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French Kinship

Structure and History

Chapters One and Two

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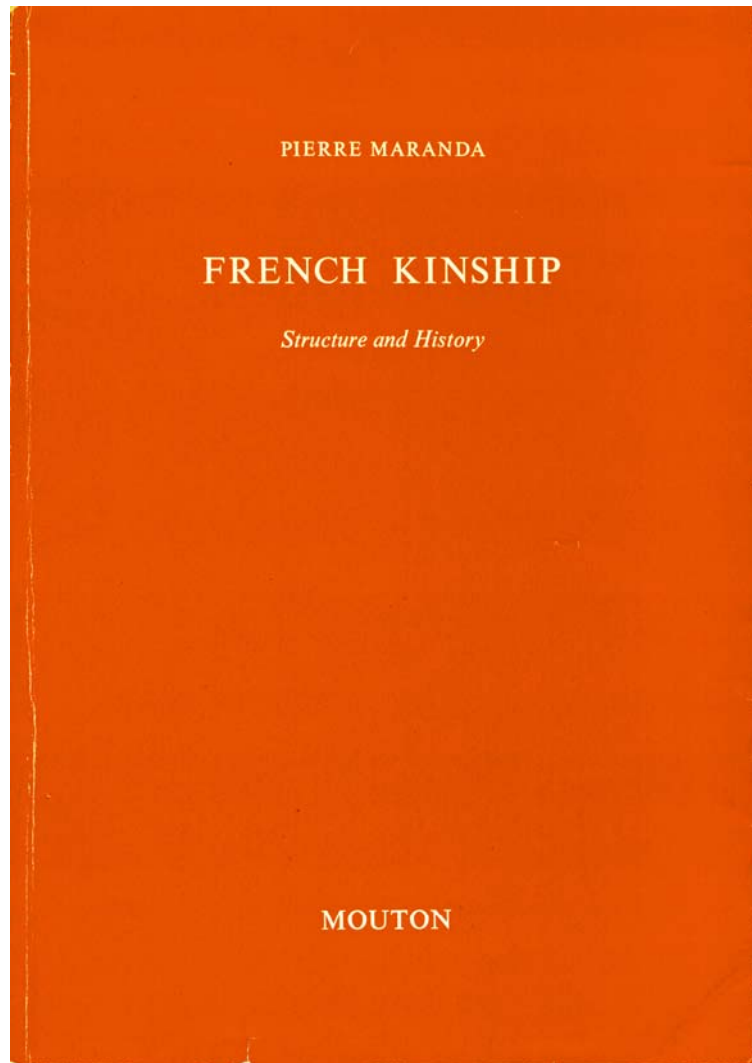
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Pierre Maranda
French Kinship
Structure and History.



This essay delineates a working hypothesis. Its framework rests on social anthropology, social history, philology, and semantics.

Two states of the kinship terminology – 9th to 13th, and 14th to 20th centuries – serve as a basis for diachronic structural analysis.

The model proposed for the measurement of meaning draws first on an Intension/Extension ratio; then it is developed in relation with variations in social organization. The working hypothesis is therefore twofold. Substantively, it proposes a synthetic approach to define problems; methodologically, it proposes a combination of diachronic and synchronic approaches, and is an attempt to relate formal to substantive semantic analysis.

FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This book was written in 1965 and slightly revised in the following year. Delays in publication have rendered some substantive parts obsolete. Yet, the formal approach and the model sketched in this essay, as well as the combined use of diachronic data and synchronic methods, seem to retain some interest. It is therefore proposed not so much as a modest stimulus for further studies of French kinship than as an equally modest contribution to anthropological and historical analyses.

I should like to thank the following colleagues, who are not to be held responsible for my mistakes, for their generous help during the composition of this work : Professors G. C. Homans, D. Maybury-Lewis, and D. L. Oliver, Harvard University ; Professeurs C. Lévi-Strauss, Collège de France, H. Mazeaud, Faculté de Droit et Science Économique, and M. L. Wagner, Faculté des Lettres, Sorbonne ; Professeur M. Cohen, Emeritus ; M. I. Chiva, Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale, Collège de France et École des Hautes Études Économiques et Sociales ; M. L. Bernot, École des Hautes Études Économiques et Sociales ; Mmes M. L. Tenèze et C. Marcel Dubois, M. H. Raulin, et M. G. H. Rivière, Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires ; Dr. R. Needham, University of Oxford ; J. L. Verdier, Faculté des Sciences, Orsay ; Professor A. R. Diebold, Stanford University ; M. P. Menget, Université de Nanterre ; Dr. L. d'Azzevedo, Massachusetts Institute of Technology ; and Professor E. Köngäs Maranda, my wife.

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0. INTRODUCTION

0.1 PURPOSE

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The scope of this essay is ambitious ; its results are modest ¹. It represents an attempt to delineate a framework for synchronic and diachronic analyses of French kinship. The conclusion should be taken as a working hypothesis to be tested further and revised or discarded. Ten centuries of semantic and social history are here reviewed concisely in order to stress some exploratory guidelines. My endeavor resembles that of March Bloch in *Les Caractères originaux de l'histoire rurale française*. Like French rural history, French kinship deserves a tentative synthetic treatment despite the unavoidable shortcomings inherent in such an enterprise.

The following excerpts from Bloch's preface define a strategy relevant to the present purpose. The reader should peruse them carefully and bear them in mind as methodological limitations fundamental to this essay.

Un historien averti des difficultés de son métier ne se décide pas sans hésitations à retracer en quelques centaines de pages une évolution extrêmement longue, en elle-même obscure et, par surcroît, insuffisamment connue...

Dans le développement d'une discipline, il est des moments où une synthèse, fût-elle en apparence prématurée, rend plus de services que beaucoup de travaux d'analyse, où, en d'autres termes, il importe surtout de bien énoncer les questions, plutôt, pour l'instant, que de chercher à les résoudre... Le jour où des études plus approfondies auront rendu mon essai tout à fait caduc, si je puis croire qu'en opposant à la vérité historique des conjectures fausses je l'ai aidée à prendre conscience d'elle-même, je m'estimerai pleinement payé de mes peines.

Seuls les travaux qui se bornent, prudemment, à un cadre topographique restreint peuvent fournir aux solutions définitives les données de fait nécessaires. Mais ils ne sont guère capables de poser les grands problèmes. Il faut, pour cela, des perspectives plus vastes, où les

¹ The point of departure of this work was my desire to know the exact meaning of the prefix *beau-* as marker of affinal relationships in French.

reliefs fondamentaux ne risquent point de se perdre dans la masse confuse des menus accidents...

L'histoire est avant tout, la science d'un changement. Dans l'examen des divers problèmes, j'ai fait de mon mieux pour ne jamais perdre de vue cette vérité. Cependant il m'est arrivé, notamment à propos des régimes d'exploitation, de devoir éclairer un passé très lointain à la lueur de temps beaucoup plus proches de nous. « Pour connaître le présent », disait naguère Durkheim, en tête d'un cours sur la famille, « il faut d'abord s'en détourner ». D'accord.

Mais il est des cas aussi où, pour interpréter le passé, c'est vers le présent, ou, du moins, vers un passé tout voisin du présent qu'il sied, d'abord, de regarder (Bloch [1960] vii-ix).

The exploratory framework is substantiated as firmly as possible. However, gaps remain ; they will be bridged with suitable generalizations. Rough as it is, this preliminary mapping will prove fruitful if it can generate better analyses.

0.2 GENERAL REMARKS ON THE STUDY OF KINSHIP TERMINOLOGIES

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A kinship terminology is a sociological and semantic field, i.e., an institution. It is indeed a verbalized system of relationships recognized as such, sanctioned, and persisting from generation to generation as a “social fact”. Aside from the obvious point that the components of such relationship systems are people linked to each other through variations on biological themes, not much more can be said of kinship that would hold true across societies. This is enough to distinguish kinship from other social systems, e.g., from relationships of production, political systems, etc., but further specifications on this general plane are well-nigh impossible (Maybury-Lewis [1965a], 254-255, 259 ; cf. Leach [1961] Ch. 4).

Morgan's basic dichotomy (1871), however, may serve to establish two broad classes of kinship systems : that between (mainly) “descriptive” or genealogical structures versus (mainly) “classificatory” or categorical ones. Further, it might be argued that genealogically-structured kinship systems are “complex structures”, whereas categorically-structured ones are “elementary structures” as contradistinguished from the former by Levi-Strauss (1949). In effect, because of their relatively closed character — they constitute a taxonomy of kin types — genealogically-based systems are incompatible with prescriptive alliance ; in contrast, categorically-based systems —which constitute a taxonomy of positions (cf. Needham [1966]) — are relatively open and thus perfectly compatible with prescriptive alliance : in fact, they need an extrinsic sociological closure of one type or another (Hocart [1937] ; Leach [1958] ; Maybury-Lewis [1965b]).

Maine's, Morgan's and Rivers' influences have led quite a few anthropologists into the ethnocentric pitfall of treating all kinship systems as if they were genealogically-based. Lévi-Strauss, Dumont, and Needham, among others, have shown that there is more than genealogies to kinship. This is not the place to discuss Lounsbury's attempt to justify the general validity of the new phase of the genealogical approach labelled componential analysis (Lounsbury [1965]; cf. Leach [1958]; Schneider [1965]; Levy [1965]). But the problem is related to a broader issue which must be mentioned in this context of semantic analysis.

Like kinship analysts, semologists are in conflict on the definition of units of signification. Their respective concepts of "dictionary" epitomize the debate (Quine [1953] especially Ch. 3; Katz and Fodor [1963]; Greimas [1964, 1966]; Jakobson [1966]). Thus, some contend that "words" cannot be used operationally as semantic units and that a broader segment of discourse (proposition) is needed, and their argument runs somewhat like that of category-analysts in kinship studies. In conformity with the traditional vein of European philology, others hold that words are indeed proper semantic units and must be handled as such (cf. Darmesteter, [1898]); in anthropological linguistics, lexicostatistics rests on similar grounds. But then, more refined treatments of "words" have been developed which, in point of fact, already resorted to the analytic device which was used afterwards by componential analysts of kinship, namely the concept of "distinctive features" (Jakobson; Lévi-Strauss [1945]; Hjelmslev [1953]; Greimas [1964]; see below, 3.2.2). Both types of analysis in semantics and in logic will doubtless continue to coexist for a long time: they work on different levels and their respective objectives are slightly unkeyed (cf. Maranda [1966a, 1966b]). In the analysis of kinship, this distinction may not be at issue: genealogical and categorical systems do not seem to be mutually reducible, as they do not overlap functionally. The consequence is that the content of the former will not be amenable to analyses other than genealogical, and that the content of the latter will be distorted if approached componentially.

It would be highly conjectural to suggest that genealogical systems evolve as a rule from previous categorical stages, although such seems to have been the case for Indo-European (Hocart [1928; 1953] 178-182), and although the passage from subsistence to cash economies might be influential in such transformations. Actually, genealogical increase through time means that kinship loses ground as framework for social interaction, this function being gradually assumed by other specialized institutions. The concomitant semantic process would be that terms are then extended from a nucleus instead of being restricted by specifiers, which is criterial in the distinction of genealogical from categorical systems (Hocart 1953: 178-182).

Be it as it may, French presents some residual traces of categorical dimensions (residual because their gradual disappearance is historically attested: below, Chapters 2 and 3). The system is definitely genealogical on the whole, though, and must be approached accordingly. — It is significant, in this respect, that the modern anthropological meaning of *généalogie* was already attested in the thirteenth century.

So far, most semantic analyses of kinship systems have been received skeptically on sociological grounds. A common reply is that semantic analysis is justified in its own right. But then, it is counterargued, semantics has no bearing on the understanding of the totality of social facts and remains a rather sterile exercise. Lounsbury (1965) tried to show the sociological relevance of his approach: he does not provide, however, an explanatory model as powerful, as Leach's categorical one (Leach [1958]) whose challenge he set out to accept.

This study is both semantic and sociological. The hypotheses formulated on the basis of lexical investigations are correlated to social history. In conclusion, it is pointed out that the structure of French society and the structure of French kinship terminology covaried. Therefore, if pure semantic analysis yields some information, its validity remains very limited.

0.3 ABSTRACT

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The five chapters form three parts: Part One (Chapters One and Two) is essentially historical and sociological; Part Two (Chapter Three) introduces a formal model for the analysis of the kinship terminology and puts it to use; finally, Part Three (Chapters Four and Five) returns to historical and sociological domains to test the conclusions of the formal analysis. The Conclusion (Chapter Six) summarizes and evaluates the attempt.

Two broad sociological dimensions are particularly emphasized: (1) social organization as geared to the relationships of production, in which kinship was embedded in traditional French society, and (2) verbalized relationship systems, both in their descriptive aspect, i.e., terminology, and their normative aspects, the exploratory one as in oral literature, and the jural one, as in law. The point is, therefore, to investigate the native definition of kinship-in-context in French society (Part I); to describe it as accurately as possible with the help of a model which allows for the measurement of states (Part II); to investigate the dynamism underlying the institutionalization of the many faces of kinship (as related to marriage, succession rights, authority, exploitation of land, etc.) as this process is socially verbalized and sanctioned (Part III); and, finally, to

sketch a structural definition of French kinship in a perspective taking into account the diachronic and synchronic interplay of the factors involved in its evolution (Conclusion).

Sociological data and verbalized systems thus form the two main dimensions juxtaposed here. How French society formulates and evaluates kinship relationships is compared to the latter's social and historical positions.

0.3.1 Sociological Data

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The political system of medieval France, like that of most other European countries at the time, was strongly hierarchic. Pyramidal social organization was the rule, enacted in vassalage. In contrast, on the level of the household (or atomistic unit of exploitation), lateral solidarity prevailed (the *freresche*). Thus, a hierarchy of lords lived out of their vassal's work, whose kinship structure maximized manpower and minimized the flank offered to the fisc (below, 1.3.3).

With the advent and rise of bourgeoisie, the foundations of a more egalitarian society were laid. Concomitantly, laterality decreased while lineality was emphasized, first in town houses and then more generally. Lineages of plutocrats were gradually constituted where generation and descent began to override siblingship. Then, alliance relationships shrank too.

On the whole, lateral solidarity prevailed in a strongly hierarchic social order until the progressive democratization of society, due chiefly to urban life, was accompanied by an increase of the lineal axis and by a simultaneous decrease of collaterality. The process is not without parallelism with what can be observed today in cases of passage from a subsistence to a cash economy. The latter is in effect usually accompanied by a growing desire to restrict one's obligations in order to consolidate one's economic position, and solidarity focuses on the nuclear family and the direct line. The hypothesis proposed can be represented roughly as in Fig. 0.1.

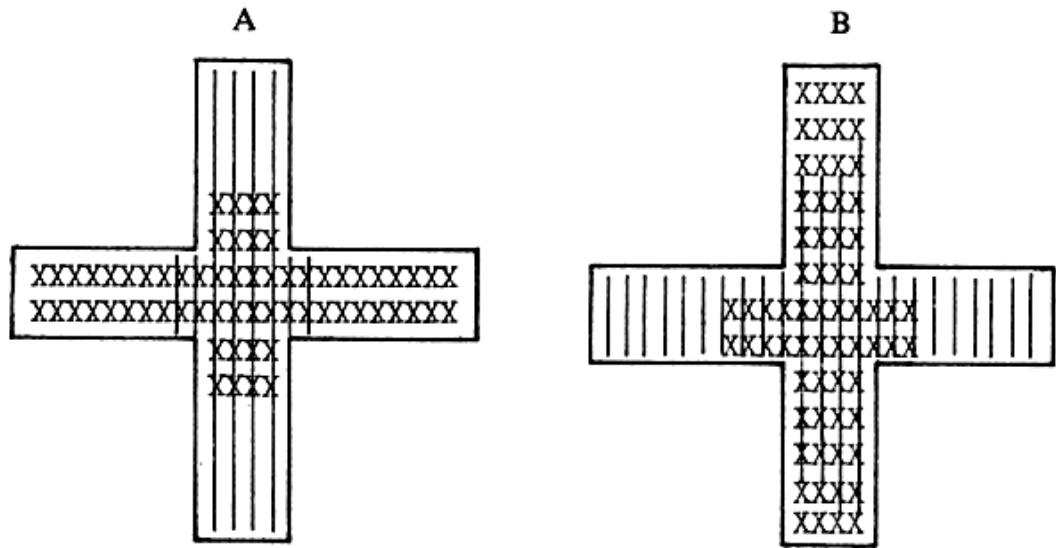


Fig. 0.1 French Society Before (A) and After (B) the Consolidation of Bourgeoisie. Vertical Lines stand for political organization, “X” for family structure: see text.

0.3.2 Verbalized Systems

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The kinship terminology evolved along lines congruent with the transformation of the social order. In effect, during the two hundred years which saw the consolidation of the French bourgeoisie (eleventh-thirteenth centuries), closer collaterals were distinguished from relatives in the direct line, singled out, and segregated to marginal positions as new and exclusive names appeared for lineals. Conversely, in the centuries that followed, step relatives lost their designations and were relegated with affines. Thus, a double process worked out successively: in both cases the terminology drove away from the set of primary relationships those which began to lose privileged treatment. This was done by the coinage of new terms to count out some collaterals on the one hand, and by the withdrawal of other terms whereby step-relatives — therefore counted out of the nuclear family but distinguished from affines — were altogether lumped and counted out with the latter. Thus, as the lineal terminology became more and more refined, the affinal terminology became poorer, and if the former seems to have reached a state of stability since the end of the last century, the confusion of the latter still persists.

Among semantic fields, kinship terminologies as have long enjoyed privileged treatment in social anthropology; similarly, the obvious relevance of law is recognized. But there are other expressions of “collective

representations” which do not always receive the attention they deserve, such as proverbs and folktales.

Folklore in general is a “social fact” for it exists in its own right as an institutionalized device to process and retrieve information encoded and stored by the collectivity. Cosmologies vary from society to society, as do political systems, kinship, etc. ; likewise, conceptions of social order and the cultural axioms on which these rest are also stated in relatively stable corpora of lore owned and managed, so to speak, by the group as such (below, 4. 1). These function as systems of quasi-norms, usually stated in terms bolder and more excessive than the true norms codified in law. They carry socially approved, socially encoded, and socially transmitted outlooks which often betray the principles at the roots of formal jural prescriptions. It is well-known that proverbs are frequently quoted in native African justice courts, and quite a few French proverbs are also legal aphorisms (below, 4.2). The “if ... then” structure implied in a great many folkloric items — “if one does this, then that will follow” — bears witness to their exploratory character as well as to their regulatory function.

A kinship terminology, a corpus of laws, and an oral literature are intimately connected with the way in which a society sees and attempts to define itself. They are, therefore, related to social organization as “conscious models” (Boas [1911]; Levi-Strauss [1958] 308-310). The analyst who would overlook them would seriously affect the validity of his approach (Cf. Gluckman [1965]).

0.3.3 The Measurement of Meaning.

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The model introduced in Chapter Three has its limitations. In the first place, it will not deal with categorically-structured systems, since it is based on a count of genealogical links. Second, it can measure only closed terms (as contradistinguished from open-ended ones), i.e., it is incapable of handling the categorical terms which may accrue in an otherwise genealogically-structured system. This restriction does not apply to French, however, as far as the borders of the system are defined by civil law, but it has some bearing with respect to common usage (below, 3.4).

My combinatorial model measures meaning by reference to contrastive features as defined by named primary relationships (alliance on the one hand, consanguinity on the other, which is subdivided into descent, generation, and siblingship). A semantic universe of kinship is generated by the combination of primary relationships into permissible strings. This is done to the seventh order, in fact, two degrees higher than would be necessary for French. The

result is a matrix of possible cases to which the French encoded (actually expressed) relationships are compared. The comparison yields a specific profile of the French kinship terminology ; then, since a time dimension is available, two historical states of the terminology are contrasted and their differences are measured.

In order to carry the measurement further, a ratio Intension/Extension is proposed. Like the combinatorial model, the ratio can apply only to genealogically-structured systems for it depends on the same prerequisites. It is most appropriate to investigate such systems, however, since it enables the quantification of the degree of ambiguity/unambiguity accruing in each term, and hence reveals built-in factors of merging and transference of meaning. On the whole, the advantages of the formalization attempted in Chapter Three are to make possible the measurement of a semantic field both synchronically and diachronically. Not only are the results obtained entirely replicable : the yardstick can also be used for quantitative comparative analyses of genealogical systems.

If categorical systems, on the other side of the kinship dichotomy (0.2), can be related to “elementary structures”, as suggested above, this implies that they must be handled as open classes whose closure is to be looked for on a higher sociological level. Finite mathematics might be used in their formalization in a way that remains to be fully developed (cf. Weil in Levi-Strauss [1949]; Kemeny, Snell, and Thompson [1957]; White [1962], Flament [1965]; Courrège [1966]).

0.3.4 Leach's “Topological” Model.

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The conclusion proposes an integrative view of French kinship which makes more explicit the rudimentary hypothesis set forth in Fig. 0.1. The bringing together of the diachronic and synchronic aspects with the help of a “topological formulation” is inspired by Leach's programmatic article (1961: Ch. 1).

The fundamental variable in topology is the degree of connectedness. Any closed curve is ‘the same as’ any other, regardless of its shape ; the arc of a circle is ‘the same as’ a straight line because each is open-ended. Contrariwise, a closed curve has a greater degree of connectedness than an arc. If we apply these ideas to sociology, we cease to be interested in particular relationships and concern ourselves instead with the regularities of pattern among neighbouring relationships. In the simplest possible case if there be a relationship p which is immediately associated with another relationship q then in a topological study we shall not concern ourselves with the particular characteristics of p and q but with their mutual characteristics, i.e., with the algebraic ratio p/q . But it must be understood that the relationships

and sets of relationships which are symbolized in this way cannot properly be given specific numerical values (Leach (1961] 7-8).¹

Throughout this essay, the terms “social structure” and “social organization” are used according to Levi-Strauss (1958) and Firth (1951). Other definitions will be found in the text (medieval institutions, “coding costs”, “stable messages”, etc.).

For the sake of economy and clarity, geographic and dialectal areas as well as sociological substrata are not singled out. The focus of this study is the structure and development of standard French kinship as defined in Chapter Two.

¹ However, contrary to the restriction stated in Leach's last sentence, specific numerical values are assigned to semantic facts and sets of relationships in Chapter Three.

1. MEDIEVAL FRENCH SOCIETY

(Ninth — Fourteenth Centuries)

1.1 PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

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Within the territory of France, two major features can be distinguished : the southern central plateau on the one hand, and, on the other, the projection of the Great Plain of Europe, which forms the most extensive section of her terrain. Irregular in conformation and relief, the south central plateau rises gradually from the plains region of the north and the west to a maximum elevation of 6,188 feet above sea level (Mont Doré) and is separated from the eastern highlands by the valley of the Rhône River. In contrast, the plains region consists of gently undulating lowlands (averaging 650 feet above sea level). It is the most fertile area of France and includes the valleys of the Seine, Loire, and Garonne Rivers and their many tributaries. The more than two hundred French streams are nearly all commercially navigable.

Temperatures along the Atlantic seaboard are equalized by ocean currents and the prevailing southwest winds. Severe winters and hot summers are the rule in the northeast region, whereas the Mediterranean coastal area enjoys a semi-tropical climate. Precipitation is fairly evenly distributed throughout the country, with peaks in June and October.

In the Middle Ages, both in the plains and in the plateau, cereals were the main crop, with a pay-off only three-to-six times the seed invested (Bloch [1960] 26; on vegetables [1961] 28-30). In the plains — especially in Anjou, Maine, and generally north of the Loire — agriculture was characterized by a triennial crop rotation, while, in the south, the traditional pattern was almost exclusively biennial rotation.

Chose du Nord, le système triennal y a fait tache d'huile. Le Midi lui est toujours resté obstinément rebelle, comme à un élément étranger. Dans le Nord, visiblement, à mesure que la population augmentait, les préférences allèrent vers la méthode qui permettait, chaque année, de ne maintenir vide de moissons que le tiers, au lieu de la moitié du terroir. Nul doute que, dans le Midi, les mêmes besoins ne se soient fait sentir. Pourtant, avant la révolution agricole [14th-15th centuries], jamais, semble-t-il, on n'y eut l'idée d'accroître la production en

introduisant les trois soles... Leur opposition [between biennial and triennial rotations], dans notre pays, traduit le heurt de deux grandes formes de civilisation agraire, que l'on peut, faute de mieux, appeler civilisation du Nord et civilisation du Midi, constituées, toutes deux, sous des influences qui nous demeurent encore profondément mystérieuses : ethniques et historiques sans doute, géographique aussi. Car si des circonstances d'ordre physique s'avèrent incapables d'expliquer, à elles seules, la répartition finale des régimes d'assolement, il se peut fort bien qu'elles rendent compte de l'origine, loin de la Méditerranée, du point de rayonnement du rythme triennal (Bloch, [1960] 34-35).

Interestingly enough, wherever biennial rotation existed in the north, it intersected with a triadic spatial and temporal principle : the farming land was divided into three parts and the year into three seasons (Bloch [1960] 33-34). Climatic differences were probably important; however, the two systems cannot be explained on the basis of ecological factors only. In effect, the northeastern and southern regions are opposed through two other, but related, dichotomies: the open field is found both in the north and in the south, but fenced fields are exclusive to the latter. Then, in the north, the strips in the open field are long, narrow and parallel to each other, forming groups, while in the south, the plots are roughly square in shape and mostly ungrouped. Hypotheses to relate these facts to the distribution of the two types of ploughs in use had to be discarded. The key to understanding the differences would perhaps be provided only by a thorough study of the ancient collective representations underlying each system (those of the Germanic and Roman traditions), as suggested by Bloch, with the additional help of other contrastive features like French/Provençal, oral/written law, hook/hollow tiles, and the architectural styles (Bloch [1960] 21-65; [1961] 38, 46-68) ¹.

1.2 BRIEF REMINDER OF FRENCH POLITICAL HISTORY

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In the first century B.C., Gaul was inhabited by tribes of Celtic and Iberian origins without any larger political unity. The Celtic-speaking peoples of Western Europe called their domain *Gaeltachd*, “the land of the Gauls”, the term from which the ancient Romans derived *Gallia*. It is only with the Roman conquest (59-51 B.C.) that intertribal peace was more or less established, to be followed by the spread of a rudimentary Christianity. In the third and fourth centuries, waves of invaders successively disrupted whatever fragile unity might have existed among the Gauls, until the Franks (a West Germanic

¹ In the Middle Ages, hunting was a necessary complement to farming, but its contribution to subsistence in the Middle Ages has not been studied so far; cf. Bloch (1949) I: 116 ; (1961) 17, 110.

people) consolidated their conquest in the fifth century. After the rule of the Frankish king Clovis (481-511 A.D.), political turmoil and confusion prevailed again. Then, with the division of Charlemagne's Empire (843 A.D.), France became geographically defined by the territory west of the Escaut, Meuse, and Rhône Rivers. Charles the Bald's struggles to maintain French political unity could not keep feudalism from gaining ground, while repeated invasions assailed the country (on the latter's respective bearings, see Bloch [1949] 1 : 79-85).

In 987 A.D., the Capetian Dynasty was established by a coalition of nobles who rejected the rightful claimant to the throne. The authority of Hugh Capet remained limited, like that of his immediate predecessors, to little beyond Paris and Orleans. Actually, the lords of surrounding feudal domains (Aquitaine, Burgundy, Normandy, and Flanders) wielded considerably more power than Capet's three successors. However, starting with the conquest of England (1066) by William, Duke of Normandy, the position of the kings began to improve. As the threat of Norman strength had been reduced by William's endeavors across the Channel, the fact that several French feudal lords embarked upon the First Crusade (1096) with ruinous results enabled the Capetians to challenge their vassals' power more successfully than before. Louis VI (1108-1137) strengthened his kingdom after more than twenty years of armed struggle and could repel the invasion led by Henry V. Then, Louis VII (1137-1180) conquered Champagne and added Aquitaine to his possessions through marriage (losing it again in 1152 when his marriage was dissolved). Philip II (1180-1223) won control over Normandy, Anjou, and most of the English possessions in France, as he resumed the English war begun under Louis VI. Philip instituted important governmental reforms, especially in the administration of justice. He curbed the arbitrary powers of feudal lords by establishing the right of appeal to the royal courts. He also encouraged the formation of *villes de commune* where the bourgeois soon became the allies of the central administration. The process of consolidation continued during the reigns of the last Capetians until the Dynasty became extinct for lack of a male successor (1328). The episodes of the Hundred Years' War which followed need not be summarized here. Finally, Louis XI (1461-1483) put a decisive end to the last crisis of independence of Burgundy, Anjou, Provence and Roussillon.

1.3 SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

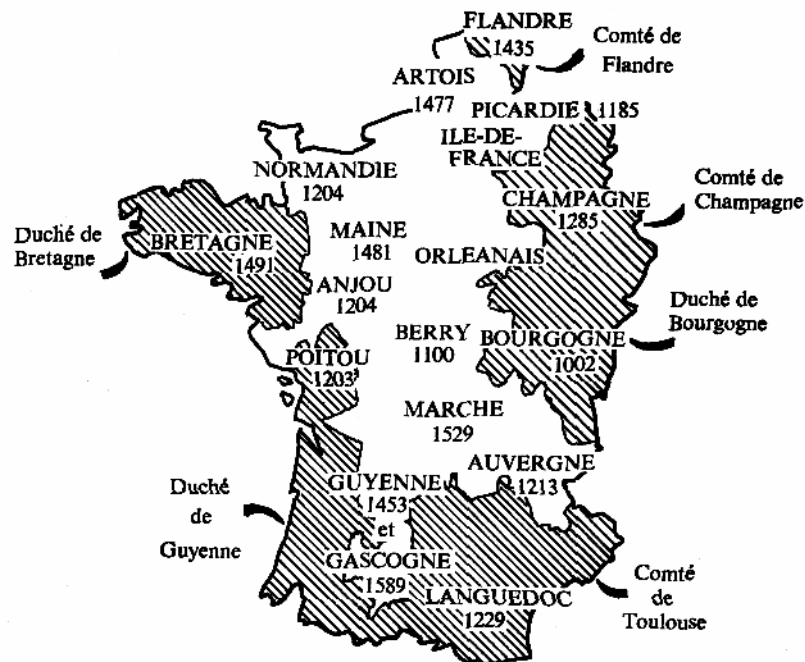
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The main purpose of this chapter is to give a general idea of the sociological context in which the core of the modern French kinship terminology was formed (see Chapter Two). This will be done at the expense of carefully displayed evidence and with the danger of oversimplification. However, thanks to the masterly works of Marc Bloch, Henri Pirenne and his associates, and others, the enterprise is not hopeless and should provide a useful sociological framework for what follows.

1.3.1 Settlements and Communications.

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Thanks to the census of parishes and hearths ordered by the central government in 1328, one can have an idea of the population of France after the population explosion which took place in the 12th and 13th centuries. On the basis of that record and by assigning a coefficient of five persons per rural hearth, Lot (1929) arrived at the figure of sixteen million-and-a-half to seventeen million inhabitants, which Bloch ([1961] 8) considered to be the minimum (see below, 1.3.4, on the size of *manse*s).



Map 1. Formation of the French Territory. Shaded areas are those of feudalities, still powerful at the beginning of the twelfth century; dates are those of incorporation into the national domain.

It is a truism to state that Medieval France was mainly agricultural. Only ten per cent of the population lived in towns which were barely more than large villages, and the *domaine* was the only significant large sociological unit at the beginning of the period, both from the standpoint of the people and of the observer (Pirenne [1937] Cubelier, [1912] Fourquin [1956]). Most agglomerations — more or less fortified hamlets — were surrounded by the vast expanse of land required for the subsistence of the population, due to poor agricultural techniques (Pirenne [1937] 63-64), by forests, and by unused fields, with the consequence that such agglomerations were far apart (Bloch [1949] 98-99; [1960] 4-5, 11-14, 18-19).

The nucleus of the *demesne* was the residence of the lord.

...[D]uring the period of insecurity which set in with the dissolution of the Carolingian Empire, the need for protection became the first necessity of a people threatened in the South by the Saracen incursions and in the North and West by those of the Normans, to which were added, at the beginning of the tenth century, the terrible cavalry raids of the Hungarians. These invasions led on all sides to the construction of new places of refuge. In this period Western Europe became covered with fortified castles, erected by the feudal princes to serve as a shelter for their men. These castles, or, to use the term by which they were customarily designated, these *bourgs* or *burgs*, were usually composed of a rampart of earth or stones, surrounded by a moat and pierced with gates. The *vilains* from roundabout were requisitioned to construct and maintain them. A garrison of knights resided inside ; a *donjon* served as the lord's dwelling-place ; a church of canons looked after the needs of religion ; and barns and granaries were set up to receive the grain, smoked meats and dues of all kinds levied on the manorial peasants, which served to feed the garrison and the people who, in times of peril, came huddling into the fortress with their cattle (Pirenne [1937] 40-41).

Until the end of the seventh century, communications were poor: the average distance covered in a day was of the order of 30-40 kilometers by land and 100-150 by sea. In case of emergency, however, special couriers could travel twice as fast (Bloch [1949] 88-100; [1961] 27). But, aside from Italy and the Low Countries, most of continental Europe, and especially France (Pirenne [1937] 156), had apparently completely lost all familiarity with the sea in the early Middle Ages, and former coastal villages had moved deeper and deeper inland. Be that as it may, traffic was relatively common, for “le baron, avec sa suite, circulait constamment d'une de ses terres à l'autre. Ce n'était pas seulement afin de les mieux surveiller. Force était de venir consumer sur place les denrées, dont le charroi vers un centre commun eût été incommode autant que dispendieux [and risky because of human predators of all kinds]. Sans correspondants, sur lesquels il pût se décharger du soin d'acheter ou de vendre, à peu près certain d'ailleurs de ne jamais trouver réunie, en un même lieu, une clientèle suffisante pour assurer ses gains, le marchand était un colporteur, un ‘*pied poudreux*’, qui poursuivait la fortune par monts et par vaux” (Bloch [1949] 101 ; Pirenne [1937] 86-95). And the same held true for monks in search of learning or of a convent suited to their expectations, for pilgrims,

peasants after more fertile soils, etc. (Bloch [1949] I, 102; Delarue [1957] 15, quoted below, 4.1.3).

Whatever communication there was presented a segmented aspect due to the absence of a network of main roads. The traveler was always facing a multiplicity of small trails linking castles, monasteries, hamlets, villages, and towns. Accordingly, no year went by without some of the latter's receiving a few visitors. On the other hand, and aside from the fairs at a later period, very few were the centers visited more frequently than on an incidental yearly basis. To use Bloch's metaphor, the picture was that of short Brownian movements which criss-crossed the country. Then, paradoxically only in a superficial way, interaction seems to have been much rarer between closer settlements, each one being open to random continental influx more than to the gossip of its neighbors. At any rate, the information conveyed through the communication channels underwent, as a rule, extreme distortions and exchanges of news were highly folkloric (Bloch [1949] I, 102-104).

The local cluster of holdings interspersed among the plots of the manorial reserve was, for all practical purposes, the sociological unit. Permeating it, social solidarity and social identity were defined by two equally binding categories, the lineage (lignage = *parenté*) and the vassalage. Both dimensions provided the axes on which an individual found his position in the social order as well as the vectors along which helpful relations could be sought. While vassalage was a relatively new institution in the ninth century, the lineage had deep roots in the past of Germanic societies.

1.3.2 Lineage.

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The *lignage* was essentially a patriline. Beaumanoir describes it unequivocally in Chapter XIX of his *Coutumes* (below, Appendix One) where he defines its membership as ascending (*en montant*), descending (*en descendant*), and lateral (*de costé*) which he subdivides further into ascending and descending (*en avalant*). Affines were excluded since they belonged to their own patrilines (*Paterna paternis, materna maternis*)¹.

The function of the lineage was threefold: to mark off relatives too close to be marital partners and/or to war against² and to determine successional channels (Beaumanoir [1690] Ch. XIV, XIX); it was therefore essentially a solidarity mechanism. — The reckoning of degrees of kinship was thus of

¹ Bloch's rather loose use of the term might give the impression that the lineage was a bilateral kindred.

² These, however, were bound to assist in wars against more distant relatives.

great importance, and jurists urged people to know their positions in the network of relationships. Yet, genealogical depth barely reached three generations (*trisaïeul*) and Beaumanoir observed at the time when he wrote (1283) that lineages had shrunk to two generations (cf. Bloch [1949] I, 216 ; II, 66). It should be noted, in this respect, that a few holdings were rented out for three “lives” (Bloch [1960] 73).

The lineage was a corporation aggregate. In Maine's insightful words, the distinctive characteristic of a corporation is that “it never dies” (1861: 179, 184). The defense reaction of the medieval lineage against extinction was indeed (1) to stress its own rights in the case of offense by retaliating (*vendetta*; *wergeld*, the blood price or “composition” for the homicide of a relative), and (2) to take measures to maintain the group's social and economic identity despite the extinction of its members (on the sociological parameters of the collective representation behind such mechanisms, see Hertz [1928] 84-98).

The principle of action, well established in the social order, was in both cases based on substitutability : justice was done when a member of the guilty group was killed, disregarding individual responsibility — i.e., offense was a group affair to be avenged on the same plane ; and the perpetuation of the group was insured with as little change as possible when the consequence of a death had to be abated, by the fact that one branch could take over as well as another the duty of maintaining the “homeostasis”. Thus, death was eliminated, as it were, by resorting to the interchangeability of individuals — a phenomenon which, far from being restricted to French or European peasant societies, is still widely found among people whose social organization rests on corporate groups. The picture is, therefore, that of a structure maintained through time where the presence of individuals more than their personality is material to the functioning of the system. As stated in ancient Roman jurisprudence, an estate lives on in the heir of its previous “manager” ; the French legal aphorism, “Le mort saisit le vif”, refers to the same conception. And what obtained along the temporal axis prevailed also synchronically : “De toute manière, l'acte de l'homme se propageait, au sein de son lignage, en ondes collectives” (Bloch [1949] I, 203 ; see also 195-203, and Gluckman's discussion of Bloch's approach and conclusions [1965] 111-114). A concrete case may be quoted for illustration :

Combien ces représentations furent puissantes et durables, rien ne l'atteste mieux, sans doute, qu'un arrêt, relativement tardif, du Parlement de Paris. En 1260, un chevalier, Louis Defeux, ayant été blessé par un certain Thomas d'Ouzouer, poursuivit son agresseur devant la Cour. L'accusé ne nia point le fait. Mais il exposa que lui-même avait été attaqué, quelque temps auparavant, par un neveu de sa victime. Que lui reprochait-on ? n'avait-il pas, conformément aux ordonnances royales, attendu quarante jours avant d'exécuter sa vengeance ? – C'était le temps qu'on estimait nécessaire afin que les lignages fussent dûment avertis du danger – D'accord, répliqua le chevalier ; mais ce qu'a fait mon neveu ne me concerne point. L'argument

ne valait rien ; l'acte d'un individu engageait toute sa parenté. Ainsi en décidèrent, du moins, les juges du pieux et pacifique saint Louis (Bloch [1949] I, 197).

Bilateral descent (in the sense of Levi-Strauss [1949] 135) was a feature of the old Germanic society which distinguished between the sword's and the distaff's sides, with a predominance of the agnatic principle¹. The transmission of proper names indicates that the father's and the mother's lines were equally weighed at least until the beginning of the ninth century. Later, however (e.g., in the , fifteenth century), documents are found where it is clear that, if females can still bear their mother's last names, they are also known — perhaps more generally — under their father's patronymic (cf. Trial of Joan of Arc).

Bilaterality persisted in French society to some extent. As we shall see below (Chapter Five), the legal axiom *Paterna paternis, materna maternis* expressed a meaningful dichotomy — where the maternal side was definitely underrated. From the tenth to the thirteenth century, conflicts between relatives posed problems analogous to those occurring in present-day bilateral societies and, likewise, the principle to determine allegiance was distance, as stated in Beaumanoir's *Coutumes*.

The reduction of the importance of the lineage to two generations which Beaumanoir witnessed was caused by several factors. One was the increasing power of the state, which became accordingly in a position to extend protection over a deeper time depth. Then, probably more determinant and at any rate more efficient in those periods where the life span was short, the *manse* and the *freresche* were the sociological models best suited to the dialectics relating exploitation rights and authority (below, 1.3.4). A corroboration of this view comes from the fact that in richer areas (the Parisian region), *freresches* broke down early and the lineal axis was reinforced whereas, in poorer provinces, the *freresche* persisted until very recent times.

Concurrently with the decreasing strength of lineages, family names slowly began to appear in the thirteenth century. Their function was to provide a mnemonic device to keep track of blood relationships when the scattering of relatives meant that common residence no longer identified them as one unit. The trend originated most likely in the higher and more mobile classes, and the use of family names was encouraged by the growing central state in order to ease administration (Bloch [1949] I, — 218-219).

On the whole, the concept of lineage does not seem to be the best operational tool to analyze French Medieval society. First, it was rather shallow; then, vassalage provided a model better suited to the exploitation of

¹ Bilateral descent had to do mainly with feuds, and the agnatic principle with inheritance.

land; finally, and consequently, as far as kinship is involved, the *freresche* or group of (male) siblings was the true domestic group.

1.3.3 Vassalage.

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The notions of demesne, *manant* (a class grouping serfs and *vilains*), etc., which will be used in this section, will be defined later (below, section 1.3.4). At this point, suffice it to handle them as general *designanta* for the sake of commodity.

The relationship of vassal was created by a ritual (the *hommage*). The subject placed his joined hands in those of his lord and uttered a few words of submission; then, both kissed on the mouth. A Christian addition to the old Germanic rite consisted of the oath on the Gospel or on saints' relics — such an oath, though, could be taken independently of the rest of the rite. The lord then handed his *man* a symbolic token of the latter's salary (Bloch [1949] I, 224-225, 267).

Homage (“to become *l'homme d'un autre*”, to alienate one's person by becoming the subject of another man) became hereditary early in the Middle Ages : both the vassal's and the lord's descendents had to perform the rite in person, thus perpetuating the bond, whereby the former were entitled to draw their subsistence from lands entrusted to their care and to receive protection from their successive lords, who, in turn, were entitled to the services, monetary contributions, and part of the goods produced by their men generation after generation (Bloch [1949] I, 223-229).

A lord, on the other hand, often was, or made himself, the vassal of a more powerful lord with the result that regional hierarchies slowly took form. At the bottom were the poorest *manants*, who enslaved themselves to escape uttermost misery; these were serfs, i.e., servants on whom the lord had a *jus in re*, since they were his “things”. Next in the same category came the *vilains*, whose dependence from the lord was established through the portion of his lands which they cultivated ; the lord had a *jus in persona* over them. The *vavasseurs*, vassals of vassals, were modest lords, receiving a fief in salary: “fief” originally meant a payment in currency for land, but the term underwent a semantic evolution through which it came to stand for the opposite of its first meaning, viz., payment in land.

The dichotomous line dividing Medieval French society passed between *vilains* and *vavasseurs*, i.e., between non-landed and landed people. In between, the class of *sergents* was made of the lord's local administrators. These stewards, thanks to their responsible positions, soon acquired the

opportunity to bridge the social gap and to infiltrate the higher level by becoming *vavasseurs* in turn. Vassals were one degree higher in the hierarchy, since they themselves had vassals (the *vavasseurs*). Finally, lords (*barons, comtes, maréchaux, ducs, pairs*) were the administrators of large territories and responsible only to the king — whose rivals they did not fail to become whenever they could (Bloch [1949] I, 223-229, 249, 255-256; II, 78-94; Pirenne [1937] 12, 60). The social order, therefore, rested on the possession of land and the pattern was replicated from the bottom up.

The smaller-scale tensions which could arise on the level of the kin group (above 1.3.2) were paralleled by those inherent in multiple vassalage. As a man could have to weigh his second cousin's son against his mother's brother's wife's father, so did a vassal, oftentimes, have to decide between the two or more lords whose subject he was simultaneously. Although strictly, if implicitly, reproved by the Carolingian model of society, and although explicitly condemned afterwards by jurists, chroniclers, and Lewis the Pious, the *chevauchement vassalique* had been recognized as normal by the end of the twelfth century. In case of conflict, however, contrary to the possibility of abstention offered to the kinsman when relatives were involved, the vassal had to commit himself. Guidelines were established by an elaborate casuistics to determine allegiance priorities. Thus prevailed ideally in this order (1) the oldest homage; (2) the one to the lord who gave the richest fief; and (3) the homage made to a lord engaged in a defensive war against that to the aggressor. To break the political deadlocks of multiple homage, the conception of *homme liges* was launched (cf. German *ledig*) and gained ground rapidly, according to which a vassal owed absolute fidelity to one lord only. The correcting device originated in France, between the Meuse and Loire Rivers and in Burgundy, and spread to Anjou, Normandy, Picardy, etc. But it did not take long before vassals became again *hommes liges* of more than one lord, with the consequence that the *chevauchement vassalique* reappeared in the guise of a new terminology (Bloch [1949] I, 325-326). The tendency was, therefore, one toward intersection of social dependences and intricate relationships, with the result that conflict was made both more frequent and less serious since, if it had more opportunities to arise, it also involved more factors of mediation (cf., on the sociological principles involved, Scheffler [1965]).

Vassalage was also modified to some extent during the thirteenth century by the easier circulation of money. Lords then began to pay salaries to those they wanted to attach to themselves (Bloch [1949] I, 269; on the *Naturalwirtschaft* theory and the role of money during the period, see the lucid discussion by Pirenne [1937] 102-139). On the whole, though, the general pattern, as far as the mass of the people was concerned, was still that of a bond not so much between two individuals as between two corporations, viz., the

corporation sole of the master and the corporation aggregate of the exploitation unit (Bloch [1949] I, 293; cf. Maine [1861] 178-185).

From the standpoint of exploitation, however, the practice of vassalage underwent an important modification between the ninth and the thirteenth century, that of the “passage d'une structure sociale fondée sur le service à un système de rentes foncières (Bloch [1949] I, 388). In effect, lords began, as early as in the tenth and eleventh centuries in France, to divide their *domaines* or *réserves* into allotments which they distributed little-by-little to their *métayers*, or made into new *métairies*, or into vassalages, which, in turn, were broken with into *métairies*. Thus, sharecroppers and other vassals found themselves both with fewer labor duties and more land in their own use, since, on the one hand, the *domaine* did not exist any longer as such, and, on the other, was parcelled out between the lord's men. The equilibrium was then reestablished by a shift in the nature of prestations, i.e., by increasing the importance of the ancient *banalités* (Bloch [1949] I, 383-388; [1960] 83-84, 95-105; Pirenne [1937] 81) ¹.

If Pirenne and his associates are right (Pirenne [1937] 68-85; cf. Bloch [1961] 23-25), this transformation was not unrelated to the innovation launched by the Cistercian abbeys founded in the eleventh century, and one of its important consequences was the abolition of personal serfdom: “After all, these [labor services] were used for the cultivation of the lord's demesne, and here there was no demesne land ... the *banalités* ... were not rights which debased personal status, nor could their exercise be considered an exploitation, since the plant involved was indispensable and no one but the lord could have constructed it” (Pirenne [1937] 71-72).

Vassalage was thus the form taken by the relationship system between the larger social unit and its physical environment in Medieval France as in most of Europe at the time. It was geared to the exploitation of the soil on the one

¹ “De toutes les ‘exactions’ nouvelles, imposées aux tenanciers, les plus caractéristiques furent sans doute les monopoles, très variés, que le seigneur s'attribua à leur détriment. Tantôt il se réservait, durant certaines périodes de l'année, la vente du vin ou de la bière. Tantôt il revendiquait le droit exclusif de fournir, moyennant paiement, le taureau ou le verrat nécessaire à la reproduction des troupeaux ... Plus souvent, il contraignait les paysans de moudre à son moulin, de cuire le pain à son four, de faire leur vin à son pressoir. Le nom même de ces charges était significatif. On les appelait, communément, ‘banalités’. Ignorées de l'époque franque, elles n'avaient d'autre fondement que le pouvoir d'ordonner, reconnu au seigneur et désigné par le vieux mot germanique de ‘ban’. Pouvoir inséparable, cela va de soi, de toute autorité de chef, donc, en lui-même, comme part de l'autorité seigneuriale, très ancien, mais qu'avait singulièrement renforcé, aux mains des petits potentats locaux, le développement de leur rôle de juges. La répartition de ces banalités dans l'espace n'offre pas une leçon moins instructive. La France, où l'affaiblissement de la puissance publique et l'accaparement des justices avaient été poussés le plus loin, fut leur patrie d'élection” (Bloch [1949] I, 383-384. see also [1960] 83-84, 95-105).

hand and to the reciprocal exploitation of men on the other. In effect, the institution was essentially conceived as an exchange: services and goods, against safety and exploitation rights — and kinship rested much on the same basis.

1.3.4 Demesne and Manse.

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The concepts of property and ownership cannot be validly used with reference to Medieval economy, for they became meaningful only in the eighteenth century; “exploitation unit” is a better term (Bloch [1960] 133-134; [1961] 94-95; vs. [1949] I, 203).

On the lowest level of the landed society, the *alleux* were small and independent units of exploitation. Perhaps original prototypes of the demesne, they did not survive long on the economic map of France. Because of their rather restricted resources in manpower as well as in land, they were soon absorbed by larger exploitations, willingly or not. In fact, many *alleux* masters understood that their best interest was to become the vassals of a more powerful lord. Kinship was indeed too weak a basis for a social group. The communities of independent agriculturists, their relatives, and their serfs and hired men could not face adequately the uncertainties of life. Even several *alleux* in coalition could not efficiently “play against nature” or “against man”. They had to give up their independence in exchange for participation in larger groups, their only means of survival. Beyond the demesne, no social unit was strong enough to subsist (Bloch [1960] 81; [1949] I, 264-267, 271-273, 369-379; cf. Maine [1861] 272-273).

Already in the eighth and ninth centuries, the basic exploitation unit was the demesne. It suited the French soil and soul so well that it persisted substantially unchanged until today in some parts of the country (e.g., Haute-Vienne). The institution retained the criterial attributes which defined it in Frankish Gaul, where it was known under the name of *villa* (= seigneurie): “Qu’était-ce, en ce temps, qu’une seigneurie, ou *villa*? dans l’espace, un territoire organisé de telle sorte qu’une grande partie des profits du sol revînt, directement ou indirectement, à un seul maître; humainement, un groupe qui obéissait à un seul chef” (Bloch [1960] 67). In the Middle Ages, *domaine* and its lexical equivalents stood for the land whose yield belonged directly and entirely to the lord, to the exclusion of the holdings (*tenures*) where his men were established. In the terminology of modern Medievalists, the word means the whole exploitation, including the holdings, and “seigneurial reserve” is commonly used to designate the lands set apart for the lord. The *dispartition* of the reserve, mentioned in the previous section, did not entail, in France, any substantial sociological transformation since it did barely more than make

vilains out of serfs — two categories of *manants* almost identical for all practical purposes.

The large medieval demesne contained an average of three hundred farms or *manses*, i.e., about 10,000 acres if Bloch's estimates are not too high (but, cf. below, this section). These farms were not all tightly grouped together, but more and more scattered as they lay further from the manorial nucleus, which not infrequently resulted in multiple allegiance (below, section 1.7). The nucleus itself consisted of the main residence of the lord : a cathedral, church, abbey or castle, which was also the only accessible court of justice (cf. the description quoted above, this chapter section 1.3.1). “Villages”, or clusters of farm buildings, barns, cattlesheds, stables, etc., were the main divisions of the large demesne ; they were under the stewardship of the mayor (*maire, sergent*), who was selected among the trustworthy serfs of the lord and whose position was described earlier (section 1.3.3). As the *vilains* under his jurisdiction soon acquired hereditary rights to holdings, so did mayors to their offices (Bloch [1960] 67-68; [1961] 89, 97-118; Pirenne [1937] 59-60). Bloch's neat summary of the institution deserves to be quoted:

Une seigneurie est donc, avant tout, une ‘terre’ — le français parlé ne lui connaissait guère d'autre nom —, mais une terre habitée et par des sujets. Normalement l'espace ainsi délimité se divise, à son tour, en deux fractions, qu'unit une étroite interdépendance. D'une part le ‘domaine’, appelé aussi par les historiens ‘réserve’, dont le seigneur recueille directement tous les fruits. De l'autre, les ‘tenures’, petites ou moyennes exploitations paysannes, qui, en nombre plus ou moins considérable, se groupent autour de la ‘cour’ domaniale. Le droit réel supérieur que le seigneur étend sur la chaumière, le labour, le pré du manant se traduit par son intervention pour une nouvelle investiture, rarement gratuite, chaque fois qu'on les voit changer de mains ; par la faculté de se les approprier, en cas de déshérence ou de légitime confiscation ; enfin et surtout par la perception de taxes et de services. Ceux-ci consistaient, pour la plupart, en corvées agricoles, exécutées sur la réserve (Bloch [1949] 368).

The labor force consisted of serfs, hired men, and sharecroppers (*tenanciers, métayers*). The second category was neither numerically nor sociologically important; the first and the third formed the class of *manants*. Among the latter, the difference was thin between serfs and *vilains* (cf. Lat. *villicus*). According to the social and legal norms, the serf was personally bound to his master, whereas the *vilain* was bound only to his lord's land as stated above (section 1.3.3). The consequence was that *vilains* could abrogate their relations of submission by leaving the holdings — but what could they do then except serve a new lord — while serfs belonged to their masters from birth to death. On the other hand, both serfs and *vilains* lived the same life on the same type of farms. Both had fairly the same obligations to meet, and neither could have found a new way of life without great difficulties. If quite a few more resolute or mistreated serfs did run away from their masters, the incidence was fairly high of *vilains* giving themselves as serfs in exchange for subsistence and protection. All-in-all, except in Normandy, French serfs seem to have greatly outnumbered *vilains* until about the thirteenth century. The

situation in Normandy was probably due to Viking influence (Bloch [1949] I, 83-84).

Historians propose a general definition of the juridical status of the French serf by the following three restrictions on his behavior: (1) a serf had no right of appeal, and his sole judge was his master — a source of income for the latter, since justice was administered for a fee; (2) a serf could not marry outside the demesne — unless he paid a fine to his lord; and (3) a serf had to pay a special, if rather light, annual tax. Such, apparently, were the norms. In contrast, the semantic imprecision of the words used at the time to designate serfs and *vilains* bears witness to the ill-defined status of those who were not landed. Then, the distinction vanished altogether, because *villes neuves* were created and given their special charters, and also because the lords allowed their serfs to buy their freedom if they could afford it. The latter trend originated in the thirteenth century and became a matter of general policy by about 1350 (Bloch [1949] I, 365 ff.; [1960] 87-95; [1961] 80-94, 109-122; on *villes neuves*, see Pirenne [1937] 168-78, Pirenne [1939] 422). Along with the partitioning of the seigneurial reserve, those factors finally led the society to accept the verdict of semantics.

The *manants* were thus the labor force of the lord, and the regime of *métairie* was perhaps mostly to the advantage of the former if one can extrapolate from their present situation in France. It is true that the dues to the lord are at present only one third of the harvest instead of one-half, as they were in the Middle Ages; but the decision recently taken by modern *métayers* suggests meaningful considerations. A few years ago in France, the remaining *métayers* (still numerous in relatively large areas in Poitou, Charentes, Limousin, Aquitaine, and South Pyrénées) were given the opportunity to change their condition to that of farmers, i.e., to rent their holdings instead of paying their dues in produce. A few *métayers* adopted the new system, but were, quick to repent; nowadays, none wishes to modify his status. This is readily understandable in view of the fact that the lord has to maintain the whole exploitation. He has to pay a share (usually one-half) of all expenses pertaining to the good repair of the house, barn, and equipment, including one-half the cost of the *métayer's* tractor. The tractor often serves more to maintain the farmer's social prestige on weekly drives to market than to work plots of land too small to justify the purchase on purely economic grounds. Thus, the lord barely subsists out of the income derived from his *métayers*, whereas the latter have an easier life than if they were farmers paying fixed annual rent regardless of crop yield. On the other hand, because of their precarious financial position, most lords have to supplement their income. One will breed cattle or pigs, another will build a small factory, etc. The majority cannot make ends meet, which I have heard expressed by the common locution, “Ils tirent le diable par la queue”. And still today, well-nigh ruined lords cannot evict their *métayers* and transform the traditional type of exploitation as long as their

sharecropper has a son willing to take over his father's place. This might be thought to be a rather rare occurrence, but the contrary is true. In effect, male sharecroppers are traditionally illiterate : they withdraw their sons from school after a year or two, notwithstanding the law of obligatory education until age fourteen. Only women know how to read and write, skills they keep alive as book-keepers of the *ménage*. Some of their sons are thus bound to stay behind and continue to fulfill the father's role, despite migrations to cities. And one could see in 1966 one or more adult and unmarried male siblings sharing the home of their married brother and his unmarried children, whom they help in the exploitation of the *métairie* (cf. below 5.2.4).

The *manants* formed groups territorially and sociologically defined as *manses*. These were fixed and indivisible fiscal units which soon became hereditarily transmitted as it was advantageous for both the *tenanciers* and the lords (Bloch [1960] 69-77). Such elementary social and territorial units, some scattered among the patches of the seigneurial reserve, some clustered closer to the manor, were the smallest, atomistic constituents of the demesne (Bloch [1961] 52-54).

Man was never treated individually: “Isolé, l'homme ne comptait guère. C'était associé à d'autres hommes qu'il peinait et se défendait ; c'était des *groupements*, de toute taille, que les maîtres, seigneurs ou princes, étaient habitués à trouver devant eux, qu'ils dénombraient et taxaient” (Bloch [1960] 154 [emphasis added] ; see Ariès (1960) 459-460, 462).

The *manse* — another name for tenure in most cases — was consequently the operational unit of exploitation (Bloch [1960] 159; [1961] 108). Bloch proposed repeatedly the figure of 13 hectares for its average size, but his estimate is probably too high and should be reduced by at least a third or even one-half (cf. des Marez [1926]; Génicot [1962]). Pirenne and his associates prefer to use a more flexible criterion: “The size of the ‘tenants’ holdings ... showed a remarkable fixity in each *villa*, though they often differed very considerably in different regions. They comprised, in fact, the amount of land sufficient for the support of a family, with the result that they varied in size with the fertility of the soil. They were known by the name of *mancus* (*manse*, *mas*) in Latin, *hufe* in German and *virgate* or *yardland* in English” (Pirenne [1937] 60; cf. Wartburg [1960] 6, 261-267).

The sociological composition of the *manse* is most instructive on the nature of the kin group. The term was used since the beginning of the seventh century to designate a typical exploitation unit and meant primarily the location of the household. Then it came to apply to the whole land cultivated by the “family”, with respect to both labor and area borders (Duby [1962] I, 88-95, 208-219). The community living in the *manse* was often called *maisnie*, and Duby defines it as the “family”, not to be interpreted, however, as “nuclear family”.

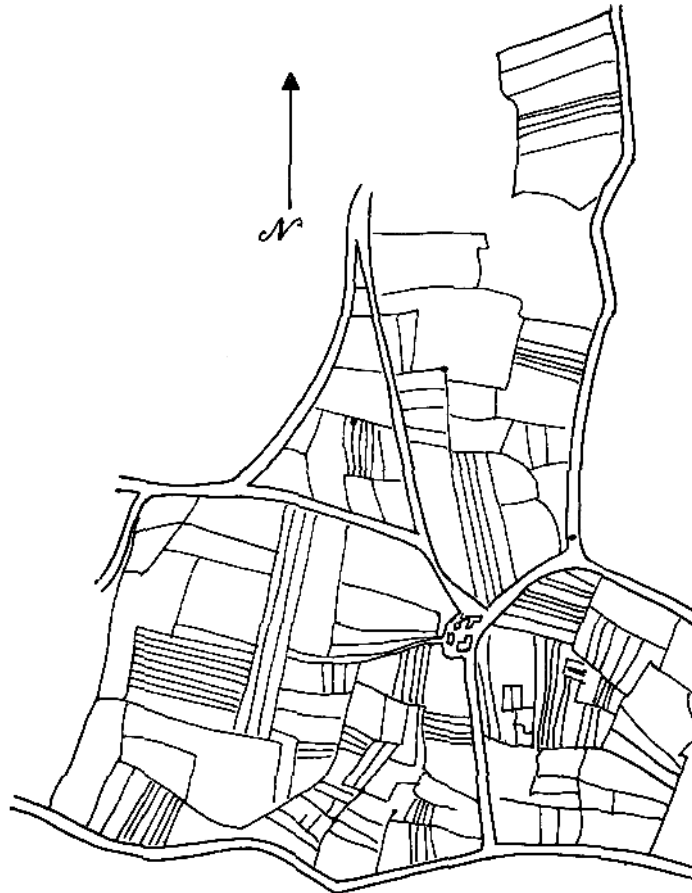
La cellule sociale élémentaire est la famille. Elle commande la structure du village et du terroir, la répartition du travail et de la consommation. Nous avons déjà repéré dans le paysage rural son empreinte très profonde. L'enclos de la maison rassemble la parenté et la protège, les annexes la nourrissent ; l'ensemble constitue le lien de toute organisation agraire. En fait les hommes de l'époque... avaient dans l'esprit la notion d'une unité typique d'exploitation, ajustée aux forces et aux besoins de la famille (Duby [1962] I, 85).

A closer look at the composition of the “family” at the time shows conclusively that it was formed of a kin group and its servants, and was not an equivalent of the modern family, which was known in France only since the eighteenth century (although adumbrated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries [Ariès (1960) 406-407, 451-458, 462-467]). In point of fact, it consisted of two or three *ménages* and could include as many as fifty to seventy people (Bloch [1949] I, 68, 370-371, 391).

Summarizing an impressive number of documents, Tobler and Lommatzsch ([1925] I 50, 884-889), characterize the *maisnie* as follows: *Hausgenossenschaft, Haushalt; Gesinde; Dienstbote; “la maisnie privée die Vertrauten unter der Dienerschaft, in der Umbegung eines Herrn; Gefolgschaft, Sippschaft, Volk”* (cf. Levi-Strauss [1956] 272). The strong lineage component which persisted in England and Germany (cf. *hide, hufe*) had already been superseded in France in the thirteenth century by the *ménage*, a group “essentiellement constitué par les descendants d'un couple encore vivant”. In Bloch's definition, descendants *d'un couple* should be stressed, for siblingship was the dominant bond in the manse:

On l'appelait souvent communauté taisible (c'est-à-dire tacite), parce qu'elle se constituait, en règle générale, sans convention écrite, — souvent aussi ‘freresche’, ce qui signifie groupe de frères. Les enfants, même mariés, demeuraient auprès des parents et, ceux-ci disparus, continuaient fréquemment à vivre ensemble, ‘à feu et à pot’, travaillant et possédant en commun. Parfois quelques amis se joignaient à eux, par un contrat de fraternité fictive (affairements). Plusieurs générations habitaient sous le même toit : jusqu'à dix couples et soixante-dix individus dans une maison du pays de Caen — d'ailleurs exceptionnellement dense — que citait, en 1484, un député aux États Généraux. Ces usages communautaires étaient si répandus qu'une des institutions fondamentales du servage français, la mainmorte, finit par reposer sur eux. Inversement, la conception même du droit de mainmorte contribua, dans les familles serviles, à conseiller l'indivision : une fois la communauté rompue, l'héritage risquait bien davantage de revenir au seigneur. Là où l'impôt se percevait par feux, la crainte du fisc avait un effet semblable : en multipliant les demeures séparées, on multipliait les cotes. Pourtant si vivaces fussent-elles, ces petites collectivités n'avaient rien d'obligatoire, ni d'immuable. Des individus, d'humeur plus indépendante que les autres, s'en détachaient sans cesse, et en détachaient des champs : ce sont les *foris familiati* du moyen-âge,

‘mis hors pain’ parfois à titre pénal, souvent aussi de leur propre gré (Bloch [1960]168, 169-170 ; see also [1949] I, 203-204 quoted below in 1.2.8, and Wartburg [1934] 763-768).



Map 2. *Frèreche de la Baudrière* in 1789 (after Bloch [1960] Plate XVIII). The distribution of the frèreche corresponded roughly to the white area in Map 1. Actually, it is attested in costumals and other sources for the following areas: Paris, Anjou, Maine, Loire, Cher, Poitou, Vienne, Bretagne, Flandres, Artois, Pas-de-Calais, Orne, Sologne to Massif Central, Limousin (Godefroy [1889]; Levy [1902]).

The *manse* differed topographically in the North and in the South, as may be expected because of the different types of exploitation in those two regions (above, 1.1; see Bloch [1961] 52-54). It has prevailed until today in some *departements* (e.g., Massif Central, Wrigord, Uvennes), but disappeared early in others (e.g., around Paris before the fourteenth century and possibly already in the ninth)¹ Map 2 gives a good example of a fresche in the eighteenth century, i.e., of what it could be between today and the end of the Middle Ages. Similarly, the type of equipment used on Medieval farms could still be found in rural communities not many years ago².

The relation of the *maisnie* to the *manse* can, therefore, be expressed in the following subordination statement : Family < Maisnie < Manse < Land < Lord³.

1.3.5 Knighthood and Nobility

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Noble classes were formed gradually when, in the eleventh century, lords became freer from direct economic activities. On the other hand, their function as protectors of their subjects transformed most of them into professionals of war — the knights celebrated in so many Medieval songs, noble in poems, but ruthless and violent in reality. Quick to sever their ties to their brothers' demesne or even to their own when they were so inclined, these gangster-knights displayed their lust for blood and fast gain without restriction. Likewise, their “potlatch” practices were well in accord with their explosive mores. The high standards to which they were supposed to conform served more as a justification for their prerogatives than as a curb on their behavior.

But, eventually, most knights settled down in turn : the fiefs they received in payment for their services bound them to the lords who hired them on a permanent basis. Thus, the cycle was completed, as it were. The first phase saw the emancipation of professional warriors, the second consisted of free-lancing for profit and sport, and the third marked the knights' return to the land, either to one they were entitled to or to one they had conquered, or to one they had received from their masters. This partial reconversion to settled life, however, was accompanied by the creation of a significant architectural style,

¹ Bloch (1960) 170; 1961: 95-97, 102-104, 108-110, 181-182; Nauton (1957-1963) map 1624: in the Massif Central, *maisonnée* is now used to designate the set of siblings, one of them speaking. See also Maspétiol (1955).

² Cf. Lacroix (1963) 95-100, where is also given a vivid description of the buildings and furniture of the *manse* as represented in ancient wood engravings and written documents.

³ Cf. Bartholomaeus Anglicus (1510); Godefroy (1888) 294-296; Stowell (1908) 8; Gougenheim (1962) 147-148; Duby (1962) II, 446-451; Ariès (1960) 377-407, 411-412).

that of the fortified castle — at the same time symbol and stronghold for the new class (Bloch [1949] II, 8-30, 44-45, 55-57; Pirenne [1937] 92).

The knights were a new class, indeed, but integrated in the general context. The homage was the ritual whereby social solidarity was established between two men for the exploitation of land—modest holding or large fief; similarly, the ritual of induction into knighthood created a relationship whereby a man ideally transmitted to another the obligation to protect exploitation rights. The inward aspect of Medieval social units (exploitation) was thus expressed in homage by a symbolic act of union — joined hands and a kiss on the mouth — and its outward (defense) aspect was expressed in knight dubbing by a symbolic act of aggression — a strong slap on the cheek and a stroke on the shoulder with the flat of the sword.

The ethic which emerged in the twelfth century as an attempt to impose norms on the restless breed consisted of two main components, *courtoisie* and *prudhommie* (the latter meaning essentially ‘the quality of brave warrior’). Originating in France, the trend diffused rapidly to Italy, Germany (cf. *höflich* for *courtois*), etc. As the knights were more mobile than most other people, and as they frequented high social groups (courts), they soon developed love affairs with women of lordly condition, who, already in the twelfth century, began to hold those literary *salons* for which French ladies were to become famous for hundreds of years. This contributed to the spread of literacy on the one hand, for a knight had to be somewhat refined and learned in order to sparkle in the eyes of his *Dame*, and, on the other, launched a conception of women heretofore unknown in the West. The influence of the latter representation remained, interestingly, only superficial in French society; it will appear below that the high consideration supposedly enjoyed by women in France is a misconception (see Chapters Four and Five).

With the foundation of the Order of the Temple in 1119, the bases of patrilineally hereditary knighthood were laid and the new right was fully constituted by 1250. Then individual knights could not bestow membership in their class without special permission, and admission to the class was more strictly controlled. Such were the norms. In practice, need of cash and/or warriors still led princes to confer knighthood to commoners (*roturiers*) and to make breaches in the barriers erected by higher-class consciousness. Nobility had by then received its distinctive features; its growth was, like that of any other aristocracy, due to the strength of public opinion, along with a mechanism of controlled access:

La noblesse demeurant, dans une large mesure, une classe de puissance et de genre de vie l'opinion commune, en dépit de la loi, ne refusait guère au possesseur d'un fief militaire, au maître d'une seigneurie rurale, au guerrier vieilli sous le harnois, quelle que fût son origine, le nom de noble et, par suite, l'aptitude à l'adoubement. Puis, le titre naissant, comme à l'ordinaire, du long usage, au bout de quelques générations personne ne songeait plus à le

contester à la famille ; et le seul espoir qui, au bout du compte, restât permis aux gouvernements était, en s'offrant à sanctionner cet abus, de tirer de ceux qui en avaient bénéficié un peu d'argent. Il n'en est pas moins vrai que, préparée au cours d'une longue gestation spontanée, la transformation de l'hérédité juridique n'avait été rendue possible que par l'affermissement des pouvoirs monarchiques ou princiers, seuls capables à la fois d'imposer une police sociale plus rigoureuse et de régulariser, en les sanctionnant, les inévitables et salutaires passages d'ordre à ordre (Bloch [1949] II, 64-65 ; cf. 58-64, 70 ; also [1960] 129-131 ; [1961] 35-45 ; Pirenne [1937] 49, Ariès [1960] 429-435).

If, with respect to itself, the social unit needed no other category than *manant* (unlanded) and lord (landed), it had to find a way of dealing with the outer world. The knights first assumed their function for the sake of protection. Then, since the institution could lend itself to it, it also served to sanction the principle of social hierarchy : definitions thus became possible on a broader basis and political administration facilitated.

During the thirteenth century, a significant permutation took place not unlike that of the sociological and economic meaning of fief which was noted above (section 1.3.3). Traditionally, a vassal was the equivalent of a nobleman, since he had lands and was endowed with authority. “Désormais, par un véritable renversement de l'ordre des termes, il sera impossible, en principe, d'être vassal — autrement dit de détenir un fief militaire, ou fief ‘franc’ — si l'on ne figure déjà parmi les nobles de naissance” (Bloch [1949] II, 69).

Here again, therefore, the fief is the point of reference by which French Medieval society defined itself. And, as the class of commoners had adjusted its settlement pattern to its holdings, the nobility adopted isomorphic quarters on their fiefs: the same household structure obtained at the lord's court as well as in the *manant's manse* (Bloch [1960] 169-170, quoted above, section 1.4; cf. Duby [1953]; Ariès [1960] 395, etc.). It will be no surprise to find the same notions canonized in the organization of the Church.

1.3.6 The Church.

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By virtue of its special code of laws, the clergy formed a group apart in traditional French society. This is a prerequisite which the representatives of a superstructural system have to meet. On the other hand, the Church belonged to the core of the Medieval semantic universe, or was grafted upon it, like all superstructures. On the whole, the organization of the Church was very much a copy of the social order. Vassalage was the principle of its hierarchy, with parish priests at the bottom and bishops at the top. In many cases, the *vavasseur* priest's parish was transmitted hereditarily, notwithstanding the Gregorian reform which had prescribed clerical celibacy (Rost [1932] 177, n. 1). Monks were lords, as any others, and their abbot ruled over the large fiefs supporting the monastery.

The Church's conception of the world was admirably adapted to the economic conditions of an age in which land was the sole foundation of the social order. Land had been given by God to men in order to enable them to live here below with a view to their eternal salvation. The object of labour was not to grow wealthy, but to maintain oneself in the position in which one was born, until mortal life should pass into life eternal. The monk's renunciation was the ideal on which the whole society should fix its gaze. To seek riches was to fall into the sin of avarice. Poverty was of divine origin and ordained by Providence, but it behoved the rich to relieve it by charity, of which the monasteries gave them an example...

It is easy to see how well these principles harmonized with the facts and how easily the ecclesiastical ideal adapted itself to reality. It provided the justification for a state of things by which the Church itself was the first to benefit (Pirenne [1937] 13-14; cf. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*).

Actually, quite a large income came to the clergy from the alms by which more worldly people insured the salvation of their souls.

D'immenses fortunes se construisirent ainsi aux mains des communautés ou des prélats, allant, parfois, jusqu'à ces agglomérations quasi princières de terres et de droits variés, dont nous verrons plus loin le rôle dans l'établissement des dominations territoriales... La perennité propre aux établissements ecclésiastiques et le respect qui les entourait faisaient d'eux, pour les humbles, des protecteurs particulièrement recherchés. D'autre part, qui se donnait à un saint ne contractait pas seulement une assurance contre les périls du siècle ; il se procurait, en outre, les bénéfices, non moins précieux d'une œuvre pie. Double avantage que les chartes, rédigées dans les cloîtres, exprimaient volontiers en affirmant que se constituer le serf d'une église, c'était, en réalité, accéder à la vraie liberté. Entendez, sans que l'on distinguât toujours bien clairement entre les deux notions, à la fois participer, en ce mode, aux franchises d'une corporation privilégiée et, dans l'autre, s'assurer 'la liberté éternelle qui est en Christ'. Ne voyait-on pas des pèlerins reconnaissants solliciter, de leur premier seigneur, l'autorisation de se soumettre, avec leur postérité, aux représentants du puissant intercesseur qui les avait guéris ? Ainsi, dans la formation du réseau de sujétions personnelles, qui fut si caractéristique de l'époque, les maisons de prière comptèrent parmi les plus efficaces des pôles d'attraction (Bloch [1949] II, 102-103; see also I, 134-139, 206, and [1960] 15-16; Pirenne [1937] 48).

And those who could not afford to pay the fee to heaven in cash, goods, or lands, had always the possibility to resort to the donation of their own selves and their descendents.

It is easily understandable that religious lords were threatening rivals to their secular peers, and these were not long to revendicate authority over the former. The "Querelle des Investitures" and the concomitant problem of the relations between the Church and the State were only the natural outgrowth of

the two conflicting sets of interests. The representatives of the Supernatural Owner of nature, who were themselves endowed with supernatural powers — especially that of opening and closing the gates of heaven — tried to assert their superiority over those who were merely the managers of God's earth. Nonetheless, since the bishops drew their prestige from the same collective representation as that kept alive by the economic system, they lay more or less at the mercy of secular lords and did indeed have to yield ground (Bloch [1949] I, 103-111; [1960] 85; Pirenne [1937] 62).

1.3.7 The Bourgeoisie.

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The religious apophthegm “*Homo mercator vix aut nunquam potest Deo placere*” was axiomatic in the Middle Ages (Goldschmidt [1891] 139). It betrayed the hostility of the traditional social order toward the bourgeoisie and the fact that “the clergy were a foreign element in the medieval town. Their privileges excluded them from sharing in those of the city. Amidst the commercial and industrial population, their economic role was simply that of consumers. As to the nobility, it was only in the Mediterranean regions, in Italy, the South of France and Spain that some of its members lived in towns” (Pirenne [1937] 168). Not until the end of the Middle Ages did the nobility move to the new towns (communes); and the clergy gained access to them only when the bourgeois built parish churches and constituted themselves into guilds under the patronage of saint protectors ¹.

The bourgeoisie cannot be studied independently of the communes which it created as its cradle. That was its locus, which originated because of and exclusively for this new social class.

Dès le XI^e siècle ... aux mots de chevalier, de clerc, de vilain, le nom de bourgeois, français d'origine, mais vite adopté par l'usage international, s'oppose en un contraste sans ambiguïté. Si l'agglomération, en soi, demeure anonyme, les hommes qui y vivent ou, du moins, dans cette population, les éléments les plus agissants et, par leurs activités marchandes ou artisanes, les plus spécifiquement urbains possèdent donc, désormais, dans la nomenclature sociale, une place bien à eux. Un instinct très sûr avait saisi que la ville se caractérisait, avant tout, comme le site d'une humanité particulière (Bloch [1949] 11, 112).

Pirenne describes clearly and economically the functional interconnectedness of the bourgeoisie and its urban expression :

The medieval burgess ... was a different kind of person from all who lived outside the town walls. Once outside the gates and the moat we are in another world, or more exactly, in the domain of another law. The acquisition of citizenship brought with it results analogous to those

¹ The clergy, however, were not members of the communes as corporate bodies.

which followed when a man was dubbed knight or a clerk tonsured, in the sense that they conferred a peculiar legal status. Like the clerk or the noble, the burgher escaped from the common law ; like them, he belonged to a particular estate (status), which was later to be known as the 'third estate'.

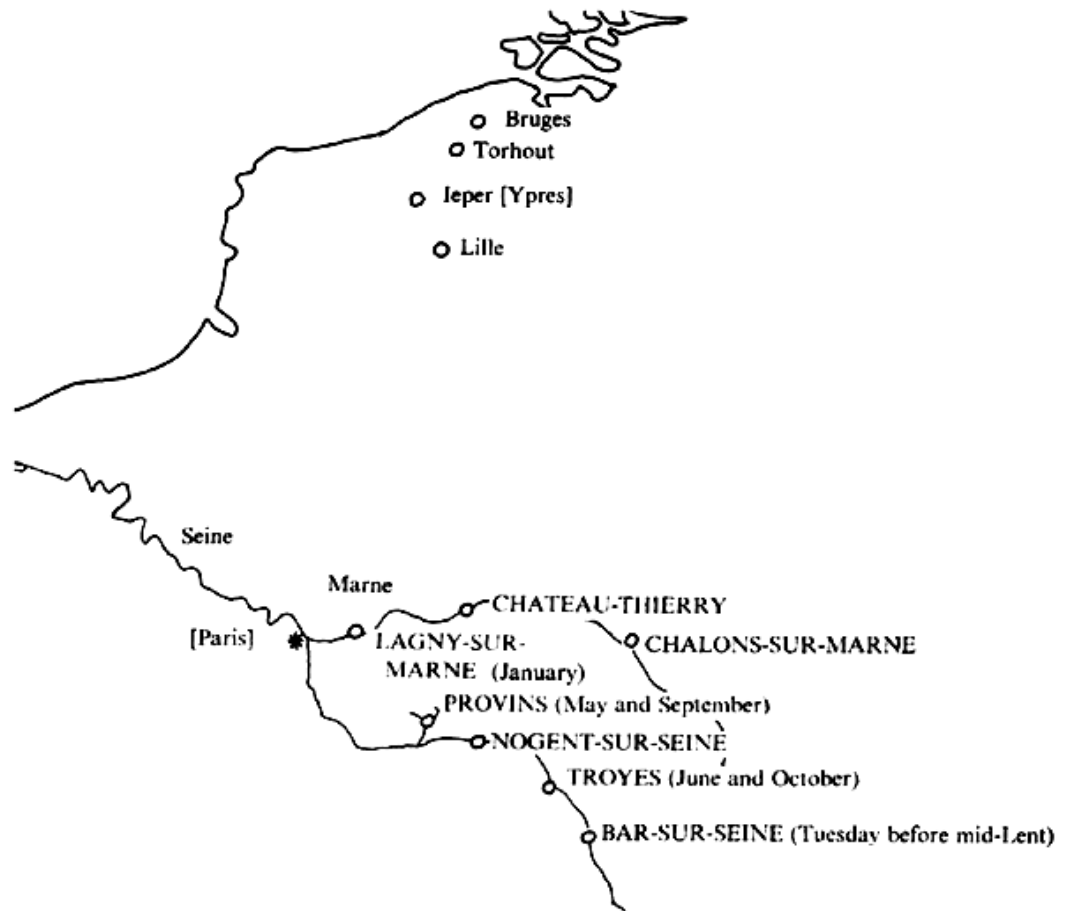
The territory of the town was privileged as its inhabitants. It was a sanctuary, an 'immunity', which protected the man from exterior authority, as if he had sought sanctuary in a church. In short, the bourgeoisie was in every sense an exceptional class. Each town formed, so to speak, a little state to itself, jealous of its prerogatives and hostile to all its neighbours ... In general, urban politics were determined by the same sacred egoism which was later to inspire State politics (Pirenne [1937] 55-56).

The hypothesis that medieval towns grew out of markets or fairs has to be rejected, although towns did develop on the sites of the fairs of Troyes, Lille, etc. Large seigneurial agglomerations and fortified feudal bourgs cannot be considered either, for most of them were sociologically and geographically inappropriate. Actually, the determining factor seems to have been privileged trade route and junctions (Pirenne [1939a] 345-387). Nonetheless, fairs have to be mentioned because of their importance in trade and as nodes in the communications network. They were periodical meeting places and centers of wholesale exchange where professional merchants met at certain times. Their number increased in the eleventh century (see Map 3). "If the Champagne fairs certainly owed much of their importance to the contact which they established between Italian commerce and Flemish industry, their influence radiated over all parts of the West" (Pirenne [1937] 100). They reached their peak importance in the second half of the thirteenth century and were soon superseded by Bruges and Paris — in other words, by towns. Actually the foundation of towns by the bourgeoisie was roughly contemporary with the first general organization of fairs, and both can be said to be different expressions of the same social fact, viz., the origin of commerce in continental Europe (Lacroix [1963] 258-259; Pirenne [1937] 97-102, 144-152).

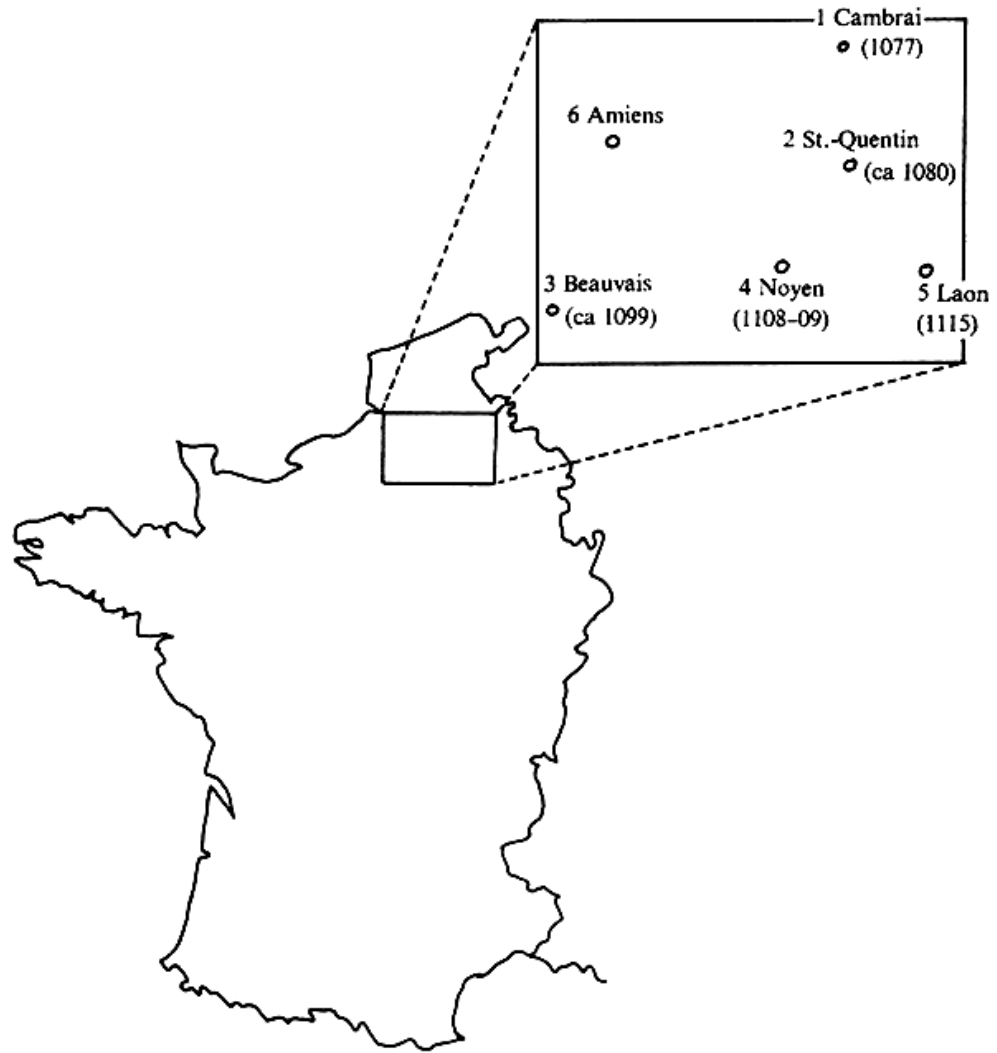
It would be too long to undertake here a description of the development of trade at that time. France seems to have been relatively slow in joining the movement. Her volume of exportation was much smaller than that of her neighbors, except for her wines which conquered the European world. Most of the towns were satisfied to produce for local markets and to exploit the population of the surrounding fiefs, from which, on the other hand, they bought food (Bloch [1949] I, 112-115; Pirenne [1937] 44-49, 152-156).

The first agglomeration to become a commune north of the Alps was Cambrai (see Map 4). Then Amiens, which had already received its charter in the twelfth century, exerted a strong influence and was imitated throughout the rest of Picardy, the Île-de-France, Normandy, Brittany, Burgundy and even as far south as Lyon on the border of the distribution area of the Southern type of communes (Pirenne [1939a] 400-404).

The creation of communes was a strictly social act in that it consisted of an oath of communal support and fidelity taken by a group of merchants living in the same bourg. By such mutual oaths, the bourgeois of an agglomeration consolidated themselves into a *ville de commune* in order to resist their feudal lords who, as a rule, treated them as outsiders and preyed on them. The mechanism was simple and effective: it diffused rapidly and the name *commune* became current to designate the new towns created by the oath.



Map. 3. Fairs in France (capitalized place names) and in Flanders *circa* 1114 (based on data contained in Pirenne et al., *Economic and Social History*, pp. 99-100).



[Map 4.](#) The First Communes in France, after Pirenne (1939a) 401.

La commune jurée se caractérise essentiellement par le serment de paix et d'assistance mutuelle que prêtent ses bourgeois. Ils sont, à cet égard, littéralement, des conjurés... Les bourgeois doivent également être domiciliés dans le ban de la commune, c'est-à-dire dans la ville et sa banlieue. Les clercs et les nobles, quoique domiciliés, ne sont pas membres de la commune, normalement, parce qu'ils n'ont pas 'juré commune'. Le serment mutuel crée entre les bourgeois un lien très étroit ; c'est ainsi que chacun d'eux est responsable, personnellement, des dettes contractées par la commune et il ne lui suffit pas de la quitter, matériellement, pour en être affranchi. Il doit 'désavouer' expressément la commune, c'est-à-dire recourir à un acte formaliste inverse de l'acte d'affiliation (Olivier Martin [1951] 167).

The bourgeois were decidedly a foreign element in medieval society. Hardly any access to social integration was open to them. They had to marry *manants* unless they were rich enough to pay the debts of a knight and revendicate his daughter. They were in conflict with the rigid and cumbersome traditions on which the nobility rested its privileges and exploitation patterns. The Church saw them as the devil's agents because of their commercial activities. But the bourgeois had cash and soon found doors which this key could open: those of the Church and of the Central State. Grouping themselves in guilds under the banner of a Saint and founding pious associations — rights for which they had to pay annual duties to the bishops — they gained concessions which they knew how to exploit. Concurrently, the Capetians understood that the bourgeoisie could be a most helpful ally in their conflicts with the great feudal lords, and they took the side of the new towns. These were ready to contribute to the royal treasury, all the more that a stronger central administration was in the interest of trade. Thus, slowly but irrevocably, bourgeoisie established its rights to live in the society it was to transform radically (Lacroix [1963] 50-55; Bloch [1949] II, 113-116; [1960] 109, 122-131; Pirenne [1937] 54, 80-85, 93, 111-112, 177-185; [1939a] 1, 392).

The towns were powerful poles of attraction, and they contributed to the ruin of the nobility by causing a shift of sociological focus from the demesne to their walls.

Sous quel aspect convient-il de se représenter la bourgeoisie primitive des agglomérations commerciales ? Il est évident qu'elle ne se composait pas uniquement de marchands au long cours... Elle devait comprendre à côté d'eux un nombre plus ou moins considérable de gens employés au débarquement et au transport des marchandises, au grément et à l'équipement des bateaux, à la confection des voitures, des tonneaux, des caisses, en un mot de tous les accessoires indispensables à la pratique des affaires. Celle-ci attirait nécessairement vers la ville naissante les gens des alentours en quête d'une profession. On peut constater nettement dès le commencement du XI^e siècle, une véritable attraction de la population rurale par la population urbaine. Plus augmentait la densité de celle-ci, plus aussi s'intensifiait l'action qu'elle exerçait autour d'elle. Elle avait besoin pour son entretien journalier, non seulement d'une quantité, mais aussi d'une variété croissante de gens de métier. Les quelques artisans des cités et des bourgs ne pouvaient évidemment répondre aux exigences multipliées des nouveaux venus. Il fallut donc que les travailleurs des professions les plus indispensables : boulangers, bouchers, forgerons, etc., arrivassent du dehors.

Mais le commerce lui-même suscitait l'industrie. Dans toutes les régions où celle-ci était pratiquée à la campagne, il s'efforça et réussit à l'attirer tout d'abord, puis bientôt à la concentrer dans les villes (Pirenne [1939] I, 387-388 ; see also, on the impoverishment of nobility while the bourgeoisie became wealthy, Bloch [1960] 122-131).

The population of towns was stratified in three levels : *haute* bourgeoisie, made of the richest merchants among whom the administrators were selected ; *petite* bourgeoisie which constituted already a middle class ; and, finally, the humbler journeymen. Additionally, each craft or class of bourgeois was recognized as a corporation (cf. the guilds mentioned above) where a triadic hierarchy prevailed as well. Masters ruled the enterprise and paid a salary to the journeymen in their employment ; apprentices, on the other hand, worked for a reward in learning. The journeymen's "labor unions" to protect their rights were not without resembling their masters' clubs and associations (Pirenne [1937] 185-206; Olivier Martin [1951] 174) ¹.

Bloch is right when he gives a great importance to the formation of the bourgeoisie, especially because it lay, for the first time, the basis of an egalitarian society: the vertical axis on which vassalage was founded underwent a ninety-degree rotation, so to speak, in the medieval towns, where the citizens were equals. It opened indeed, a new dimension and personal initiative became more important than birth for social prominence. And thus, according to Bloch, the first roots of the French Revolution developed with the advent of bourgeoisie. Freedom became the legal status of the inhabitants of towns: "so much so that it was no longer a personal privilege only, but a territorial one, inherent in urban soil just as serfdom was in manorial soil. In order to obtain it, it was enough to have resided for a year-and-a-day within the walls of the town ... (*Stadtluft macht frei*)" (Pirenne [1937] 51). The modern, "horizontal" society thus took shape gradually and blossomed out of its antecedents in the Germanic and Celtic traditions (Bloch [1949] II, 114-116; [1960] 109; Lacroix [1963] 48-49).

1.3.8 Social Structure

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The first seven subsections of section 1.3 have sketched the general categories elaborated and used by French medieval society to order itself. Their interconnectedness has also been pointed out. Such was the native or "conscious" model (Levi-Strauss [1958] 308-310, after Boas [1911] 56-61). The notions of lineage, vassalage, fief, demesne, *manse*, *manant*, lord, knight,

¹ On the structure of guilds, see Olivier Martin (1951) 172-176. In brief, "l'activité des dirigeants du métier est commandée par les règlements ou statuts que le métier s'est librement donnés par délibération en assemblée générale" (p. 174).

clerk, bourgeois, etc., were common and stood for specific, if not always well-defined, nodes in the system of relationships. The aim of the present section is to propose a structural sketch of these sociological data.

The analysis of categories and their relationships has long been a way to approach problems of social structure¹. The French and British schools of social anthropology prefer to devote their attention to macrocategories, whereas some American anthropologists are now mainly concerned with componential analysis of what they assume to be self-contained semantic fields. (The contrast between the two approaches is exemplified in Leach [1958] and Lounsbury [1965]). Microanalysis will be relevant to the contents of Chapter Three ; here, we have to deal with larger components.

Four macrocategories imposed themselves on a member of French medieval society, and his position had to be defined with respect to them. They were nobility, clergy, peasantry, and bourgeoisie. Whoever wanted to participate in human relations had to fit into one of these exclusive classes. Generally, membership was not optional, for one found oneself assigned by birth to one or the other. Some degree of social mobility was possible, as mentioned above (1.3.1-1.3.7), since an industrious man could pass from serfdom to *vilainie*, from the state of *sergent* to that of lord (*vavas seur* or even vassal), and since nobility could be acquired through distinguished service or by purchase. The general pattern remained nonetheless that of a stratified society where access to a higher level was restricted. Bourgeoisie alone was flexible.

The operations of inclusion and exclusion as factors of fusion and fission (Evans Pritchard [1940]) were active in the society. The mechanism of inclusion was controlled access ; exclusion obtained in the conflicts which opposed the four categories, as diagramed in Figure 1. 1.

¹ Durkheim and Mauss (1901-1902); Durkheim (1912); Mauss (1950); Kroeber (1909/1959); Levi-Strauss (1949, 1958, 1962, 1964); Goody (1958); Goodenough (1951, 1956); Lounsbury (1956, 1964); Frake (1962), etc.

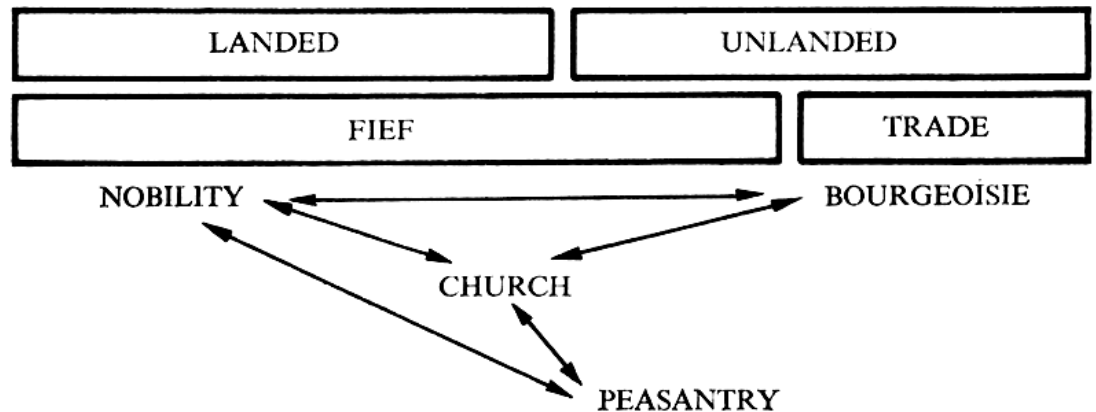


Fig. 1.1. Relations of Opposition between the Four Medieval Social Classes in France (arrows stand for conflict).

Exclusion was contingent upon threats of encroachment. In effect, the universe of resources was limited, and the gain of one was the loss of another. In this respect (see Fig. 1.1), it will be noted (1) that the basic dichotomy landed/unlanded divided the four classes into two opposite groups and that (2) within the unlanded classes, bourgeoisie and peasantry were not in conflict, whereas landed groups fought not only with unlanded ones, but also between themselves. Then, another broad dichotomy cross-cuts the former, that between fief and trade. This had to do with payment in land on the one hand, and with payment in money on the other ; i.e., with slow/rapid circulation of goods and services, or with less/more mobility. Finally, fief implied rural settings, and trade implied urban organization.

Transition from peasantry to bourgeoisie was relatively easy, for merchants were originally recruited among *manants* as were their journeymen. Then, mediation between the unlanded but wealthy on the one hand, and the nobles and clerks on the other was operated by the action of money, which compelled the latter to open their gates and accept permeation. As for the Church, it adopted a policy which varied with the times, the ranks of clerks being open or closed to commoners depending on the sociological-historical context; a *manant* or *vavasseur* clerk, however, could not hope to rank in the Church much above the condition of his birth. On the whole, although opposed to the peasantry as its lord in the feudal hierarchy, the Church exerted a strong attraction on commoners and nobles alike for it was the sole agent for collective representations. Finally, as the Church was partaking in the feudal system by virtue of its large demesnes, it could not help but share in the nobility's political system and was, accordingly, very similar to its most threatening rivals.

Each category will now be examined from the viewpoint of its own stability, and the contrast inclusion/exclusion will help summarize their respective predominant states.

Internal rivalries and the struggle for power divided the nobility: lords warred against their vassals, from kings to lower vavasseurs. In the Church, the continuous tension between reformers and more worldly elements did not yet provoke the fission which was soon to become unavoidable ; actually, the inertia of collective representations was still unchallenged by the slow advent of bourgeoisie and held the clergy together despite sporadic agitations. Strong bonds united the *manants*; nonetheless, the rules of *vendetta* bear witness to the presence of disruptive elements even on their modest level. In point of fact, it is only with the bourgeoisie that we see stability promulgated and fostered by explicit social measures, i.e., by the installation of the oath of mutual allegiance. To put it otherwise, the only stable class was that where a horizontal conception of authority had been substituted for the vertical one expressed in the homage. From another angle, stability was inversely proportional to the degree of landedness ¹.

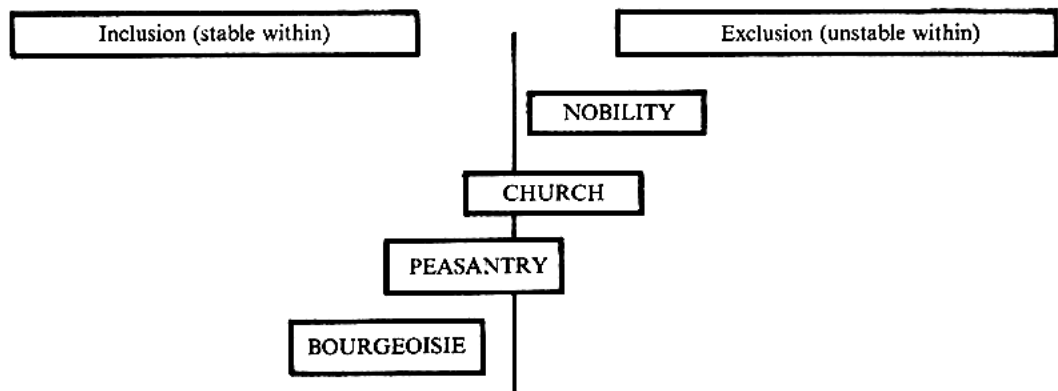


Fig. 1.2. Inner Stability/Unstability of French Medieval Social Classes.

The respective organizations of the nobility, the church, and the peasantry were isomorphic with each other ; that of the bourgeoisie was of a different order. The former's foundations were exploitation of land, the latter's trade. And since money, more mobile and versatile than the products of land, is more powerful once it has gained currency, its owner, the bourgeoisie, was bound to prevail over the other social classes whose sociological and metaphysical

¹ The bourgeoisie enjoyed, apparently, a greater stability in France than elsewhere in Medieval Europe (e.g., Flanders), perhaps because Jural norms forbade wars between bourgeois (Beaumanoir [1960] Ch. LIX), and/or because trade was less active in France due to a smaller volume of exportations.

cosmos it disturbed. Fig. 1.3 summarizes the structures. It is an oversimplification which purports to indicate the dynamic tensions of the system. The structure is that of a “flip-flop”, or double inverter in a Boolean description (cf. Köngäs and Maranda [1962]).

	A R I S T O	C R A C Y	D E M O	C R A C Y
Land	1		0	
Money		0	1	

Fig. 1.3. The System's Tensions.

The noble, the clerk, and the *manant* understood each other easily for they spoke the same idiom — they lived in the same type of household. To them, the soil was the basic parameter, whether they were landed or not. They talked a language strongly influenced by mechanical solidarity (Durkheim, 1893) and shared the same collective representation of vassalage which traversed the universe from God to the anonymous mass of damned souls under the rule of Lucifer and his vassals. On the horizontal plane of earth, hierarchies built a pyramid where everybody found his position assigned by Providence and where the absolute order of things was replicated for the salvation of man, the lords holding their authority from God.

A deep congruence pervaded the domestic groups of *manants* and nobility. Likewise, monasteries and chapters of clerks conformed to the same pattern : “brother” (*frère*) was the term by which their members addressed each other.

Partout, dans les campagnes, de nombreuses “frères” groupaient, autour du même “feu” et du même “pot” et sur les mêmes champs indivis, plusieurs ménages apparentés. Le seigneur, souvent, encourageait ou imposait l'usage de ces “compagnies” : car il jugeait avantageux d'en tenir les membres pour solidaires, bon gré mal gré, des redevances. Dans une grande partie de la France, le régime successoral du serf ne connaissait d'autre système de dévolution que la continuation d'une communauté déjà existante. L'héritier naturel, fils ou parfois frère, avait-il, dès avant l'ouverture de la succession, abandonné le foyer collectif ? Alors, mais alors seulement, ses droits s'effaçaient, totalement, devant ceux du maître. Sans doute, ces moeurs étaient moins générales dans les classes plus élevées : parce que le fractionnement devient nécessairement plus aisé à mesure que la richesse augmente, surtout, peut-être, parce que les revenus seigneuriaux se distinguaient mal des pouvoirs de commandement, qui, par nature, se prêtaient moins commodément à être collectivement exercés. Beaucoup de petits seigneurs, cependant, notamment dans le centre de la France et en Toscane, pratiquaient, tout comme les paysans, l'indivision, exploitant en commun le patrimoine, vivant tous ensemble dans le château ancestral ou du moins se relevant à sa garde. C'étaient les “parçonniers à la cape trouée”, dont l'un d'eux, le troubadour Bertrand de Born, fait le type même des pauvres

chevaliers : tels, en 1251 encore, les trente-et-un copossesseurs d'une fert^é gévaudanaise. Un étranger, d'aventure, obtenait-il de s'adjoindre au groupe ? Qu'il s'agît de rustres ou de personnages plus haut placés, l'acte d'association revêtait volontiers la forme d'une fictive "fraternité" : comme s'il n'y avait de contrat de société vraiment solide que celui qui, à défaut de s'appuyer sur le sang, du moins en imitait les liens. Les grands barons mêmes n'ignoraient pas toujours ces habitudes communautaires : ne vit-on pas, plusieurs générations durant, les Bosonides, maîtres des comtés provençaux, tout en réservant à chaque branche sa zone d'influence particulière, considérer comme indivis le gouvernement général du fief et se parer tous, uniformément, du même titre de "comte" ou "Prince" de toute la Provence (Bloch [1949] I, 203-204 ; cf. Wartburg [1934] 763-768).

1.4 COLLECTIVE REPRESENTATIONS

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Collective representations work out as code parameters. They are the semantic axes which form the innermost dimensions of a cognitive universe while they determine its scope. They consist of categories transmitted through time with a minimum of distortion, for they are slow to take shape and still slower to lose it. They are at the same time behind and ahead of social life: they arise from interaction between man and man, and man and physical environment, but they also regulate and command interaction once they are established.

Collective representations provide the member of a society with semantic grooves ; they condition the use of language. It is for this reason that they make communication possible. Beyond a common lexicon and syntax, man needs a deeper semantic system in which to cast his social relations and by which to be cast as a member of his group. In other words, there must be a common set of understood, tacit principles, an array of axioms shared by most before any can talk. Thus, collective representations allow people to communicate and to act (cf. Chapter Five, Figure 5.1).

In the Middle Ages, interaction with the environment was not limited to hunting, ploughing, sowing, harvesting, felling trees, and such. A threatening wilderness, poor technology, high infantile mortality, short life-span, famines and epidemics were the features impinging on the mind of the Medieval man. No adequate clocks were available to him before the fourteenth century. Time was more a ritual than an analytic category. And individual precarity could only grope through the cutting edges of a hard world whose saints were barely distinguishable from its witches and devils.

Social interaction was based on the links created by the exploitation and the protection of the land. Vassalage was the all-pervading model. It transformed the deeply-rooted conception of the Christian God as father into that of the

Supreme Lord. Conversely, to give oneself to the devil was to become his vassal, and the best iconography of homage is that depicting pacts with the devil (or scenes of love...). “Mais, sans doute, de l'omniprésence du sentiment vassalique n'existe-t-il pas de plus éloquent témoin que, dans ses vicissitudes, le rituel même de la dévotion : remplaçant l'attitude des antiques orants, aux mains étendues, le geste des mains jointes, imité de la ‘commendise’, devint, dans toute la catholicité, le geste de la prière par excellence. Devant Dieu, dans le secret de son âme, le bon chrétien se voyait comme un vassal, pliant les genoux devant son seigneur” (Bloch [1949] I, 358). Likewise, the morphology of homage also influences the ritual of knight-dubbing which, in turn, molded the form of the Christian confirmation rite (cf. Bloch [1949] II, 49-53).

Relative security and mutual comfort existed almost exclusively around the hearth where siblings gathered and fended for themselves since, like in so many fairy tales, they could not rely on helpless parents. But even in the *manse*, closer to everyday human interaction and within the domestic group, vassalage penetrated. The master of the *maisnie* was the *senior*, the *donneur de miches*, and his men were his “companions”, “boys”, his “*mangeurs de pain*”. And when courts of justice had to bear judgment in a trial opposing father and son, it was decided that the father had to be treated as the lord and the son as his vassal “commendés par les mains”. Finally, if conflicting obligations opposed kinship ties and vassalage, the latter prevailed (Bloch [1949] I, 356-361; cf. Ariès [1960] 382-383).

A kind of cynicism and indifference for human life was also common in the Middle Ages, probably due to the strong corporative character of the society where everybody was replaceable, as it were. “What if King Etienne kills my son whom he took as hostage”, replied Jean le Maréchal when he refused to meet the terms of his promise, “do I not still have anvils and the hammers to forge handsomer ones?” (*L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, quoted in Bloch [1949] I, 210)¹. Similarly, a daughter submitted to her father's decision to marry her off without even having seen her fiancé.

According to Duby (1962; cf. Ariès [1960] 395-396), the vertical and horizontal dimensions of Medieval society varied in inverse ratio (cf. 3.3.2), the *freresche* gaining importance to the detriment of the lineage, and vice-

¹ “Cultivateur et maquignon, Haudouin n'avait jamais été récompensé d'être rusé, menteur et grippe-sou. Ses vaches crevaient par deux à la fois, ses cochons par six, et son grain germait dans les sacs. Il était à peine plus heureux avec ses enfants et, pour en garder trois, il avait fallu en faire six. Mais les enfants c'était moins gênant. Il pleurait un bon coup le jour de l'enterrement, tordait son mouchoir en rentrant et le mettait à sécher sur le fil. Dans le courant de l'année, à force de sauter sa femme, il arrivait toujours bien à lui en faire un autre. C'est ce qu'il y a de commode dans la question des enfants et, de ce côté-là, Haudouin ne se plaignait pas trop” M. Aymé, *La Jument Verte*, 5.

versa. The view could be proposed instead that in reality *freresche* and vassalage were covariants. At any rate, the vertical conception of authority was important in the Middle Ages, and still influences the organization of Western societies. Miller summarizes adequately the semantic dimension underlying this social fact.

In the European cultural tradition a rather remarkable phenomenon can be noted : authority, or 'power', is conceptually equated with height or elevation. It is conceived as originating in some elevated locus, and as passing down to lower levels. This metaphorical way of thinking about authority is closely tied in with European religious conceptions, many of which utilize the notion that power originates in a supernatural being or group of beings located in the heavens, or some elevated location. Central Algonkian religion places its deities at the four corners of the universe, and on the same plane as humans.

This way of conceptualizing authority is so well integrated into European culture that it is difficult to deal with authority in any other way. The equation of authority with altitude is firmly built into European linguistic systems ; the terms *superior* and *inferior*, *superordinate*, *subordinate*, have been key terms in this discussion. A man with considerable authority is said to be in a *top* position, *high-ranking*, *way up* there ; one with little authority is on the *bottom*, in a lowly position, *down* and out. We speak of the *haut-monde* and the *underworld*, of *overlord* and *underling*, of *upper* and *lower* classes.

In addition to the metaphorical convention whereby 'amount of authority' is conceived in terms of points on a vertical scale, there exists the conception that there is a passageway between the various positions on this scale, which is frequently pictured as a ladder or a flight of stairs. Thus, one can 'rise' or *climb* in respect to authority or status by means of this vertical passageway. A man is 'on his way up', or on his way 'to the top'; 'elevated' to a lofty position; a 'rising' young executive; or he is 'slipping' badly, or 'falling' by the wayside. The Hebrew story of Jacob's ladder, the French use of 'echelon' to describe a position in a system of authority, the Latin phrase 'ad astra per aspera', and the American phrase 'the ladder of success' all utilize this figurative mode of referring to changes in the amount of authority or prestige accorded an individual (Miller [1955] 277).

But the horizontal dimension which gained more and more ground and power was not only that of the *freresche*. More decisive was the bourgeois conception of the social order based on equal reciprocity. In the towns, one exchanged goods and services of the same nature, as it were, without having to bind oneself to a specific status : the impersonal medium of money freed man from the bonds of mechanical solidarity. Thus, vassalage was losing its meaning. Equality and freedom had begun to bewilder the semantic universe that the cash economy would eventually shatter.

The following chapters will narrow down on kinship. Chapter Two will follow diachronically the formation of the modern forms of kinship terms in French. Chapter Three will examine the structure of the system and propose a dynamic model on purely formal grounds. Chapter Four will enlarge the semantic perspective by taking into account connotation as found in attitudes formalized in folklore. Chapter Five will summarize the legal conception of the group of relatives and survey the evolution of the family. The concluding

chapter will suggest a general formulation of the semantic field of kinship in French, both in its historical and structural aspects.

2. FORMATION OF THE FRENCH KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

2.1 NOTATION SYSTEM

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In order to handle more operationally the kinship terms to be presented in the next section (2.2), I will use a modification of a notation proposed in an earlier writing (Maranda [1964a]).

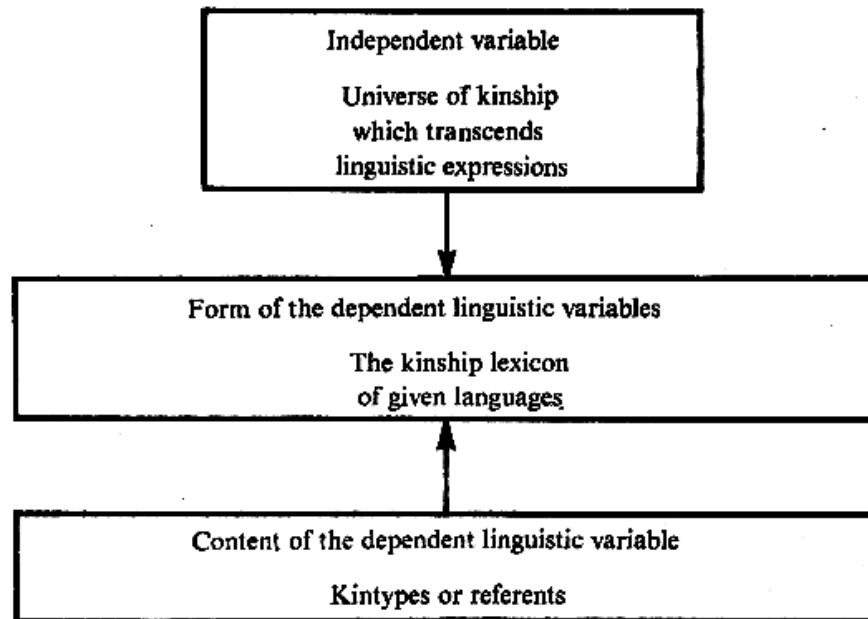
A class like that of kinship terms can best be investigated by a calculus (cf. Hjemsløv [1953]). A calculus consists of a set of operational concepts which obey definite rules of combinations, whereby the elements of a system are defined unambiguously. Operational concepts are conveniently represented by arbitrary symbols, the array of which forms a notation.

Notations must be carefully devised, since a good one will help, while a bad one will hinder any type of investigation. Thus, the striking progress of Western mathematics was largely due to the well-adapted and economical system which the Greeks and the Arabs developed. In this respect, the formation of the notation of modern chemistry is most instructive (Granger [1960] 45-50). Quite a few systems of notation have been devised by students of kinship. The most widespread is that of graphs and abbreviations : in this, the graphic symbols Δ for male, \circ for female, a vertical line for generation, \square for sibship, and = for marriage are used. A series of abbreviations designates kin types or referents (Fa or F for father, Mo or M for mother, So or S for son, Br or B for brother, Si or Z for sister, etc.). The graphic symbols represent adequately the relationships between the terms for which the abbreviations stand.

Numerous variations of the traditional notation have been proposed. Only Leach (1961) however, has suggested framing the problem in more accurate terms. Actually, a kinship term is the dependent variable of a kinship relationship (see : p. 49.).

The graphic symbols mentioned earlier are adequate to represent the independent variables, and the abbreviations provide unequivocal descriptions of the content of the dependent linguistic variable ; native terms supply the forms of the latter.

Now, two recent attempts have been made to replace graphic symbols and abbreviations by a more economical and also more operational notation. The first was inspired by Lounsbury and is found in Romney and d'Andrade (1964), while the second was developed independently (Maranda [1964a]). Both notations lend themselves readily to calculus. Apart from minor differences, they cut elementary units in the same way, although they formalize them differently. It would, therefore, be superfluous to discuss their relative merits, were it not for the operational consequences which they imply. Neither has so far been extensively tested ; but their intrinsic constitution can be examined comparatively. (Perhaps it is worth recalling here that, in physics, Leibnitz's notation proved to be more efficient than Newton's, for it permitted operations — and, consequently, yielded results — which would have been impossible had only the latter's been available.)



Romney and d'Andrade chose to use (1) lower-case letters to designate sex; (2) the equal sign (=), i.e., the statement of a relation of identity, for marriage; (3) the number zero (0) for sibship; (4) the signs for the arithmetical operations of addition and subtraction (+, -) for the parent link and the child link, respectively (Romney and d'Andrade [1964] 148). I have proposed to use letters only, as follows: *A* stands for marriage, *G* for generation, its inverse, *G*-1, for filiation, and *S* for sibship. Italicized letters stand for the relationship in itself, i.e., they preclude from sex specification. Whenever a sex marker is

necessary, I use capitals for males and lower-case letters for females. Thus, G stands for parent, G for father and g for mother (cf. Maranda [1964a] here somewhat modified). These two notations are aligned on different calculus orientations (see below, Chapter Three), but they are essentially comparable on the grounds of economy, consistency, and adequacy to meet the requirements of calculus. In this respect, Romney and d'Andrade's notation is valid (however, see Boyd [1965]). On the other hand, because of the mixed types of already loaded symbols they use (signs for the statement of a relation, a number, and signs for arithmetical operations), I find it preferable to adhere to my previous notation until the other can be shown to be better, or until an improved one is developed (cf. attempts in Hammel [1965]). Be it as it may, I do not pretend that my notation is the best one; I offer it as an alternative in the hope that it will contribute to stimulate the elaboration of an improved set of operational symbols.

French kinship will, therefore, be analyzed here with the help of my notation, according to which :

Table 2.1

A Notation for Basic Kinship Relationships

Relationships of the 1st order		♂	♀
A	Spouse	H	W
AG⁻¹	Child	S	D
G	Parent	F	M
S	Sibling	B	Z
Relationships of the 2nd order			
AA	Spouse's spouse	WH	HW
AG⁻¹	Stepchild	HS, WS	HD, WD
GA	Stepparent	MH	FW
G⁻¹A	Child-in-law	DH	SW
AG	Parent-in-law	HF, WF	HM, WM
G⁻¹₂	Grandchild	SS, DS	SD, DS
G₂	Grandparent	FF, MF	FM, MM
AS	Sibling-in-law, spouse's side	HB, WB	HZ, WZ
SA	Sibling-in-law, sibling's side	ZH	BW
SG⁻¹	Nibling ¹	BS, ZS	BD, ZD
GS	Avuncular relatives	FB, MB	FZ, MZ
Relationships of the 3rd order			
ASG⁻¹	Nibling by alliance	HBS, HZS	HBD, HZD,
		WBS, WZS	WBD, WZD
GSA	Avuncular by alliance	FZH, NZH	FBW, MBW
GSG⁻¹	Cousinage	FBS, FZS	FBD, FZD
		etc.	etc.
GAG⁻¹	Half-sibling	FWS, MHS	FWD, MDH
G⁻¹AG	Child's parents-in-law	SWF, DHF	SWM, DHM

¹ Coined after sibling, for nephew + niece (see Conklin [1964]).

The notation will be used in this chapter only for the sake of convenience. Chapter Three will show its potential with respect to the analysis of kinship as a system.

2.2 LINGUISTIC CONTEXT ¹

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The *lingua vulgaris*, or low Latin, was widespread and firmly established in Gaul by the fourth century. It was adopted by her successive conquerors (German tribes, Franks) in the following centuries. By the seventh century, it had undergone deep modifications and became the Romance or Romanic language in which clerks had to deliver their sermons after Charlemagne's edict. In early medieval times, a linguistic dichotomy could be observed between the northern part of France from the area south of the Loire River, i.e., from La Rochelle to Grenoble. This led to the distinction, in the thirteenth century, between the langue *d'oïl* (north) and the langue *d'oc* (south), which differed in their phonetic treatment of the unaccented vowel *a* of Latin (which became *e* in langue *d'oïl* but remained unchanged in the south). The principal dialects of the langue *d'oïl* were spoken in Île-de-France, Normandy, Picardy, Champagne, Burgundy, and Poitou (cf. Map 1). The only serious rival of the Parisian dialect was that of Picardy; its influence decreased as the Capetians became stronger (twelfth century). In the south, Provençal was the main dialect of the langue *d'oc*, in competition with Auvergnat, Limousin, Béarnais, Languadocien, and Gascon. Equally in the twelfth century, the langue *d'oc* had to yield to its northern rival, which was by then the tongue in which the affairs of the kingdom were conducted. It is interesting to note that proper names began in general to be in use at about the same time and for the same administrative reason; above, 1.3.2).

The process of linguistic unification took the simple path of elimination. The lexicon became stabilized as synonyms and cognate forms were gradually reduced to standard terms. Competition still prevailed for some time on the physical and semantic borders of the linguistic community, but the basic vocabulary was soon established. Concrete cases can be found in the following sections.

¹ Brunot (1905 ff.); Cohen (1947); Wartburg (1958).

2.3 PHILOLOGICAL SURVEY

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The rest of this chapter provides a diachronic sketch of the emergence of 78 standard forms of kinship terms in French. Today, 73 of them are still in use, some with a different meaning, some only in the geographic areas where they were coined and from which they never spread. The semantic processes underlying this social fact will be examined in Chapter Three.

Except two, all French kinship terms come from Latin. It is on this traditional basis that coding decisions were taken, as it were (on coding costs and processes, see 3. 1). Evidently, the variations on the theme of bio-sociological relationships (Maranda [1963, 1964a]) found in French were already conditioned by the sociological matrix of Ancient Rome, which, in turn, depended on Indo-European (cf Tappolet [1895]; Hocart [1928]; Anderson [1963]). The Latin forms supplied hereafter only suggest a weak correspondence, however, since, although impinging on the French terms, they should never be taken as direct ancestors. To borrow a relevant example from Wartburg (1963) :

Mettre par exemple côte à côte fr. *femme* et lat. *femina*, c'est dissimuler le problème que pose la relation réciproque des deux mots : le lat. *femina* signifiait en effet non pas 'femme', mais 'femelle', c'est-à-dire exemplaire du sexe féminin, chez les hommes aussi bien que chez les animaux. On ne peut étudier ces deux mots que dans un cadre plus vaste, en liaison avec les mots qui sont en usage pour 'épouse' ou qui sont usités comme titre ou comme apostrophe depuis l'époque du Bas-Empire. Le tableau suivant donne un aperçu (très simplifié) de ces quatre concepts et de leurs désignations.

Table 2.2

*The Etymologies of Femina and Femelle from Classical Latin to Modern French
(from Wartburg [1963] 26.)*

Lat. class.	FEMELLE femina	FEMME mulier	ÉPOUSE uxor	APOSTROPHE (titre)
Lat. V ^e siècle	femina femella	mulier	uxor	domina
Vx.fr.	femelle	femme	oissor (jq. 1300) moillier (jq. 1500)	
fr. mod.	femelle	femme		(ma)dame

The following philological survey will be restricted to standard literary forms. As a rule, dialects, argot, children's language, and other similar lexical dimensions will be left aside. This is a major drawback, unavoidable in an essay of this format. On the other hand, the main interest of dialectal, argot, and other forms is that they are strongly motivated : but the motivation of the French standard lexicon is probably as high as that of German, which linguists like to quote as example. In effect, the contrary opinion is very likely a misconception due to the fact that linguists like de Saussure paid a greater attention to literary forms than to dialects (Wartburg [1962] 133). Finally, another justification for the borders assigned to the terminology is that standard terms have been and are widespread enough to deserve independent treatment (the general diffusion through twentieth century France of all the terms quoted in Table 2.3 is attested by the linguistic atlases of Gilliéron and Edmond [1902-1910], Nauton [1957-1963], and Séguy and Gardette [1950-1958]).

Table 2.3 lists the terms chronologically according to their first appearance in literature. It was built on the information provided by Littré (1882), Tappolet (1895), Dauzat (1938), Bloch and Wartburg (1950), Wartburg (1928-1965), and Robert (1951-1965). The table shows that modern terms referring to males seem to have gained access to written documents earlier than the female forms, except in the case of *belle-mère*. (Literary genres — epic, costurnals — were perhaps responsible for this.) Tappolet had already made a similar observation concerning Romance kinship terminologies: “Die s y m m e t r i e der Ausdrucksweise betreffend, liess sich beobachten, dass die Initiative für die Neuschöpfung fast immer beim Masculinum beginnt“

(1895: 50; see also 132, note 1). Similarly, *G* received early its modern expression in literary sources — *gendre* and *bru*, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries respectively, were assimilated to the lineage in which they married, according to a residence principle (see 5.2.1). Actually, the *G* factor is predominant here, with emphasis on the male side. The fact is readily understandable when the role of residence as coextensive with consanguinity is taken into account. *S*, *G*, *A*, SG^{-1} , *GS*, $G^{-1}A$, and GSG^{-1} , i.e., sibling to cousinage, found their modern expression between the ninth and twelfth centuries, followed by the terms for affines beyond child's spouse. Finally, a series of compound forms were coined with the introduction of the prefix *arrière-*, which is a term of distance (against the more “behavioral” terms used in other cases).

The semantic history of some terms will now be delineated according to the information available in the sources after which Table 2.3 was built.

2.3.1 Frère :

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Lat. *frater* ‘brother’; terms of friendship used within and between sexes; also used to designate and address the members of a closed society; fellow men.

Soeur: Lat. *soror* ‘sister’; term of friendship commonly used within and between sexes to address a loved and/or respected woman; Christian kings gave it as a title of address to Christian queens (whereas they used “cousin” for other kings or for royal relatives); members of a closed society.

Derived from *frère*: *frairie* ‘group of brothers’, ‘group of siblings’, ‘close relatives’ (Old French); *frateur*, *cousin-frateur*, or *frère-frateur* ‘first cousin’ (thirteenth-fifteenth century); *frèrage*, *freresche* (above 1.3.4, 1.3.8; below, 5.2.3), individual succession, or succession shared between brothers (thirteenth-fifteenth century): other derivatives exist which are of significance for rights of succession, but no such thing happened with *soeur* (see Ch. Five). *Demi-frère*, ‘FWS’ or ‘MHS’ (fifteenth century); see *beau-frère*, below, 2.13. The age markers *ainée (e)/cadet (te)* ‘elder’/‘younger’, are regular modifiers of *frère*, *soeur*, *fil*, and *fil*.¹ Among first order relationships, the terms for siblings would have arisen through a process different from that yielding the terms for parents, although both are equally founded on behavioral patterns which have to do with first order relationships: “Die Benennung des Verwandtschaftsverhältnisses Bruder-Schwester geht ziemlich selten von den Kindern ... [see 2.3.2 and 2.3.3] ... meist von den Eltern oder erwachsenen

¹ *Ainé/cadet (te)*: for a fuller treatment, see below, 4.3.2.3, 5.2.2, and 5.2.3.

Dritt-personen, kurz in erster Linie von U n b e t e i l i g t e n aus und ist daher weit objectiver als die beiden vorangehenden [father and mother] Begriffe ausgefallen“ (Tappolet [1895] 60-61).

2.3.2 Fils

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Lat. Filius ‘son’; by extension, ‘descendants’ (see *frère*).

Fille: Lat. filia ‘daughter’ (see Tappolet [1895] 50, quoted in 2.3. 1).

Table 2.3.

Diachronic Sketch of French Kinship Terminology (9th-19th Centuries). Terms of ritual kinship and those of "milk relations" are bracketed; between parentheses is a G₂ term for which I could not ascertain a date on which all authors would agree. Capitalized terms are attested throughout France, either such or in unambiguous dialectal forms ; when other widespread terms stand for the same relationship, they are given as alternatives after their most current synonym. Note that before the emergence of a term to designate a specific set of relatives, this could be referred to and/or addressed by the use genitives, e.g. "l'aious a mon besaiol" (Beaumanoir, ch. XIX).

Relation- ships	CENTURIES						Relation- ship	CENTURIES				
	9	10	11	12	13	14		15	16	17	18	19
S	FRÈRE		SOEUR	jumeau			S	Frère/soeur de lait				
G⁻¹	FILS	FILLE ENFANT				[FILLEUL-E] PETIT-FILS	G⁻¹				PETITE- FILLE arrière- petit/e fils/fille	PETITS- ENFANTS
G			PÈRE MÈRE papa maman ancestres	parentage [MARRAINE/ belle dame]	Aïeul (bisaïeul) pépé		G	Mémé (bisaïeul) ARRIÈRE- GRAND- PÈRE/ MÈRE			trisaïeul arrière- arrière- grand- père/mère	
			PARENT [PARRAIN] GRAND- PÈRE		[mère de lait] généalogie							
A			époux épouse veuve	MARI/ HOMME FEMME MARIER couple	FIANCÉ/E accordé/-e promis/-e		A	veuf				
SG⁻¹			NEVEU	NIÈCE			SG⁻¹	Arrière- neveu/niece			petit-neveu- niece	

Relation- ships	CENTURIES						Relation- ships	CENTURIES				
	9	10	11	12	13	14		15	16	17	18	19
<i>GS</i>			ONCLE tonton		TANTE tata		<i>GS</i>		Grand-oncle			arrière- grand- oncle/tante
<i>GSG⁻¹</i>				COUSIN/-E cousinage			<i>GSG⁻¹</i>					
<i>G⁻¹A</i>			GENDRE fils/ filastre	BRU/ noro fille/ filastre			<i>G⁻¹A</i>	Beaufils Belle-fille				
<i>AG/GA</i>				Belle-mère parastre			<i>AG/GA</i>	beau-père				
<i>AS/SA</i>						BEAU- FRÈRE	<i>AS/SA</i>	BELLE- SOEUR				Beaux- parents

On the ground provided by Tappolet's hypothesis, it can be said that the likely logical process underlying the designation of children — *fil*s and *fil*le — is due to contacts with outsiders (affines?): “Reden Eltern von oder zu ihren Kindern, so braucht das Abstammungsverhältnis nicht erst ausgedrückt zu werden, für Fremde dagegen braucht es einer genauren Bezeichnung” (1895: 37, and cf. his observations on the terms for affines, 121-141). On the other hand, and in connection with authority and residence patterns, “In Frankreich allein finden sich einige Sohnes — nicht Tochter — Ausdrücke, die alle in der ursprünglichen Bedeutung ‘D i e n e r’ übereinstimmen: nämlich *valet*, *ménage*, (*garçon*)” (Tappolet [1895] 43). And “*Garçon* [meaning also ‘servant’, ‘waiter’] ... als familiar vertraulicher Ausdruck für Sohn, z. B. in *c'est mon garçon*, findet est sich auch in der Schriftsprache in ganz Frankreich” [the same is true of *fil*le which, in addition, came to mean ‘whore’ in the fifteenth century] (Tappolet [1895] 47; see also 48; Pauli [1919] 137-138, 145-147, 170-171; Bloch [1949] I, 273; Ariès [1960] 382-383, 411-412, 448).

2.3.3 Père

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Lat. *pater* ‘father’; used to address, beside the biological father, God, the Pope (*Saint-Père*), a member of a religious order, a founder or someone who did much for his fellow men, and, conversely, a poor chap.

Mère: Lat. *mater* ‘mother’; extension similar to that of *père*.

Z u s a m m e n f a s s e n d können wir sagen: die schriftsprachliche Form für Vater und Mutter dringt in Italien weniger schnell und später in die Mundarten ein, als in Frankreich. In beiden Sprachgebieten gehören unsere beiden Begriffe zu den ersten, die in gemeinsprachlichen Gewande dem mundartlichen Sprachgut einverleibt wurden. Die E i n f ü h r u n g des neuen Wortes geschieht bei der A n r e d e in Südfrankreich wenigstens; sie scheint auf franco-prov. Gebiet durch eine unedle Verwendung der altern Form begünstigt zu werden. Sie kann ferner rückwirkend sein: so hat sie in Frankreich eine Bedeutungsentartung (Entedelung) des alten Wortes, soweit dieses bleibt, zur Folge (Tappolet [1895] 19).

The analysis of *a r g o t* would be particularly relevant at this point, especially in connection with residence and authority (the household), as bearing on the constitution and active use of kinship terminology in French. For instance, “Der PATER FAMILIAS oder Hausvater, Hausherr (Haus-frau, -mutter) heisst... [in French]... *dabe* — *dabuche*, Pariser Argot, gehören wohl hierher, da sie ausser Vater, Mutter auch *maître* und *maîtresse*, *dabe* auch Gott, bedeuten” (Tappolet [1895] 31). Further along the same lines, Tappolet suggests the interesting hypothesis, “Es sind dies alles ursprünglich oder jetzt noch e h r e n d e T i t e l , Ehrfurchtsbezeichnungen, *termes de respect*, die, wie ich vermute, anfangs nur von der Dienerschaft des Hauses dem Hausherrn und der Hausfrau gegeben wurden. Diese Titel wurden von den Kindern, die ja ebenfalls unter dem Hausherrn stehen, adoptiert. Dass dern so ist, darauf scheint mir ein

Übergangsstadium, eine Art Compromiss zwischen der alten, titellosen und der neuen, nur titelhaften Benennung hinzudeuten: nämlich der Fall, wo Verwandtschaftswort und Titel zu einem Ausdruck verschmiltz" (1895: 31-32; see also 35).

Children's language has played an important role in the coinage of the forms of French kinship terms denoting close relations: *kindersprachliche Verdopplung* is shown at work in the designation of avuncular relationships, and such forms were time and again adopted by the parents themselves (for F, M, GF, GM; see Tappolet [1895] 73, 97-101; also 25-27).

Parents: Lat. *parentes* 'parents'; father and mother, collectively; cognates from whom one descends; relatives.

2.3.4 Parrain, marraine

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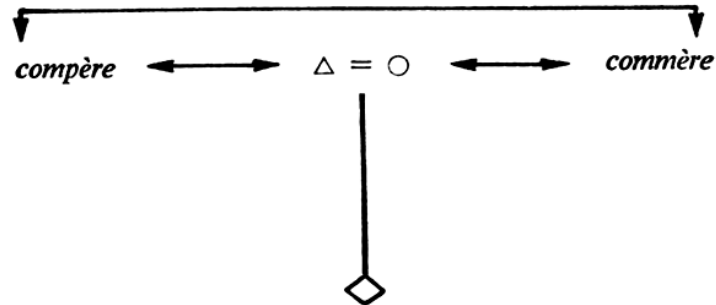
Lat. *patrinus*, *matrina* 'godfather', 'godmother' and *filleul*, *filleule*: Lat. *filiolus*, *filiola* 'godson', 'goddaughter'. *Parrain* was coined after *marraine* (an exception to the rule of the anteriority of the the masculine form), which replaced *commère* (Lat. *commater*). *Marraine*: the one who holds the child during the ceremony of baptism (eleventh century until today); the oldest woman of a household; the one who introduces another lady to the royal court; *parrain*: the one who holds the child in the ceremony of baptism, who answers for its faith and gives it a name — he also contracts, with the *marraine*, a moral obligation to take care of the child in case of death of the natural parents or in case they neglect the child; a knight presenting a novice to knighthood; a witness to a duel; finally, the soldier, selected by another soldier about to be shot, who was to fire first at or to blindfold the latter.

Godparenthood features in Christian *rites de passage* in general: confirmation, marriage, sponsorship of things which need a special protection (boats, bridges...); it is also involved in a network of social relations capable of political consequences (cf. Anderson [1956]).

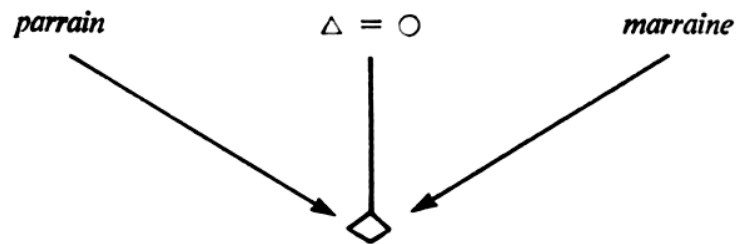
The terms are essentially of ritual origin and stand in counterpart to the natural *père* and *mère*.

PARRAIN/MARRAINE: FILLEUL/FILLEUL \simeq PÈRE/MÈRE: FILS/FILLE.
Although the French tradition cannot be said to have been generally closer to the Latin Church than that of other Romance countries, "Die kirchenaat. Ausdrücke PATRINUS — FILIOLUS haben sich nur in Gallien nebeneinander erhalten, obschon auch da formelle Abweichungen eingetreten sind. Im übrigen

Gebiet lebt in der Regel PATRINUS neben einem romanischen Derivaturn von FILIUS weiter” (Tappolet [1895] 145). Originally, the relationship was twofold, *parrain* and *marraine*, being used in conjunction with *compère* and *commère*. The latter stood for godfather and godmother with respect to (1) the father and mother of their godchild, and (2) their mutual relationship, i.e.,



Parrain and *marraine*, on the other hand, referred to the godparent-godchild relationship, i.e.,



However, that double terminology was not preserved, and *compère* and *commère* became pejorative (cf. Bloch and Wartburg [1950] 138). It is interesting to compare the rise of this pejorative meaning to the hostility which underlies parent-child relations in French folklore (below, Chapter Four), *compère* and *commère* standing precisely for ‘pro-father’ and ‘pro-mother’.

Finally, in some rural areas, *parrain* and *marraine*, on the one hand, and *compère* and *commère* on the other underwent a similar semantic evolution. It is difficult to establish whether it was a restriction or an extension of meaning (on the theoretical issue involved, see Leach [1958] and Lounsbury [1965]), but the fact is that children used *parrain* and *marraine* as categorical terms to address strangers coming to their home (see below, 3.4). As to the latter pair,

Originally, the *compère* and the *commère* were connected with each other, and both with the child's parents, through the mystical link of parrainage. However, the relation was very soon secularized in all small rural communities, or rather, wherever the familial structures were of greater importance than the social ones ; it was then used to establish an artificial link of kinship, or, more precisely... to express in kinship terms a purely external relationship of spatial promiscuity. The stranger or newcomer was adopted by means of the reciprocal appellation of *compère* or *commère* which he received from – and returned to – his male adult contemporaries. On the other hand, since the stranger usually assimilated himself to the group by marrying within his new community, the terms

compère and ‘brother-in-law’ soon became synonymous, so that men allied by marriage usually called each other by the first term (Levi-Strauss [1943] 408).

The categorical meaning of these four terms is, therefore, clear enough. Additionally, one might evoke in favor of the same viewpoint that the terms were used in the context of the “ceremonial” behavior of hospitality. Guests were and still are treated in French society according to a ritual of etiquette which sets them apart but, at the same time, integrates them to the domestic unit (cf. below, *oncle*, *tante*, in 2.3.8). Honors isolate as well as establish communication.

Finally, in connection with the baptismal rites, it must be mentioned that avuncular relatives and cousins were preferential godparents. This new relationship — superimposed or not on an already existing one — entailed a specific marriage prohibition: incest taboo forbade marriage between godfather, godmother, the child baptized, *compère* and *commère*, as well as the minister of the rite (Malécot and Blin [n.d.] 54; van Gennepe [1943] 234).

2.3.5 Époux, épouse

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Lat. *sponsus*, *sponsa* ‘husband’, ‘wife’; absolutely and in the plural form, *époux* = spouses. In contradistinction from *mari* and *femme*, *époux* and *épouse* were used, until the eighteenth century, in juridical or noble style, or in colloquial and ironical expressions; afterwards, according to diverse lexicographers, the terms belonged to colloquial or juridical and noble style (1788), to colloquial language (1835), to poetic or elevated usage (1870), to the administrative and juridical lexicon (1932), and they are now supposed to be typical of noble or bourgeois familiarity (1961) (cf. Wartburg [1963] 12 : 212).

Mari, *femme*; Lat. *maritus*, *femina*; the former is of ecclesiastical origin, the latter was created in epic poetry. *Homme* is in competition with *mari* in popular usage, probably because of the attraction of *femme*. The following comprehensive statement by Rousbaud (18th century philologist, economist and historian) is quoted here as a witness rather than as an authority.

Mari désigne la qualité physique; c'est le terme physique qui signifie le mâle. *Époux* marque l'engagement social; il vient du latin *sponsus*, promis, accordé, qui vient lui-même de *spondère*, cautionner, promettre.

Le *mari* répond à la femme comme le mâle à la femelle; l'*époux* répond à l'*épouse* comme un des deux conjoints à l'autre. Les Latins appelaient l'animal mâle *mari*; *époux* ne peut convenir qu'aux personnes. On prend un *mari*: la cérémonie donne un *époux*. [Cf. Wartburg (1963) 26, quoted above, 2.3 and (1934) 3 : 451.]

Époux est de par lui-même un mot plus noble; il est seul du haut style: *mari* est plus familier. Le mot *mari* annonce la puissance, le mot *époux* n'annonce que l'union; qui prend un *mari* prend un maître, qui prend une épouse prend une compagne. Une femme est en puissance de *mari*; le *mari*

est le chef et le maître de la communauté : deux époux sont l'un à l'autre ; et ce mot, désignant également l'époux et l'épouse, semble mettre entre eux l'égalité.

Le *mari* a des droits, et l'épouse des devoirs ; et qui perd plus d'un ménage c'est que tel qui ne se souvient pas qu'il est époux n'oublie jamais qu'il est *mari* (in Noël and Carpentier [1831] II : 254-255).

As pointed out earlier, the term for daughter (*filie*) took the meaning of 'whore' in the fifteenth century. *Femme* did not escape the same semantic fate in some attenuated fashion: first, *arrière-femme* came to stand for 'concubine' in the sixteenth century and then *femelle* for 'whore' in the seventeenth. This is well in agreement with the general representation of the "noble sex" in France, as we shall see below (Chapter Four).

Obviously related to *mari* are the verb *marier* and the substantive *mariage*. *Marier* did not first mean 'to get married' but 'to find a husband for one's daughter' (twelfth century), denotation which stressed paternal authority ; likewise, *remarier* meant, in the thirteenth century, 'remarry one's child to another partner'. In the thirteenth century, *marier* came to the meaning, 'unite a man and a woman in wedlock', and *se marier à/avec* 'to get married'. *Desmarier* 'unmarry', occurs in the fourteenth century to express legal separation.

The typology of marriage elaborated in French linguistic usage from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries is worth mentioning. Types of marriage are described by reference to four main categories, viz., legal aspects, concubinage, instability, and motivation of the choice of a partner (cf. Wartburg [1960] 359). Table 2.4 lists them chronologically.

Table 2.4.

Types of Marriage in French Linguistic Usage (15th-19th Century)

Century	Law	Concubinage	Instability	Motivation
15	Mariage par échange			
17		Mariage de Jean de Vignes Mariage de la main gauche	Mariage en détrempe	Mariage de conscience
18	Mariage du côté gauche		Mariage de garnison	Mariage <i>in extremis</i>
19	Mariage sous la cheminée Mariage mixte	Mariage à la parisienne	Mariage à la cruche cassée	Mariage d'inclination Mariage de raison Mariage d'argent Mariage de convenance

By mariage par échange was meant the union between two serfs belonging to different masters, following which the bridegroom's master gave to the other lord a femaleserf in exchange for the one lost¹. In a *mariage du côté gauche*, one of the spouses is of inferior social position with the consequence that his/her legal rights are restricted. To marry 'under the mantlepiece' (*sous la cheminée*) was to marry secretly without fulfilling legal requirements. Finally, a 'mixed marriage' was understood then as it still is, viz., that between persons of different faiths.

Among the other locutions which might need explanation, *mariage de conscience* implied that the wedding was due to the moral pangs of lovers; people married in *in extremis* usually had their free union legalized when one of the partners was in danger of death — this could be to the advantage of the survivor, thus entitled to inherit, or of the progeniture which was thus made legitimate. Inclination was motivation related to personal choice and, as such, sharply contradistinguished from convenience. The latter, which summarizes reason and money, rested on social and economical status. It is interesting to see that, although predominant in previous centuries, these motivations received linguistic consecration only in the nineteenth century.

On the whole, the aspects of marriage which were salient enough to deserve encoding had to do with legal and financial interests on the one hand and with

¹ See Bloch (1949) I, 91; Duby (1962) II, 446-451.

instability on the other. Like the collective representation of women in French society, this is reinforced in folklore as we shall see in Chapter Four.

2.3.6 **Veuve, veuf.**

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Lat. *uidua* ‘widow’, eleventh century (Littré [1888] IV, 2473; Dauzat [1938] 791) or twelfth century (Gamillscheg [1928] 888; Wartburg [1960] 71: 432); the modern masculine *veuf* was coined in the sixteenth century. “Es wird *veuve* zuerst als indeklinables adj. sowohl mit bezug auf den mann wie auf die frau gesagt (so seit 13. jah.); eine spur davon zeigen die mundarten, die für <witwer> noch den ausdruck *homme veuve* gebrauchen. Sonst wird aber mit der zeit der grammatikalische gegensatz zwischen diesen beiden wörtern empfunden und zu *veuve* eine adjektivisches *veuf* gebildet” (Wartburg [1960] 71: 433-434). The first use in French, undifferentiated as to gender, is all the more interesting that “bei meisten indogermanischen völkern bedeutete für die frau der tod ihres mannes den eintritt in einen neuen rechtlichen zustand, während für den mann, der seine frau verlor, keine anderung seiner sozialen stellung eintrat. Es bestand daher ein besonderes wort nur für die frau, welche ihren marm verloren hatte, daher lat. VIDUA, ahd. *wituwa*, got. *widuwo*, usw” (Wartburg [1960] 71: 433). It is possible that the coinage of *veuf* was a step taken to specialize the meaning of *veuve* by diminishing its extension (see below, 3.2.2) according to the Indo-Germanic tradition mentioned by Wartburg. In effect, legal codices in the sixteenth century define the *droit de veuve* — in fact, a duty — as “droit dû au seigneur par les veuves à cause de la protection qu'il doit leur accorder” (1583); and, as a right, “droit qu'a une veuve de prendre, outre son douaire, son meilleur habit, le lit garni et quelques autres meubles de la maison” (1533) (Wartburg [1960] 71: 432). Then, the social position of a widow in France is revealed by the way she is commonly designated, viz., *Veuve Untel*, i.e., by reference to her late husband through whom only she was legally defined. The wife is, so to speak, an “adjective” and can only be predicated by her husband. Thus, the Indo-Germanic usage is perhaps what gives root to, and sheds light on, Levi-Strauss's relevant observation:

L'usage français traditionnel est d'incorporer ‘veuve’ au nom propre, mais on n'incorpore pas le masculin ‘veuf’, et pas davantage ‘orphelin’. Pourquoi cet exclusivisme ? Le patronyme appartient aux enfants de plein droit ; on peut dire que, dans nos sociétés, c'est un classificateur de lignée. La relation des enfants au patronyme ne change donc pas, du fait de la mort des parents. Cela est encore plus vrai de l'homme, dont le rapport à son patronyme reste immuable, qu'il soit célibataire, marié, ou veuf.

Il n'en est pas de même pour la femme. Si, perdant son mari, elle devient ‘veuve un-tel’, c'est parce que, du vivant de son mari, elle était ‘femme untel’, autrement dit, elle avait déjà abandonné son autonome pour un terme exprimant sa relation à un soi autre, ce qui est la définition que nous avons admise au teknonyme. Sans doute ce mot serait-il impropre en la circonstance ; pour maintenir le parallélisme, on pourrait forger celui d'andronyme (grec [...], époux), mais cela ne semble pas

utile, l'identité de structure étant immédiatement perceptible sans recourir à une création verbale. Dans l'usage français, par conséquent, le droit au nécronyme est fonction du port antérieur d'un terme analogue à un teknonyme : c'est parce que mon soi est défini par ma relation à un autre que mon identité n'est préservable, à la mort de cet autre, que par cette relation inchangée dans la forme, mais désormais affectée du signe négatif. La 'veuve Dumont' est la femme d'un Dumont, non pas aboli, mais qui n'existe plus que dans sa relation à cet autre qui se définit par lui (Lévi-Strauss [1962] 256-257).

The consideration of the term *veuve* gives another clue to the underrated position of women in French society (cf. above, *filles* and *femme*), which is still more marked in folklore and law.

2.3.7 Neveu, nièce

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Lat. *nepos*, *neptis* (among other forms) 'nephew', 'niece', 'nibling'; 'grandchild' and 'descendants' until the seventeenth century (cf. *petit-fils*, *petite-fille*, and *beau-fils*, *belle-fille*, below, 2.3.14 and 2.3.17). *Neveu d'un frère* 'brother's nephew', *neveu à la mode du Marais* 'nephew in the Marais fashion', all meaning 'illegitimate child'. It can be noted that these circumlocutions are not without similarity with the place more or less recognized to illegitimate male children in traditional French society (see below, 5.3.2). Finally, *neveu* and *nièce* are sometimes used by unrelated members of the community to address the children of a household with which they interact.

2.3.8 Oncle, tante

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Lat. *auunculus*, *amita* 'uncle', 'aunt', in some dialects, 'stepfather', 'stepmother'; *bel-oncle* 'aunt's husband' (rare). In Latin, *patruus* = FB, *matruus* = FZ, *auunculus* = MB, and *matertera* = MZ; furthermore, "1) AVUNCULUS ein Dim. zu AVUS, 'das Grossväterchen' d.h. ein Verwandter, Familienangehöriger, *der nicht ganz* Grossvater ist, aber für das Kind eine ähnliche Rolle spielt [italics mine]. 2) AMITA, diminutive Erweiterung des kindersprachlichen Stammes AM, vgl. AMARE... B e i d e A u s d r ü c k e leben nebeneinander fort: Frankreich, Graubünden... F r a n z ö s i c h e s G e b i e t. Mit verschwindenden Ausnahmen über das ganze Gebiet verbreitet; in unveränderter Form aber nur: *oncle-ante*... In den Mundarten hat es sich länger erhalten, so bis 1711 in Guernesey (Métivier) im rituellen Gebrauch: 'présenté (e) au baptême par son *ante*'" [here, the ritual function of the godmother is fulfilled by the aunt] (Tappolet [1895] 92-93; see also Wartburg [1928] I: 88, 188-189; Galton [1957] 128-130).

In Latin, Lounsbury's "skewing rule" applies (1964: 375); although French carried the same semantic feature for a while, it modified it rather early with the

introduction of *petit-fils* (thirteenth century). Thus, originally, *oncle* and *tante* might have referred to MB and FZ: in this respect, it is worth noting that Lat. *patrinus* (> French *parrain*) “ist zu PATER gebildet, ähnlich wie im klt *patruus*, ‘der bruder des vaters’” (Wartburg [1958] 8: 23), to supplement *auunculus* (MB). (On the mechanism of skewing, see Levi-Strauss [1949] 447-448.)

A somewhat similar semantic axis underlies the terms *parrain*, *marraine* on the one hand, and *oncle*, *tante* on the other. Aside from the fact that both uncle/niece, aunt/nephew, and godparent/godchild marriages require an Ecclesiastical dispensation (cf. above, 2.3.4), the terms ‘uncle’ to a greater and ‘aunt’ to a lesser extent are often used to integrate into the kin group such remote relatives as parents’ fifth cousins or mere friends of the parents who interact to some degree with the household, or even older members of the village community (Gilliéron and Edmond [1902-1910] Map 941).

2.3.9 Gendre, bru

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Lat. *gener* (cf. *gens*), Old High German *brūt* ‘son-in-law’, ‘daughter-in-law’. Se marier *gendre* ‘to reside uxorilocally’; see *beau-fils*, *belle-fille*, below 2.3.17. *Bru* displaced Lat. *nurus* and is on its way to being superseded by *belle-fille*; the competition started almost four centuries ago, however. The original meaning was virilocal residence. See also Tappolet, (1895 : 130-131), “*bru...* = la nouvelle mariée” (Eng. ‘bride’). *Fillastre*: $AG^{-1}/AG^{-1}A$, eleventh-fifteenth century.

2.3.10 Couple

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Lat. copula ‘couple’; H and W, or two lovers, or two friends.

2.3.11 Jumeau, jumelle

Lat. *gemellus* ‘twin’. No semantic history relevant to the purpose of this study.

2.3.12 Cousin, cousine

Lat. *cosobrinus*, *cosobrina*, ‘cousin’; “all kins or affines other than those who have a special name” (Littré [1882] I, 868); honorific title given by the kings of France to French blood and Church princes, peers, dukes, and marshals (cf. *frère*, *soeur*; see Tappolet [1895] 111, note, and 119, note). Fifteenth century, *cousin* = ‘cuckold’, *cousine* = ‘prostitute’. *Cousin germain* ‘first cousin’ (see Tappolet [1895] 55, 115).

Cousinage first meant a set of cousins (twelfth century) and, four centuries later, was used to designate relatives in general as well as cousins proper — a clear case of extension of meaning (i.e., supporting the views of Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, etc.). *Cousinière*, in the thirteenth century, had a meaning somewhat similar to that of *freresche*, viz., the place where live a group of cousins and parents; three centuries and a half later, the term had taken a pejorative connotation and stood for an ‘ants’ nest of poor relatives. In the Haute-Vienne, the picturesque and suggestive name *cousine au cul* was given to the *polygonum aviculare* (“Wohl weil diese pflanze dem menschen überallhin folgt, wie eine verwandte, die man nicht los werden kann”) (Wartburg [1946] 2: 1074-1075).

2.3.13 Parastre, marastre

Lat. *patraster, matrasta*, ‘stepfather’, ‘stepmother’; these terms soon lost reference to their original meaning, their pejorative connotation winning over their denotation so that the latter covered only ‘bad father’ and ‘bad mother’. Cf. the general situation in the Romance area: “In der übrigen Romania ist es ersetzt worden durch zweit ableitung von PATER, welche die abschwächung des verwandtschaftsverhältnisses gogenüber dem leiblichen vater durch pejorativsuffixe ausdrücken, ein vorgehen, das zugleich erlaubt, die ausdrücke für stiefvater und stiefmutter morphologisch zusammenzuordnen” (Wartburg [1958] 8: 20; see also Pasquier, quoted in Godefroy, 1881-1902, art. *fillastre*.)

2.3.14 Petit-fils, petite-fille

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See *fils, fille* (2.3.2) ‘grandson’, ‘granddaughter’. *Petit* may be a term of affection, compassion, or familiarity, probably connected at times with small size, cf. *petit mari, petite femme, petit frère, petite sœur, petit garçon*, etc. English expresses the same relationship with a term of distance, like German, where the process “ist eine mechanische Übertragung von Grossvater” (Tappolet [1895] 89; see also *aïeul*, 2.3.15). According to Bloch and Wartburg (1950 : 456), *petit-fils* was formed in imitation of *grand-père*, and used to distinguish grandchildren from niblings (cf. Tappolet [1895] 89); in that case, *petit-* would be a term of distance rather than a term of affection. Early competing forms show that the first idea was indeed one of distance : *arrière-fils* and *sous-fils* use prepositions marking position as prefix, instead of the adjective *petit*. Tappolet suggested a clarifying explanation of the semantic process involved: “Die eigentliche Neuschöpfung schliesst sich stets an den Begriff resp. Begriffsausdruck, ‘Sohn’, an. Kindersprache und Titelbezeichnung sind hier ausgeschlossen“.

a) S o h n = E n k e l ... [as father \simeq grandfather, 1895: 73].

b) S o h n + p h y s i s e h e E i g e n s c h a f t = E n k e l .

Die einzige Eigenschaft, die hier als unterscheidendes Merkmal dem Sohne des Sohnes beigelegt werden konnte, ist die *K l e i n h e i t* ...

c) *S o h n + M e t a p h e r = E n k e l* ... [by metaphor, Tappolet means the use of prefixes].

d) *S t i e f s o h n = E n k e l*” (1895 : 89-90). On the whole, and when the meaning of *grand-* in *grand-père* is taken into account, it seems that *petit* in *petit-fils* is a term of distance, equivalent to “grand-“ in the English “grandson”. It remains possible that *petit-* evokes a psychological attitude (Pauli [1919] 248-259 ; Gougenheim [1962] 151), but its first use in kinship contexts must have been a reference to distance.

2.3.15 *Aïeul, aïeule*

(Lat: *aviohus, aviola*, dim. of *avus* and of non-classical *ava*) ‘grandfather’, ‘grandmother’; *aïeul* was in competition with *grand-père* from the twelfth century until the sixteenth when *aïeul* was finally relegated almost exclusively to written language (cf. also *repère*, Saintonge dialect; Tappolet [1895] 79). It took four centuries for *grand-père* to supplant *aïeul*. The latter generated *bisaïeul* in the thirteenth century when *grand-père* had just been coined, and *trisaïeul* in the sixteenth century, at the time of its own disappearance and when *grand-mère* was formed after *grand-père*. Finally, Voltaire's attempt to launch *guadrisaïeul* in 1751 did not meet any success.

“Les mots relatifs à la vieillesse ont toujours appelé des atténuatifs”, and that is perhaps why *grand-parent* superseded *aïeul* (Dauzat [1938] 372). But, on the otherhand *grand-* is used here in the sense of *agé* ‘old’, which it had already in Latin (*grandis natu*) (Bloch and Wartburg [1950] 289). The new term, as consisting of the addition of the prefix *grand-* to *père* and *mère*, would have been accepted easily if Tappolet's hypothesis is valid:

Die Übertragung des Väterausdruckes auf den Grossvater kommt nur vereinzelt vor. Ich denke sie mir so, dass das Kind die Benennung sich aneignet, die es seine Eltern ihren Eltern geben hört, während bei der kindersprachlichen Urschöpfung das Umgekehrte stattgefunden hat: dort haben die Eltern innerhalb der Familie den von den Kindern aufgebrauchten Ausdruck adoptiert und dadurch sanctioniert.

And, in a footnote,

Auf meine Frage, wie denn der Grossvater vom Vater unterschieden werde, bekam ich jeweilen zur Antwort: durch den beigelegten Vornamen: *papa Joseph, mamma une telle*. Diese Ortschaften haben also tatsächlich keinen eigentlichen Grossväterausdruck (Tappolet [1895] 73).

The case of the displacement of *aïeul* by *grand-père* can probably be invoked against the “codability hypothesis”. According to Brown and Lenneberg (1954), who followed the path opened by Zipf, a color which can be named with a single word will be more easily “available”, because of its greater codability, than another with a longer name (measured by words or syllables); consequently, the length of a name “was found to be correlated with the latency of the naming response and the reliability of the response from person to person within the linguistic community and from time to time in person” (in Saporta [1961] 491; cf., however, Darmesteter [1885] 105 and Guiraud 1954). Brown and Lenneberg suggest that “there may be general laws relating codability to cognitive processes. All cultures could conform to these laws” (in Saporta [1961] 492). Similarly, Frake states (1962: 75): “Evidence also seems to indicate that those cognitive features requiring most frequent communication will tend to have standard and relatively short linguistic labels.”

Before dealing with the more general issue of codability, Frake's point concerning standard labels can be questioned on the grounds that, in French, the frequently used terms for spouses have not yet been completely standardized (*époux/mari/homme* are in competition as are *épouse/femme*). This instability may be due, however, to the precarious relationships between sexes and to the French conception of marriage ; in other words, the collective representation which underlies French society may very well be at the root of this linguistic uneasiness (cf. Leach [1964]).

Martinet (1961: 179, 183-184, 192-195) formulates the codability hypothesis as follows: “Lorsque la fréquence d'une unité s'accroît, sa forme tend à se réduire. Ceci vaut pour une unité minima comme pour une unité plus vaste, pour une unité distinctive comme pour une unité significative puisqu'il n'est pas nécessaire qu'une unité participe à la signification pour qu'elle apporte de l'information” (1961 : 194). But if the hypothesis has general validity, the replacement of *aïeul* by *grand-père*¹ would mean that the frequency of the use of the term to designate grandparents decreased after the sixteenth century, which is quite contrary to the facts (below, 3.3.2). As to those who would contend that *aïeul* never existed in spoken French and, therefore, cannot have disappeared, they can find that it was still alive in rural areas at the beginning of the century (Gilliéron and Edmond [1902-1910] supplément). Another dimension must be taken into account, however, in the discussion of the problem. The relative descriptive power of terms in competition may have bearing on survival. The case of *aïeul* vs. *grand-père* shows in effect that the length of a word is not the only factor impinging on

¹ One may argue that *aïeul* is a shorter written but not a shorter spoken form than *grand-père* : the same case could not be made, however, for *bisaïeul* and *trisaïeul* shorter on both counts than, and yet superseded by, *arrière-grand-père* and *arrière-arrière-grand-père*, respectively. Thus, “the latency of naming response and the reliability of the response from person to person” etc. may not be the real factors.

codability. Motivation, semantic transparency, or intensional immediacy, is perhaps more important than number of syllables. In this respect, Martinet is probably right when he says that the “inertie mémorielle” (cf. Zipf’s principle of the least effort) plays an important role in linguistic economy (1961: 184). Higher motivation or “greater transparency” reduces coding, storing, and retrieval costs. Along these lines, Tappolet’s observations should be recalled that in French rural communities, the composition of the household favored the use of a compound form of *père* and *mère* against the shorter but less motivated *aïeul*. The codability hypothesis should, most likely, be rephrased with a provision for the descriptive power of a term (Mandelbrot’s “letters” could be more useful than the number of syllables — Mandelbrot [1953, 1954]; see also Rapoport [1957] 159).

To sum up both the theoretical issue and the problem posed by competing forms of French kinship terms, let us consider what philologists have long recognized and studied under the heading of motivation. Wartburg’s comprehensive statement is perfectly adequate for this purpose. His first category (direct motivation) covers cases of *kindersprachliche Verdopplung* (see above, 2.3.3). His second and third categories (morphological and arbitrary motivations, respectively) apply on the one hand to *grand-parent*, *beau-parent*, and other similar terms, and, on the other, to *aïeul*, *gendre*, *bru*, etc. “On peut donc répartir les mots en trois catégories: 1. *Mots motivés* directement (par les sons), par exemple les onomatopées *coucou*, *claquer*, *clopiner*, [and *papa* mentioned elsewhere in the same page]; 2. *Mots qui sont motivés* soit par leur structure morphologique (composés : *abat-jour*, *garde-boue* ; dérivés : *penseur* à côté de *penser*...) soit par leur valeur sémantique... 3. *Mots arbitraires* ou ‘opaques’, qui ne doivent leur sens qu’à la tradition” (Wartburg [1963] 139-140) ¹.

A modern instance of the same type of competition is that between different terms for niblings. In lower-class milieux nowadays, *fil(s)/fil(le) de frère/soeur* are preferred to the more specialized but less descriptive terms *neveu/niece* (Wagner [1965]). A counteracting force, however, keeps *neveu* and *nièce* well alive. In effect, the Church has traditionally recommended that niblings be selected as godparents. This illustrates how a sociological factor may impinge on the codability hypothesis.

The following compounds belong to the same category as *grand-père* and pose the same problem of codability: *arrière-grand-père* (= *bisaïeul*), *arrière-arrière-grandpère* (= *trisaïeul*).

Arrière-petit-fils and other *arrière-* compounds, except those concerning grandparents (Lat., *adretro*) stood for vague, remote kinship relationship in the

¹ The French edition was preferred because of its enlargement of the general description of the categories ; cf. Wartburg, 1962 : 129. The same framework had already been proposed by Ullman (1952 : 87-92). For additional bibliography, see Ullman (1952), and Diebold (1964a).

sixteenth century. The first to appear was *arrière-neveu*, followed by *arrière-fils* (G_2^{-1} , G_3^{-1}). The modern denotation of *arrière-peti-tfils* (G_3^{-1}) was established during the eighteenth century.

2.3.16 Généalogie

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Lat. *genealogia* ‘genealogy’; the term was already used in its modern anthropological meaning in the thirteenth century. For its depth and content, see above, 1.3.2, *Lineage*, and below, Appendix One.

2.3.17 Beau-, belle-

Lat. *bellus* ‘in-law’. Originally terms of respect and affection used to address beloved persons in the Middle Ages, they soon underwent a pejorative evolution (cf. above, *parastre*, 2.3.13), notwithstanding Wartburg's opinion.

Altfranzösisch *bet* wird also ausdrück der gefühle des respekts, der verherung, der liebe verwendet, so z.b. *biauz sires*, *biaus dous amis*, *biaus frères*, ‘mon cher frère’. Seit dem 15. jh. wird diese respektsformel nach und nach zu einer bezeichnung von verwandtschaftsverhältnisses ... Es kan wohl kein zweifel bestehen, dass in diesen verbindungen *beau* zuerst die ehrerbietung ausdrückte ; dazu stimmt auch, dass zuerst die bezeichnungen für die eltern, dann für die geschwister und zulest erst die für kinder damit verbunden werden. Fils und *fille* konnten wohl erst damit zusammentreten, als die ältere bed. von *beau* verblasst war. Urfel Z 38, 712 will dem *belle* von *belle-mère* eine art beschwörende kraft beimessen gegen den unheilvollen einfluss der gefürchteten schweigemutter. Doch könnte so etwas nur in ganz andern kulturellen verhältnissen eine rolle gespielt haben, als sie in Frankreich im 15. jh. herrschten. Die französische wörter schon im 16. jh. ins niederländisch übersetzt : *schoonvader*, usw (Wartburg [1928] I, 321).

In opposition to Wartburg, let us take notice, first, that Tappolet's more refined account (1895: 123-125) shows that the connotation of *beau* differs when it refers to the spouse's parents and to the spouse's siblings. Then, Noël and Carpentier are in agreement with Urfel, whose view Wartburg sweeps aside. According to them, *beau*, *belle*, refer only to age distinction, elder calling younger, somewhat despisingly, “*beau-fils*”, “*beau-cousin*”, etc. “Nous avons conservé des traces de ces expressions dans celles de *mon beau monsieur*, *ma belle dame*, qu'un supérieur adresse à un jeune homme, à une femme inférieure, qui croit qu'on donne à sa beauté ce qu'on refuse à son rang” (Noël and Carpentier [1831] 111).

In the third place, Stowell (1908: 39-43, 148-150) bases similar conclusions on statistical evidence showing that the pejorative connotation of *beau* increased from 21 per cent of the attested cases in the second half of the twelfth century to 76 per cent in the thirteenth and became general and almost exclusive in the fourteenth century. The phenomenon is not without parallels, *ami*, *danz*, and perhaps *frere* having also followed the same pattern of devaluation (Stowell [1908] 21-29, 110-113, 142-146, etc., and cf. above, 2.3.2, 2.3.5, 2.3.12, *fille*, *femme*, and *cousin*).

Beau-frère: ‘brother-in-law’ first as $G^{-1}AG$, then as AS/SA ; displaced *sororge* (*serorge*), Lat. *sororius*. Competing forms: *frère en loi* (= literally Engl. ‘brother-in-law’), *pas-frère*, *compère* (see above, 2.3.4), and the same with *belle-soeur*; those competing forms were commonly used in the fifteenth century. On *germain* (*utérin*) and *demi-frère* ‘step-brother’, see Tappolet (1995) 55-56, 138.

In *beau-frère*, *belle-soeur*, the prefix *beau-* reinforced the worn-out sense of *frère* and *soeur* as titles of address.

Beau-fils: ‘son-in-law’ and ‘stepson’; (also, *pas-fils*) displaced *fillastre* (Lat. *filiaster*). Stood for DH (1530) first, then for WS and HS as well (1611); in competition with *gendre* for DH.

Belle-fille: ‘daughter-in-law’ and ‘stepdaughter’; in competition with *bru* in the sense of ‘daughter-in-law’. Stood for SW (1477), and then for WD, HD (1611) (Tappolet [1895] 128-129; Dauzat [1938] q.v.).

Beau-père: ‘father-in-law’ and ‘stepfather’; eliminated *suire* (Lat. *socer*) and *parastre*, now vanished; W/HF.

Belle-mère: ‘mother-in-law’ and ‘stepmother’; eliminated *marastre*, now pejorative (see above, 2.3.13); W/HM.

Beau- was also prefixed to **nieps* (‘nephew’), *oncle*, *tante*, etc., in the fifteenth century.

To sum up the alliance relationships as expressed by *beau-*, *belle-* in the order of their historical appearance (after Wartburg):

1386: *beau-frère*, “le père du gendre ou de la bru”, i.e., DHF or SWF;

1423: *belle-soeur*, “la mère du gendre ou de la bru”, i.e., DHM or SWM; both meanings have now been replaced with reference to the level of wife and husband;

1454: *belle-mère*, W/HM;

1480: *beau-père*; *belle-fille*, W/HF; SW, H/WD;

1530: *beau-fils*, DH, H/WS;

1877: *beaux-parents*, H/WF/M.

The semantics of affinal terms will be discussed in the next chapter. Suffice here to point out that the shift from $G^{-1}AG$ to AS/SA for *beau-frère* and *belle-*

soeur was counterbalanced by the merging of *GA* (*parastre, marastre*) and *AG* (*beau-père, belle-mère*) on the one hand and that of AG^{-1} and $G^{-1}A$ (*fillastre* and *beau-fils, belle-fille*, respectively) on the other.

2.3.18 Fiancé, fiancée

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(*fier*, Lat. *fides*); bound by a solemn promise of marriage. In the twelfth century, the verb was used in the sense of ‘to agree on a war treaty’.

2.3.19 Lait, mère de –

Enfants de-, frère de-, soeur de-: ‘milk mother’, ‘milk children’, ‘milk brother’, ‘milk sister’.

2.3.20 *Tu* and *vous* between relatives.

The use of the second person singular pronoun *tu* in French was uncommon between relatives until the eighteenth century. With the 1789 revolution, it became more and more widespread, although descendants of noble ancestry kept, and in some cases, still keep, to the ceremonious *vous* even between spouses and siblings. Several parents still require that their children address them with *vous*, which they do not reciprocate, addressing their children with *tu*. A few decades ago, Catholic priests were known who recommended in their sermons that parents maintain the *vous* requirement from their children.

It is a rather widespread custom in present-day France for parents-in-law to ask their children-in-law permission to address them as “tu”. This is easily granted, of course, but I do not know of reciprocal cases (cf. Brown and Gilman, 1960).

2.4 CONCLUSION

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The purpose of the philological survey just conducted was to provide some historical information on the denotative meaning of French kinship terms; some indications of their connotation was also given. A few sociological and behavioral factors were also touched on (taxonomy of marriage, ceremonial relationships, parental authority, etc.). Before undertaking an analysis of the structural determinants of the system in the next chapter, it might be appropriate to recall briefly that (1) classificatory terms in French kinship can be viewed categorically to some extent — see especially 2.3.1, 2.3.4, 2.3.7, 2.3.8, and 2.3.12 ; (2) terms for women and affines are subject to pejorative evolution.

Table 2.5

Historical Semantics of French Kinship Terms. The first two terms in the category EXTINCT have almost completely disappeared from current speech; the two others are still in use but do not refer to kinship.

Stable terms	Terms in competition	Ambiguous terms	Semantic shift	Extinct
Brother	3 for husband	mother-	marastre	parastre
Son	2 for wife	/father-in-	grand-	
Sister	2 for grand-	law/ /step-mother	niblings	
Daughter	parents	father	grand-children	
Children	2 for son-			
Father	/daughter-in-law			fillastre
Mother			siblings-in-law	compère
Parents				commère
Nephew				
Niece				
Uncle				
Aunt				
Cousins				
Godparents				
Godchildren				

Historical data enable us to establish the following semantic chart according to intension, or degree of specification of meaning (see below, 3.2.2).

The greatest degree of stability is found in consanguineal terms. Then, as soon as alliance relationships come in, competition, ambiguity, shift, and extinction bear

witness to the uneasiness of the system. Likewise, G_2 relationships and their converse are somewhat unstable.

Chapter Three will now attempt to elucidate the mechanisms underlying these semantic facts.