Lourmarin in the Eighteenth Century
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Lourmarin’s magnificent Renaissance chateau did not house a resident seigneur during the eighteenth century; instead of living in the village, the lord chose an agent to represent him and to manage and protect his seigneurial interests while he lived elsewhere. The history of the eighteenth century in Lourmarin would be much more exciting if serious conflicts and struggles had occurred between the seigneur and his village. The truth, however, is that there was no confrontation between the two which might have produced feelings of hatred or deep resentment before the Revolution, although it would be equally wrong to depict the relationship between seigneur and village as idyllically paternal-filial. The Lourmarinois might best be described as overtly respectful. Accepting the class structure of the eighteenth century, the village seldom challenged the lord’s authority directly. Yet, as it did in its relations with any superior authority, the village stood ready to defend its rights, both collectively and individually. If any one word can capture Lourmarin’s attitude toward its seigneur, the word would be “adaptability.”

Although Lourmarin maintained a deferential air of formal respect and affection toward the seigneur up to the Revolution, disputes between the two parties increased after 1750 and official mention of the last seigneur became more rare after Jean-Baptiste Jérôme de Bruny succeeded his father in 1772. The degree of sincere affection that the village displayed toward François de Bruny, seigneur from 1723 to 1772, was not transferred to his
son. It appears that M. le President, as Jean-Baptiste Jérôme was known after 1775, immersed himself in the political machinations of the Parliament in Aix where he was councillor. Except for ceremonial occasions, there were few contacts between the seigneur and his village. Does lessening contact mean diminished loyalty? Once the Revolution and the National Assembly had upset the accepted structure of the ancien régime, Lourmarin was quick to assert its new-found independence against its former seigneur.

The village's concept of its relationship to the seigneur is clarified by the multitude of entries in the council minutes. Other documents relating to the seigneurie are in the departmental archives at Marseilles and Avignon, as well as in the Musée Calvet at Avignon. The notarial archives in Lourmarin, which are quite complete, shed light on the kinds of leases entered into by the seigneur, but since he was not often at Lourmarin, many of the leases concerning the seigneur's property in the village were drafted elsewhere and unfortunately are not available.

Since the seigneur did not live in Lourmarin, he was represented by his agent (viguière). Often the viguière was a local notable, but even when he was an outsider, he was accepted more or less enthusiastically by the village leaders as one of their own. Of course he immediately became involved with all village business since he attended the meetings of the village council, but his main functions were to manage the affairs of the seigneur, to protect his interests, and to see that all of the seigneur's rights including payments in money or kind, were observed. An interesting note of continuity was that the major agent of the seigneurie remained the same during three transfers of the property, from the Duchesse de Les Diguieres to the Due de Villeroy and from the Due to Jean-Baptiste de Bruny.¹

Three members of the Bruny family held the seigneurie of Lourmarin from 1719 to the Revolution. As will be explained briefly below, the Brunys are an example of a bourgeois family that made its fortune in commerce, used this money to buy a seigneurie, and eventually moved into the local parlement. Pierre Bruny, the first important member of the family, was born in 1615 in Toulon and moved to Marseilles to engage in com-

¹ A.M., D.M., May 7, 1711. July 19, 1713, September 6, 1716, January 24, 1717, September 17, 1719.
merce around 1650. One of his two surviving sons, Jean-Baptiste Bruny, born about 1661, inherited his father’s wealth and became a négociant, banker, and manufacturer, established soap factories at Marseilles, and by the end of the seventeenth century was the richest man in Marseilles.

Figure VI-1. The Jean-Baptiste de Bruny Family in the Eighteenth Century

Jean-Baptiste, b. 1661  
d. 1723  
Banker, Négociant, Manufacturer

Francois, b. 1695  
m. 1722 = Louise de Souttier  
d. 1772  
Baron de La Tour d’Aigues

Jean-Baptiste  
Jérome  
b. 1724  
m. 1758  
d. about 1800  
Baron de La Tour d’Aigues  
Councillor, President  
of Parlement at Aix

Marie  
Louise  
Gabrielle

Geneviève  
Angélique  
Joseph

Cathérine  
Anne

Jean-Pierre  
Alexandre

army  
officer

In 1697 Jean-Baptiste Bruny became a municipal officer (échevin) in Marseilles and shortly thereafter purchased La Tour d’Aigues, the first and most important seigneurie in his “valley.” The purchase price of 900,000 livres included a chateau, built about 1500, one of whose towers dated from

2 See Figure VI–1 for a genealogical chart of the Bruny family.
the eleventh century.\(^4\) The beauty of this huge walled chateau is still evident today although it was sacked and burned by angry peasants during the Revolution and only vestiges of its former magnificence remain.\(^5\) The Brunys' holdings in their "valley" were later expanded to include several other villages bounded on the north by the massive, forbidding Luberon Mountain and by the Durance River on the south.

The westernmost village in the Luberon valley, about 12 miles from La Tour d'Aigues, was Lourmarin. Bruny purchased the property of Lourmarin for 314,075 livres in August, 1719, from the Duc de Villeroy, who had inherited the seigneurie from his mother-in-law, the Duchesse de Les Diguieres.\(^6\) The document recording the sale described the buyer as "noble Jean-Baptiste Bruny, écuyer."\(^7\) The Bruny family was still living in Marseille in 1719 and it was not until 1742 that they finally abandoned commerce, bought an elegant town house in Aix, and assumed the title attached to the barony of La Tour d'Aigues.\(^8\) Having built a strong economic and social base, the Brunys became active in Provençal politics in the second half of the eighteenth century and the last Baron before the Revolution was a councillor in the Parlement at Aix.\(^9\)

The exactions made by Lourmarin's seigneurs were based on an agreement signed April 28, 1523, between Seigneuresse Dame Louise d'Agoult and the villagers which recognized the municipal organization of Lourmarin and spelled out the inhabitants' obligations vis-à-vis their seigneur.\(^10\) This pact governed relations between the two parties until the Revolution.\(^11\)

\(^5\) *Masson, Provence*, p. 437.
\(^6\) *M.C.*, 4580 fo. 124, August 4, 1719.
\(^7\) *Ibid.*
\(^8\) Didieé, "Notes," pp. 227-32. From an examination of records concerning the Brunys, however, it would appear that they began using the title of Baron de La Tour d'Aigues much earlier than 1742.
\(^9\) Michel Vovelle has used the Brunys as an example, not uncommon in Provence, of a family that passed "not only from commoner to nobility, from commerce to the Parlement, but from Marseilles to Aix ..., and to the chateaus of the Luberon." Vovelle, "État présent des études de structure agraire en Provence," p. 80.
\(^10\) *M.C.*, 4580, fo. 1, August 14, 1497; Mathieu Varille, *Lourmarin de Provence. capitale du Luberon* (Lyons, 1967), p. 16; *A.M.*, *D.M.*, passim.
\(^11\) Fragments of this document were translated into French from the original Latin in the early eighteenth century and the council often referred to the agreement when defending the collective rights of the community. Unfortunately this document no longer exists.
Discussions of the seigneur's rights occurred throughout the eighteenth century in various documents, including the 1719 contract which recorded the sale of Lourmarin to Bruny. The best surviving description of the seigneurie of Lourmarin occurs in a copy of a 1739 report to the Intendant at Aix discussing the seigneur's rights with relation to the inhabitants of Lourmarin. The village council carefully entered a copy of the report in the council minutes.\textsuperscript{12} Rather complete and useful enumerations of the seigneur's rights are also recorded in the minutes of November 10, 1704, and in an extract of a document sent to Aix in 1731 to protest a recently enacted increase in Lourmarin's tax levy.\textsuperscript{13}

Attached to the seigneurie were three monopolies (banalités) governing the ovens, grain mills, and olive oil press. In Provence there was no tradition of attaching a monopoly to the seigneur's wine press although it could be, and usually was, used by the inhabitants.\textsuperscript{14} During the eighteenth century all persons were required to bake their bread in the seigneur's ovens, grind their grain in his grist mills, and use his press to extract oil from their olives. The millers, who were the seigneur's employees, retained one-sixteenth of all grain brought to them for grinding into flour while the oven-keepers, as their charge for baking dough into bread (droit de fournage), were allowed one-fortieth of the bread.\textsuperscript{15} These monopolies were routine in eighteenth-century France, and although the charges were higher in Lourmarin than the average for Provence, they were not the subject of any particular protest prior to the Revolution. Baehrel says that millers in Provence normally received between one-twentieth and one-fiftieth of the grain; the figure in the village of Charleval was one-twentieth.\textsuperscript{16} Baehrel also says that the charge for using the seigneur's oven in three-quarters of the 36 villages he studied was one-twentieth or less.\textsuperscript{17} The one-sixteenth charged by the miller in Lourmarin was rather high, although the charge for fournage was about average.

\textsuperscript{12} A.M., D.M., October 16, 1739.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., November 10, 1704; A.D., Bouches-du-Rhône, C 139-3927, April 15, 1731.
\textsuperscript{14} Baehrel, \textit{Une croissance}, p. 334.
\textsuperscript{15} See Chapter III for a discussion of the relationship between the seigneur's oven-keeper and the village fermier who provided fire-wood and stoked the oven fires.
\textsuperscript{17} Baehrel, \textit{Une croissance}, pp. 333-35.
In return for the above payments to the seigneur the villager received a tangible service even if he might occasionally complain, as he did in 1704, that the oven-keeper was taking more than his share of bread. The council, reviewing the transaction of 1523, complained that the miller was also overcharging the villagers by not furnishing the stipulated amount of flour after grinding. The viguier issued instructions that criminal action would be instituted against the miller if he were found guilty of cheating the inhabitants by giving them less flour by weight than required. Complaints about the services provided by the oven-keeper were renewed in 1724 and the council succeeded in having him replaced. There were other complaints during the century against specific abuses associated with these monopolies, but otherwise they seem to have been accepted as a fact of life and the villagers never challenged the seigneur's basic rights.

The inhabitants of Lourmarin were also required to give a part of each harvest to the seigneur as payment of the tasque, the Provençal equivalent of the champart. The charge in Lourmarin, one-eighth, was applied to all cereal grains, vegetables, grapes, olives, hemp, almonds, and other nuts produced in the seigneurie. The figure of one-eighth was heavy. Baehrel has examined the payment of the tasque in Provence and has found other rates as low as one twenty-second. For example, the rate at Charleval was between one-tenth and one-fifteenth although rates in some villages were occasionally as high as one-sixth. The charge at Baux varied from one-eighth to one-fifteenth depending upon the commodity.

A much less significant item in the seigneur's revenue, but an important recognition of his position, was the cens. Fixed charges in money or kind, the cens were set forth in the 1523 transaction. Since collection of the cens varied greatly from one place to another in Provence, it is impossible to make any generalizations. According to Theus, the situation in Lourmarin, which had a multitude of different cens, was unusual because elsewhere the cens was usually applied to only one item, such as land or houses. In con-

19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., May 21, 1724.
21 Ibid., October 16, 1739.
23 Baehrel, Une croissance, pp. 335–36.
In Lourmarin the *cens* charge was five deniers for each bushel of olives taken to the olive press for conversion into oil and eight deniers for each quart of wine extracted from grapes taken to the wine-press in the cellar (*cave*) of the chateau.\(^{25}\) Various other *cens* payments based on the 1523 transaction depended on the amount of property held by an individual. For example, there was an annual payment of one denier for each *éyminé* of grain land and two deniers for each *éyminé* of orchard.\(^{26}\) Reflecting the premium placed on it, the Lourmarinois paid a *cens* of five deniers for each *éyminé* of meadowland. These payments were certainly small and support the generally held view that by the eighteenth century the various *cens* payments were more of a nuisance and a reminder of the seigneur’s authority than an actual burden on the peasant. At least compared to other obligations that the villagers had to pay, the *cens* payments were minor. The seigneur also had the right to collect *cens* on all buildings and enclosed property (*bien enclavé*) within the seigneurie. He was to receive two chickens (*poulets*) for each garden in Lourmarin and two young hens (*gelines*) for each house. In addition he received one young hen for each courtyard, stable, and auxiliary building. One must assume that in 1523 this tax was paid in kind, but by the eighteenth century (and possibly much earlier) the villagers were permitted to pay all *cens* in cash.

The seigneur had many other rights including the collection of *lods*, a mutation fee, on all land transactions in the seigneurie at the rate of one-sixth, a rate which would have discouraged most land exchange. Baehrel says that one-sixth was the upper limit of the *lods* charge and that the range was between one-sixth and one-twelfth with some communities paying even less.\(^{27}\) Theus says one-twelfth was normal for Provence, while at Charleval the *lods* charge was one-tenth and at Baux one-eighth.\(^{28}\) Marion agrees that in general *lods* were collected at one-twelfth throughout France and that

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\(^{25}\) These *cens* rates are estimates based on conversions of eighteenth-century Lourmarin measurements of uncertain accuracy. For additional information on the *cens*, see *A.M.*, *D.M.*, November 10, 1704, and *passim*.

\(^{26}\) One *éyminé* equals .15 acres; therefore, the tax on one acre of grain land would be six and one-half deniers.

\(^{27}\) Baehrel, *Une croissance*, p. 338.

in no area did the seigneur receive more than one-sixth. He also says, however, that it had become the practice for the seigneur voluntarily to reduce this mutation fee in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{29}

Among the myriad of other rights, there was an annual "personal levy" of two sous on each family head. Each person who owned two draft animals was required to plow one day in the seigneur's fields; in addition, he was required to furnish one charge of wood for each beast of burden he owned while those who had a cart filled it with wood and delivered it to the seigneur. The seigneur had the right of first refusal on all poultry, as well as beef, cow, and veal tongue before it could be sold, and the community butcher sold meat to the seigneur at two sous per pound less than the price established by his lease. Since the price of even the most desirable meat was seldom more than four sous per pound, it is obvious that the butcher was forced to sell it to the seigneur at a loss. Although no annual figures exist on the amount of meat the seigneur purchased, since he was seldom in Lourmarin, this probably was not a particularly heavy burden on the community butcher.

The southern slope of the Luberon Mountain formed the northern boundary of Lourmarin and belonged to the seigneur, "never having been cleared."\textsuperscript{30} The inhabitants were allowed to use the mountain for pasturing and gleaning, but those caught by the constable cutting green wood or otherwise violating the seigneur's rights on the mountain were fined by the council. The seigneur received one half of the fine levied; the other half was allocated to the village poor.\textsuperscript{31} Finally, the local fermier of the tile works was required to furnish 200 tiles as Lourmarin's cens on the "old tile works."

The viguier was entrusted with most of the seigneur's official business, such as overseeing the drafting of leases for the lord's land. Another agent of the seigneur, who usually did not live in Lourmarin, collected the various dues owed to the lord. Since leases for the rental of the seigneur's land were not always executed in Lourmarin while those leases which were signed in the village did not always cover the same pieces of seigneurial property, it is difficult to reconstruct any meaningful comparison of the

\textsuperscript{29} Marion, Dictionnaire, pp. 338–39.
\textsuperscript{30} A.M., D.M., October 16, 1739.
\textsuperscript{31} A.D., Bouches-du-Rhône, C 139-3928, April 15, 1731.
leases and their terms. However, there is enough information available to enable us to examine those rights and taxes which were "farmed" and also to look at that property "dependent upon the seigneurie."\textsuperscript{32}

In 1764 Jean, André, and Pierre Gaudin, brothers, signed a lease (bail à rente) with the seigneur's agent in Lourmarin.\textsuperscript{33} For an annual rent of 3,000 livres the Gaudins rented the exclusive use of the seigneur's ovens (fours banneaux) along with the right to collect the charge for baking (droit de fourrage) from the villagers for six years. The corvée of one day per year paid by those with draft animals was to be applied to the seigneurie now being farmed by the Gaudins and they also received, for the term of the lease, "all the farmlands, meadows, and gardens" of the seigneurie. The Gaudin brothers were required to hire two competent oven-keepers (fourriers) who had to be approved by the seigneur. Within three months they evidently had found two oven-keepers agreeable to the seigneur because there are separate leases subletting to Jean Roman, baker, and Pierre Meynard, travailleur, the two ovens and the right to collect the seigneur's charge for baking. Roman and Meynard were to pay the seigneur annually 42 5 livres and 3 7 5 livres respectively for this right. Thus the seigneur received an additional 800 livres in income.\textsuperscript{34}

The most complete lease in the notarial minutes was executed in January, 1789, by Bruny and Sieur Mathieu Colletin, ménager. Colletin rented for nine years the "farmland, meadow, orchard, and gardens" which belonged to the domaine of the chateau except for a small portion of meadowland nearest the chateau.\textsuperscript{35} Colletin also received the use of the chateau, two storehouses, the small hayloft, the stables, and the fountains. Colletin agreed to pay 2,400 livres each of the nine years.\textsuperscript{36} For the most part this is a classic eighteenth-century lease with the obligations of the lessee spelled out in detail. The lease would seem to assure the continued good maintenance of the property, but it did not encourage innovations or improvements.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{32} For example, see A.Not., Jacquier, August 11, 1764.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., November 2, 1764.
\textsuperscript{35} A.Not., Borreilly, January 12, 1789.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} See Appendix E for a copy of this lease.
THE SEIGNEUR

By a separate lease signed the same day Colletin and a colleague rented the two seigneurial ovens and the right to collect the baking fee, agreeing to pay 1,800 livres annually for nine years.38 The seigneur’s income from the seigneurie and the banalité of the ovens thus increased from 3,800 to 4,200 livres between 1764 and 1789. The document which recorded the sale of Lourmarin to Bruny in 1719 included the information that the seigneurie had been leased in 1717 for five years for 2,650 livres per year, the lease to be continued after the sale. Assuming that this lease included the banalités of the ovens (since no separate figure is given), the seigneur’s income from this source appreciated 58 percent in the 70 years prior to the Revolution.39

In 1765 the seigneur signed a three-year lease for rental of the olive press (moulin seigneurial à huile). The lessees were to pay 2,000 livres annually “after each harvest” and in addition were to provide the seigneur with two turkeys and four large capons; they were also required to plant 30 mulberry or almond trees to be provided by the seigneur.40 There are no other leases concerning the olive press in the notarial records at Lourmarin and therefore one must assume they were drafted in Aix, La Tour d’Aigues, or some neighboring village. Other leases in the notarial minutes deal with small and scattered holdings rented by Bruny to individuals in Lourmarin. Unfortunately the rent was usually low, the pieces of land too diverse, and the entries too few to add any significant information about the seigneur’s income.

Complete records of the seigneur’s receipts from Lourmarin are available for 1746, 1747, and 1748.41 Recorded at the end of each year by his agent, they reflect a detailed account, month by month and occasionally weekly, of the sale of goods received from Lourmarin as payment in kind of the tasque and other seigneurial dues. However, since these accounts record only that produce which was sold, there is no record of how much,

38 A.Not., Borrelly, January 12, 1789. An interesting exception was made for Sieur Pierre Paul Cavallier, the seigneur’s legal representative (procureur fondé), who had drawn up the lease and who was also the fermier for the tithe-collector in 1789. During the term of the lease Cavallier’s bread was to be baked free from the usual charge.
39 M.C., 4580, fo. 124, August 4, 1719.
40 A.Not., Jacquier, May 11, 1765.
41 M.C., 4580, fo. 56–113. 1746–49.
if any, was actually consumed by the seigneur and his family and, combined with the fact that no mention is made of the monetary income from the seigneur's leases in Lourmarin, means that the figure for total income from the village appears lower than it actually was. I was unable to find comparable estate figures for earlier or later periods; thus, these figures do not indicate any long-range pattern of seigneurial income from Lourmarin. But since the estate books for each of the three years list income from the same sources, they are important in allowing us to learn the relative importance of various commodities to the seigneur's income and also in making a rough approximation of the seigneur's return from his 1719 investment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>1746</th>
<th>1747</th>
<th>1748</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Totala</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tasque (cereal grains)</td>
<td>3,383</td>
<td>5,058</td>
<td>2,589</td>
<td>11,030</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasque (olive oil)</td>
<td>2,328</td>
<td>1,362</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3,690</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodis</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>1,821</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cens</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>1,078</td>
<td>1,442</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal grains received in payment for grinding</td>
<td>2,871</td>
<td>3,251</td>
<td>3,139</td>
<td>9,261</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of Hay</td>
<td>2,037</td>
<td>2,044</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4,150</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of Wine</td>
<td>1,993</td>
<td>1,616</td>
<td>1,440</td>
<td>5,049</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product of Dovecote</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous (chickens, almonds, etc.)</td>
<td>2,329</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>3,478</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15,484</td>
<td>15,039</td>
<td>9,573</td>
<td>40,096</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: M.C., 4580, Fo. 56-123, 1747-49.

* Figures throughout the table are rounded to nearest livre.

a Percent figures are rounded to nearest tenth of one percent.

The income from the *lods* and *cens*, the only items in Table VI–1 that the Lourmarinois paid in cash, represents only 8.1 percent of the total income. The charges on cereal grains, an absolute necessity in the peasant's diet, provided the seigneur with more than one half of his income. The charge for the *tasque* took one-eighth of the harvested grain while the fee

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12 The only lease that I can find for 1748 was a five-year lease to Jean Ginoux for the seigneurie at 2,200 livres annually, but it did not include the right to collect the baking tax (*fournage*). *A.Not.*, Jacquier, March 12, 1748.
for the use of the seigneurial mill took an additional one-sixteenth; together they amounted to 50.6 percent in this three-year period. It is likely that these two charges amounted to about one half of the total payment until the Revolution. The villagers often complained about the unpredictability of the olive harvest since the right weather conditions were essential for a successful yield. Poor weather may account for the variation and, in one year, the absence of income from the tasque on olive oil. The most logical explanation for the sharp drop in income from the sale of hay in 1748 is that the armies stationed in and around Lourmarin during the War of the Austrian Succession had left. The principal reason for the drop in income in the miscellaneous column in Table VI–1 was that the walnut crop was very good in 1746 and the oil was sold for 1,313 livres, but the crop declined in 1747 and 1748 and the seigneur elected to store the oil rather than sell it. Presumably this oil was sold at some later date and the income counted in the year it was sold.

An examination of the account books indicates that the sale of grain began in September when the harvest was completed and continued through the winter—the amount of grain being held back presumably depended on the storage facilities of the seigneur and his need for cash. Sixty percent of the seigneur’s wheat from the 1746 harvest had been sold by October 18 of that year at 25 livres per charge, but the last six charges, sold in April, 1747, brought 44 livres each. The same is true for rye, of which there was about two and one-half times as much as wheat. The first sale in September, 1746, brought 19 livres per charge while the final sale in March, 1747, brought 31 livres. The practice of holding one’s grain as long as possible, which could be done only by those who did not need cash immediately, could increase one’s income by as much as 80 percent. Unfortunately most peasants were in no position to do this and were usually forced to sell when the price was lowest.

The seigneur’s average annual income, as reflected in the above table, was 13,365 livres. Based on a capital expenditure of 314,075 livres in 1719, this figure represents an annual return of 4.3 percent. However, it would seem fair to assume that the seigneur realized enough other income to raise the average to at least 16,000 livres, thus providing a return of 5.1

\[ M.C., 4580, \text{fo. 56–113. 1747–49.} \]
\[ \text{Ibid.} \]
percent. Because data covering an extended period of time is not available and because it is impossible to arrive at an exact figure even for the three years for which data exists, one cannot compute the seigneur’s income with exactitude, although the available evidence indicates that the return was around five percent, a figure with which the seigneur certainly could not have found fault. The return of five percent was the current rate from government bonds. For two of the three years the account books show no expenditures on his property in Lourmarin at all; in 1747 Bruny spent 181 livres, only 1.4 percent of that year’s income. There is other evidence that minor expenditures occurred periodically throughout the century, but the only evidence of a major expenditure was in 1739 when the seigneur paid two local masons 1,150 livres to rebuild the olive press. Except when necessity dictated, the seigneur was not interested in making improvements in the village or on his own land.

Except for a brief period in the early sixteenth century, Lourmarin’s seigneur did not reside in the village. At the death of Monseigneur le Duc de Les Diguieres in 1681 the seigneurié passed to his wife, who held it for 35 years. This 35-year period witnessed the religious troubles of the 1680’s, the long, disastrous wars of Louis XIV, and the economic crisis of 1709 brought about by a severe winter and spring. Upon the death of the Duchesse in 1716 Lourmarin passed to her son-in-law, the Duc de Villeroy, minister and councillor to the king during the Regency. On January 1, 1718, Sieur Antoine Ailhaud, mayor of Lourmarin, journeyed to Aix where he pleaded with Lourmarin’s vigier and lieutenant de juge to intercede with the Duc “to try and prevent the sale of this place.” Probably one reason the Lourmarinois wanted to prevent the sale was because their former seigneurs had made little attempt to enforce religious conformity and, in general, had allowed the villagers to govern themselves. They feared the reaction of a zealous new seigneur. Ailhaud’s mission was unsuccessful and one may assume that M. le Duc was not overly concerned with his provincial seigneurié and even less concerned about whether the proposed sale of the village met with the approval of its inhabitants.

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Informed by letter in August, 1719, of Lourmarin's sale in Paris to "Seigneur Monseigneur de Bruny of Marseilles," the council resigned itself to a new lord and appointed two notables who were instructed to pay their respects to Bruny's son, then living in Marseilles, and "to pray him to be good enough to let us know when his father will return from Paris in order that we might go to render our homage to him." 50 Bruny returned from Paris a month later and the council deputed 14 persons, including the priest, the mayor, and the viguier, to visit their new seigneur in Marseilles. 51

Soon the council received word that "Monseigneur is expected to arrive in this place next Saturday. He is making his first visit to this village as our new seigneur and the community ought to receive him in a body and render to him the honors due to a person of his station." 52 Arriving at his chateau in November, 1719, Seigneur Bruny was greeted by 60 notables in uniform who presented their seigneur with his coat of arms. He was then feted at a banquet, the equal of which was not seen in Lourmarin in the eighteenth century. 53 The village leaders evidently were anxious to impress upon their new seigneur their respect and gratitude; perhaps they also were motivated by a desire to begin the relationship amicably in the hope of receiving future favors from their lord. Lourmarin's leaders certainly did not attempt to present a picture of poverty to the seigneur; the banquet menu was both elaborate and expensive. Among the various items consumed were 24 bottles of fine liqueur and a large quantity of wine as well as more than 100 pounds of assorted chocolates and other candies. Twelve turkeys, two hams, 20 young hens, seven chickens, two capons, and two rabbits were consumed. Various vegetables including cauliflower were on the banquet table along with lemons, oranges, pears, apples, and assorted condiments. Two hundred seventy-six loaves of bread were consumed. A large quantity of oats and 220 pounds of hay were provided for the horses of their new seigneur and his entourage. The seigneur and his party evidently were pleased by these marks of respect and all enjoyed the hearty food and drink of the banquet. Not until July, 1721, did "all the inhabitants of Lourmarin" gather to approve the expenditure of 684 livres to provide the

50 Ibid., August 13, 1719.
51 Ibid., September 17, 1719.
52 Ibid., November 1, 1719.
53 The description of this reception is based on ibid., November 1, 1719, January 1, 1720, July 21, 1721.

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feast which celebrated the "joyous first visit" of their new seigneur.64 Six hundred eighty-four livres was about equal to all other local expenditures together and amounted to ten percent of the village's total annual expenditure.

It was not long before the Lourmarinois had cause to be thankful for their new seigneur. They had occasionally received small gifts from their former seigneuresse, the Duchesse de Les Diguieres, including an allocation of 45 livres in 1713 for poor relief, but there is no evidence that she ever donated larger sums to her village.65 The winter of 1719–20 was very severe, grain prices had risen considerably by spring, and Lourmarin was unable to purchase amounts of grain sufficient to supply the villagers' needs. Fortunately in April the consuls received a letter from Bruny in which he offered to buy wheat in Marseilles and to re-sell it to them considerably below the market price.66 On April 16, 1720, the seigneur loaned the village the large sum of 980 livres to buy grain and the council paid for hauling it to Lourmarin where it was "converted into bread and distributed to those who had the most need."67 Because of the turmoil and unsettled conditions brought about by the plague, Lourmarin could not begin to repay the seigneur's loan until January, 1725, but there is no indication that the seigneur or his agent applied pressure to collect the debt earlier.

Heavy snowfall during the winter of 1727–28 caused much suffering and the seigneur donated 250 livres outright to be distributed to the village poor.68 The large numbers of troops quartered in Lourmarin during the War of the Austrian Succession severely strained the village's finances. The baron helped alleviate the financial crisis by loaning the village 1,200 livres in 1744, interest-free. The loan was not repaid until 1750.69 Although the amount of money loaned and given to Lourmarin was not large, the seigneur did demonstrate an awareness of, and an interest in, "his village."

Each year Lourmarin acknowledged the arrival of the New Year by sending the vignier and consuls to the seigneur's residence in January to pay

64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., January 15, 1713.
66 Ibid., April 11, 21, 1720.
67 Ibid., April 26, June 9, 1720.
68 Ibid., August 1, 1728. Compared to his annual income from Lourmarin, the seigneur's gift of 250 livres does not seem extraordinarily generous.
69 Ibid., March 7, 1744, November 22, 1749, January 15, 1750.
their respects. After the formality of the greeting was concluded, the village representatives reported the names of the newly elected municipal officers. Perhaps the formality of informing the seigneur about the new officers was followed because of a prior agreement or may simply have been the custom, but not once in the period after 1680 did the seigneur ever disapprove any of the newly elected municipal officers, an added proof that the village had a fair degree of autonomy in local affairs. Although the Brunys were Catholic, there is no evidence that they tried to interfere when Protestants began to filter back into the local government.

Since the Lourmarinois seldom were in direct contact with their seigneur, relations between the village and Bruny were limited to certain well-defined situations, such as births, marriages, and deaths in the seigneur’s family or when a legal conflict between them developed. Jean-Baptiste de Bruny, who had purchased the seigneurie of Lourmarin in 1719, died in 1723. It cost the village 30 livres to send the viguier, mayor, and second consul to Marseilles to pay their respects while the council spent 20 livres for candles for “a great mass and prayers for the repose of the soul of our seigneur.” His son, François, was to be Lourmarin’s seigneur for 49 years. Three sons were born to the new seigneur, but it was the birth of the second in 1728 that occasioned the most celebration because Bruny’s second son was titled M. de Lourmarin. Writing to inform the village of the birth, the baron expressed his thanks to God for his new son and his gratitude at the happy union with Lourmarin:

I flatter myself to think that this union will be even more perfect when we will be able to live together amicably forever as I have hoped. You will always find me eager to give you additional proofs of the perfect esteem which I have for you. I am, dear sirs, your very humble and very obedient servant,

(s) St. Cannat.

The village notables went to Marseilles to celebrate the joyous occasion but “joy turned to grief” when they arrived and learned that the baby had died. There would not be another Bruny child to bear Lourmarin’s name.

60 Ibid., January 28, 1720, and passim.
61 Ibid., February 28, 1723.
62 Ibid., March 7, 1723.
63 Ibid., September 3, 1724, January 18, 1728, June 7, 1739.
64 Ibid., January 18, 1728. St. Cannat was another of Bruny’s villages.
65 Ibid., February 13, 1728.
Except for Bruny's first visit in 1719, the most exciting event involving Lourmarin and its seigneur prior to 1789 occurred in 1758 when the seigneur's eldest son, Jean-Baptiste Jérôme de Bruny, who was a councillor in the Parlement at Aix, was married. The mayor, M. Vial, announced at a special council meeting that he had received a letter from the baron in which he informed Lourmarin of the impending marriage. Having been given the "honor of announcing this to the village," Vial stated that "always in the past the village has given witness to its joy and I know it will this time also," because the village should honor "a seigneur who has, on every occasion, given marks of kindness and of friendship to all his vassals [sic]." The council replied that the village was indeed honored "as witness the satisfaction all his vassals [sic] have for the marriage," and said they wished for the marriage "health and prosperity and that God will give them a blessed fecundity."

The mayor, second consul, priest, and "twenty-four of the principal taxpayers of this place" demonstrated their pleasure at the marriage by going to the chateau of La Tour d'Aigues to pay their respects. The village also formed a company of 100 men including six sergeants, four drummers, and two fifes to meet the couple in Pertuis and "conduct them up to the chateau of the said seigneur." This splendid procession cost the village 150 livres.

The council decided that since it "is the custom of all of M. le Baron's villages to give a gift on the happy occasion of marriage;" the village should send Henri de Girard to Marseilles to purchase "a robe of royal manufacture." Given to the groom by the village, the robe cost 1,215 livres and was "graciously accepted . . . thereby doing a great honor to the village." In order to purchase this garment Lourmarin once again went into debt. Some villagers, however, argued that in view of several pressing village needs—the drafting of a new cadastre, repair of the clock tower, the needs of its own poor, etc.—Lourmarin's gift was a bit too generous.
These more practical voices were not heeded and the village presented the seigneur with a lavish demonstration of its affection.

By the terms of a contract, drawn up August 4, 1758, Jean-Baptiste Jérôme was to receive one half, or 300,000 livres, of his mother’s dowry at the time of his marriage.\textsuperscript{72} He was also to receive 20,000 livres annually for his maintenance as well as that of his mother during her lifetime.\textsuperscript{73} In 1768 François de Bruny drafted his last will and testament.\textsuperscript{74} Three of his four daughters had married and had already received their portions as dowries. The fourth, and youngest, daughter was to receive 80,000 livres apportioned in four annual payments. The younger son, Jean Pierre Alexandre de Bruny, an officer in the king’s army, could take either a life annuity of 4,500 livres annually or a lump sum payment of 80,000 livres over a four-year period. The universal heir was the eldest son, Jean-Baptiste Jérôme de Bruny, who was to have complete control of his inheritance upon the death of his father.\textsuperscript{75}

When seigneur François de Bruny died in 1772, several village notables went to La Tour d’Aigues to express their grief to his family over the loss “of a seigneur so good and so just.”\textsuperscript{76} As was the custom, a special mass was held in the parish church.\textsuperscript{77} Because Louis XV had suppressed the Parlement, the new seigneur was temporarily unemployed, but upon the accession of Louis XVI two years later the baron returned to Aix and Lourmarin celebrated “his re-establishment” in his former office.\textsuperscript{78} The council spent 102 livres to celebrate its “joy” at an event “so pleasing to the community.”\textsuperscript{79} From the municipal minutes it is difficult to tell if this was a real enthusiasm for the return of the Parlement or whether they merely felt it their duty to say so. It is very possible, of course, that they

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{A.Not.}, Jacquier, August 4, 1758. This was a very large dowry. Robert Forster says that the dowry of the typical Toulousan noble family, robe or sword, was between 20,000 and 80,000 livres. Even for the court nobility at Versailles a dowry over 200,000 livres was exceptional. Robert Forster, \textit{The Nobility of Toulouse in the Eighteenth Century} (Baltimore, 1960), pp. 120-51; Henri Carré, \textit{La noblesse de France et l’opinion publique au XVIII\textsuperscript{e} siècle} (Paris, 1920).

\textsuperscript{74} M.C., 4588, fo. 232, July 2, 1768.

\textsuperscript{75} A.M., D.M., December 26, 1772.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., February 21, 1773.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., January 29, 1775.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., February 21, 1775.
viewed the event as a sort of local provincial victory and a check on the despotism of the far-off monarchy.

M. le President de La Tour d'Aigues, as the new baron and seigneur preferred to style himself, seemed to regard his relations with Lourmarin as a mere distraction. Bruny was an agronome and in his chateau at La Tour d'Aigues he established a superb botanical garden with plants from all over Europe and the Near East.80 His library brought the following comment from Arthur Young, an English agricultural reformer, who stayed at the chateau. "The Baron has a very fine and well filled library, and one part of it totally with books and tracts on agriculture, in all the languages of Europe. His collection of these is nearly as numerous as my own."81 The seigneur had written several articles for the publications of the Society of Agriculture in Paris which Young had read and upon which he commented favorably.82 He was also one of 15 charter members in the Society of Agriculture established in Provence in 1778.83 But, as in the case of many French agronomes, there is no evidence that the seigneur ever attempted to improve practical agricultural methods in Lourmarin.84

Several areas of conflict between the seigneur and his village occurred after 1750. One concerned repairs to the new village fountain, constructed in 1738 because water in the former fountain, adjacent to the public bath and wash house, was dangerous "for both man and beast."85 In 1762 the council moved ahead with plans for extensive repairs to the fountain costing more than 1,000 livres. Whether he objected to the expenditure of money or to the fact that he was not consulted, the seigneur opposed the repairs claiming that Lourmarin had proceeded "without my permission."86

80 Bancol, Monographies communales, p. 219.
81 Arthur Young, Travels during the Years 1787, 1788 and 1789 (Dublin, 1793), pp. 369-71.
82 Ibid.
83 A.D., Bouches-du-Rhône, C 93, fo. 253, April 18, 1778.
84 See André Bourde, Agronomie et agronomes en France au XVIIIe siècle, 3 vols. (Paris, 1967), as well as his earlier work, Bourde, The Influence of England on the French Agronomes, 1750-1789 (Cambridge, England, 1953). In the latter work, especially pages 200-218, Bourde argues that real, measurable progress occurred from 1750 to 1789; however, many obstacles to agricultural reform had not been surmounted by 1789.
85 A.M., D.M., July 11, August 2, 1762.
86 Ibid., September 19, 1762.
Not until Lourmarin appealed to Aix was the village allowed to continue with the repairs. Water from the new fountain was to be used for drinking only and not for washing clothes or bathing.

Two very important and related problems were the use of the Luberon Mountain and the care of Lourmarin's olive trees. The most enduring and seemingly insoluble problem, involving much litigation, was the extent to which the villagers were allowed to use the resources of the Luberon Mountain. The mountain belonged to the seigneur but by the terms of the 1523 agreement the inhabitants had certain limited rights regarding pasturage, gleaning, and the use of wood from the mountain. Scarcely a year passed without complaints from the seigneur about "damages on the mountain," while the Lourmarinois complained that their rights, guaranteed in 1523, were being violated. However, a Special Council meeting in 1719 candidly admitted that almost all of the inhabitants were guilty of long-standing offenses, such as cutting prohibited trees for firewood. But before the problem could be resolved, Lourmarin was sold to Bruny.

Until 1749 there was little discussion in the minutes about the mountain except for the constable's usual complaints that stray animals were nibbling the bark and branches of the saplings. In January, 1746, during the War of the Austrian Succession, Louis XV instructed Lourmarin to furnish all of its white oak (chêne blanc) to the navy in Toulon for use in shipbuilding. In 1749 the council complained that, because the oak trees had been removed in 1746, the heavy winter rains presented a serious erosion problem for the village. Bruny attempted to alleviate the problem by informing a Special Council meeting that no holm oaks (chêne vert) were to be cut for the next six years and the council responded by levying fines which ranged up to 25 livres for violation. The council even forbade the firing of the ovens to bake either bread or tiles without the express permission of

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87 Ibid., May 29, 1763.
88 Ibid., October 16, 1739.
89 Ibid., February 12, March 5, 1719.
90 Ibid., January 30, 1746. On March 7, 1730, two Commissioners of the Navy, accompanied by the mayor, had inspected Lourmarin's part of the Luberon Mountain hoping to find oak trees of sufficient size to use in the royal navy. None was cut at this time because they were judged too small. A.D., Bouches-du-Rhône, C. 284, May 3, 1730.
the vignier and both consuls, a regulation that was confirmed one week later by the Bureau of Waters and Forests in Aix.92

The restrictions and subsequent fines did not stop the depredations and in December, 1753, the seigneur intervened directly against the continuing violations "notably by the principal bourgeois." He was shocked, he said, that they should be the ones violating his regulations since it was the "misérables who often need to cut wood in order to stay alive" and the bourgeoisie was "setting them a very bad example."93 The council, made up of course of these same "principal bourgeois," ordered the guards to enforce the law impartially against all violators, reminding all inhabitants that two years still remained of the six-year restriction.

The other serious problem between Lourmarin and the seigneur concerned the village's olive trees, many of which were periodically killed by frost or heavy snows. Since the olive trees were especially susceptible to severe weather, arrangements had to be made to plant large numbers of replacements for those killed. The problem was compounded because young olive trees are very delicate and it was essential that all animals be kept out of the orchards, a difficult task since Lourmarin had about 40,000 olive trees in a rather small land area. This problem concerned the seigneur because without his acquiescence, regulations concerning flocks in Lourmarin would be meaningless.

The problem had been temporarily solved in 1709 by a written agreement between the village and the Duchesse which limited the number of animals, particularly sheep which were very hard on the young shoots, that could have access to the olive groves until 1715.94 Those who owned sheep, including the butcher and Madame's fermier, were required to pasture them in the meadow and to use the main roads to take their animals there, thus avoiding the young olive trees. If sheep strayed into the olive groves, the fine for the first offense was to be one livre for each animal. A fine of two livres per animal was levied for the second offense, and if it happened a third time, the animals were confiscated.95 The village constable and other officials had difficulty enforcing the prohibition and by the summer of 1710

92 Ibid., January 14, 1749.
93 Ibid., December 23, 1753.
94 Ibid., October 27, 1709.
95 Ibid.
the council had voted to increase the fine to three livres during the day and six livres after dark while levying an additional fine of 25 livres on each offending shepherd. One half of this fine was to go to the seigneur, one half to the proprietor in whose orchard the offending animals were found. Enforcement of these regulations was aided in June, 1715, when the council passed a law requiring shepherds to have a bell on each tenth sheep.

Another severe winter in 1765-66 caused the death of many vines and olive trees, a great blow to the village's two principal crops, wine and olive oil. As in 1709, measures were taken to conserve the remaining vines and trees but without notable success so that it became necessary to convocate a General Council of all heads of family in May, 1768. The consuls announced that since the existing regulations were being ignored, the council had voted to institute a 400-livre fine plus confiscation of his flock against any shepherd who allowed his sheep to stray off the main road while taking them to pasture in the meadow. The council concluded, however, that their restrictions, which were an attempt to insure the growth of the young olive trees, would be useless unless the seigneur required his fermier in Lourmarin to obey them too. The baron agreed and the council's regulation on the "Exclusion of Flocks" was registered by the Parlement in Aix on June 6, 1768, and was then published in all of the neighboring villages so that "foreigners will not be able to plead ignorance."

Lourmarin had received royal aid because of the death of its olive trees since 1766. In 1768 the village thanked the king for his generosity while presenting a petition showing that it would be unable to pay the dime that year because of the death of most of its olive trees. The disaster was compounded, stated the petition, because the assessment for the royal, provincial, and district taxes which had to be paid was too high. The stringent regulations of 1768 designed to permit the development of the young trees must have had the desired effect because there were few complaints for the

96 Ibid., June 29, 1710.
97 Ibid., June 16, 1715.
98 Ibid., May 4, June 29, 1766.
99 Ibid., May 22, 1768.
100 Ibid., June 26, 1768.
101 Ibid., October 30, 1768. They had earlier asked that Lourmarin's assessment be reduced by one-quarter for at least 15 or 20 years, about the time it takes for an olive tree to reach maturity, but this was refused. A.D., Bouches-du-Rhône. C 1177, November 15, 1766.
next several years, although the council was able to make the situation appear so grave that the village continued to receive some royal aid until Louis XV's death in 1774.102

The situation became critical again in 1778 when Mathieu Caire, constable, told the council that he wanted to resign because he had been threatened by several shepherds while attempting to enforce the community's regulations.103 A General Council meeting of August 12, 1778, decided to hold all shepherds jointly responsible for damages done by sheep in the territory of Lourmarin.104 This deliberation, along with other new requirements such as the provision that sheep's bells now had to be audible at 500 yards, was registered by the Parlement in Aix and was approved by the seigneur.105 By 1786, however, it was obvious that the system was not working even though individuals who owned sheep had formed a corporation and elected a sindic to oversee the shepherds. Too often the guilty party either was unknown or was from outside the village while the financial burden on some of the shepherds was much too heavy.106

One of the difficulties was that the village had no way of forcing the fermier and other employees of the seigneur to observe these regulations. The council complained bitterly on two separate occasions in 1786 that the seigneur's men were not observing the restrictions regarding the grazing of sheep or the new regulations against cutting wood on the mountain.107 As Lourmarin approached the Revolution it was obvious that these twin problems had not been solved despite the council's concern and the threat of heavy fines. The terrible winter of 1788–89 caused the death of most of those olive trees so carefully nurtured in the 1760's and 1770's. Although economic disaster was threatening the village, there is no record of any offer of aid or expression of sympathy from Lourmarin's seigneur. While momentous events were occurring in Paris, a Special Council decided once again to limit strictly the number of sheep which might be kept and insti-

103 Ibid., August 2, 10, 1778.
104 Ibid., August 12, 1778.
105 Ibid., November 15, 1778.
106 Ibid., July 16, 1786, October 1, 1786.
107 Ibid., May 14, July 2, 1786.

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tuted even higher fines than before. On June 30, 1789, the Aix Parlement registered this deliberation and it was published in Lourmarin.  

The Revolution’s effects on the relations between Lourmarin and its seigneur are part of a later story. But a 70-year period under three separate Bruny seigneurs had set the pattern. Lourmarin’s cahier of 1789 has not survived and we do not know what, if any, complaints the villagers made against their seigneur. Although the term “absentee lord” has all sorts of bad connotations, the Brunys managed the seigneurie of Lourmarin in a fair and equitable, albeit businesslike, manner. The available figures indicate that Lourmarin was a good investment and that the seigneurs received a five percent return on their capital. Possibly by chance, but more likely by design, the seigneur’s agents in Lourmarin were fair, intelligent men who were interested in the village’s welfare and not just the seigneur’s receipts. The seigneurs, whose main interest was always somewhere else, were nevertheless kept informed about Lourmarin and displayed interest in, and sympathy for, the Lourmarinois when disaster struck. This may explain why there were no general attacks on the seigneur’s property at the time of the Revolution and why, when some of his goods were seized to pay his taxes, it was done in a peaceful and legal manner. Lourmarin’s seigneur never emigrated and, in fact, returned to the village in 1792, made special tax contributions to the community, and was accepted, if not necessarily enthusiastically, as citizen Bruny. One cannot help but feel that its long period of virtual self-government had prepared Lourmarin for the political changes of the Revolution.

108 Ibid., May 24, August 9, 1789.