théophile (i) de la Coeur Desbrisay**, supposedly born in 1671², who first appears on the 1st of July, 1689, when he received a commission in one of the French Huguenot Regiments of William of Orange [1]. These regiments were formed directly after the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, in which William of Orange invaded England, booted out James II, and called himself William III.³ After his arrival in England, it became apparent to William that he was going to have to fight another war in Ireland (which culminated in the Battle of the Boyne, in 1690), and thus he formed four Huguenot regiments, commanded by prominent Huguenots; François du Cambon, Charles Massue de La Caillemotte and Isaac de Monceau de La Melonière commanded three infantry regiments, while a cavalry regiment was commanded by Frederick Herman von Schomberg, a former marshal of the French army. When Cambon died soon after the Battle

¹Don Lowe has been particularly helpful in teaching me about the Desbrisay family. A lot of his information is at <http://www.islandregister.com/desbrisay1.html> and <http://www.desbrisay.ca/>. He doesn't always give sources unfortunately.

²I have never seen any reference for this date, so I approach it with considerable scepticism.

³You can tell he won because it was called the Glorious Revolution. If he'd lost, the enterprise would have been called the Orange Invasion.

of the Boyne, his regiment was commanded by Frédéric Guillaume de Rochefoucauld, Comte de Marton, afterwards the Earl of Lifford. As a side note, Cambon was trained as an engineer, but made a huge fuss whenever called upon to exercise those talents; presumably he thought it beneath him. He was insubordinate and contrary, perpetually squabbling with his fellow officers and his superiors, leading Schomberg to describe him as a “chicanier sur ses mathématiques”. I don’t know how to translate this properly, but it means something like a mathematical nit-picker, or pedant, or squabbler, or all around pain in the arse one suspects. Most likely the mathematical bit was the worse insult.

Théophile’s 1689 commission was in Cambon’s regiment so he was clearly one of the Huguenots recruited by William of Orange for his Irish war. In 1698, Cambon’s regiment, now Lord Lifford’s regiment, was disbanded, and Théophile’s name appears again, in a “List of the Staff and Standing Officers of the Earl of Lifford’s Regiment of Foot”.

On the 19th of July, 1700, we find in the Treasury Books¹ that Captain Desbrisay was acting as an attorney for Dame Mary de Beaupey “praying payment of 15l. 10s. 8d. due to her son as a Reformed Ensign in Lord Lifford’s Regiment and of 7l. 10s. 2d. due to him [Desbrisay] as attorney of Peter de Brisac, Ensign in the said Regiment.” It seems likely that this is Théophile, so his skills were presumably legal as well as military.

Théophile then disappears from view. Apparently, the burial of a Théophile DesBrisay is recorded on an old and almost obliterated inscription on a tomb stone in the Huguenot Cemetery in Merion Row, St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin, bearing the date 15th July, 1767, together with the names of Simeon Boileau, aged 50, and John Boileau. However, the date on this tombstone is clearly the date of Simeon’s death, not of Théophile’s death, so the common interpretation, that Théophile lived to the age of 96, is both unlikely and unsupported. Note that the name on this grave cannot refer to Simeon’s father-in-law, Théophilus (ii) Desbrisay, as he didn’t die until 1772 (for which we have a newspaper announcement² to prove it). Hence, the Théophile buried with Simeon Boileau is possibly the elder Théophile (i), Simeon’s father-in-law’s father. One likely candidate for the John Boileau in this grave is the brother of Simeon, who died in 1722, aged only 1.

Although I don’t believe that Théophile (i) lived to be 96, it seems that he lived at least until his 70s in Dublin (where his son Théophilus (ii) was based, as we shall see); he appears in a 1907 history of Dublin [25] as a figure of some amusement:

A strange figure was Captain Debrisay when upwards of 70 years of age still wearing the dress of the reign of Charles II³, ‘a large cocked-hat all on one side his face, nearly covering his left eye; a great powdered wig, hanging at the side in curls, and in the centre at the back a large black cockade with a small drop curl from it; his embroidered waistcoat down to his knees; the top of his coat not within three inches of his neck, the hip buttons about a foot from it; buttons all the way down the coat but only one at the waist buttoned; the hilt of the sword through the opening of the skirt ; a long cravat, fringed, the end pulled through the third button-hole; small buckles; the coat sleeves very short, and the shirt sleeves pulled down, but hid by the top of the gloves, and the ruffles hanging out at the opening of the cuff; the waistcoat entirely open except the lower button, displaying the finely plaited frill’. Such, in his bodily presentment, was the old courtier who we learn ‘walked the streets of Dublin unremarked.’

Since King Charles II died in 1685, Théophile, born in 1671, might well have been wearing clothes of the fashion of that time, so this account is consistent with other information I have. That’s about the best that can be said, without a lot more research.

According to Lart, Théophile (i) married **Madelaine Boisrond de St. Leger**, about whom I think I know a little (see page 192). They married on the 13th of December, 1692, at the Savoy Temple in London, and had two children; the elder, Magdalaine Marie de la Cour, was born in 1693 and married Solomon Blosset de Loches, a brigadier-general in “La Melonières” Regiment of Foot.

¹Warrants etc: July 1700, 16-31’. Calendar of Treasury Books, Volume 15: 1699-1700 (1933), pp. 411-428.

²*Londonderry Journal*, 3 June 1772

³Referring here to King Charles II of England, Ireland, Scotland etc, not to Charles (ii) Boileau.



A bookplate of Théophilus (ii) Desbrisay, showing the Desbrisay crest on the left impaling the d'Aubussargues arms on the right (from his wife, Magdalene de Vergèze d'Aubussargues; page 193).

The second child of Théophile (i) and Madelaine Boisrond de St. Leger was **Captain Théophilus (ii) de la Coeur Desbrisay**, born in 1694. His full name was possibly Samuel Théophilus, or Samuel-Théophile, but there is considerable confusion as to the exact number of generations and their respective names. The Dictionary of Canadian Biography claims that Captain Théophilus was baptised Samuel-Théophile. However, other family researchers say that Samuel-Théophilus was a Cornet in the 4th Troop of the 3rd Horse, or King's Carabiniers, on the 14th of November, 1749, which is so unlikely as to verge on the impossible, if he was born in 1694. People of his rank were not in the army as a cornet at the age of 55. Either Samuel-Théophile was the son of Captain Théophilus, or there is some mistake in the army commission. It seems most likely to me that this Cornet was a third Théophilus, the son of Théophilus (ii), and the grandson of Captain Théophile (i).

Théophilus (ii) married **Magdalene de Vergèze d'Aubussargues** (see page 193) in 1718, and they had ten children. One daughter, **Magdalena Elizabeth**, married Simeon Boileau, and thus, eventually, there came me. For more details, and their descendants, see page 158. Of the sons of Théophilus and Magdalene d'Aubussargues, four entered the army and ended up as a general, a captain, a lieutenant-general and a colonel; Peter died in 1759 while defending Basse-Terre, in Guadeloupe¹. A fourth son was a Reverend, while a fifth was a colonial administrator in Canada (see below). The other girls made various marriages, and had various children.

Théophilus (ii) remained a Captain in the army; he was the Agent for the 2nd Regiment of Foot at Cork Hill, according to the "List of General and Field Officers as They Rank in the Army 1754," which is in the Library of the British Museum. There exists voluminous correspondence from the period 1760–1768, between him and Sir Robert Wilmot, Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, about various military matters. It all looks terribly dull, to be honest. Bills, troop movements, and

¹Mind you, he was lucky to live even up to 1759. In 1746, at the Battle of Rocaux, he was bayoneted at least 13 times but survived. God knows how.

so on. A Captain Théophilus Desbrisay appears in a few other official documents; he was the Irish agent of the 39th from 1752–9, which doesn't entirely agree with the List quoted above, in which he was the agent for the 2nd Regiment. Maybe there is a simple military explanation for this, or maybe he was the agent for both of them, or maybe a different Captain Théophilus Desbrisay is meant. I'm not sure.

In 1732, someone of the same name was put on half pay as a "reduced captain of horse". This is possibly the elder Captain Théophile (i), who would have been about 61; it's unlikely to be the younger Théophilus (ii), who was still an army agent some 30 years later.

The most intriguing entry is in Treasury documents from 1771¹, a year before Théophilus died, which read "Votes of the House of Commons': that a committee be appointed to enquire into the disposition of the effects of debtor Theophilus Desbrisay". Well, well. Does this mean that our Théophilus died a debtor, of such a scale that he required a House of Commons committee? I find this hard to believe, but there is no denying the existence of the document. Maybe the document refers to an entirely different person. That Theophilus was not wealthy is confirmed by a letter he wrote to his son in 1769, which is reproduced below. In it he says that, given his circumstances, he couldn't show his affection by real effects; this is entirely consistent with a bankruptcy in 1771.

Questions: There are clear indications that Theophilus Debrisay was relatively poor towards the end of his life, probably a debtor. There is probably a story here, and I'd like to find it out. One day. I bet that Irish military records, or local Dublin records will contain more information about this. Or are there any followups to the House of Commons document?

Captain Théophilus (ii) died in Glasnevin, Dublin on the 5th of July, 1772; an announcement of his death appeared in the Londonderry Journal on the 15th of July. His wife, Magdalena survived him by a few years, dying on the 13th of December, 1788, also in Dublin.

One reason that so many people have been interested in Captain Théophilus de la Coeur Desbrisay is that one of his sons, Thomas, born in 1735, went to Prince Edward Island in Canada, where he became a prominent colonial administrator, and left a lot of descendants².

In 1769, Théophilus wrote the following letter to Thomas, on the occasion of Thomas leaving for his assignment on Prince Edward Island. To my mind it gives a nice insight into the sort of man Théophilus was.

Dear Tom,

As by all appearances, at my great age, I cannot hope to see you more after you leave this Kingdom³ and my circumstances not affording me the means of showing you my affection by real effects, I shall at least discharge a duty by laying before you such advices for the conduct of your life, which if attended to may be conducive to your welfare and happiness.

Let me observe to you:

1. That your principal duty is to offer daily your worship to the Supreme being, not only in private, but let your family join you in acts of devotion morning and evening. In the post wherein it hath pleased God to place you, you are not to consider yourself alone, but to be an example to others. This you will do by never neglecting, with your family, to attend the Public Worship.
2. As Lieutenant-Governor of St. John's Island I think there are many obligations laid on you and the mentioning of some of them may, I hope, be of use.
3. In regard to the Inhabitants of the Island whom His Majesty hath laid under your inspection, be to them affable and courteous, but especially to the Officers immediately

¹National Archives, T 1/484 Treasury: papers.

²And Americans and Canadians, in particular, seem to be fanatical about genealogy. Well, lots of them anyway.

³He never did, dying only three years after he wrote this letter.

attending on Public business be civil but not familiar. Have no favorites and beware to let any one get an ascendancy over you. Reward virtue and punish vice without showing any partiality in either case. Be just and fear not. Dare to be wise.

4. Be very sparing in giving Entertainments. From a long experience I have found that they answer no end, insomuch that those persons who have eat your meat and drunk your wine will look upon it as a small obligation and perhaps blame you in their minds.

5. Be constantly on your guard against being tempted to make any advantages, that perhaps they may appear innocent. Money making is a dangerous snare and avarice hath often perverted the best minds who, when out of reach of temptation, thought themselves secure from that vice.

6. As you may be allowed to dispose of employments, do not stretch your authority too much to your advantage, forever give the preference to merit tho at your loss. By this method you will gain friends. His Majesty's service will be better promoted and you will have the inward satisfaction of having acted by the rules of generosity, disinterestedness and with sentiments abhorring a filthy lucre.

7. You will, I suppose, have plans of Worship of different denominations. In general people are very tenacious of their religious principles. When their differences are laid open History will inform us to what length opinions and prejudice will carry men. The consequences are always fatal. If any such arise in your island, these as governor you may compose, by an impartial behaviour accompany'd with gentleness and moderation. If you can compass this great end, your island will be peaceable and every particular member will apply himself to his private affairs and consult the good of the whole. Do not suffer party's of any kind to take root. Prevent them at their first appearance, but always with good manners.

8. Apply yourself to Agriculture and Horticulture. This will employ some hours in each day, take you from Idleness, and will occasion such reflections, as will raise your thoughts, and fill your mind with sublime ideas by admiring the works of Providence and will give you an amiable taste to virtue, which will every day increase.

I have now laid before you some few leads for your conduct, to which you may add your own reflections, and enlarge upon them. As to the passions ingrafted in us, by our nature, or to speak better by Providence and what relates to the education of your children, you are come to that time of life, that I should be sorry that you should want advice.

I most ardently pray God that He may bless you, you and yours, that He may sow in your minds seeds of morality and virtue, that you may pass the days of your pilgrimage with all those who belong to you, in health, happiness and comfort and the conscienceness of doing well.

Amen

(signed) Théophilus Desbrisay, London, England 1769.

Connection to the earlier De Brisay family

There probably isn't one, but it's worth a quick look as this question has been a source of discussion for over a century. The point is that there is a super-famous De Brisay, or De Brizé, family, connected closely to the French royal family, with a lineage that extends back well into medieval times. Not only this, but there is a very plausible story that can be constructed as to how the Huguenot Desbrisays were connected to the famous French De Brisays. As far as I'm aware, this story was first put about by the Reverend Henry de la Coeur Desbrisay in about 1884, and was promoted by Jane Alicia Innes when she constructed the Big Boileau Chart [11].

The story goes as follows: Pierre de Brisay, Chevalier and Seigneur de Denonville married Jacqueline d'Orléans de Longueville (a recognised illegitimate daughter of Claude d'Orléans de Longueville, the Grand Chamberlain of France, and a descendant of King Charles V of France) was

the first of the family to become a Protestant. His son, Jacques de Brisay, was born at Denonville in 1579 but fled to Holland where he died at Heusden in 1625, leaving a son, Pierre, by his wife, Judith d'Argenson. Pierre, however, with an eye to the main chance, converted back to Catholicism, and headed off back to France to pick up his considerable fortune and continue the family line. I can't say I blame him. His children became very rich and very famous. All correct so far.

However – and here is the crucial step – Jacques remained in Holland, and may well have had other children. They are not mentioned, of course, by any French genealogist; Huguenot progeny were usually completely ignored. But then, neither are they mentioned by anybody else, French or otherwise. There is no record yet found that links Jacques de Brisay, Seigneur de Denonville, who died in Holland in 1625, with Théophile de la Coeur Desbrisay, who first appears as a Captain in Holland in 1698. It's possible they were related; it's possible they weren't. We just cannot say.

The authors of the Big Boileau Book [10] are scathing about this claimed connection, saying baldly that it's total nonsense, and the two families are quite unrelated. Well, this may well be true, but I wish they'd given a few more details. In general, the Big Boileau Book is very reliable, so I tend to believe it, but it's unlikely to end the arguments.

So, make up your own mind. If you're happy in an evidence vacuum, and you really want to be descended from the Kings of France, then by all means believe the story. If you're more of a sceptic like myself, don't. It's up to you.

St. Leger de Boisrond

Although it's technically correct that I know nothing at all about Madelaine Boisrond de St. Leger (the wife of Captain Théophile (i) de la Coeur Desbrisay, see page 188), I believe I do know a little. It is known that **Réné de St. Leger**, Seigneur de Boisrond et de Orignac was the Protestant commander of a French regiment at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Although he converted to Catholicism, his wife and children did not, deciding to flee the country. One of his sons, **Samuel de St. Leger de Boisrond**, entered Brandenburg service before joining Cambon's Huguenot regiment in England. Another of his sons, Henri, also served in Ireland in one of the Huguenot regiments. It is implausible that Madelaine Boisrond de St. Leger was anything other than closely related to Samuel and Henri, either their sister or the daughter of one of them. Note that Samuel was in the same regiment as Théophile; indeed, he was a lieutenant-colonel (commissioned in September, 1690), while Théophile was a mere captain. They appear together in the list in Agnew [1]. So it's most likely that Madelaine was the sister or daughter of Samuel.

Réné's other son, Henri, was naturalised by an act of Parliament, wherein it states that he was the son of Réné Boisrond de St. Leger, by Benine, his wife, born in the province of Saintonge in France [47]. One of Henri's sons was called Théophile, who was presumably named after the good Captain, either his aunt's husband or his cousin's husband.

Agnew claims that the wife and daughter of Réné were refugees in England (which confirms that Réné had a daughter), and says that the daughter was imprisoned in France, being conveyed from one convent to another from 1685 to 1688, but, upon proving 'obstinate', was banished. We don't know this daughter was Madelaine, but it might have been. It's certainly consistent with a marriage date of 1692.

All in all, there can be little doubt that we've now found Madelaine's family.

Pursuing the St. Leger family a little further, a 1698 list of the nobility of the region around La Rochelle lists "de SAINT-LEGER, seigneurs de Boisrond, d'Orignac, etc., . . . *De gueules, à la croix écartelée d'argent et d'azur, cantonnée de 4 fleurs de lys d'or.*" So a red background, a silver and blue cross with golden fleurs de lys. Sounds quite nice, doesn't it? It'd make a nice cushion. More history of the St. Leger family appears in the *Archives Historiques de la Saintonge et de L'Aunis* [4]. The first Réné de Saint-Légier, Seigneur de Boisrond et de la Montagne, married **Péronne de Pradel** in 1560, and was still living in 1582. His son, another **Réné**, became the Seigneur d'Orignac by virtue of his 1578 marriage to an eleven-year-old heiress, **Marie Le Forestier**, dame de Lussac et d'Orignac. This second Réné was killed at the siege of Brouage in 1585, when Marie would have been only 18, but they still managed to reproduce. One can only feel sorry for Marie.

The final mention of this family in the archives of Saintonge is in 1686 (or 1687), when François-Louis de Bourbon wrote a letter to Monsieur de Boisrond, in Pons. The recipient was “Réné de Saint Légier de Boisrond, IV du nom, dit ‘Le Forestier’ et surnommé ‘Fine Plume’ ”; this Réné was also the author of some memoirs, but I have not been able to find out much about them. The only extract from them I’ve found [57] is a couple of pages that don’t mention his family, and a short introduction that says “Boisrond is a Saintongeais Gentleman; a converted Protestant by necessity, and combining in his person the grace, spirit and legendary insouciance of the French Nobility. His wife and children were refugees in Holland; his person, his servants and his goods were in peril; but he did not cease, for a single day, to continue his gay parties in Paris, in Saintes, and in the chateaux of his friends. The style of his *Memoires* is sharp and clever, with a Gallic twist; there is nothing more amiable.” Right. So his wife went off to danger and privation, while he stayed behind with the money and partied on. Quite the insouciant French noble, no doubt. I’m quite sure I don’t like Réné de Saint Légier de Boisrond, IV du nom, dit ‘Le Forestier’ et surnommé ‘Fine Plume’.

Vergèze d’Aubussargues

Magdalene de Vergèze d’Aubussargues, the wife of Théophilus Desbrisay (page 189), came from a Huguenot family that has a rather uncertain history, difficult to piece together from the available sources. Probably the most reliable account is that given in the 1911 volume of the *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français* [14], and this is what I follow here.

The first of this family who became a Protestant was **Antoine de Vergèze**. His son **Claude**, married in 1570 to **Domergue de Joanis**, had a son **Nicholas**, who, in 1621, was in charge of the fort of Sainte-Anastasie, overlooking the Gardon river (and thus, interestingly, close to Castelnau. Aubussargues is almost exactly halfway between Castelnau and Uzès; see Map 7).

Jean d’Aubussargues, the son of Nicholas, married **Bonne de Barjac** in 1638, and had a number of children, two of whom, **Jacques**, the elder, and Jean, are known to have fled France at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It’s difficult to know what they did abroad, as they were both usually just called Daubussargues, or Daubessargue, and only sometimes do we also find any other identifying name.

Upon leaving France, Jacques succeeded the Vicomte de Saint-Bonnet as the commander of the Grand Musketeers in Brandenburg, where he also commanded the Horse Grenadiers, an elite corps formed by the Grand Elector at the same time as the Grand Musketeers, that admitted only those of honourable birth or proven valour. However, by 1698 Jacques was in Ireland, a Colonel in Galway’s regiment. He died in Dublin in 1720.

When he left France, Jacques left behind his wife, **Madeleine Gasc** (the daughter of the co-seigneur de Sanilhac and the consul of Uzès in 1636) and his ten children, to protect their inheritance. She raised their children, who inherited the family wealth, her husband having fled, and finally rejoined her husband in Dublin, in about 1702, where she died sometime after 1714. Apparently, she called herself Madon de Gas. One of the ten children she raised by herself in France was another **Jacques**, while two of the girls were called Madeleine and Jeanne. I know nothing about any others. It’s likely that this younger Jacques was a Captain in Galway’s regiment in 1698, the same regiment where his father was a Colonel, although his name isn’t given by Agnew [1].

Finally, it is this younger Jacques who was, according to family tradition, the father of Magdalene, who married Théophilus Desbrisay. This is, let me emphasise, only tradition, not genealogy. Historically, there is little doubt of the connection between our Madeleine and the other de Vergèze d’Aubussargues; genealogically, there is no specific proof, and is thus technically unacceptable.

Just to add to the confusion, there were at least three Madeleine de Vergèze d’Aubussargues in Dublin at various times. One was the wife of Colonel Jacques, who signed herself Madon de Gas. Another was the Madeleine who married Théophilus Desbrisay, while the third was the wife of Jean de Vergèze d’Aubussargues, the brother of Colonel Jacques. Jean and his wife lived in Dublin for a time, before moving to Switzerland, where they remained for the rest of their lives.

The d’Aubussargues coat-of-arms was *De sinople à un lévrier courant à fasce d’argent accolé de gueules bordé d’or accompagné de 4 roses d’argent boutonnées*. That is, a dark green background,

with a silver running greyhound, collared in red and bordered in gold, surrounded by four silver roses. Very stylish. This is illustrated on page 189, in a bookplate of Théophilus Desbrisay.

Collot d'Escury

My 6G grandfather, Charles Boileau, married Mary Magdalena Collot d'Escury (page 157), and, as it happens, we know a lot about her family. A surprising amount, actually, because Magdalena's father and her brother wrote a few pages about themselves and their parents¹, pages which are reproduced in the 1861 volume of the *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* [13]. I've translated most of it (well, Dad helped), although there are still bits I don't understand as my French is truly awful. However, I get pretty close most of the time, I think. The first part of this was written by Magdalena's father, Daniel Collot d'Escury, before he married and had children, and it contains an account of what Daniel's grandfather had told him about his own life. The second part was written by one of Magdalena's brothers, and continues the account of the family. It's truly a priceless account of the Collot d'Escury.

But we not done yet! There is more! A lady by the name of Susannah Proctor Flory published in 1896 a book called *Fragments of Family History* [26], in which she described at length her ancestors, including those of the Collot d'Escury variety². I don't know how, but she clearly had access to family papers that are now quite likely lost, including the diary of Daniel Collot d'Escury, and the letters patent that proved the family's nobility. There is a copy of this book in, I believe, both the British Library and the Huguenot library in London, but I've never seen it. However, Vince O'Grady sent me copies of quite a few pages from this book, so a big thank you to him. Where they can be compared, Flory's book agrees in all material aspects with the account in [13], so I trust it.

Finally, there is in the Mormon library, *Archieven van het geslacht Collot d'Escury. Deel I. Het familiearchief 1611-1939 : met oudere stukken van aanverwante geslachten*, by F. de Wijs (i.e., The family archive of the Collot d'Escury family of the Netherlands³, with older documents of related families). Who'd have thought the Mormons would ever be useful for anything? I have never read any of these archives, but one day I might get around to it. As long as they're not written in Dutch, which, come to think of it, they probably are. That would be a problem.

So, the Collot d'Escury. They were yet another Huguenot family, forced to flee France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The males took service in various Protestant armies, the major one of which was that led by William of Orange, and thus ended up in England, Ireland, or Holland, where they met hordes of other Huguenots in identical circumstances. The girls followed along until they could find a husband. This is the same story as the Boileau de Castelnau, the Desbrisay, the Boisrond de St. Leger, and the d'Aubussargues, all families that we have seen before.

The early Collot d'Escury

According to Lart [46] the earliest known ancestor of the Collot d'Escury was **Jean Collot**, who was known to be living in 1531. He married the **Dame de Chaumont** and had a son, **Louis**, who married **Adelaide de Drouilly**, through whom he became the seigneur de Drouilly. I'm not sure how much faith we should put in these details, but they're all we have, so there's no real point in throwing them away.

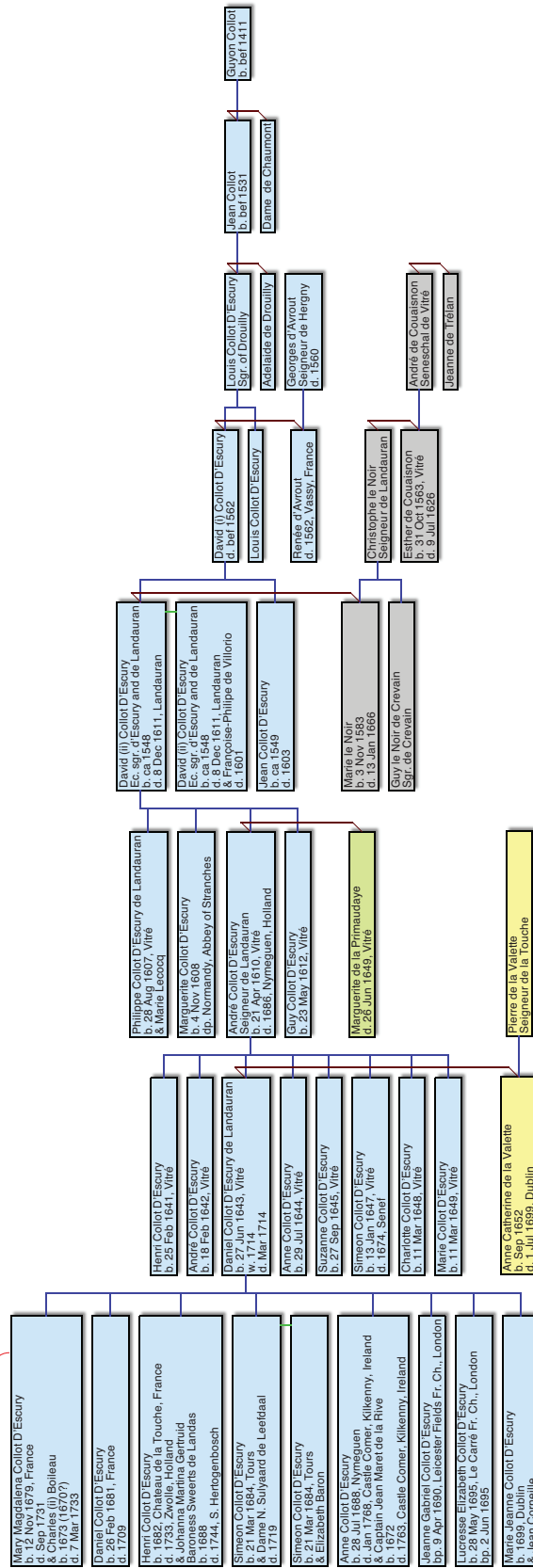
However, with the next generation we stand on slightly firmer ground. Louis and Adelaide had two sons, **David (i) Collot d'Escury** and **Louis**. David married **Renée d'Avrout**, whom we know was a Huguenot, as she was murdered in the Vassy massacre of 1562. On the 1st of March, 1562, François, the second Duke of Guise, travelling to his estates, stopped in Vassy and decided to attend Mass. He found a congregation of Huguenots holding religious ceremonies. Outraged, or more

¹Just like I'm doing in this book, huzzah!

²Flory was descended from Anne (the daughter of Daniel Collot d'Escury) who married Captain Jean Maret de la Rive.

³Why the Netherlands, I hear you asking. Well, although I'm descended from one Collot d'Escury lady who lived in England and married a Boileau de Castelnau, at least one of her brothers continued the Collot d'Escury family line in Holland, from whom the family continues to the present day, I think. Certainly at least until 1939.

To the Boileau
de Castelneau



The Collot d'Escury.

likely pretending to be so, he led his men in setting fire to the church, killing just over 80 Huguenots and wounding hundreds others. This was the spark that ignited open warfare between Catholics and Protestants, the so-called Wars of Religion, that were to last, with varying degrees of ferocity, until the Edict of Nantes in 1598 (page 151).

Renée's two young sons were there in the church with her. The elder, David (ii), later told his grandson, Daniel, who included an account of the incident in his memoirs:

Everything that we have been able to learn about the origins of her husband, was told to my grandmother, Marie Le Noir, by her late husband David Collot [David (ii)], esquire, seigneur d'Escury. He said to her that when he was about 15 years old, and his brother a year younger, his mother [Renée d'Avrout] was killed in the massacre in the church at Vassy, a small town in Champagne, on the Bloise, in the first religious civil war in the reign of King Charles IX of France. His mother perished in the church at the hands of the army of the duc de Guise. While they were chanting Psalm 88, the barbarians entered the church, sword in hand, and massacred everybody there, and he and his brother could hear their mother, who was a widow, asking God many times to save her children, for the sake of her who was dying for his holy name.

David Collot and his brother noticed that the troops had white ribbons on their hats, put the same on theirs, and were spared. David went to the Bishop of Noyon, a good friend of the family, where he hid for three days, after which time the Bishop said he had to leave, as if anybody discovered that he had given asylum to David, he himself would be killed. So my grandfather went to Brittany, to the house of Monsieur le comte de Fretigny, who took him in very willingly and looked after him until his marriage to Françoise-Philipe de La Villorio.

At this time, Henry IV took the throne of France. My grandfather took the opportunity to go to Vitré, a small town of the Messieurs de la Trimouilles, in Brittany, where there was a large church maintained by those seigneurs [presumably a Protestant church]. There, finally, he was able to gain the consolation of his proper faith, in a way that had been very difficult to do previously.

Clearly David (i) Collot d'Escury had already died by 1562, but I have no idea when.

His son, **David (ii) Collot d'Escury**, the survivor of the Vassy massacre, married twice, once to **Françoise-Philipe de La Villorio**, with whom he had no children, and secondly to a much younger woman, **Marie Le Noir**, whose heart seems to have been a match with her name. They had three children; Philippe, Marguerite and André, but David (ii) died in December, 1611, when the eldest child was only about four. Marie's second husband, Amaury de Mardeaux, was a Catholic, and seems to have turned Marie so completely against the children of her first marriage that she burnt all the Collot d'Escury family documents in an attempt to prevent them ever inheriting the property of their father, her first husband. She was also mostly likely highly irritated by her first husband's will, which returned the property of his first wife to her family, rather than giving it to his second wife. Marie Le Noir and the evil stepfather managed to convert two of the children, Philippe and Marguerite; Marguerite became the Lady Abbess of the Abbey of Stranches, in Normandy.¹

André Collot d'Escury

However, the younger son, **André Collot d'Escury**, seems to have been a much tougher proposition. The official line was that André was pure in the faith and held to his religious principles through thick and thin. Well, this may be true I suppose, but since it seems that André was not yet two when his father died, it's unlikely his religious principles were all that strong. Of course, it might be that he was older than two when his father died; in any case, he left home at the age of 12, and even at that age I doubt his religious convictions. I'm guessing he just couldn't stand his stepfather, and got the hell out as soon as he could. In the words of André's son, Daniel [13]:

¹I have never found any other mention of this Abbey anywhere. Maybe the name is spelled incorrectly in Lart.



André Collot d'Escury. This is a copy of a copy of a copy etc, which explains the poor quality. I got this from a pdf of Flory's book [26].

My father left his stepfather at the age of 12, to go and find Monsieur d'Antrague, who lived in the Cévennes, two hundred leagues from Vitré; he arrived there safely, and Monsieur d'Antrague received him with all the affection and tenderness of a father, bringing him up for the next two years with his own children. Monsieur d'Antrague was the governor of Barnègues; he gave my father a position as ensign, but the wars of religion arrived. Louis XIII took Barnègues and disbanded the troops. My father then went to Holland where he was for two years in a regiment at Utrecht. Upon his return to France, Monsieur le duc de la Tremouilla raised a company of soldiers and gave the command to my father, but this company did not last long, as the court forced Monsieur le duc to dismiss them. Since my father found himself without a job, he went to Mademoiselle Rohan to ask of her a letter of recommendation to her brother, Henry de Rohan, who was the commander in the Valteline; having obtained one he went there.

He was received very favourably by Monsieur de Rohan, and was made a gentleman of his chamber and a cornet in his guards. After the disgrace of Monsieur de Rohan my father took service with the duc de Birkenfeld, who made him a cornet. However, the king of France having no more need of these troops, my father found himself again without employment. Monsieur de Turenne gave him a position as lieutenant in Streefs. My father went on campaign and was badly wounded, with a broken arm. He was taken to Metz, where he thought he was going to have to have it amputated, but it healed. He went on a second campaign, without having his own company. As he had the misfortune to be wounded in every situation in which he found himself, he received at Lamort (?) a musket ball that crushed his whole nose and that he thought was going to kill him, but which procured him his own naval company in 1639 [I'm not too sure of the translation here]. He commanded a number of companies after that.

In 1640 André married **Marguerite de la Primaudaye** (or Primaudois), with whom he had eight children, four boys and four girls, in eight years. Unsurprisingly, she promptly died. I would have, too. Two of the boys died young, and a third was killed at the battle of Senef. Only one daughter survived infancy. Marguerite herself came from a noble Huguenot family, but I have not been able to trace her relatives. There are lots of Primaudaye around, but I have never been able to find any specific connection to Marguerite.



Daniel Collot d'Escury.

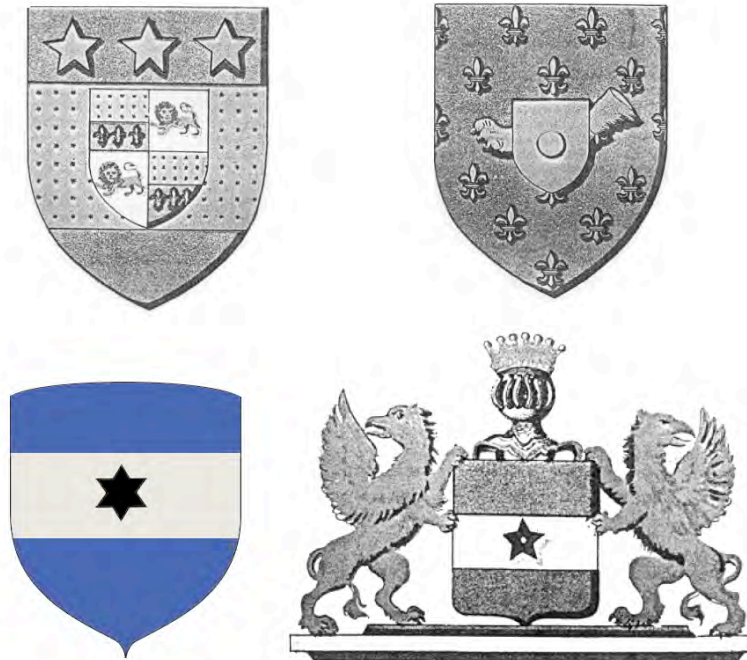
André had a lot of trouble establishing his proof of nobility, as French nobles were required to do, and there is quite a lot of discussion about this in the writings of his son [13]. It seems that, around 1649, soon after the death of his wife, André forgot to register his letters patent, which he had received from the king. So when he was required to prove his nobility in 1655 he wasn't able to, at least not easily. It went to court in Brittany and there seems to have been a protracted legal argument, which was not resolved until André appealed again to the king in 1675. Even that didn't settle things, although the details are not very clear to me.¹ It was all, however, a little late for André Collot d'Escury, as the revocation of the Edict of Nantes followed soon after, in 1686, and he and his family were forced to leave the country, whereupon he promptly died in Holland, at the age of 76.

Daniel Collot d'Escury

André's third son, **Daniel Collot d'Escury**, my 7G grandfather, was the only son who survived long; his two elder brothers died as children, while his younger brother, Siméon, was killed in 1674 at the battle of Senef, aged only 26. Daniel described his early years briefly in [13]:

I was about six when my very dear mother died. After her death, my father sent me to Ladomerie, to the home of my uncle and aunt de Latulerie, where I stayed for two years. After that, my father took me away from there and put me in school, where I stayed another two years. In 1654, my father, who was in Paris, brought me to stay with him; I stayed there about six months, after which my father sent me to the provinces with my aunt Primaudois. Fifteen days later, my father returned to the provinces and took me to Saumur, where he left me to continue with my studies. But I wasn't there very long as Monsieur le marquis de la Moussaye, the god-father of Monsieur de Turenne, who had seen me in Paris, wrote to my father to ask him to send me to him as his page, which my father did. I went to Monsieur le marquis in 1655 and stayed there until 1660; in 1661 I went to Paris, to the academy, where I stayed for 15 months, and then in

¹It seems that the actual title really belonged to André's cousin, a son of the elder branch of the family, but André thought that, since he had gone to all the trouble and expense of getting the documents from Picardy, it should belong to him. His cousin asked for the documents to be sent to him, and then never returned them. It all sounds a bit shonky to me, and rather as if André Collot d'Escury was not, after all, the Seigneur de Landauran, as he claimed. Most interesting.



A selection of coats of arms. Top left, de la Vallette: *Azure a fess and in chief three mullets pierced or, over all an escutcheon of pretence, quarterly. 1 and 4: Per fess or and azure, in base three fleurs-de-lys of the first. 2 and 3: Argent a lion passant gules.* Top right, Primaudaye: *France ancient, in bend sinister a lion's gamb coupé or armed gules, over all an inescutcheon or with a tourteau sable.* Bottom panels, Collot d'Escury: *Azure, a fess argent charged with a mullet sable. Supporters: two lions, or. [They look more like griffins to me, to be honest.].* The three greyscale images are reproduced from Flory [26], while the colour one is my own creation.

1662, I joined the Queen's Guard, a new company composed of 100 men, all gentlemen of the reformed faith. In 1665, I was made a lieutenant of that company, which was disbanded in 1668. I then went to see Monsieur le comte de Quentin, who kept me with him for three years. But the war having started again in 1672, he made me a lieutenant of cavalry, and in 1674, my captain having been killed at the battle of Saint-Sein, he gave me command of the company.

And there his narrative ends. Fortunately, however, it was continued some years later by his son, Henri:

A very short time after the death of M. de Turenne, my father [i.e., Daniel] had the misfortune to have his arm broken by a gunshot; it was necessary, in order to save his life, to amputate it, two fingers below the shoulder [you can see this in the picture on page 198]. The king compensated him with an annual pension of 200 écus, for the remainder of his life, as one can see from an act still in my possession, and my father enjoyed this pension for the rest of the time he remained in France.

In 1677, on the 19th of May, my father married my dear mother, **Anne-Catherine de la Vallette**, daughter of M. de la Vallette, seigneur de La Touche, who had been the king's lieutenant at Stenay, a strong fortress on the Meuse. My father had five children with her, all born in France, four boys and one girl; the eldest died in France, and the

four others left France with my father and my mother when, in 1685, they abandoned their property, goods, pension and their native country, to escape the cruelties inflicted on those who refused to change their religion. As all the histories of that time are full of details of this terrible persecution, I shall recount only those particularly noteworthy events.

My father and my mother, as I said, in 1685 went traveling with their four children in order to find, in a foreign country, the freedom to worship God in safety, following the teachings of our holy and divine religion. My father and mother were on horseback, and the four children, of whom the eldest was six, were in panniers on a horse that a valet was leading by the bridle. My father, who had business in Tours, when into the town, taking a different route from my mother and the family; he had the misfortune to be arrested and put in prison, where he stayed only four days. His fears for his wife and children, who had not been arrested, were much greater than his fear of death, or the sufferings inflicted on him in an effort to make him change his religion, which was the only thing required of him.

So he was freed; as soon as he was released, he spent all his time looking for his wife, not knowing what had become of her. He learned that she had continued along the road to Orléans, but she had been forced to leave behind one of her children, Siméon, at the home of a friend, as he was the youngest of the four, because he was too young to endure the hardships of the journey. Fortunately, my father passed by and heard news of his wife; he found my brother, whom he took with him, pleased that God had returned my brother to him, rather than leave him in a country where he would have been raised in a religion so opposed to the commandments of God. My father caught up with my mother in Orléans, and they traveled together to Basle, in Switzerland, without any other incident to them or their four children.

Daniel himself also wrote an account of his escape from France, and fragments are reproduced in Flory's book [26]:

We believed that the only remedy was to fly, and we prepared to depart in the night [from Chateau de la Touche] but we were too much watched to go far. I was arrested and made prisoner, and all I could do was to prevent my wife from coming, and to beg her to use every endeavour to get away by all means. She went to the Coudraye House, five miles from Tours, to Mademoiselle Bouilly, who had a rebellious maid-servant who had caused me to be taken to Tours. I found myself in a cell, arrested, and thought there was no help for me and my family. Grief took hold of me, for I feared my wife and children would be arrested and put into convents. The monks informed me that my family had been captured, and that they were already placed in convents. I had no news from my wife, except a note, which I received the day after my detention, in which she told me of her intention to return to La Touche. I thought all was over, and begged God to put into my heart what He wanted me to do for His glory and my salvation.

After five or six days, Daniel was released and he wrote:

I thought that my wife had returned with the children to La Touche, but was much astonished when, on arriving at La Courdraie, I found one of my children, called Siméon, who was the youngest, and not eighteen months old; they told me that they could not inform me where my wife had gone with the three others, viz, Madelon, Daniel, and Henry. I also heard, through one of my servants I had left there and whom I met, that my wife was not there. At last I learned from a letter I had the same evening from her, that she had gone straight to Monbelliard with her three children. I blessed God for her resolution, and only thought of taking away my poor child and following her; that was a great difficulty, as I only had one arm, but God, who managed everything for our salvation, had taken her to one of her friends at Boisgenty, from whence she sent me back the only valet who was of her religion to try to hear of my whereabouts. I was delighted

to hear about her, and hoped God would not try us any more, since He had taken her so far without being arrested. It is true she thought this would have happened at Amboise, but God saved her. I could only think of reaching her. I made the servant carry the child Siméon and set off directly, and ordered the valet to go to Orléans, where I went also. We walked without stopping as far as Bar, near Monbelliard, where I did not think we were safe.

After spending a day there we started to this place, where Divine Providence has taken us for the salvation of our souls. My three eldest children were on one horse – the two boys in the baskets and the girl on a pack-saddle, and poor little Siméon in front of the valet's horse; my wife and I each on a horse. This little story is only related to let my children know, when they are old enough, what great things the Lord has done in taking them out of this wretched Sodom to keep them in His real Bethel, the house of the Lord.

Regarding the escape from France, Henry Maret de la Rive, the grandson of Daniel Collot d'Escury, wrote [26]:

My great Grandfather was David [he means André] Collot D'Escury. He stole early out at the Commencement of the Persecution, and leaving his own Country went to Holland. His and family's Escape was thus effected. Mr. Collot D'Escury had three Asses or Mules with Paniers on each side, in each of which a Child was concealed, and over them some Lemons and Oranges for apparent Sale.¹ My great Grandfather and my Grandfather (who helped to lead the asses or mules) did by this Artifice impose on all the Intendants and Guards of the Districts through which they passed; and thus arrived Safely in the Dutch Territories with their Charge.

Returning to Henri's account of his father's life [13]:

The first thing my father [Daniel] did upon arriving in Basle was to give thanks to God for the favour he had showed them, to save him and his whole family from Babylon, and asked his forgiveness [there follows a few lines of religious enthusiasm which are too difficult for me to translate. Reading between the lines, I'm guessing that Daniel was forced to abjure his faith in order to get his release, and that he felt terribly guilty about this. I could be wrong.]

My mother [Anne-Catherine de la Vallette], upon arriving in Basle, gave birth to a son; it should be remarked that her children were rather embarrassed, she was so large [I doubt this is the correct translation]. After the birth, my father left the whole family in Basle, and went to Holland. M. le prince d'Orange gave him a pension as a captain of cavalry, after which he established his wife and children at Nimègue, where they stayed until 1688, when my father went to England with the prince d'Orange when he invaded that kingdom. My father was made a captain of cavalry in the regiment of Chambéry, since called Galway's regiment, where he was then made a major. After the prince was recognised as king of England, my father went to find my mother, and brought the whole family to England; the family was larger by a daughter, as my mother had given birth to a daughter at Nimègue. So we were four boys and two girls.

In 1689 my father went to Ireland with the army, where he campaigned with his regiment until that country had been forced to recognise the prince d'Orange as the king of England. When the king had reduced all these States to obedience, he considered restarting the war with France, which was very popular and which he could do in the Spanish Netherlands. To this effect, he sent to Flanders all those troops he didn't need in England. The Galway regiment was one of those sent to that country. But Lord Galway, who was a close friend of my father, advised him to stay in England with his family, which was already large, and getting bigger almost every year, and offered to gain the

¹According to Flory, there was a family tradition that, during the escape from France in the panniers of fruit, a soldier became suspicious and thrust his sword into one of the panniers. The child escaped unhurt.

agreement of the king. My father took this advice for the good of his family, for if he had been killed they would have been in a sad and deplorable condition; he had six children, the oldest of which was ten. This is why my father never reached a high position, which he should have done, by virtue of his seniority. But not having served in the last campaign of the war, he was not promoted.

He stayed in England until the disbanding of the army after the peace of Ryswyck. He then went to Ireland on a pension where he remained; he lived with my mother until her death in Dublin in 1699, aged 46, and died himself in 1714, aged 71. They had eleven children all told, but only seven survived past childhood. A daughter, born in France in 1679, married a Boileau de Castelnau, from Nîmes. Four [he means three] boys; Daniel, born in France in 1684, Henry, born in France in 1682, Siméon, born in 1682. These four children were all born at La Touche, an estate we owned in Touraine but abandoned, with the rest of our property, for the sake of our religion. The fifth child, Abel, was born in Basle, Switzerland in 1686. In 1688 my mother gave birth to my sister Anne in Nimègue; Anne married a Marret de la Rive, captain of dragoons in England, and she is now living with her two children in Dublin, in Ireland. My mother gave birth in 1699 to my sister Marie; she married a Corneille, captain of infantry in England, and chief engineer of Ireland. They have had many children, of whom seven are still surviving; four others died while young.

Daniel died in 1710, a captain of dragoons in the regiment of Walef. Henry, myself who wrote this, I'll talk more about later. Siméon was colonel in an English regiment that carried his name, and married, firstly, a Lady Zellard de Leefdoel, with whom he had no children. He married secondly a Lady Baron, with whom he had three children; a daughter who died young, and two sons, who are captains of infantry in the English army. Abel was killed at the siege of Bonn, in 1703, when he was a cadet in the regiment of Disselle.

Another account of Daniel's later life is given by his grandson, Henry Maret de la Rive, who wrote [26]:

André Collot D'Escury, my great Grandfather, had been Governor of Quintin in Brittany; he on his retreat in Holland obtained a Captain Commission in their Service, and died soon after his Refuge. My Grandfather [Captain Daniel Collot d'Escury], who went to England with William III, there obtained a Company of Infantry, and being ordered with his Regiment to Ireland, had his Arm shot off at the Battle of the Boyne (June 1, 1690).¹ He had five sons. The eldest, Henry, my Godfather, remained in Holland for a time, and coming over to England with the Princess of Orange (in whose suite he was), he kept the Pharaoh Bank Table at her Court. When returning to Holland with her Majesty, he was made one of the Burgomasters. Daniel died a Captain in the Dutch Service. A third died young. A fourth (named Able), a boy, when mounting a breach as a Cadet or Volunteer, was kill'd; and the fifth, Simeon, died in England, Colonel to the 23rd Foot, in 1738. Henry, the Eldest Son of my Grandfather, left two Sons, one a Burgomaster; the second, who came to Ireland on a Visit to his relations, and whose Christian name was Edmund, was some Years ago Lieutenant Colonel in the Dutch Service, who (if alive) has very probably a Regiment. In a letter he wrote home, he signs himself le Baron Collot d'Escury.

Finally, to complete the line, let me remind you, gentle reader, that it was Daniel's eldest child, Marie Madeleine (Mary Magdalene), who married Charles Boileau in Dublin (page 157), from whom the line descends, eventually, to me.

¹This is incorrect. Daniel himself says that he had only one arm when he fled France, so it must have been lost well before the Battle of the Boyne, and his son said it was lost soon after the death of M. de Turenne, who died in 1675. Other family documents [10] suggest it was lost at the Battle of Attenheim on the Rhine, in 1675. Actually, Henry's memory is highly suspect in a number of things, so I wouldn't trust his account without independent evidence.

De la Vallette

Recall that Daniel Collot d'Escury married Anne-Catherine de la Vallette. Well, if you look around the web you find it written that Anne-Catherine de la Vallette was related to the famous family of de la Vallettes, whose lineage extends back a number of centuries in a seriously rich and famous way. This would be lovely if it were true. However, as far as I'm aware, there is absolutely no evidence for this claim. Interestingly, the notes by Henry Maret de la Rive shown in Flory [26] give a rather different picture of Anne Catherine. He says:

Captain d'Escury, my grandfather, was married to a Mlle. Belney, a lady of good family; one of whose Uncles lived in Holland (at the Hague), a Monsieur La Villette, a man of Large fortune. Mlle. Belney had an Estate at Montbelliard in Switzerland, which my grandfather gave my mother at the death of his wife, to dispose of for her own use and said purpose. My mother often told me of a large Dog, of the Wolf breed, belonging to her Uncle, La Villette, at the Hague, on whose neck his Master would hang a basket, in which lay a piece of silver. He would then every morning send the Dog to his Baker for bread; which the dog would do. The baker, after putting the bread into the Basket, would take the money, and the Dog would carry the bread home; no one in the Streets daring to touch the Bread or Basket.

I'm a little suspicious of this; I suspect the poor memory of an old man. Where on earth does the Belney come from? We know that's not right, for a start, as his grandfather's wife was definitely Anne-Catherine de la Vallette. Her own son said so. However, it is true that Daniel, the grandfather, left his wife's property to Anne, the mother, as we know from his will. So Henry Maret de la Rive remembered that correctly.

According to Lart [46], Anne-Catherine's father, Pierre, was "Chev. governor of the Chateau Stenay. Sgr. de la Touche, in Touraine. This family came originally from the Bourbonnais. He lived in the parish of Chillé, near Chinon. He and his brother, René de La Valette, Sgr. de La Brosse, living at St. Laurent-du-Lin, near Angers, maintained their noblesse since the year 1532, commencing with their grandfather, in 1668." So these de la Vallettes seem much more like relatively recent nobility, not part of the old and prestigious family.

De Vignolles

The next in our lineup of French Huguenots are the de Vignolles, the connection to whom is through Françoise de Vignolles, who married Jacques Boileau de Castelnau in 1664. She is the one who was imprisoned in a convent after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, eventually managing to escape to Switzerland (pages 154 and 146). The de Vignolles, although only noble for a century or so, had married into the *crème de la crème*¹ of Provençal and Languedoc society.

The de Vignolles appear in a number of places; Lart [46] for one, d'Hozier [42] for another. Here I just follow those two sources, unreliable though they most likely are.

The earliest noble de Vignolles on record is **Etienne de Vignolles**, who was ennobled on the 15th of December, 1549. We have the names of a few earlier generations, but know little about them, except that they were humble, with the earliest, Jehan, being called a labourer. One presumes that Etienne got wealthy and bought a title. His son was **Jean de Vignolles** who married **Gauside de Parades**, thus becoming the Seigneur de Parades. Or possibly Prades, depending on which source you follow. I'm not entirely sure where is this Prades or Parades, but it's possibly the Prades-le-Lez just north of Montpellier. Gauside de Parades made her will on the 29th of April, 1595, in which she named four sons: Pierre (to be considered soon), Jean, Seigneur de Bruguier, Paul, the ancestor of one of the third branch of the family (in d'Hozier's numbering), and Jacques, who is known only from his sole appearance in his mother's will. Jean and Gauside also had a daughter, Perrette de Vignolles, who married on the 16th of November, 1577.

¹Very cleverly keeping a French theme here, you'll notice.

Pierre de Vignolles, Seigneur de Prades, was a king's councillor and a Juge Conservateur des Conventions at Nîmes. In 1600 he married his second wife¹, **Gabrielle de Villages**, herself descended from a number of old Provençal families. Her GG-grandfather, Jean de Villages, was Seigneur de Lançon and chamberlain of the duc de Calabre. He lived in Marseilles during the reign of René, King of Sicily and Comte de Provence, who appointed him councillor and, in 1453, admiral. Moro, the Doge of Venice, had to ask him for permission to sail the Republic's galleys to Aigues-Mortes, which must have been a nice feeling. When Provence was united with France in 1481, and Louis XI thus became the Comte de Provence, Jean de Villages continued to be employed in bureaucratic affairs (grand and important affairs according to Chesnaye-Desbois [21], but I'm hardly silly enough to believe that), at which, it is claimed, he acquitted himself with wisdom and great success. Since this account was probably written by his descendants, I'm hardly likely to believe that either.

Anyway, to return to the de Vignolles, Pierre had a son, **Jacques de Vignolles**, Seigneur de Prades, who made the most illustrious marriage his parents could possibly have desired. He married **Louise Baschi d'Aubais**, which must have been a bit of a let-down for her, but not a bad effort for him; her ancestry takes in pretty much the entire European medieval nobility, and I'll have a brief look at it at the end of this chapter. Jacques, although not reaching the giddy heights of a Baschi d'Aubais, still had balls enough to prove his own (minor) nobility, which he did on the 2nd of January, 1669. His career was that of a typical soldier of the time. In 1634 he was a Captain of Cavalry in the Regiment d'Aubais (I guess he married his boss's daughter. Not unheard of.), he helped to punish a couple of deserters in 1640, was a Colonel-General² by 1645, and a Major by 1660. He was, of course, a Protestant, although I don't know whether or not he was the first of family to be so.

Jacques de Vignolles and Louise de Baschi had at least 16 children, of whom at least four died in infancy. The surviving children, being Protestant at the wrong time, mostly left the country. Louis and his wife died in Switzerland, Charles, the ancestor of the main branch, died in Dublin, Alfonse died a Protestant minister in Berlin, Louise the younger died in Dublin, Madeleine died in Berlin, Françoise, as we have already seen, died in Geneva, and the others I'm not sure of. Clearly, the family was scattered far and wide by persecution.

As you can see from the chart on page 204 there were quite a few other families who married into the de Vignolles. However, very little is known about them except their names; often their existence is known only from wills, land transactions, or marriage settlements, and these documents, by their nature, shed little light on the people themselves. Not to mention that I find it difficult to navigate the maze of French genealogy; not being able to read French very well is not a help.

De Calvière

Next up, the de Calvière family, who married into the Boileau de Castelnau at least twice (see the chart on page 206) and the de Vignolles at least once. The earliest of the family I know of is **Antoine de Calvière**, a lieutenant-juge³, and consul of Montfrin in 1468 and 1472. Montfrin, in the Diocese of Uzès, is almost exactly halfway between Nîmes and Avignon (see Map 7; page 241). According to Louis de la Roque [54] there is a mention of an Arnaud Calvière who witnessed an oath of homage taken by the inhabitants of Moissac to Raimond VI, comte de Toulouse, on the 12th of May, 1197. However, since there is no further information this Arnaud might well be no connection at all. Moissac is north of Toulouse, quite a long way from Montfrin, which argues somewhat against a connection, but who knows?

Antoine's two sons, Antoine and **Raymond de Calvière**, both called Chevaliers, were living at Montfrin on the 4th of August, 1508. They bought land in Montfrin on the 10th of May, 1510, from Brother Charles-Alleman de Roche-Chinard, Grand Prior of Saint-Gilles. I don't know for sure, but it seems very likely that these brothers were the first of the family to purchase nobility. The status of

¹His first wife was Anne de Calvière de Boucoiran, who appears a bit later in this chapter.

²Whatever that is.

³i.e., an assistant judge, who acted as a judge when the real judge was away.

their father is not very clear to me, but there is no doubt that these two brothers purchased land and titles.

Raymond had three sons and three daughters. Two of the sons, **Nicholas** and **Robert**, are my 10G grandfathers, but in different ways, of course. In Raymond's will he leaves each of his daughters a sum of money, two night-ropes, and a silver girdle. I guess their brothers got everything else, including the castles and the lands. Wow. The girls must have been delighted. Don't you wish you were a female in medieval times?

Nicholas was the founder of the branch of St. Cosme, or Côme, while his brother Robert was the founder of the branch of Boucoiran. Guillaume, the eldest brother, was the founder of the main branch, and there seems to have been some disagreement between him and Robert; on the 10th of December, 1556, they came to an agreement whereby Guillaume returned to Robert some of their father's goods.

Nicholas paid homage to the king for the lands of Saint-Côme on the 23rd of March, 1552, and then bought, in 1557, the lands and Seigneurie of la Boissière from Jacques de Bouzène (my 12G grandfather; see page 282). He was a busy Protestant soldier during the religious wars of the latter half of the sixteenth century. First, in 1567, an Ensign in the company of Captain Bouillarge, he fought at Nîmes in 1569; he was present at the lifting of the siege of Montpellier, in 1577; he was appointed Governor of Nîmes in 1580, and finally Gentilhomme ordinaire de la Chambre du Roi, in 1581. He and his wife, **Françoise Brochet**, whom he married in 1552, had at least nine children, of whom at least one girl, Hélis, died young. A son, Pellegrin, was killed at Nîmes in 1603 (presumably as a soldier), and another daughter, Rose, married Jean Boileau de Castelnau in 1576.

On the 26th of November, 1566, the brother of Nicholas, Robert de Calvière, purchased the lands and title of Boucoiran, becoming thus the Seigneur de Boucoiran. He married **Claudine de Leugue** in about 1546, and had at least three children. Marguerite married a judge in Nîmes, while Anne became the first wife of Pierre de Vignolles, my 9G grandfather through his second wife (page 205). Their son, Guillaume, did homage for the seigneurie de Boucoiran in June, 1567, and married Isabelle Barrière in 1591.

Guillaume and Isabelle had at least nine children. One of them, **Anne**, married Nicholas Boileau de Castelnau, but another of them, Françoise, married the far more interesting Jean-Valentin de Sade, Seigneur d'Aiguières. And this is a name we all recognise, as being an ancestor of the infamous Marquis de Sade, which make me peripherally related to a famous weirdo.¹

In Montfrin there still exists a house built by the de Calvière, in 1549, and you can find photos of it on the web. It's a classified historic monument.

De Montcalm

The last to appear in this chapter are the Montcalm, yet another Languedoc family, who were later Huguenots. They, like the Boileau, and probably every other family in the minor nobility, fabricated their origins, making up all kinds of important ancestors for themselves, all dutifully reproduced in the pages of Chesnaye-Desbois [21]. However, a French genealogist, Peter Lorient, has sent me a lot of information about the Montcalm, and other related families; I trust this information as it is sourced in detail and plausible.

As it happens, the Montcalm are connected through a number of other old families, the de Gozon and de Garceval, to the Mostuéjols, a family that is traced back to about 1070 or so. Of course, it's impossible to be sure of the descent, but there seems to be general agreement.

The first of the Montcalm, **Raimond**, was most likely a barber in Millau, Languedoc, as was his son after him. It was the next **Raymond** who got wealthy enough to purchase lands and a title. He was the doctor to the comte d'Armagnac, and was ennobled in 1439 when he bought from Bertrand de Vissec some land around Saint-Veran. His son, **Jean de Montcalm**, was the Seigneur de Saint-Veran, de Tournemire, du Viala, de la Baume, de Pradines & de la Panouse, Conseiller du Roi & Maitre des Requêtes de l'Hôtel, for all of which he took oath in May 1437. Between the hands of the Bishop of Maguelonne, for those who care. Later, in 1462, he gave homage to the comte

¹As opposed to being related to unfamous weirdos such as my siblings.

d'Armagnac for his lands at Saint-Veran. This comte d'Armagnac, Jean V, was a rather colourful character. Not in a good way. Although he fought for King Charles VII against the English, he was essentially completely outside the control of the French king, and when he forced a priest to marry him to his own sister (who bore him three children, by the way. She was not unwilling by all accounts, although I'm a little sceptical of that claim), the scandal was too much for Charles VII. In 1455 he invaded the comte's lands and kicked him out to Aragon, where he spent his time pleading to the Pope and trying to organise resistance to the French king. When Charles VII died in 1461 the new king Louis XI unwisely reinstated Jean V who immediately turned against him; he was part of the league that called themselves the *Bien Public* and threatened Paris at the head of 6000 mounted men. In 1469, when Louis sent an army against him, Jean fled to Spain, only to reappear in 1471 in the train of the king's rebellious brother, the duc de Guyenne. Finally, Louis had him besieged in his stronghold of Lectoure and put to death by Jean Jouffroy, the bishop of Albi, in 1473. Nothing to do with the family history, but a good story.

Anyway, this Jean d'Armagnac was not a good person to swear fealty to, and so Jean de Montcalm was imprisoned in Tours, together with Guillaume and Gaillard, two of his sons, and all his possessions were confiscated. Fortunately for them, Louis XI had a change of heart and pardoned them, restoring their possessions in March, 1471.

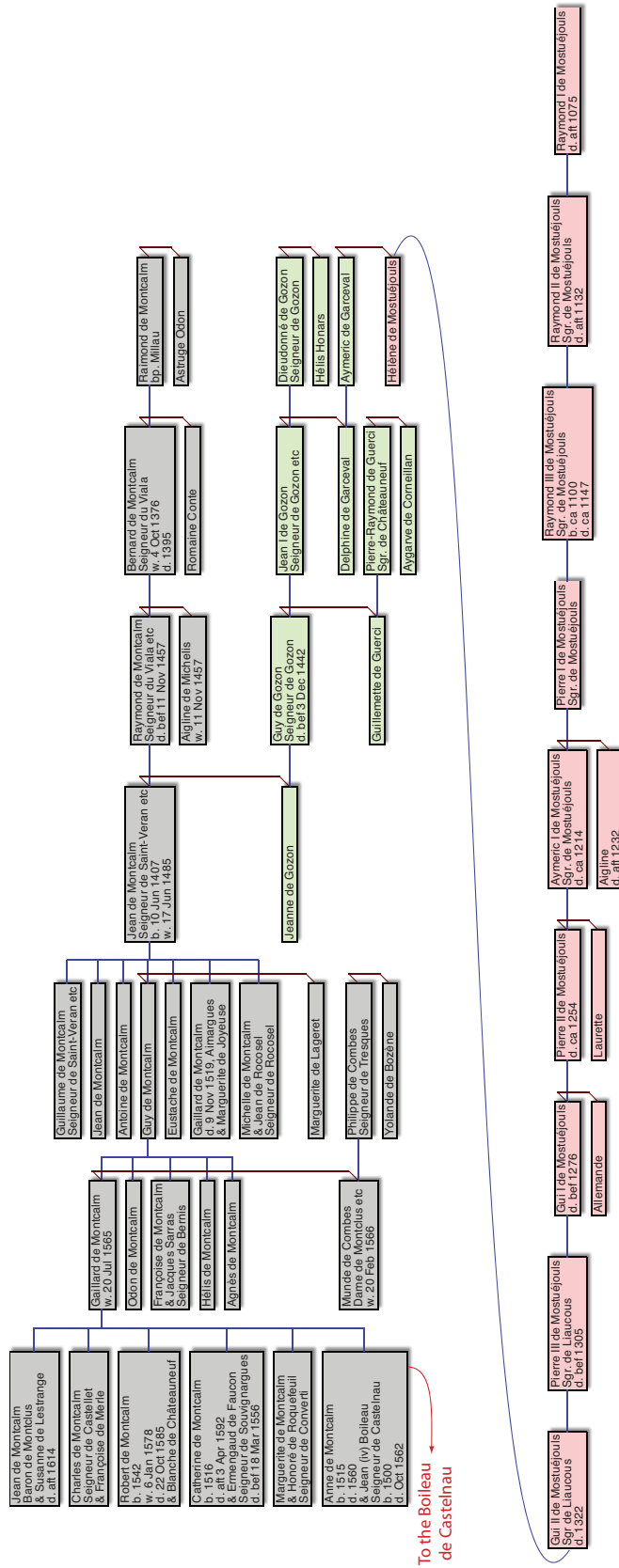
Jean de Montcalm married **Jeanne de Gozon** about whom more shortly. They had a bunch of known children, three of whom (Guillaume, Guy and Gaillard, all the G ones) founded different branches of the Montcalm family. Of the other sons, Jean became a Benedictine monk in the Abbey of Nant, Antoine became Protonotaire of Saint-Siège and the Prior of Sénillac and Sumène, while Eustache was also a monk in the Abbey of Nant, as well as the Prior of Saint-Sauveur du Larzac. Golly. What a lot of monks. The only recorded daughter, Michelle, married Jean de Rocosel. It's very typical of these old genealogies that the daughters are almost entirely ignored except where they made a good marriage, in which case their husband's name is more important anyway.

Our Montcalm branch is the one founded by **Guy**, who founded the branch of the Barons of Montclus. He married **Marguerite de Lageret** and had at least five children. One son, **Gaillard**, was the father of **Anne de Montcalm**, who married Jean Boileau de Castelnau. Gaillard's brother, Odon, was Vicar General of the Abbey of Saint-André of Avignon, and the Prior of Saint Theodore of Larzac. I just like all these monkish titles, which is why I'm giving them; they do rather roll off the tongue.

Jeanne de Gozon, who married Jean de Montcalm in 1438, was the granddaughter of **Jean de Gozon**, Seigneur de Melac, St. Victor, Malvieu, Montredon, and Montagnot. Quite some farmer. Jean married **Delphine**, the daughter of **Aymeric de Garceval** and **Hélène de Mostuéjols**, which is interesting mostly because the Mostuéjols family can be traced right back to about 1075. Not bad at all. The earliest known Mostuéjols was **Raymond I**, who was named in a 1075 charter when he gave a gift to the Abbey of Saint-Sauveur for the foundation of the priory of Rozier, in Gevaudan. He was the seigneur of the château de Mostuéjols, a castle and town that was associated with the same family for many centuries, situated on the western border of the Cévennes. His son, **Raymond II**, appears in 1132, in a treaty between Bérenger-Raimond, comte de Gévaudan, marquis de Provence, and Guillaume VI, seigneur de Montpellier. They were arranging how to deal with the administration of the lands of the comte de Melgueil, during the minority of the comtess Béatrix.

Interestingly, the comtess Béatrix de Melgueil is also a direct ancestor, although in quite a different line. She was born in about 1124 (and thus in 1132 was only about 8, still in her minority), the child of Bernard de Melgueil and Guillemette de Montpellier, and married, as her second husband, Bernard Pelet, a name famous in the annals of French medieval history. The Pelet family, for those who care, have the simplest coat-of-arms I've ever seen. Plain red; nothing else. Or, in French, *de gueules plein*. Cool, huh? They were just so important they didn't need anything else. Not to mention that their ancestry can be traced back to the vicomtes de Narbonne, of whom the first known is Franco, born before 852, so that they got first pick of the available patterns. It's quite noticeable how the earlier the coat-of-arms, the simpler it is. Later monstrosities became quite ridiculous.

Anyway, to return to the Mostuéjols family, the son of Raymond II was, unsurprisingly, **Raymond III**. Around 1135 he was witness to an agreement between Raymond d'Anduze, Rostaing



The de Montcalm and de Mostuéjols.

d'Arsac, Pons de Montlaur and Bernard de Sauve. You can guess what I'm going to say now; yes, indeed, most of that list are also direct ancestors one way or another. Or uncles, at the very least. The interconnections among the aristocracy are frightening to behold. They probably all had webbed feet and drooled.

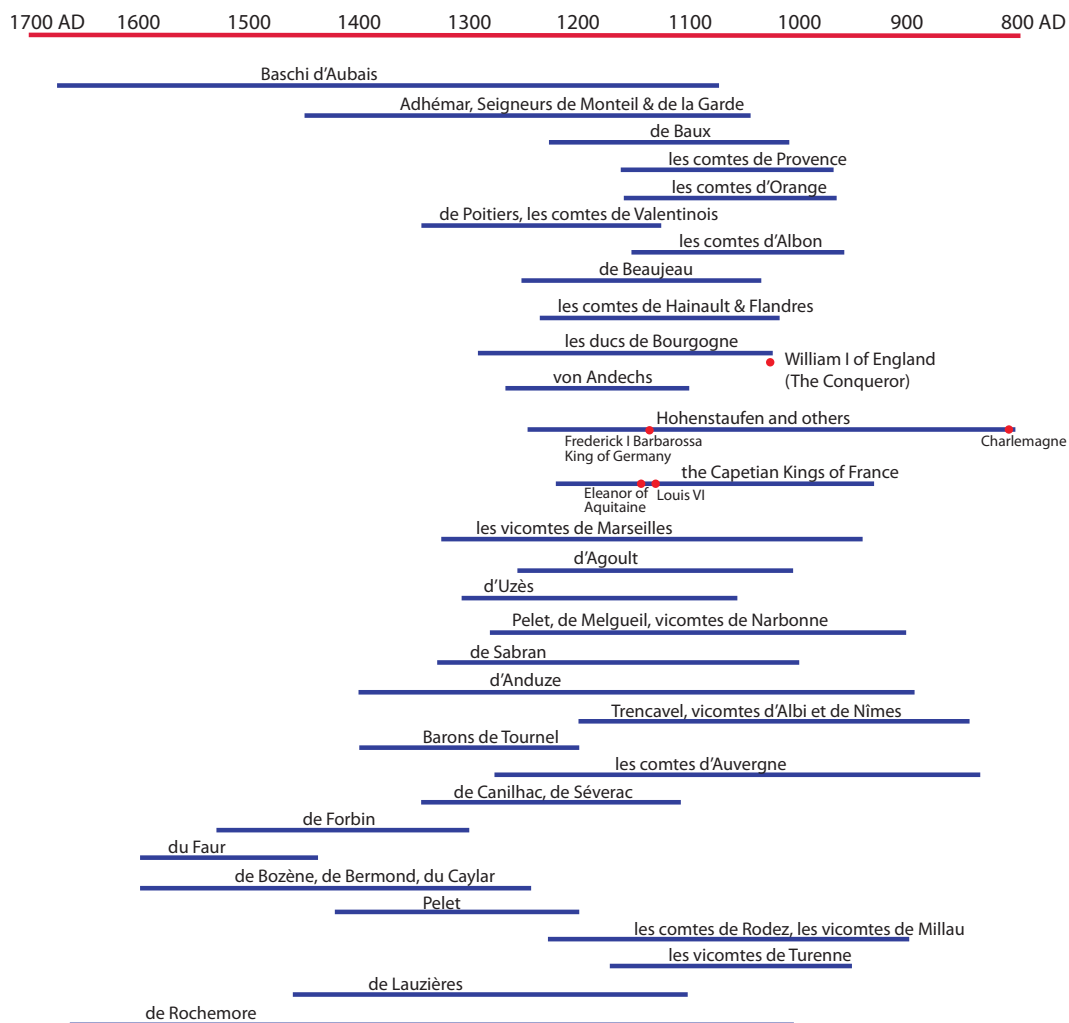
Raymond's grandson, **Aymeric de Mostuéjols**, wrote his will in 1214. His widow, **Aigline**, appears in a charter of 1232, in which she freed a woman who had been imprisoned in the château Mostuéjols for theft. Their son, **Pierre**, seigneur de Liaucous, de Lueysses, de la Condamine, de Vebron, de Verceil, de Mostuergues, de Mostuéjolenques, coseigneur de Montbrun, appears in 1246 when Raymond de Roquefeuil gave some property to Hugues, comte de Rodez. Hugues had married Isabeau de Roquefeuil, the daughter of Raymond de Roquefeuil. And yes, Hugues, comte de Rodez is a direct ancestor also (22G grandfather). Once you go back this far, one just has so many ancestors they are almost impossible to avoid. Practically every charter or land agreement involves families from whom descent can be traced. It's a fun puzzle game to play, but little more than that.

And so the Mostuéjols continue, a procession of wills, charters and land grants; monks, priors, seigneurs, lots of money, the usual story. All the way to 1999 at least, or so it seems. But we branch off with Hélène in the 14th century, and head off with the Montcalm down to the Boileau de Castelnaud.

A very brief look at some other medieval ancestors

We have already seen in the previous sections how various French ancestors can be traced back almost 1000 years. However, those complications pale into insignificance when compared with the ancestry of Louise de Baschi [52], who married Jacques de Vignolles (see page 204). If we were to attempt to draw a diagram of her ancestry it would take an entire wall. I know. I did it. It takes an entire wall (see page 141). The trouble is, of course, that once you hit one member of the nobility, you get them all, as they were so interbred. However, Appendix III gives her ancestors for ten generations, in the form of an ahnentafel, just in case anybody cares. Even more generations are given on my web page, <http://www.burningviolin.org/family>. I also give a strange kind of chart on page 211, where I list many of the best-known families and the approximate dates during which our ancestors lived. I couldn't think of any other way of doing it concisely. As you can see, the ancestry can be traced back to a number of well-known people, such as Eleanor of Aquitaine, William the Conqueror, and Charlemagne, taking in along the way most of the known families of southern France; there are connections to other families, of course, but the southern French contingent is very much the strongest.

And that, I think, is all I'll say about these lines. They are mostly very well known as vast numbers of people are descended from these families, and so I find them less interesting. At any rate, what point is there in me giving little potted biographies of the comtes d'Auvergne, for instance, or the ducs de Boulogne? If you're interested, look them up for yourself.



Medieval families, with some well-known people labelled, just for interest. This chart is highly approximate, with many families omitted; I've really only tried to hit the major points. It was Louise de Baschi d'Aubais who married Jacques de Vignolles, thus connecting these lines with the ones described earlier in this chapter.