Lourmarin in the Eighteenth Century

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IN ADDITION TO THE constant preoccupation with how best to manage the village’s economy, the municipal government was also confronted with the perpetual problem of providing for Lourmarin’s poor. The municipal deliberations give the distinct impression that Lourmarin’s continuing commitment to its poor was caused primarily by humanitarian impulses, although self-interest also motivated the local bourgeoisie, which was determined to keep the poor pacified. Since neither Paris nor Aix provided a centralized, planned program for relief, the council relied on village resources to care for those Lourmarinois, particularly children and the elderly, who otherwise would not have survived. Efforts to aid the poor were intensified in times of crop failure, severe weather, or the outbreak of contagious diseases, when the number of persons who needed relief naturally increased. In such times of particular hardship, it was necessary to supplement the council’s resources by gifts or loans from the king, the seigneur, or the bourgeoisie of Lourmarin. Estimating that in a normal year 150 persons, or about ten percent of the population, received some type of

aid, it is necessary to examine the variety of ways by which Lourmarin provided relief to the poor. To show how the village functioned in a crisis, this chapter will conclude with a discussion of the measures taken in 1720 against the outbreak of the plague in Provence.

Two more or less constant sources of poor relief were meat from the butcher and bread from the baker. We have seen how bidders for the butcher shop often offered to include in their leases a stipulated amount of meat that they agreed to provide free to the poor of the community. If the consuls authorized the butcher to provide more free meat than his lease required, he was reimbursed by the council. The baker's lease never required him to furnish free bread; however, he would give bread upon presentation of chits signed by a consul and later was reimbursed by the community. Times of crisis increased the demands for aid, of course, but there were always the "poor and sick" (pauvres et pauvres malades) who needed help in good times and bad. Consequently, the council often authorized aid to specific individuals, such as occurred in 1716 when approval was given for the "distribution of two loaves of bread per day to Etienne Pacot and his wife, both poor sick, because of their extreme poverty."

Another regular and predictable source of relief for the poor was the six charges (30 bushels) of rye which a transaction of 1615 obligated the tithe-collector to donate to the village. The fermier of the dîme, who was always a prominent Lourmarin citizen, gave his donation in rye and the community was responsible for "converting it into bread and distributing it to the poor at the door of the town hall" in the presence of the priest, the seigneur's agent, the consuls, and several other village notables. Distribution occurred the weekend before Christmas, although in difficult times it could be given whenever the council deemed it necessary. Although the fermier received numerous requests for additional grain, he felt little obligation to the poor or to the community beyond furnishing the required six charges of grain. In fact, especially during the first half of the eighteenth century, the community was fortunate if the fermier furnished the six charges. Although six charges of rye did not satisfy the needs of the village

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4 A.D., Bouches-du-Rhône, C 139-3927, 3928, April 15, 1731.
poor, at least the grain did have the advantage of being distributed regularly and, insofar as Lourmarin had a plan for relief at all, they could count on this annual donation.

After 1718 Lourmarin also received income from the interest on 800 livres invested from a legacy established by Messire Raphael Girard, the village priest, who donated this sum to the poor of Lourmarin by "a pure and simple motive of charity." Girard had been the vicar of a predominantly Protestant village during the difficult days after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and he seems to have been genuinely respected by all the villagers. Father Girard and his sister, who donated one-half of the capital, transferred 800 livres in promissory notes to the community, stipulating that the village was to use the interest, computed at five percent or 40 livres annually, "to aid the poor and ill." Distribution was to be made by the priest and the consuls.

The capital of the Girard legacy was doubled in 1784 by a gift of 800 livres from Sieur Pierre Henri Joseph de Girard and Marie Anne, his unmarried sister. These Girards were members of a prominent Catholic family but were not directly related to the former priest. Interest paid on the additional capital was to be distributed to the poor in exactly the same manner as the earlier bequest.

Marie Anne de Girard's share of 400 livres was left to the Girard Foundation in her will. Four hundred livres was a very large sum to be included in a will, and its application to the Girard legacy was unusual, but the principle of leaving a part, however small, of one's earthly treasures to the poor was a long-established practice in Lourmarin. The most common bequest was in the form of either grain or money, and was usually distributed to the needy at the door of the deceased's house or at the town hall the Easter or Christmas after death. Whether this was done because of a

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6 Ibid., January 1, June 12, 1718.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., November 21, 1784.
9 A.Not., Borrelly, July 5, 1784.
10 For example, from 1741 to 1750 notaire Jacquier registered 94 wills, 60 percent of which made provision for payment of money or grain to the poor. A.Not., Jacquier, 1741 to 1750, passim. From 1781 to 1785 an average of 12 wills were registered annually with the notary. Of these an average of two-thirds, or eight, provided money or grain for the poor. A.Not., Borrelly, 1781 to 1785, passim.
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genuine interest in the poor or as a last act of penance or as a combination of the two, legacies to the poor were extremely important supplements to the regular sources of relief funds. It must be emphasized, however, that this type of poor relief, although representing a considerable amount of grain and cash, was very irregular and could not form the basis of any systematic relief plan.

A less common bequest was made by Suzanne Tasquier, who designated the "poor of this place" as her universal heirs at her death in 1712. She left the poor 95 livres in cash and a small piece of land in a neighboring village which subsequently was sold. The money realized from the sale of her land was combined with the 95 livres in cash and part of the sum was used to repair the village shelter house for the indigents. The remaining capital was invested and each year the community received an interest payment of three livres, 15 sous, which was used to carry out the terms of her will.

The only charitable institution in Lourmarin, other than the church itself, was the shelter house for poor wayfarers (maison des pauvres passants). This small building was purchased in 1711 with a donation of 180 livres and the fermier of the seigneurial dues was instructed not to collect lods on the transfer. Other donations, the Tasquier legacy, and tile from the tile maker were used to maintain this house, which also served as an infirmary for the poor.

In times of particular hardship aid came from various other sources—royal aid through the Intendant, aid from Provence, aid from the seigneur. While much of this aid was earmarked for distribution to the indigent classes, in years such as 1709 and 1766 when there were very severe winters, monetary relief was given to the village as a whole. Poor harvests in 1712 forced the officials of Provence to buy foreign grain and distribute it to the villagers "in order to try to avoid famine and to combat the high prices which accompany the shortage of grain." In their request for aid the consuls stated that Lourmarin needed at least 300 charges of grain in order to

11 A.Not., Chastroux, August 14, 1712.
13 Ibid., May 7, 1711.
14 Ibid., November 20, 1776, and passim.
15 Ibid., September 4, 1712.

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avoid hardship in the village. After a summer flood in 1726 washed away much of the spring planting, royal aid amounting to 700 livres was granted to the village. A snow in 1728 was so heavy that it "has prevented the poor from working and consequently they cannot even earn enough to buy bread for their pressing needs and now they find themselves reduced to charity." Immediate aid was forthcoming from the consuls and vicar and eventually the community received a gift of 250 livres from its seigneur with the promise of more if that amount should prove insufficient.

From 1766 until his death in 1774 Louis XV, acting through his Intendant, was very generous to Provence and to Lourmarin in particular. The crown's annual donation varied from 500 to 900 livres, distribution being supervised by a committee of village notables. In 1766 the consuls notified the Procurer in Aix that 37,424 of the 41,338 olive trees planted in the parish had been killed by the severe cold of the preceding winter. The loss of 90 percent of the village's olive trees was a hard blow since the village depended upon the income from the sale of olive oil to help buy grain. Lourmarin produced only about one half of the wheat required to feed the villagers each year. Soon new olive trees were planted and after a period of time began to produce once more, but disaster again struck in the winter of 1788-89.

When times were hardest the priest and some of the well-to-do bourgeois came forward with offers of money or grain. For instance, in 1763-64 a poor harvest pushed the price of wheat up dramatically. Since the scarcity of grain had increased the price, the bakers threatened to raise the price of bread above the set tariff, arguing that they were losing money because of the inflated price they had to pay for grain. Pierre Henri de Girard offered to sell 130 charges of the grain stored in his granaries at the "former price in order to supply the needs of the community." In addition to these and

16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., June 23, 26, July 13, 1726.
18 Ibid., February 13, 1728.
19 Ibid., August 1, 1728.
20 Ibid., 1766 to 1774, passim.
21 A.D., Bouches-du-Rhône, C 1177, September 15, 1766.
22 See Appendix A, État of the Community, 1790.
24 A.M., D.M., May 1, 1764.
other documented cases of aid from individuals, one can imagine many, many more instances of the villagers rallying to concerted action in times of crisis. 25

Illegitimate children, foundlings, or indigent adults who became ill while away from Lourmarin utilized the facilities of hospitals in other communities at Lourmarin's expense. There was no real hospital in Lourmarin, nor are there any extant hospital records for the majority of Lourmarinois who did not use public funds. The care to be provided by the hospital at Aix or in neighboring communities was a constant source of friction, as was the question of who was to pay the bill.

Not wishing to incur the cost of hospital care, the council was loathe to admit any responsibility to contribute toward the care of indigents away from home. The council often argued, sometimes with justification, that persons claiming Lourmarin as their residence had, in actuality, never lived there. In 1771 the Hospital of St. Jacques in Aix demanded reimbursement for treating two ill men who said they were residents of Lourmarin. 26 The council refused to pay, arguing that one of the men had worked in the village only a few months while the other had lived in Lourmarin "only as a domestic." Furthermore, neither had been born in Lourmarin. Adjudication of this question continued through the winter with the council producing "expert" witnesses, including the priest, who testified that neither man was a resident of Lourmarin. The council lost its case, however, and in April, 1772, the community was forced to pay the hospital 68 livres. 27

Although many examples are available, two unusual and unique cases involving public expenditures will be examined. Obviously both were causes célèbres in the village and tell more about the village and its attitudes than about the administration of poor relief. Nevertheless, they will give two concrete examples of how the council acted to resolve such problems.

It was reported to the council in May, 1759, that Rose Barthelemy was pregnant "the work of Joseph Grimand of Menère," a village 50 miles

25 Jeffry Kaplow has also found that, in the years just preceding the Revolution, certain wealthy inhabitants at Elbeuf rallied to the support of the poor of that city. Kaplow, Elbeuf, p. 101.
26 A.M., D.M., October 8, 1771.
27 Ibid., October 8, 1771 to April 15, 1772, passim.
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northwest of Lourmarin. Rose was sent to Avignon where she spent part of the summer consulting lawyers at community expense. The mayor, requesting funds for legal and medical expenses, said that "the honor of this poor girl must be restored." When a baby was born in October to a still unwed Rose Barthelemy, the priest and Daniel Savornin, a wealthy bourgeois, together with a lawyer from Avignon, arranged a confrontation with the accused boy and his father "to make them give satisfaction to this poor girl as well as to repay the community [for its expenses]." In December the mayor was able to announce with satisfaction that Grimaud and Rose were now married. There is no indication, however, that Lourmarin ever recovered its expenses.

Since illegitimacy and pre-marital conception were not foreign to Lourmarin, it is difficult to explain the keen community interest in Rose Barthelemy, the daughter of a relatively unimportant family. It is evident that the keen interest in this case was more than simply a fear that the village would have to bear the expenses of the baby's care. The answer may lie in the fact that Grimaud was a "foreigner" who had brought dishonor on the entire village by his refusal to marry Rose, as well as a general disapproval of illegitimacy. From the tone of the proceedings in this instance, as well as in similar cases, it is obvious that the girl was not harshly stigmatized. The blame for pregnancy rested primarily upon the man.

The second example involved the only recorded homicide in Lourmarin, which was committed by Jean Barraud, 25-year old son of Jean Barraud, apothecary and respected member of the community. Jean was convicted of killing Anne Aguitton, 50, wife of André Anezin, "in his madness" on February 17, 1757, and was committed to the insane asylum in Aix. Lourmarin was ordered to pay 250 livres per year for his care. One would have to assume that the insane asylum's security system was a bit lax, since Barraud escaped in July, 1757, July, 1759, September, 1759, June, 1761, November, 1761, and January, 1764. He was finally recaptured in March,
1764, and was condemned to be imprisoned and enchained for life in the insane asylum.\(^{35}\) However, he managed to escape twice again before his death in prison in August, 1769.

Barraud represented a considerable financial drain on the community, compounded by the added cost of apprehending him.\(^{36}\) In 1759, after escaping from the asylum, he appeared in Lourmarin still dragging his chains and brandishing a gun and knife as he threatened to kill anyone who approached him.\(^{37}\) The community had to pay four constables from a neighboring village to apprehend him. Barraud was periodically detained in the seigneurial prison, but this proved costly and nerve-racking because he broke all of the serving utensils and furniture in his cell. A mason had to be called in August, 1761, to clean up the debris in the prison and to repair the plaster Barraud had destroyed in his "great fury."\(^{38}\) One can imagine that the news of Barraud's death was received in October, 1769, with a sense of relief. When informed of Barraud's death in Aix, the council minutes recorded simply: "The council approves the death of the said Barraud."\(^{39}\) It is noteworthy, given what we know about the frugality of the council, that they never attempted to repudiate the community's debts to St. Jacques in Aix for Barraud's care.

The last great outbreak of plague in France began at Marseilles in the summer of 1720. The crisis lasted in Lourmarin until 1722, a two-year period whose dramatic events were not matched until the Revolution. An examination of the measures taken to insure the village's safety will show how the municipal council acted to arrive at decisions, sometimes painful, and to care for the poor, while trying to alleviate the terrible tensions produced by sealing off Lourmarin from the rest of France.

France had suffered before from the devastation of the plague. As the major southern port through which ships passed bound to and from North Africa and the Middle East, Marseilles had experienced the horrors of the

\(^{35}\) Ibid., March 4, 1764.
\(^{36}\) As early as 1757, the council had proposed that the tax on wine be reinstituted and that the proceeds be used to support Barraud. Ibid., April 3, 1757.
\(^{37}\) Ibid., July 29, September 1, 1759.
\(^{38}\) Ibid., August 16, 1761.
\(^{39}\) Ibid., October 1, 1769.
plague several times before and had instituted safeguards to prevent a recurrence. All ships were to be inspected, their cargoes quarantined on an island in the port, and any suspect goods confiscated. When the Grand St. Antoine, carrying goods from Syria, entered the port of Marseilles it was sent to this island. The ship's captain, Chabaud, submitted his cargo to the health commissioners and also reported the fact that seven sailors had died en route to Marseilles. The inspectors decided, however, that they had died from poor nutrition or inadequate hygiene and not from the plague. There is clear evidence that several local officials had a financial interest in the cargo of the Grand St. Antoine and, wishing to avoid delays, conspired to unload contraband lengths of cloth without going through the customary procedures. Unfortunately for the buyers, the merchandise was contaminated and in late June, 1720, the plague appeared and began to spread rapidly.

Men died horrible deaths in the streets of Marseilles or in their rooms unattended. Doctors, priests, and administrators made an heroic, albeit unsuccessful, attempt to contain the disease. Finally on August 1 a blockade of Marseilles was ordered. A make-shift wall was built around the city and no one was allowed to enter or leave. Royal troops were stationed throughout southern France, particularly along the banks of rivers. The final result was that, unlike previous outbreaks, the 1720 epidemic was confined almost exclusively to Provence. The plague was especially severe in Marseilles, where perhaps 40,000 to 50,000, or about one half of the population, died, but Aix, Arles, and Toulon also lost between one-quarter and one half of their population, and most other Provençal communities felt its


43 The first death, on June 28, 1720, was that of a tailor who had bought the prohibited cloth. The plague spread rapidly and by early August beggars and convicts had to be conscripted to bury the dead. Of the 217 convicts conscripted in August to bury the dead, only 12 remained alive by September 1. Biraben, "Demographic Characteristics of the Plague," pp. 536–38.

44 Ibid., p. 539.
effects. Abbé Expilly estimated that 170,000 persons, one-quarter of the population, died in Provence, although Paul Masson thinks that this figure is too high. A conservative estimate is that between one-sixth and one-fifth of the population of Provence died from the plague between 1720 and 1722.

Lourmarin first learned of the trouble to the south in a letter sent to the village by Seigneur Bruny on August 4, 1720. Bruny informed them that because the plague had appeared in Marseilles, the Parlement at Aix had forbidden all commerce with that city: the Lourmarinois were warned to stay away from Marseilles.

The council discussed the situation in Marseilles at a meeting of August 12 and reviewed the measures taken when the plague occurred at Toulon in 1664. The council established a Bureau of Health which operated independently of the regular council, although some bourgeois served on both concurrently. During the next 18 months the Bureau met each Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at noon to consider questions dealing specifically with the plague while the council continued to concern itself with other village business. The Bureau of Health kept its own minutes and named six Intendants of Health to assist the consuls, who served on both bodies. The priest, Messire Girard, and the seigneur’s agent were usually two of the Intendants. Because it was crucial that Lourmarin be protected from the plague, the Bureau of Health was granted extraordinary authority which it then exercised until the plague was contained in 1722. Most major decisions during the two-year period originated with the Bureau of Health rather than with the municipal government.

The Bureau was responsible for issuing billets de santé authorizing travel outside Lourmarin. Since most other villages in Provence had similar regulations designed to prevent the plague from spreading, billets were necessary if one wanted to move from one place to another. In January, 1721,
the Bureau ordered 1,000 *billets* printed in Avignon reading "M.—,- thanks to God has no suspicion of the plague nor any other contagious disease."

Jean Roman, dyer, was imprisoned for 40 days and was fined 25 livres for traveling to Bonnieux without a *billet*. Some Bureau members argued that he should not be fined but the fine was allowed to stand because Roman "could afford it" and the money "is to be used to help the poor and will serve as an example to others."*

In early September, 1720, the villagers began to repair existing gates, which had served no functional purpose for the past 50 years, and built others. The gates were all erected by November 18 and the Bureau ordered that since Lourmarin, unlike several neighboring villages, was not walled, the doors of every house, apartment, and other structure facing the outside of the village were to be closed permanently while all windows would be boarded up. Guards were stationed at the various gates in Lourmarin's temporary wall and were to admit only those who had *billets*. To further protect the village, admission of those persons with valid *billets* had to be authorized by the consuls. The village gates were closed from 5:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M. and could be opened during these hours only upon authorization by the Captain of the Guard. There was a fine of 25 livres (distributed to the poor) for disturbing the guard at night.

In mid-November a General Council authorized the establishment of a *Garde Bourgeoise* and appointed six Captains and six Lieutenants of the *Garde* to oversee the village militia which was on duty day and night. One captain and one lieutenant were assigned to each of the six sections of the village and were to draw up a list of all families who lived in each section. Visiting each section daily, they were to check each family and if the guards discovered any new persons or any merchandise purchased elsewhere, they were to inform the Bureau. Should they see anyone ill or dead, they were to notify the Bureau so that a doctor could be called. Fearing that

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50 Ibid., August 23, 1720, January 9, 16, July 3, 1721. The period of the plague was one of the very few times in the eighteenth century in which mention was made of the deity in any kind of official document. And even these scattered instances, always in a time of crisis, seem perfunctory.

51 Ibid., May 7, 1721.

52 Ibid., September 1, 1720.

53 Ibid., November 18, 1720.

54 Ibid., November 18, 27, 1720.

55 Ibid., November 17, 1720.
it might be difficult to obtain needed goods, the council made each of the six captains responsible for setting aside a two-month supply of "wood, oil, wine, salt, vinegar, and wheat" for his section. In addition to the lieutenants and captains, six bourgeois inspectors were also named to supervise each section. Most of the guards served without pay except for a few from among the travailleur class who received ten sous per day. Serving on the Garde Bourgeoise was a volunteer duty and the guards' vigilance might be the difference between life and death.

Obviously the Bureau was suspicious of any illness in the village and many families were quarantined, usually for 40 days. In most cases a quarantined family was required to pay the cost of posting two guards at their home. At a February 27, 1721, meeting the Bureau decided that each head of family should assume the responsibility for reporting any illness in his family to one of the consuls, who would then dispatch a doctor to investigate and quarantine the house if necessary. Once a house had been declared off-limits anyone who entered was fined 100 livres, to be used for poor relief. Less than a month later Sieur Pierre Sambuc, surgeon, investigated the death of Pierre Goulin's widow and concluded that she died of "natural causes" and not the plague. As a precautionary measure the Bureau ordered that Anne Mille and Martha Goulin, the dead woman's sister and daughter, be confined to their house for 40 days. After making sure that the two women had enough wine, cooking oil, and other supplies, they called in a mason who plastered up the front door and window facing the street to prevent contact with any of the villagers.

The Marquis d'Argenson was sent to northern Provence in September, 1720, to command the king's brigade and organize a defensive line against the spread of the plague. On September 4, 1720, d'Argenson requested that Lourmarin dispatch "six men, armed and with sufficient powder and food" to guard the northern bank of the Durance. They were ordered to shoot to kill any unauthorized person who attempted to cross the river. The Lourmarinois voted to pay their guards 20 sous per day and in order not

56 Ibid., November 30, 1720.
57 For example, see ibid., March 12, 27, 31, 1721.
58 Ibid., February 17, 1721.
59 Ibid., March 15, 1721.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid., September 8, 1720.
to interfere too much with the harvest, the six were replaced weekly. By January, 1721, a *cordon sanitaire* around Provence employed one-third of the infantry and one-fourth of the cavalry of the entire French army.\(^6^2\)

The many demands the threatening plague made on human and monetary resources were indeed a heavy burden on the village and the municipal council justifiably complained that compared to Cadenet, which was walled, Lourmarin needed "a great number of men to guard the several gates and barricades that have been placed on all the approaches to this place."\(^6^3\) Eleven more men were needed for militia service and the village was required to house a detachment of 65 royal troops in November, 1720.\(^6^4\) By the end of the year the plague had struck the villages of Cucuron and Bonnieux, both within ten miles of Lourmarin, and more troops were needed to blockade them.\(^6^5\) The financial burden on the village was further increased when, in addition to the regular annual district levy, the authorities at Apt demanded 800 livres to pay the troops manning a supplementary line to the north.\(^6^6\)

Village regulations were tested on October 10, 1720, when Anne Sambuc, daughter of Pierre Sambuc, *bourgeois* and mayor in 1720, and wife of Sieur Jean Ailhaud, a doctor from Pertuis, a village southeast of Lourmarin, appeared at the village's gates accompanied by three sons, two daughters, and a wet-nurse and asked for permission to stay with her father. The Bureau of Health denied her request; instead the family was quarantined for 40 days in a small house on the road to Cadenet and was guarded day and night.\(^6^7\) The 40 days ended November 20 and the guards reported to the council that "by the grace of God they are all healthy."\(^6^8\) Anne Sambuc and her family were allowed to enter the village and went to live in Sambuc's comfortable town house. By applying the regulations to the daughter of the mayor, the Bureau notified the villagers that no one would be exempted from these stringent rules.


\(^{63}\) *A.M., D.M.*, September 22, 1720.

\(^{64}\) *Ibid.*, November 3, 1720; February 3, 1721.

\(^{65}\) *Ibid.*, December 3, 25, 1720; January 1, 5, 1721.

\(^{66}\) *Ibid.*, October 20, 23, 28; November 2, 1721; January 18, 1722.

\(^{67}\) *Ibid.*, October 10, 1720.

\(^{68}\) *Ibid.*, November 20, 1720.
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It was essential that the villagers have enough to eat since they could die of starvation as well as from the plague, and as the winter became more severe, the Bureau pleaded with the villagers to help the poor. At least 76 persons appeared at the Bureau meeting on January 3, 1721, and each agreed to contribute sufficient wheat to feed two or three poor during the winter.69 The council also took up a collection for the poor to which was added the fines collected from those violating the Bureau of Health's regulations.70 Much of the money was spent for poor relief but 362 livres still remained in the fund in June, 1721, and the council decided that "since God in His infinite mercy has spared us and has allowed us to hope that He will continue to favor us if we throw ourselves on His divine protection," the money will be saved and used in the future to "succor the poor if God should again afflict us with the plague." If Lourmarin were spared, the money would be kept "in perpetuity" and used for poor relief.71

In October, 1720, the council decreed that inns and taverns could not serve food or drink after 9:00 at night during the week and might not serve at all on Sunday "during the time of the contagious plague." A fine of ten livres was to be levied against an offending innkeeper, and patrons found there after the curfew were fined three livres.72 Throughout the entire period after 1680, there are only a few recorded incidents of physical violence in Lourmarin. The majority occurred between 1720 and 1722, indicating the tension which existed in the village. Shortly after ten o'clock on the evening of January 18, 1721, Jean Chauvin, mason, and Joseph Monge, assigned to the guard for that night, entered the inn of Jean Aguitton and found that he was still selling wine. When the guards attempted to close the tavern, Barthelemy Vien, Claude Danizot, and Augustin Richier, three somewhat inebriated travailleurs, attacked them with rocks and bottles. During the ensuing scuffle Vien allegedly told Chauvin that if he had a gun he would kill him.73 The next day all of the principals appeared to testify before the Bureau of Health whose members, because of the forced confinement of the village, were understandably alarmed. But

69 Ibid., January 3, 1721.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., June 25, 1721.
72 Ibid., October 2, 1720.
73 Ibid., January 19, 1721.
they decided not to press charges against the three after the offenders apologized and said that they had meant no harm.\textsuperscript{74}

Tension was evident again in November when Jacques Vial, *bourgeois*, one of the Captains of the Guard, was attacked by François Caire, apprentice of Antoine Jean, master hatmaker. Caire was apprehended while stealing wood and threatened to hit Vial with his ax. Two guardsmen restrained Caire and arraigned him before the Bureau of Health. Holding Jean responsible for his apprentice’s actions, the Bureau sentenced Jean to serve 20 days in the seigneurial prison and fined him 20 livres.\textsuperscript{75}

Tension reached a peak in early 1721 because the villagers expected daily to learn that the plague was among them. At this inopportune moment Sieur Silvy, priest and resident of La Tour d’Aigues, arrived with an entourage at the gates of Lourmarin. Silvy introduced two old issues, religious and seigneurial, at a time when the village was fighting for its survival. Silvy handed the Captain of the Guard a letter from the seigneur requesting "the Council of Lourmarin to admit Monseigneur Silvy and his followers who have come to perform a baptism."\textsuperscript{76} The Bureau, headed by Mayor Henri de Girard, an old Catholic, met hurriedly in the town hall while Silvy waited *outside* the gate. They decided "to plead very humbly with Monsieur le Baron de La Tour d’Aigues to be strongly persuaded of the submission and the profound respect that we have for him and to receive kindly, if it pleases him, our refusal to admit Sieur Silvy."\textsuperscript{77} Supporting its decision, the Bureau said that the seigneur’s letter asked admission for Silvy alone and furthermore that "the pretext of the baptism that Silvy will perform is a hoax since there is no infant in this parish to be baptised."\textsuperscript{78}

At this point more must be said of Lourmarin’s quiet and kindly *curé*, Messire Raphael Girard, who came to Lourmarin from Pertuis in the 1680’s and immediately inherited the religious problems engendered by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Messire Girard handled his difficult assign-
ment well and earned the affection of all Lourmarinois, Protestant and Catholic alike. Feeling that his primary goal was to restore the community spirit damaged when the government moved against the Protestant majority in the village, Girard did not attempt to enforce all of the restrictions against the Protestants and nouveaux convertis and he evidently chose to overlook the lack of religious zeal displayed by many of his parishioners. Although he encouraged the Catholic minority to support their church, evidently he did not actively proselytize among the Protestants, attempting to maintain a delicate balance between religious fervor on one hand and the best interests of the community on the other. This compromise was undisturbed prior to Lourmarin's purchase by Seigneur Bruny. But the newly ennobled seigneur, aware of the religious history of Lourmarin, decided to send Silvy to enforce Catholic observances, particularly the baptism of those suspected of Protestant leanings. It is not clear why he chose this worst of all possible times to send Silvy, who was certainly not a very diplomatic courier. Denied entrance by the municipal council, Silvy returned in a rage to La Tour d'Aigues and informed the Baron of the insufferable insubordination of his village.

Having persuaded Bruny that he should stand firm, Silvy reappeared at the gates on May 9. This time he obviously had no intention of suffering the indignity of standing outside the barricades and debating with the village elders. He pushed the guards aside, refused to show a billet de santé, and shouted that the Intendants of the Bureau of Health were "rabble." Despite entreaties to lower his voice, his tirade continued as he marched down the main street until he was confronted by the curé and the viguier. Silvy, still "full of anger," shouted at the curé that "you will pay for this in heaven. You have not baptized as you should and I have come here to correct your deficiencies." Girard tried to calm him, but he continued his "slander and menacing gestures" which he punctuated by "swearing in the name of God" and threatening Girard. In the face of this threat the Bureau met and agreed to write to their seigneur that the scandalous actions of Silvy were a clear threat to local authority and "like cases cannot

79 In his will Girard made several charitable bequests to the poor of Lourmarin and left his extensive library and prie dieu to M. Figuïere, his assistant. A.Not., Jacquier, February 28, 1729.
be tolerated." Although the village was predominantly Protestant, the municipal government rallied behind their priest to repel the Catholic representative sent by their seigneur.

As Lourmarin entered the winter still under siege all of the safeguards and precautions established in 1720 were continued. Since it was necessary to insure that the villagers did not eat contaminated meat, the already strict rules regulating the butcher were tightened. All villagers were required to sell their animals to the local butcher; under no circumstances were they permitted to sell meat to "foreigners." Only the butcher was allowed to kill and sell meat, which first was inspected and certified safe by a local committee of experts appointed by the Bureau. The Bureau demonstrated that it intended to enforce its regulations when it sentenced Jacques Etienne to one month in the seigneurial prison and fined him ten livres for slaughtering a sheep.

In August, 1721, the Bureau of Health discovered that the local butcher, Jean Antoine Anezin, was selling mutton which had not been inspected. Instead of fining Anezin, the Bureau confiscated 13 of his sheep, sold them, and gave the proceeds to the poor. Furious because his sheep had been seized, in November Anezin appeared at the home of inspector Jean Monbrion at two o'clock in the morning and demanded that Monbrion inspect a sheep he was preparing to slaughter. Not surprisingly, Monbrion refused his services "at such an indecent hour." Anezin slaughtered the sheep anyway and sold the meat to Pierre Tertian, proprietor of the Auberge de la Croix d'Or. The meat was contaminated and a three-sided argument between Anezin, Tertian, and Monbrion ensued because Tertian felt he had been tricked into buying unfit meat. The Bureau of Health reprimanded Anezin and sent all the details to d'Argenson.

Most of Lourmarin's restrictive measures continued as late as June, 1722. The Bureau met regularly, reviewing its efforts to control the plague and making provision to keep a surgeon on permanent duty. At a meeting of June 12 it was reported that the preceding night three soldiers had appeared

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81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., January 25, 1721.
83 Ibid., February 14, 1721.
84 Ibid., March 29, 1721.
85 Ibid., August 8, 1721.
86 Ibid., November 15, 1721.
at the village gates without *billets de santé* and were immediately put in the seigneurial prison.\textsuperscript{87} But this was the last time the prison was used during the plague, and by harvest time the village had almost returned to normal.

It would be impossible to calculate the expenses, psychological as well as economic, which the plague caused Lourmarin. The only total figures available, calculated in March, 1722, set Lourmarin’s expenditures, primarily for supplying and paying the militia and its own guards, at just under 12,000 livres.\textsuperscript{88} Many expenses, of courses, were not included in this figure; in January, 1721, alone the village spent 408 livres just to erect doors and walls.\textsuperscript{89} It is clear that a substantial burden fell on the villagers and that the village’s regular expenditures were at least doubled during these two years. But the cost to Lourmarin must also be measured in terms of the disruption of normal village life. Lourmarin was fortunate because the plague never actually struck the village, due in part to the tight security measures taken, but also to a great deal of luck since the plague did strike several nearby villages.\textsuperscript{90} Emotions often ran high and the animosities which surfaced during the period of forced confinement brought violence to a peak and must have lingered for many years, but despite the continuing financial and emotional problems, the Lourmarinois breathed more easily as 1722 drew to an end.

The events surrounding Lourmarin’s successful attempt to ward off the plague have demonstrated the vitality of the village. Fortunately Lourmarin was not called upon to meet another such emergency until the era of the French Revolution. Records of the plague years show how the village cared for its less fortunate inhabitants although no “grand design” emerges from the council minutes. Doggedly pragmatic, the village council, whether in an average year or during the trying months of 1720-21, managed to finance a program of poor relief which at least kept the indigent classes alive. We must not judge their actions by our own present-day standards.

\textsuperscript{87} *Ibid.*, June 12, 1722.
\textsuperscript{88} *A.D.*, *Bouches-du-Rhône*, C 936, March 24, 1722.
\textsuperscript{89} *A.M.*, *D.M.*, July 13, 1721.
\textsuperscript{90} Lourmarin fortunately was spared the tales of ghostly moaning said to come from the mass graves in Cucuron and other nearby villages. Jean-Baptiste Castel, *Histoire de Cucuron: Period de la peste de 1720 à 1730* (Cucuron, n.d.), p. 37.
POOR RELIEF AND THE PLAGUE

The eighteenth century was the era of the Enlightenment with its preachings about the dignity of each individual, but it was also a time when poverty and famine were accepted as the common fate of the poorer classes. Since the Lourmarinois lacked a centrally-directed program of “rehabilitation,” we can hardly condemn them for meeting each crisis as it occurred and the village council’s minutes evince a deep, consistent commitment, if not to all of humanity, at least to the less fortunate of Lourmarin.