

# 25

APRIL 2008

# AMS

## MARIST NOTEBOOKS: MARLHES

- **Introduction**  
Bro. André LANFREY

### INFORMATION

- **“Marlhes through the centuries”**  
by The Friends of Marlhes
- **“The Peasants of Marlhes”**  
by James R. LEHRING, 1974, (reedited in 1980)

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Bro. André LANFREY
- **Catholic Reform and Political Revolution**  
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- **The Alirot Inquiry (1790)**  
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- **Grandeur and Decadence of the  
Champagnats**  
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Vocation**  
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Institute of the Marist Brothers

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**Editor-in-chief:**  
International Patrimony Commission  
André Lanfrey  
Aureliano Brambila  
Henri Réocreux  
Ivo Strobino  
Jaume Parès  
Michael Green  
Paul Sester  
Robert Teoh

**Publishing Director:**  
Bro. Antonio Martínez Estaún

**Contributors to this edition:**  
Brs. André Lanfrey  
Gabriel Michel

**Translators:**  
Bro. Joseph Belanger  
Sr. Roberta Desjardins

**Formatting & Photolithography by:**  
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**Editing and Administrative Centre:**  
Piazzale Marcellino Champagnat, 2  
C.P. 10250 – 00144 ROMA  
Tel.: (39) 06 54 51 71  
Fax: (39) 06 54 517 217  
E-mail: [publica@fms.it](mailto:publica@fms.it)  
Website: [www.champagnat.org](http://www.champagnat.org)

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Piazzale Marcellino Champagnat, 2  
C.P. 10250 – 00144 ROMA  
Tel.: (39) 06 54 51 71  
Fax: (39) 06 54 517 217  
E-mail: publica@fms.it  
Website: www.champagnat.org

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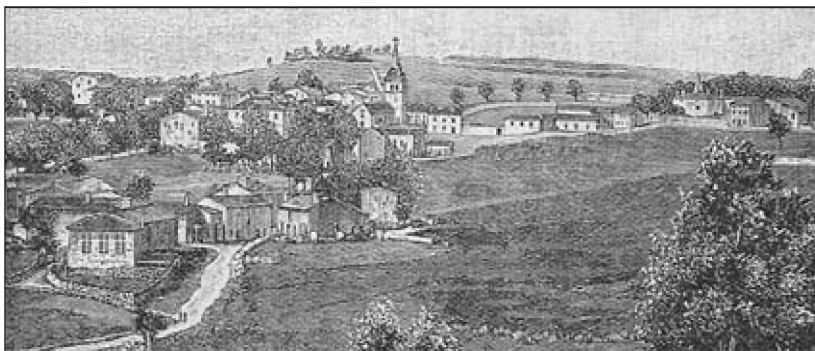
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# INTRODUCTION

## *Why a Special Number on Marthes*

Bro. André LANFREY, fms



It is a well-established habit in Marist historiography to take Marcellin, his family or the institute as the central focus of study, the geographical, historical, spiritual, social, economic milieu...being located more or less on the periphery. It has seemed legitimate for us to take here an inverse perspective and consider Marthes and its region as the focus of investigation and inscribe the Champagnat family and Marcellin therein.

The editors of the *Cahiers Maristes* also aim at giving their readers from time to time a dossier focused on such and such a subject which, without claiming to be exhaustive, would allow them to give a synthesized and renewed vision of the matter. This practice, actually, is not new with us since certain *Bulletins of the Institute* have been issued as special numbers.

This number would also like to be a tribute to the pioneers in Marist research, notably Bro. P. Zind, who in a series of 61 articles in *Voyages et Missions* entitled "In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat," devoted the first twelve to the historical context in which Marcellin spent his childhood, ar-

ticle V treating “Marlhes under the Terror of Year II” and article VI: “The Thermidorian reaction to Marlhes”. This collection was reedited with other works by Bro. Pierre Zind by the Motherhouse in 1996 under the title “Champagnat Miscellany”.

We must also note the contribution of Chapter 2 from *Achievement from the Depths*” by Bro. Farrell: “The Champagnat Family: Marcellin’s early years”.

But it is Brother Gabriel Michel who seems to us to have devoted the most energy to the subject which preoccupies us. The result of his research in various private and public archival deposits is assembled in numerous notes and photocopies confided to the archives of the Hermitage province.

From this important corpus he was able to draw a major work: “Marcellin Champagnat’s Obscure Years or the Revolution in Marlhes, Loire, 1789-1800”, cahier of 182 pages published around 2000 through the care of Bro. Henri Vignau, C.G. Furthermore, the Motherhouse published in April 2001 “To Know Marcellin Champagnat Better”, a volume of 292 pages in A4 format, evoking in the first part “The Socio-political Context of Marcellin Champagnat” (pp.5-117) from 1789 to 1840, while the second part (pp.119-210) discusses in detail “The Religious Context of Marcellin Champagnat”. Finally, in a cahier of April 2001 entitled “Champagnat from Day to Day” Bro. Gabriel Michel built a chronology from 1789 to 1840 carefully tying events in the Institute to general, regional and local history, the years 1789-1804, little documented in the Chronology of the Institute, being particularly valuable for us. The readers will appreciate, besides, in this CM 25 an old article by Bro. Gabriel Michel, but to our knowledge unedited.

Mentioning these works, however, must not make us forget the classic sources:

- Chapter 1 of Bro. Jean-Baptiste’s *Life of the Founder*
- The first 50 paragraphs of *The Annals of the Institute* by Bro. Avit, much more documented.

Therefore, it is in keeping these previous works in mind and being aware that a certain number of others may have escaped us that we present this special number which, we hope, will draw attention in spite of the somewhat technical character of certain articles.

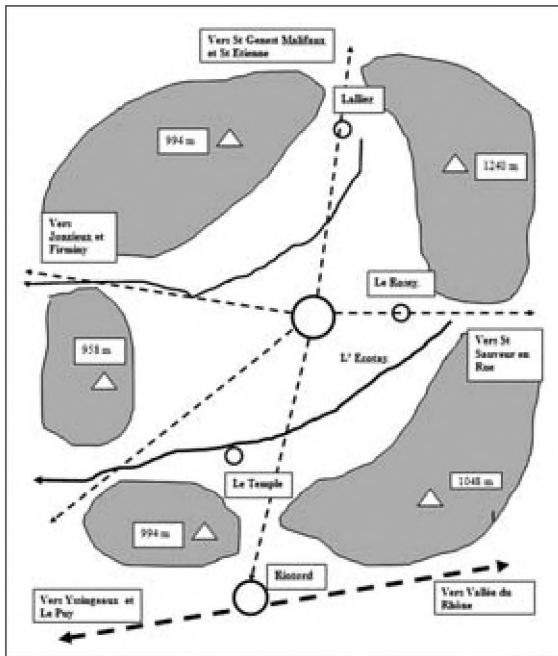
Bro. André LANFREY

# *Marlhes through the Centuries*

## *Collection of Local History*

The Friends of Marlhes  
1, rue Saint-Genest-Malifaux, 42 660  
amimarlhes@fr.st  
2002

**Bro. André LANFREY, fms**



This work of 478 pages has five main authors: Bro. André Bardyn (from the community in Le Rosey), Pierre Chausse, Claude Chorain, Roger Defours and Antoine Herrgott. In his Foreword Bishop Brunon (1913-1997), born in Marlhes and former bishop of Tulle, recalls notably that Marlhes is tied to world history by Marcellin Champagnat, but also by Bishop Epalle, Marist, founder of the Church in the Solomon Islands and Bishop Chausse, founder of the Church in Benin.

The work describes Marlhes through the centuries in eighteen chapters. The Marists have an important part: chapter 7 is devoted to the Confraternity of Penitents, whose treasurer was Jean-Baptiste Champagnat; chapter 10 to Marcellin Champagnat; chapter 17 to the missionaries who went to the antipodes in the 19th century.

The authors did not want to compose a scholarly work<sup>1</sup> but rather give information both solid and fit for a broad public. Neither did they neglect the ethnological aspect, for example by giving a chapter on village songs. Very numerous textual documents are referred to and cited at least in part. The iconography is rich and diverse; some maps are precious.

I particularly appreciated a certain number of lists and tables which save the researcher a lot of time: among others, the list (p.108) of pastors, assistants and lawyers from 1662-1960; the scale of weights and measures of the Ancien Régime (p.179); the detailed genealogy of the Champagnat and Chirat families from the 17th century (pp.192f); the list of students in the school, with the profession of the parents and an estimate of their assets around 1850 (pp.222f); the list of the 80 hamlets and their population in 1790 and 1808...

In brief, for those who want to situate more precisely the milieu in which Marcellin Champagnat and the first Brothers evolved, this work is fundamental.

Neither is it insignificant to know that Marlhes remains today a dynamic space: if its population, from 2,700 inhabitants in 1790, has suffered a slow rural exodus, since 1973 it is rising again, for Marlhes is benefiting from the deep current of peri-urbanization which is driving city populations to settle at some 20 and 30 kilometers from the heart of town. In 2005 Marlhes had 1,392 inhabitants.

Bro. André LANFREY

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<sup>1</sup> We regret that there is no index to the documents.



*The Peasants of Marthes*

*Economic Development  
and Family Organization in the  
19<sup>th</sup> Century in France*

James R. LEHRING, 1974,  
(reedited in 1980)

Translation of *The Peasants of Marthes, economic development and family organization in the nineteenth century, France*, The University of North Carolina Press.

This work is on the shelves of the archives library in the Motherhouse but does not seem to have been exploited so far. The collaboration of BB. Louis Richard and Gabriel Michel has enabled us to establish a copy in French for private use.

Bro. Louis Richard instigated a minor inquiry on Brothers André Bardyn and Louis Silvan of the Marthes community. The former town commissioner, Mr. Claude Chorrain, remembers a man who came every day on the 9 a.m. bus and returned to St-Etienne on the 5 p.m. bus. He was researching especially the genealogy of the inhabitants and the crafts proper to the region: makers of ribbons and trimmings. He had promised to send a copy of his work. Mr. Claude Chorrain is sure he saw him in city hall. As for the copy in the archives in Rome, we don't know how it got there.

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**COMMENTARY ON THIS WORK**

As the book's cover indicates, but not the title, this is the history of a peasant family adapting to profound economic change generated by the closeness of St-Etienne, profoundly mutating industrially in the course of the 19th

century with the expansion of the mining and metallurgical industries. The repercussion on Marlies was: 1° the decline and reorganization of the ribbon industry, which goes from the family workshop to the factory; 2° the increased channeling of agriculture to the market, St-Etienne, an exponential growth claiming more and more agricultural products; 3° the increasing importance of the farming salary for the peasant household.

Nonetheless, these notable tendencies did not cause a social destructuring: family ties remained intact, even if the family had to change workplace and find new sources of income. The author notes, therefore, that the peasant family succeeded in bending without breaking, under the pressure of the new economic structures.

The work is not particularly historical: founded on the economic and demographic statistics influenced by the theories of Le Play, French sociologist of the end of the 19th century, it is based first and foremost on sociology. Furthermore, its remarks concern essentially the second half of the 19th century.

Marists, therefore, can expect nothing from this book if they are looking for details on Marlies in the years 1800-1815, nor on Marcellin Champagnat, who is never cited. The author says little on teaching, which he dates as starting with the Guizot law (1833). Here and there he refers to a Marist school, but he says almost nothing on religious life.<sup>2</sup> As for the economy, he doesn't seem to have seen the importance of activities linked to the forests: sawmills, transportation of wood... probably because the statistics consulted consider forest exploitation as part of rural life.

Yet, this work has considerable value for it replaces the history of Marlies in the economic and social evolution of Europe and its comparisons with Ireland, England, Germany... , with an abundant bibliography, are invaluable.

Especially, its nine chapters teem with detailed information and charts on the economy and the family which, even though somewhat belated, re-

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<sup>2</sup> The Brothers of Marlies point out an interesting detail: the author quotes a Brother: Jean-François Celles, who left the Institute in 1850, but referred to in 1852 as still a Marist Brother.

main pertinent in general for the beginning of the century. Let's add that the work, rather technical, has the advantage of offering balanced conclusions and avoiding value judgments. Reading it, we get a positive view of an open and solid rural society.

Each chapter brings its load of interesting details. For example, we know (p.10) that the village of Marlhes had only a few inhabitants: 6% of the village area in 1834. Located in the higher and colder parts, they watched over the grazing of livestock and gathered wood to make sabots. The harvest of rye per hectare was 6.5 hl in 1837. Rotation was biennial: they planted rye, oats or potatoes the first year and the land was left fallow the second. In 1822 the canton of St-Genest-Malifaux, which includes Marlhes, had 1,965 bovines and 3,043 sheep. In 1820 the village of Marlhes had 720 sheep, namely 23.6% of the total. In 1800 the network of roads is very bad: steep slopes, sharp turns...

There were 7 annual fairs in St-Genest-Malifaux between 1807 and 1818 and 5 in Marlhes between 1806 and 1819. In St-Genest they sold animals, clothing, but also dry goods and metal goods, but in Marlhes, only animals and some clothing. There was a market in St-Genest every Tuesday at which the peasants could sell livestock, but none in Marlhes. As for milk, in the first part of the century it was probably sold by private merchants who bought it from the peasants.

From the beginning of the 18th century making ribbons was the major industrial activity of St-Etienne. This will decline only after 1850. It was organized according to the factory system: the "maker" (in fact a merchant) of St-Etienne bought the silk, had it prepared then delivered the thread to the "weavers" of the city and neighboring countryside: in 1836 there were 5,000 spinning wheels in town and 18,000 in the countryside. Most of the houses of Marlhes had their spinning wheel to weave ribbons. In 1851 1,733 women and 243 men of all ages worked at that.

As for the distribution of land in Marlhes, the survey of 1834 allows us to determine that 2/5th of the 84 properties have less than 1 hectare and 70% come to less than 5 hectares; 5 property owners (9.4%) have between 5 and 9 hectares and 46 (7.9%) between 10 and 19 hectares. 59 owners have more. A minimum average of 10 hectares being necessary to just about guarantee the survival of a family unit, we see that in Marlhes property was often very

divided and most of the owners needed added income. In 1862 in Marlhès there were 160 owners (17.5%) cultivating their land and that of one or more others, and 275 (30.9%) farmers who did not own their land.

The author points out that this dispersed property favored the preservation of a “republic of peasants”: almost everybody had some land but very few rose above the others by having extensive properties.

On migration, J.R. Lehring notes that from 1841 to 1870 almost 60% of married men and women were born in the village, 7.5% of the men and 12% of the women coming from surrounding villages, but 26% of the men and 21% of the women being natives of the Haute-Loire. This is because Marlhès is part of the plateau going from Issingaux to Annonay and people don't even look towards St-Etienne.

As for the family: a crushing majority of the people grow up and live in nuclear families: husband, wife and young children. When the children marry, they set up their own house, which seems difficult.

As for the successions, we are surprised to note that from 1850 to 1865 67% of the dead die intestate, which means that division is done equally among the children. The author gives an interesting explanation, which could apply to J.B. Champagnat: the lack of a will permits the family property to remain intact, so the younger generation can live thereon without fear of being driven away by a division. Along the same line of thinking, the author notes that the parents keep control of the time of transfer for the property, which can defer the marriage of the children but guarantee them a place in the family. Besides, most of the widowers and widows continue as heads of their family after the death of their partner. The children remain under their authority and cannot marry without their consent.

Most of the couples in Marlhès enter marriage with a trousseau valued at a few hundred francs and two or three hundred francs in cash. Donations by the parents are rather rare. Often this sum was gathered by personal savings from household work for a few years starting at age 13. For the girls there is the ribbon. In any case, whether they work outside the family or inside, the adolescent can make personal savings. As the author highlights, it is not a sign of individualism but an adaptation to the economic reality which obliges the young man to earn money in order to set up his own life.

So, childhood ends around 12 or 13 and the adolescent shares the financial resources of the family, while building up reserves for marriage.

On schooling: between 1841 and 1870 54.8% of the women and 76.2% of the men know how to sign their name. In 1841 a discussion in the municipal council indicated three types of students: those who learn to read; a second level who learn to read, write and calculate; a 3rd group also learns “the elements of the French language” and the legal system of weights and measures. Apparently at this time Marlhes had two school systems: the old way which consisted of separating reading and writing, and the simultaneous way which associated them and even added a higher program of French and mathematics.

To end, let's repeat that in this rural country evolving slowly the information furnished for the middle or the end of the century significantly illuminates what Marlhes was at the beginning of the century. In the articles which follow on the Champagnat family we will again find, on an individual level, many of the traits underlined in this book as general characteristics of the economy or the society.

Bro. André LANFREY



*Diocese of  
Le Puy and Haute-Loire  
Lands Marist and Refractory*

**Bro. André LANFREY, fms**

It's at Le Puy that the idea of the Society of Mary was born. It's by two men born in the diocese of Le Puy and spiritually connected to its sanctuary, Jean-Claude Courveille and Marcellin Champagnat, that the Society of Mary of the Hermitage was formed. These are two reasons for being interested anew in the history of this holy place during the years of the gestation of the Society of Mary whose first representatives ardently nourished the project of returning to their origins.

These few pages are the result of work of different years ago done especially in Paris and at Le Puy: a sort of provisional focusing to allow us to take note of what has been definitely learned and to formulate hypotheses to direct deeper research. They are elaborated in dossiers relatively independent rather than in a unified development.

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**I. AROUND THE JESUIT JACQUES-ANTOINE BERTRAND**

Marist tradition has the legend of an elderly Jesuit from Spain who would have given Father Courveille the plan for the Society of Mary.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the lists of the priests of the diocese living in Le Puy during the Revolution and the Consulate cite the name of Jacques Antoine Bertrand, former Jesuit, sev-

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<sup>3</sup> OM4 p.532. See docs. 819, 845, 858, 881, 885, 887.

eral times between 1791 and 1802<sup>4</sup>. Fr. Robert Bonfils in the Jesuit archives in Vanves gave me the following details on him on 20 January 2005:

“Born in Le Puy (or in that region) on 31 July 1723, entered the Novitiate on 12 September 1738, he studied Philosophy for three years and Theology for 4 years. Taught classes in grammar and humanities, was a preacher. He made his solemn profession on 2 February 1755.”

Where he studied is not given nor the schools where Fr. Bertrand would have taught. Besides, it is probable that in 1763, when the Jesuits were suppressed, Fr. Bertrand, 40 years old then, would not have been at Le Puy. He probably returned because, having become a secular priest, he had to return to his diocese of origin and perhaps also be near his family. We can suppose that after that date he gave himself to preaching. In 1789 he's an old man of 66. The register of assignments in the diocese lists him in 1791 as a secularized religious. In 1802 he is 79 years old. J.C. Courveille at that time is 15 years old and is not living in Le Puy but in Usson-en-Forez, in the northernmost part of the diocese. In 1809 he is cured of his blindness in the cathedral of Le Puy.

It is not at all clear how this young man and this elderly priest, whose date of death we don't know<sup>5</sup>, would have been able to forge links. Nonetheless, it is clearly established that there was in Le Puy, for many years and at least until 1802, an elderly Jesuit, whose influence should be evaluated.

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## **2. COURVEILLE AND THE CHURCH IN LE PUY**

Jean-Claude Courveille, born in 1787, spent his youth in the diocese of Le Puy of which Usson-en-Forez, the parish where he was born, is a part until the Concordat of 1801. He is a seminarian at Le Puy from All Saints 1812 to spring 1814. It is not unimportant to give here the ecclesiastical organization of that time, even if the OM have already said everything essential.

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<sup>4</sup> Register of the diocesan assignments in 1791: he is listed among the 5 ex-Jesuits of the city. In October 1795 he is among the 14 priests arrested in Le Puy (Tavernier, pp.204f). He is listed again in the diocesan registers of 1797, 1799 and 1802.

<sup>5</sup> We can suppose notably that the 1809 pilgrimage was not the first one Courveille made.



We don't think it is useful to recall the history of the diocese in the first part of the Revolution, marked here as elsewhere by the creation of a constitutional Church, the exile of the bishop and part of his clergy, then the Terror. After the fall of Robespierre (July 1794) the history of the Haute-Loire becomes more original, for the authority of the Republic scarcely controls vast areas of this mountainous region. One sign of this loss of credibility: the coup-d'état of Fructidor (September 97) which unleashes a second terror in France doesn't cause a single priest to leave the Haute-Loire. Even at Le Puy, church services are held clandestinely "without hesitation and with no regard for the prohibitions against them"<sup>6</sup>. (Tavernier, p.238). If twenty priests are locked up in the convent of St-Maurice as disturbing public order and twenty-two are condemned to deportation, in August 1799 216 villages are declared in fanatic and civil disorder, and 64 calm and Republican. It is clear that in the Haute-Loire opposition to the Republic has won the war and that the official authorities can govern only with the tacit consent of an opposition whose center-piece is the refractory Church. In the Haute-Loire more than elsewhere it is religious peace alone which can bring back calm.

We can understand, then, why the bishopric of Le Puy was not re-established by the 1801 Concordat: we must not give way to a rebellious territory whose bishop, His Excellency de Galard, accepted to resign only with reticence while staying in exile. It is His Excellency de Belmont, then, bishop of St-Flour, who will govern this territory which, in fact, remains largely autonomous, under the administration of a sort of triumvirate composed of the Vicars General Issartel, Doure and Richard.

## **2.1 Jean-Antoine ISSARTEL**

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He was born in Le Puy in 1769. His family, originally from Colange, parish of Lantriac, gave three other priests. He studies at the city school whose principal was Father Proyart. He enters the seminary at the end of 1787. The Revolution sends him to the army, probably in 1793, but he deserts and hides near Le Puy to study theology. He takes the trip to St-Maurice-en-Valais in Switzerland to be ordained by Bishop de Galard on 31 July 1796. Upon his return he goes to live with his parents in Colange<sup>7</sup>. Teacher-cat-

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<sup>6</sup> Fr. P. Tavernier, *The Diocese of Le Puy during the Revolution (1789-1801)*, Le Puy, 1938, p.238.

<sup>7</sup> Actually in the Puy de Dôme.

echist during the day, he visits the sick at night. Father de Rachat, pastor in Tence, principal administrator of the diocese, then summons him as vicar. He now extends his apostolate into the Ardèche. “Oracle of the diocese”, he trains a few priests, probably in an embryonic seminary, among them Fr. A. Péala, future superior of the seminary.

## **2.2 Jacques DOUTRE**

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He is ordained by Bishop de Galard on 21 October 1792 in the church of the canons of St-Maurice in Switzerland. He figures in the National Archives (F19/866) in the list of the “Priests still refractory whom we presume disposed to align themselves with the government by the promise of fidelity to the constitution of the Year 8” after the publication of the Concordat (1801):

“Doutre. (no age mentioned). Ex-vicar in Ste-Sigolène. He teaches logic, physics. He is considered very justly an excellent person, clean living and well liked. Suitable to the ministry and to teaching.”

At the 1832 survey on the vicars general (National Archives, F19/2647-48) the prefect of Le Puy answers on 12 April 1832:

“Fr. Doutre, former pastor of the cathedral of Le Puy, called to his functions by Fr. de Bonald. He communicates very little, is well educated, his opinions seem moderate, and everything leads us to believe that he would not express any opposition hostile to the ideas of the government. He is about 65 years old, son of a farmer in the canton of Vorey, district of Le Puy; he has no assets. He is generally respected and enjoys a rather broad consideration even among the clergy.”

## **2.3 RICHARD**

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He is a former Sulpician. In 1800 the authorities judge him as follows (N.A. F19/866):

“Richard, 50 years old, living in Le Puy. Ex-pastor of the parish of St-Georges in Le Puy. Well respected priest, learned and zealous. But having

always been very moderate in his opinions and very orderly in his conduct. Political, faulting the bishop's resistance, announcing loudly the legitimacy of the promise of fidelity and his resolution to make it, right after the publication of the Concordat. Excellent pastor for the city of Le Puy."

Fifteen years later during the Hundred Days the highly charged atmosphere gives rise to sharper judgments: the prefect of the Haute-Loire (D.A. of the Haute-Loire, 7 V2) sees in Richard:

"One of the main partisans of those principles of the school of St-Sulpice whose bad influence on the clergy of the Haute-Loire I had the honor to inform you of. His opinion is directly opposed to the actual order of things."

### **Difficult reconstitution of the seminary**

Among the essential tasks of these men is very evidently the reconstitution of the seminaries. They are not the first: in the middle of 1801 a Father Rousset "took the initiative for this project and wrote to Ratisbonne<sup>8</sup> to submit it to the approval of Bishop de Galard". In his letters to Father de Rachat (5 July, 28 September, 19 October 1801) de Galard takes up this matter. But tying the bishopric of Le Puy to that of St-Flour obliges them to postpone, and the seminary buildings are occupied by young boarders.

In 1808 Bishop de Belmont receives government approval for each department of his diocese to have its own special seminary. But he dies before settling the matter. The seminary of Le Puy, therefore, opens its doors only in October 1810. Father Emery, superior of Saint-Sulpice, sent Father Terrasse there, back from Switzerland, who added assistants Doutré, Beauzac, Robin and Issartel, diocesan priests. Since June 1810 St-Sulpice is threatened to close.

At the end of 1811 the Sulpicians have to leave the seminary since their society has been dissolved. Doutré becomes superior. Beauzac, Robin and Issartel share the teaching. The latter is professor of dogma and morals as well as master of ceremonies. It is therefore under their direction that Courveille does his studies.

It's in this context that we have to put Father Claude Augustin Péala

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<sup>8</sup> New residence of Bishop de Galard.

(Bertrand, Sulpician Library, t.II, p.204). Born on 8 September 1789 to the Raymonds in the village of Tence, he takes courses in philosophy and does two years of theology in Le Puy (1805-1809?), then in 1809 moves on to the major seminary in St-Flour, directed by the Sulpicians. There he becomes master of conferences. In 1811 he goes to Paris to complete his studies in theology. In October 1812 he is called back to Le Puy to teach philosophy. On 5 January 1815 Father Levadoux, new Sulpician superior of the seminary in Le Puy (Archives of St-Sulpice 21 G V), praises him thus: "Father Pilat (sic) teaches dogma; that's a very excellent subject. His timidity and too great modesty do him some harm." Péala's school curriculum, then, shows that there was in Le Puy before 1809 at least the nucleus of a school of philosophy and theology, the seminary in St-Flour accepting perhaps only the last year of theology. To be noted also: Péala enters as professor of philosophy just when Courveille becomes a student there.

Another letter from Father Levadoux to Father Duclaux<sup>9</sup> on 29 November 1815 states that the seminary has 80 resident seminarians in theology but that:

"It will take a long time to destroy the results of the unlimited liberty they had in town, and have them adapt to the rules."

The vicars general De Mailhet and Richard, calling the clergy to be generous towards the seminary<sup>10</sup>, have the same opinion: "The good of the Church and of religion has obliged us to gather in this asylum all the students of the sanctuary studying theology in order to shelter them from the world's depravation." Until then it was "the almost complete absence of common life and the disadvantages of a day school, the variety and bizarreness of the dress, the requirements of military service which it was very difficult to escape."

This difficult history helps us to understand why Courveille enters the seminary only on All Saints 1812, namely at a time when it is starting to function with a minimum of organization and no risk of suppression. Nevertheless for eighteen months Courveille lived as an (older) day student in an institution more like a school than a seminary 19th century style. He prob-

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<sup>9</sup> Archives of the seminary of St-Sulpice, 10 C 3: letters to Fr. Duclaux.

<sup>10</sup> In a circular of 1 March 1816.

ably knew the regular life of a seminarian only from All Saints 1814 to July 1816, from 27 to 29 years old, in Lyon. This chopped up and unstructured formation is not a negligible element in explaining his later life and a certain incomprehension on his part of the other Marist candidates who spent more than ten years in seminaries.

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### **3. BISHOP DE GALARD AND THE REFRACTORY SPIRIT**

We have already said that Bishop de Galard had refused to rally around Napoleon. We can almost say that he fostered a refractory mystique developed in a long missive mixing inextricably hopes of restoration, sacrificial spirituality, royalist fidelity, missionary spirit... For me, such a text helps to understand in what spirit the Society of Mary was founded, all the more so since a good part of the clergy of the Haute-Loire shared these ideas which Courveille must have absorbed during his stay in the seminary of Le Puy.

This “Letter of His Excellency the bishop of Le Puy to the pastors and priests deported from his diocese<sup>11</sup>” dates from 10 December 93, year of the king’s death, of the Terror and of counter-revolutionary hopes.

“My worthy and dear collaborators

Though I always carry you in my heart<sup>12</sup>, may you always be present in my mind, and may God be a witness to me of my fidelity in remembering you unceasingly in my prayers. in the sight of all the calamities of which the course of this year has offered us the wrenching spectacle, I feel urged to come in a more particular way and mingle my tears with yours, and to invite you to unite your wishes and sighs in holy violence on the heart of the God of all goodness Who loves to be conquered by our pleadings, and to call down finally on our unfortunate country the return of His mercy.

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<sup>11</sup> N.A. F7/3021, piece 3, “Collection of instructions and decisions for the use of deported priests re-entering France” seems to have been found belatedly. At the end there is a letter dated in 1797 as well as a pupil’s writing exercises. This paper was probably found in a search made at the start of the Empire and communicated to the ministry as witness to the spirit of Bishop de Galard. Furthermore, a page is attached to the document, stamped “French Empire. General Office of Archives”.

<sup>12</sup> Formula inspired by Saint Paul. It is found also in Courveille, letter of 4 June 1826, OM, doc. 152, t.1, p.395, §16.

[...]

But would it be possible M.D. and C.C. (my worthy and dear confreres) to even taste the celestial sweetness which the God of the afflicted is pleased to spread in the souls He judges worthy of suffering persecution for justice when I turn my eyes on the ravages which impiety is wreaking in the Lord's field. Ah, I say it with as much truth and the st. King prophet: I feel tormented by the pains of death when I think of all the evils and dangers to which are exposed the unfortunate people whom we have been forced to abandon, and which hell surrounds with afflictions.

[...]

Such are also your feelings, m.d. and c.c., I have no doubt. Whatever distances separate us I read these in your disconsolate hearts; every time I cry between the vestibule and the altar I see you too prostrate at the foot of the sanctuary, water it with your tears, place yourselves between your dear sheep and the lightning of the righteous God, offer yourselves as victims, make yourselves anathema<sup>13</sup> for the children of your ministry; and in the bitterness of your heart devote yourselves, like Moses, for your people.

[...]

You have no more temple on this unfortunate land but everywhere numerous and venerable confessors bent under the weight of their chains which they carry with joy transform their prisons and dungeons into as many sanctuaries... Finally France, we guarantee it o my God, everywhere offers to your justice outrages to be avenged, and crimes to be punished; but everywhere also we see it smoldering with the blood of the martyrs of your h(ol)y religion.

[...]

At the sight of these marks of heavenly justice so sharply etched, we are led to firmly hope that the reign of this despicable atheism is ready to end: but the more we approach the day so desired of the mercies of the Lord the more we must take care to make ourselves worthy of the h(ol)y and sublime vocation to which we are destined.

The end of our exile will be for us only the beginning of our work [...] The throne of impiety to be toppled and erased; that of religion raised in all hearts, what a task m.d. and c.c.! ... How noble and grand but how frightening it is when we want to plumb the depths of the abyss from which we

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<sup>13</sup> Saint Paul's expression in the Epistle to the Romans. Used by Courveille, op. cit., doc. 152, § 16.

will have to draw the people entrusted to our care. Let us not hide either the number or the strength of the obstacles we will have to overcome, or the overwhelming events we will have to undergo or the multitude of dangers of all kinds to which we will be exposed. The harvest will be immense, but to take it in we will have to be prepared to water it with our sweat, our tears, and perhaps with our blood<sup>14</sup>.

[...]

Ah far from being satisfied with the desire and the hope of empty and false sweetness which is no longer everything for us, let us prepare ourselves for new efforts, more rigorous than those of our exile; and to get us fit to endure them with courage and more usefully for us and for others, let us be filled with the great duties of the apostolate, and by continual study, assiduous vigils, deep meditations, let us make a treasure of knowledge which will furnish us the weapons needed to repel all the blows of the various enemies we will have to fight, and to dispel all the prestige which heresy, schism and impiety have set in motion to seduce, lead astray and corrupt our people.

[...]

It is at the foot of the crucifix, therefore, m.d. and c.c. that we have to look for that rich treasure of light and virtue which we need so much and so urgently. Impiety has wanted to erase its name on earth; it is at her school that we will learn to reestablish its empire and restore the altars.

[...]

You wanted, o my God that all peoples, all generations and all centuries learn to know in itself the impious and barbaric philosophism, to recognize its tyrannical tolerance and its horrible humanity. It tore away the mask which covered these awful traits; it showed itself bare; you have allowed it to reign and immediately it floods France and threatens the whole world with the disorder, darkness and horrors of hell.

[...]

May it finally fall, this veil of lies and impostures which woefully blinds so many thousands of men and may the God of all light remove the deadly blindfold which hides from the eyes of our deluded people the bottomless abyss in which impiety has been throwing them headlong for four years. May the God of the Clovises, the Charlemagnes, the Louises call him back to the former mercies on our country; that he may cover, with his shield

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<sup>14</sup> The Marist style of 1816 recalls the trouble, work, suffering and torment of the Marist apostle.

which protects the orphans and the wretched, the unfortunate and so interesting remainders of the royal family; may he give the young and august heir of so many kings<sup>15</sup> the heritage which belongs to him by birth and which the blood of a father and martyred king<sup>16</sup> conquered for him and consecrated by his love for his people, his charity towards his enemies, and his fidelity to his God.

[...]

Ah may he be especially the object of our wishes, the common father of the faithful, this venerable pontiff as great as he is holy<sup>17</sup>: whose insights, ideas, virtues and qualities draw all homage; whose tender and vast solicitude has been not only like a second providence for the thousands of unfortunate confessors but has known how to interest, stir all hearts to spread the benefits everywhere. May heaven deign to keep days as dear to misfortune as precious for the Church.

[...]

While waiting with trust and resignation the blessed moments when it will please the Lord to fulfill all our wishes, may, m.ch. and d.c., the peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your spirits and your hearts in humble and perfect submission to his holy will and to our L.J.C. the true and only source of all good. Pax quae exuperat omnem sensum custodint corda vestra et inteligentias vestras in xto jesu domino nostro Philipp. C. 4.2.7.

At St Maurice en Vallais (sic) 20 Xber 1793  
+Marie Joseph, bishop of Le Puy  
[...]

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<sup>15</sup> Louis XVII.

<sup>16</sup> Louis XVI.

<sup>17</sup> Pius VI.



#### 4. MARLHES UNDER THE REVOLUTION

Marcellin Champagnat's parish is at the far northeast of the diocese of Le Puy. The constitutional Church being null and void for the refractories, Marlhès will become part of the diocese of Lyon only in 1801, with the Concordat. We know that Fr. Alirot remained pastor there during the Revolution but we know less about his two auxiliaries: Fathers Laurent and Mijollas who all three are listed in the "diocesan dispositions" for 1794, 95, 97, 99.

1794	Alirot pr(iest). P(astor).; Laurent assis(tant). Without approv(al). And Fr. Mijollas assis(tant).
1795	Alirot pastor pr. Mijollas, assis. Laurent without approv(al).
1797	Alirot pastor, Mijollas, Laurent for Mass only
1799, 6 May	Alirot, pr. C. Mijollas assis. Laurent not appr(oved).

Furthermore, the work, *Marlhès through the Centuries*<sup>18</sup>, records an interesting fact:

"In October 1792, Jean Antoine Alirot, Jean Claude Laurent, assistant, Régis Philip, duty collector, Jean Reboud, justice of the peace, take the oath: "I swear to be faithful to the nation, to maintain liberty, equality or to die defending them."

This does not refer to the oath tied to the civil constitution of the clergy imposed on 27 September 1790 and sworn to in the course of the year 1791, but to the oath called Liberty-Equality of 15 August 1792, authorized by Fr. Emery<sup>19</sup>, and some of the bishops, never condemned by the Pope but disapproved by Bishop de Galard. By consenting to this act, Fathers Alirot and Laurent show that they are conciliatory. We cannot say as much of Mijollas who did not swear to it because he emigrated that same year.

A notice on Father Mijollas is found in the *Religious Week* of Le Puy<sup>20</sup>:

<sup>18</sup> Op.cit., p.164.

<sup>19</sup> Superior of Saint-Sulpice and head of the moderate refractory party.

<sup>20</sup> *The Echo cf N.D. de France*, 1° Religious Week of the Haute-Loire, year 1866, pp.211-214 and 240.

“Fr. Mijolas, pastor of St-Just-Malmont”

He was born in Messignai in the parish of Bessamorel in a well-to-do peasant family which possibly had titles of nobility. At the Revolution, then assistant in Le Chambon<sup>21</sup>, in the diocese of Lyon, he refuses to swear to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and has to go in hiding. A hotheaded and impressionable character, he leaves suddenly for Italy, with Fr. Berger, future pastor of St-Didier-la-Seauve. This clandestine trip is difficult up to the border, then the two priests go to Rome. Two years later, (at the end of 1794 or the beginning of 1795 therefore), Mijolas returns to France and settles in Marlhes. “People still speak of his zeal in helping the faithful in the midst of the dangers which surrounded them on all sides. There are very few villages with neighboring parishes which did not witness his activity, his zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.”

Given to fear, he also inspires fear: one night he knocks at the door of a dangerous man shouting: “Eh! Citizen D<sup>22</sup>... get up quickly; there’s a scoop to make: there’s a priest saying Mass not far from here.” When this man gets ready to open, Mijolas fires twice through the door.

After the Revolution Mijollas leaves Marlhes and becomes pastor of Saint-Just-Malmont, twelve km from Marlhes, a good parish which had been cared for by Fr. de Vareilles, Sainte-Colombe missionary<sup>23</sup>, and Ronchon<sup>24</sup> and who had almost never left the parish during the whole time of the revolutionary turmoil. The buildings used for services have remained intact. He enlarges the church become too small because of the new delimitations of the parish. His infirmities oblige him to resign as pastor towards 1826 and he dies on 25 July 1836, leaving an excellent souvenir in the parish.

The registers of Catholicity allow us to detail somewhat the religious history of Marlhes and particularly the presence of pastors in the parish. The old registers having been turned over to the municipality on 20 February 1793, the new ones are partially reconstituted afterwards according to the records of the registry office, Alirot having baptized everybody, but without recording them. The reconciliation of the church, which served for a time for the worship of the goddess Reason, takes place on 18 December

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<sup>21</sup> Le Chambon-Feugerolles today, near St-Etienne.

<sup>22</sup> We can think of Ducros, J.B. Champagnat's cousin.

<sup>23</sup> Maybe Ste-Colombe in the Rhône, near Condrieu.

<sup>24</sup> This is not Jean-Baptiste Rouchon, pastor later of Valbenoite.

1796 and we can suppose that until the coup d'Etat of Fructidor in September 1797 worship must have been done publicly. In any case, the marriage registry has Alirot's signature until 4 September 1797 and takes up again in November 1800. The register of marriages and baptisms, kept by Mijollas, starts on 21 February 1796 and ends on 28 August 1800. Furthermore, the register of marriages and baptisms from 1797-1801 declares on p.9:

“The storm of the persecution having separated the pastor from his flock there exists a gap in the state (of) this register of his pastoral functions from 11 June 1798 up to 1 April 1799. He was replaced in part by Fr. Mijollas Catholic priest who served as added help.”

Therefore, on the one hand there seems to be an absence of Alirot from the end of 1797 to the end of 1801, namely for four years; on the other hand the record shows he left later and his absence was much shorter. Each hypothesis apparently seems to have an element of important truth: September 1797 marks the coup d'Etat of Fructidor which unleashes a new Terror and justifies Alirot's departure better than June 1798. On the other hand, returning in April 1799, a few months before the coup d'Etat of Brumaire, seems more plausible than the end of 1801.

But it is not impossible to reconcile the two chronologies, Alirot having opted, from September 1797 to June 98, for a discreet presence before actually hiding himself, then returning just as discreetly before deciding to show up in broad daylight. Then, we must not forget that during this time the White Terror was raging and that if Alirot has to be afraid of the Revolution, in the area of Marllhes royalist activism could be feared just as much. It is not preposterous to state the hypothesis that Alirot, moderate refractory, dealt gingerly with his camp in times of high tension, as J.B. Champagnat did in his. But examining a larger territory will allow us to broaden the problem.

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## **5. THE PRIESTS IN THE DISTRICT OF ISSENGEAUX DURING THE REVOLUTION**

The district of Issengeaux covers the Northeastern angle of the diocese of Le Puy. It is a mountainous region cut in two by the valley of the Loire which flows from the South towards the North in steep gorges: an almost

ideal refuge. Marlihes, Usson-en-Forez and Apinac are the last parishes of the former diocese there at that time, just outside this district. A series of biographical notices seen in the *Religious Week* of the diocese of Le Puy for 1880-81 throws interesting light on the actions of the refractories in an area where Courveille and Champagnat were growing up. Of the 36 priests cited I list only a few that I consider more typical or better documented.

**Fr. Bergonhou de Rachat:** Pastor of Tence<sup>25</sup> in 1774, 26 years old. He and his assistants refuse publicly to take the oath. He goes into hiding without leaving his sheep. He is administrator of the diocese.

**De Rachat:** pastor of St-Didier-en-Velay<sup>26</sup>, brother of the above. He refuses to take the oath and goes into hiding without leaving his parish where he continues to function secretly. Kept as pastor after the Revolution.

**Mermet,** pastor of St-Ferréol-d'Auroure<sup>27</sup>. Born in the Jura. He did his studies in the major seminary of Lyon. He then lives near his uncle, pastor of St-Ferréol, who resigns and turns the parish over to him. He emigrates to Ferrara (1791?) but returns after Thermidor (in 1794 or 1795). He is arrested in a nocturnal sweep in the parish of St-Didier on 21 August 1798 and shot at Le Puy on 15 September 1798. He is, therefore, a victim of the second terror.

**Jean-Pierre Maurin, pastor of Beauzac**<sup>28</sup>. Assistant in the parish of St-Georges in Le Puy. Named pastor on 10 May 1790. "Having refused to take the oath in 1791, he disappears from the parish and takes refuge we don't know where." He reappears in 1796 and signs the acts from that time on, all the while fulfilling his functions in the shadows, but with the greatest devotedness. He continues his functions until 1809, date of his death.

**Fr. Pause, pastor of Riotord** (7 km from Marlihes): Pastor since 1764. After refusing to take the oath he continues his ministry. He is helped by two assistants: Fr. Desgrand, born in Riotord, and Fr. Thomas, from the parish of Cayres<sup>29</sup>. Their houses are safe and from them they go help the dying

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<sup>25</sup> 32 km south of Marlihes.

<sup>26</sup> Less than 10 km from Marlihes.

<sup>27</sup> Near Firminy on the border between the Haute-Loire and the Loire.

<sup>28</sup> Village on the left bank of the Loire, very far from Marlihes.

<sup>29</sup> In the district of Le Puy.

and baptize the newborns. The pastor who took the oath (“intrus”<sup>30</sup>) is out of work.

**Fr. L’Hoste, pastor of Araules**<sup>31</sup>: Wrote an “Account of certain facts on the tyranny towards the end of the 18th century” which inspired him. Pastor since 1774, he seems to have taken the oath conditionally and to have quickly retracted before the bishop. He disappears in the early years of the Revolution. Delegated his powers to priests, assistants or pastors of the parishes of St-Jeures, Champclause, Chaudeyrolles, Saint-Front (outside the district), Issengeaux, d’Araules. He returns to his parish around 1795 and holds services until 1804.

**Fr. Perbet**: Arrested in Issengeaux, assassinated on the road to Le Puy by the troops escorting him. His grave becomes a place of pilgrimage. His body is transported to the church of St-Pierre-Eynac a few years later.

**Jean-Georges Agrève Detouche**: From a family of Issengeaux, becomes assistant at Gap, takes refuge in his family. Clean living, ardent and zealous worker. Denounced. Executed in Le Puy on 30 November 1793. He was 29 years old.

**Fr. Mijolla du Crouzet**: “His reputation spread in several parts of the department: but his usual residence was around Marllhes, Jonzieux and St-Genest-Malifaux.” Always ready to visit the sick in danger of death. “It’s true that he never went alone and that he was well armed, like those who accompanied him”... He seems to be a Resistance fighter almost in the military meaning of the word.

**Fr. Philippe Pouzols**<sup>32</sup>: Born in Issengeaux in 1754. Priest in 1775. In 1789 assistant in Lapte<sup>33</sup>. Refusing to take the oath, he has to go into hiding. “The theater of his travels at night took in a vast radius:” Lapte, Grazac, St-Maurice-de-Lignon, Tence, St-Jeures, Bessamorel, Glavenas, St-Julien-du-Pinet, Retournac<sup>34</sup>. He is accompanied by Fathers Maurin and Abrial.

<sup>30</sup> This is the term given to the constitutional priests.

<sup>31</sup> Near Issengeaux.

<sup>32</sup> See Father Cornut, “Chats on the history of Le Velay” and the manuscript of Fr. L’Hoste.

<sup>33</sup> Halfway between Montfaucon-en-Velay and Issengeaux.

<sup>34</sup> Parishes located within a radius of 20 km around Issengeaux.

**Fr. Berger:** Companion in exile in Rome of Fr. Mijolas. Born in the diocese of Le Puy. In 1789 he is assistant in St-Maurice-en-Gourgois (Loire)<sup>35</sup>. Upon his return from Rome (with Mijolas) “he shows himself to be one of the most intrepid champions of Catholicism. On bad days we see him just about everywhere but always devoted to his duties and being all over to serve the faithful.” One day he is on the shores of the Ance<sup>36</sup> with Mijola and another confrere. With their shots they repulse a detachment that wants to arrest them. He dies in 1842.

**Fr. Bonnet:** Born in Le Barry, parish in Araules. The persecution suffered by his family seems due in large measure to a religious quarrel between Protestants and Catholics. The father has to hide in the neighboring parish, two Sisters, religious of St. Joseph, are imprisoned for some time, his brother also has to hide. The sister-in-law finds nobody to hire to till the land and the municipality prevents her from selling livestock. The pastor who took the oath threatens him or seeks to attract him. “For three or four years he never stopped fulfilling clandestinely the functions of his holy ministry in the midst of his own”...

In the face of the systematic persecutions of his family he resolved to go away with a confrère towards the left bank of the Loire. They go to the parishes of Retournac, St-Maurice-de-Roche, Vorey, Solignac, “followed everywhere by a crowd of people in tears and carried away by the holiest joy”. After a month they want to return but the Loire has risen and prevents them. So they return to the parishes they visited, adding St-André, Boisset, Tiranges. Crossing the Loire, they are almost arrested: Fr. Bonnet shoots on those who want to arrest them. “Robespierre’s death had already ended the terrorism.” Fr. Bonnet continues his functions until the return of Fr. L’Hoste.

**Fr. Maunier or Monier**<sup>37</sup>: Born in the parish of Retournac and assistant in his own country. After he refused to take the oath “he was assigned to Bas (in Basset) as theater for his night time excursions and clandestine service. Helped by Fr. J. F. Paris, “he did immense good in the parish of Bas”. He is not afraid to hold gatherings at night of several thousand people from Bas and the nearby country<sup>38</sup>. Finally arrested at one of these gatherings

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<sup>35</sup> Very near the border with the Haute-Loire.

<sup>36</sup> Tributary on the left bank of the Loire.

<sup>37</sup> N.A. F19/1011, Refractory priests, Haute-Loire. Vital, Monier affair.

<sup>38</sup> It is from this region that 8 postulants come in 1822. Bro. Gabriel Michel, “1822 and the 8 Postulants” in the *Bulletin of the Institute*, t.XXVIII, n° 209, July 1969, pp.263-280.

in 1796, Fathers Maunier and Paris are taken to Le Puy where they escape. Then, we hear nothing any more of Fr. Maunier in Bas. He seems to have gone to Sentinhac, where he was born, and he spends the last years of the Revolution there, exhausted. In 1802 he is named pastor of Usson<sup>39</sup>.

**Fr. Lagniel:** born in Usson, (part of the diocese of Lyon in 1801). Becomes chaplain in Valprivas<sup>40</sup>. During the FR he serves clandestinely in Valprivas and neighboring places. Often denounced, he escapes searches thanks to the people.

**Fr. Thamet:** We don't know where he was born. He serves in the villages located in the mountainous parish of Bas-en-Basset. Denounced around year III: he is said to have held assemblies in Valprivas, Chanteloube, Le Bouchet, and Le Valtalier<sup>41</sup>. The municipality of Bas puts out arrest warrants for the men in these places "because they were especially designated as ardent partisans of faithful priests. After being sharply warned in public they were sent back to their homes with the secret warning to be more prudent and to have their religious convictions show less. In fact, he was watched more closely.

**Fr. Antoine Pouzols:** Born in Champclause, stationed in Araules as assistant. After refusing to take the oath he stays in the parish for six weeks but can't agree with the pastor, who did take the oath. He returns to his family but continues to care for the parish which is nearby for almost a year. Arrested, he is imprisoned in Le Puy. Exiled to the Island of Ré<sup>42</sup>. He returns from there, probably by escaping, and once again cares for the faithful until the reopening of the churches.

**Fr. Charrel:** Assistant at Issengeaux, he refuses to take the oath and takes refuge in Switzerland. He is so shabby when he arrives there that he is imprisoned as a vagabond. After the Revolution we find him again at Issengeaux.

**Fr. Menut:** At the beginning of the Revolution he is only a deacon. Retires to Araules, his country, where he baptizes and carries the Viaticum. He goes into Switzerland with several confrères to be ordained. Returning,

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<sup>39</sup> He is pastor of the Courveille family.

<sup>40</sup> Near Bas-en-Basset on the right bank of the Loire.

<sup>41</sup> Hamlets.

<sup>42</sup> Sort of concentration camp for priests.

he is appointed with Fr. Beauzac “to evangelize the parish of Monistrol-sur-Loire and the surrounding area<sup>43</sup>”. Thanks to their precautions and the protection of the people they are not arrested.

**Fr. Jacques Rouchon<sup>44</sup>:** Native of Riotord. Takes refuge in his family. Serves the surrounding people. Escapes once from being arrested.

**Fr. Jean-Jacques Gerenthes:** Born in Laussonne<sup>45</sup>. Lived in Tence. Arrested and executed on 16 February 1794.

It would be good to add to this list Mathieu Beynieux (1762-1835), uncle of Jean-Claude Courveille, probably assistant in Saint-Pal-en-Chalancon before 1790. From 1795 he signs the registers in Apinac, parish he will officially take over as pastor in 1803<sup>46</sup>.

### **Commentary on this picture**

As a region the district of Issengeaux has remained rather homogeneous, in which a refractory has good chances of surviving and exercising a useful ministry, provided he’s prudent and lucky. Besides, it’s the region where Fr. de Rachat lives, the administrator of the diocese who can act steadily in relative security.

The pastoral system seems to function like the missions of the vicar general Linsolas in the diocese of Lyon: in vast sectors directed by a “missionary” having some priests under his orders who go around administering the sacraments. But the degree of organization seems rather flexible and several times we see priests working in tandem. Finally, the resistance is not only spiritual: certain priests look for provocation by holding numerous gatherings which look like political manifestations. Furthermore, and Mijolas and his companion are significant in this regard, they go out armed and sometimes escorted. We can wonder also about the meaning of certain expeditions on the left bank of the Loire which seem to offer a situation less clear than the right bank.

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<sup>43</sup> That is the administrative center of the Northeast of the diocese of Le Puy.

<sup>44</sup> This is not Jean-Baptiste Rouchon, who will become pastor of Valbenoîte. Biographical notice in OM 4, p.312.

<sup>45</sup> District of Le Puy.

<sup>46</sup> OM4, biographical notice p.197.



All of this allows us to situate the ambience in Marllhes or Usson<sup>47</sup>. In those places, the authorities have the upper hand during the day but night belongs to the refractories. When there remains a constitutional priest he is marginal. The Republicans are no safer than the refractories, for the counter-revolutionary party - the famous and mythical “companions of Jesus” denounced by the authorities - can take its revenge (liberty trees cut down, gunshots through the doors...).

In fact, a tacit accord between the authorities and the refractory current seems to be reached very early on, the authorities allowing services but quietly. If the refractories give the impression of accusing those in charge they raise lively but limited reactions. Evidently the mass of the population is taken hostage, since pure brigands benefit from the disturbances... Apparently everybody has to watch everybody else in a climate of nascent civil war, neither camp able to get a decisive advantage.

In Marllhes pastor Alirot looks like many of the pastors who continue their functions, free to disappear for a while, perhaps more not to embarrass the local republican authorities than because the danger is great. Mijolas, who replaces him for a while, seems on the contrary in a line more politico-religious, which would explain his greater freedom of action in places where the royalists are very influential.

Jean-Baptiste Champagnat could be the very type of partisan of a moderate Revolution caught in a history beyond him. When he dies in 1804 he is politically conquered because in the cultural universe of Le Velay the Revolution has lost the match, even if the Napoleonic régime, on a larger scale, has decreed tie score.

In any case, the young Champagnat seems to have had under his eyes a very tense society and a family, to say the least, overwhelmed by the events. The young Courveille would have to be placed in a different context because his uncle is a priest and his family is in a well determined camp<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> Places where Jean-Claude Courveille spends his childhood.

<sup>48</sup> His parents hide the statue of O.L. of Chambriac.

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## **6. THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION IN THE HAUTE-LOIRE SEEN BY THE PREFECT IN 1801**

The document below, from the prefect of the Haute-Loire just before the Concordat supports what we were saying above. Combining it with the list of the priests of the district of Issengeaux, we confirm the impression that the left bank of the Loire is less clearly marked by the refractory spirit and that the priests in the mountainside are in danger there only on occasional excursions. The districts of Le Puy and Brioude appear more divided, even if the prefect seems to exaggerate the role of the constitutionals and minimize the quarrels between Catholics and Protestants.

His report is very coded, for, like a good servant of the authorities, he indirectly praises the policy of supple firmness of the government and shows the results he himself obtained in his application. Basically, it's a plea for the Concordat which would separate the clergy from the "brigands", generic term including the royalist activists led to practice white terror, and also the real outlaws. He probably exaggerates the desire of the priests to separate from the royalists and to rally to the government, but he has clearly understood the desire for peace of the men and populations they include, on condition though of not imposing on them unacceptable or ambiguous obligations like the early revolutionary oaths.

We will note in passing the sovereign disdain, mixed with fear, of the "enlightened" people of the general administration towards the rural and religious populations.

"Excerpt from the article 'public spirit' furnished by the prefect of the department of the Haute-Loire, administrative center of Le Puy, in the course of year nine (1801)<sup>49</sup>.

### **Article on the priests and services**

It would be unjust and unfair to consider the entire department of the Haute-Loire as agitated by fanaticism and influenced by disobedient priests. A rather good part of the district of Brioude<sup>50</sup> recognize and follow only the constitutional priests who, on their part, use their influence only to insure that the laws are obeyed and the government is liked.

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<sup>49</sup> N.A. F19/342, Diocese of St-Flour, Haute-Loire, year IX-year XII.

<sup>50</sup> In the west of the district.

At the opposite end of the department, in the entire strip which borders the Ardèche, from Montfaucon up to the neighborhood of Pradelles, which takes in part of the districts of Issengeaux and Le Puy, we can count just about the same number of Catholics and Protestants; and the mix, far from starting religious quarrels, seems to neutralize them. Private arguments and assaults, however, are frequent in these steep and difficult locales; but they are all only disagreements involving money or merchant traffic, and the result, often deadly, must be attributed only to the character of the inhabitants of these regions, hard-headed and opinionated, like all mountain-dwellers, irascible and violent like the people in the South. Nobody more kind, more welcoming than these men when they are calm and satisfied, nobody more dangerous when they are bitter.

In the rest of the department we cannot help seeing a superstition as vulgar as it was universal two centuries ago, and with it a very excitable fanaticism in most of the people, a very strong influence of the ministers of religion. It seems that the laws on deportation reached among the priests only a few imprudent individuals or a few men weighed down by age. Almost all found in the scattered houses, the woods, mountainsides, security, hospitality, devotedness and discretion. Perseverance in searching and the seriousness of the punishments only increased the consoling care and preservative precautions, and often the persecution encouraged rebellion among agrarian and robust people who bear without a word the greatest fatigues and know how to live on roots<sup>51</sup> and water, if need be.

Given this state of affairs, it is very probable that the priests, invisible and all-powerful in some ways, hated a government which placed them every day between incarceration, proscription and torture. It is very certain at least that the noticeable relaxations which the present government has effected for them have drawn almost all of them to itself. They say it out loud; they are not afraid to express it in their letters. They have contributed much to calm the turmoil in the countryside; they detest brigandage; they have pointed out some of the leaders. But they refuse nonetheless to sign on a register the promise of fidelity which is imposed on them.

After that isn't it sound policy to keep exemptions for former priests? We prevent public services; we tolerate, because we can't stop them, services

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<sup>51</sup> Vegetables.

performed in offbeat places, in private houses: at that price we get the greatest tranquility. If we want to force the issue, we could risk alienating the priests most distinguished by their knowledge and attachment to the government and abort the good results that we can immediately expect from their influence and we would inflame uselessly a fanaticism ever defiant and rumbling after these huge disturbances.”

Signed Lamothe (prefect).

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## **7. THE DISTRICT OF ISSENGEAUX IN 1811**

D’Authier, sub-prefect in the district of Issengeaux, writes a letter<sup>52</sup> to the prefect in which he sets forth the difficulty of assembling the soldiers mobilized for the wars of the Empire. The causes of this refractory spirit are for him “an opposition to military service, rather ordinary in mountainous regions”, but also:

“This opposition and this repugnance have been strengthened by perfidious homilies and insinuations at those times when there were counter-revolutionary camps and parties; that in those unfortunate times people vowed to anathema and eternal damnation the young men who left for the army, they assassinated in cold blood those who showed up in military uniform, they covered with opprobrium and ridicule those whose life was spared, they refused to hold services for those who died on the field of honor, devout women known under the name of “blesseds” would bring food and baskets full of bullets to the requisitionaries<sup>53</sup> and to active deserters in holes and caves where they took refuge, inciting them to revolt<sup>54</sup>; this damn mob is numerous in my district and has a special influence; almost all the priests, therefore, who preach rebellion are still in the same parishes, where they don’t dare today teach publicly a contradictory doctrine, even though their opinions are no longer the same, and their behavior in general is wise and moderate”...

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<sup>52</sup> D.A. of the Haute-Loire, R 500, 12 February 1811. Letter cited in M. Chaulanges, A.G. Maury, R. Sève, historical texts, 1799-1815, Delagrave, 1969, p.103.

<sup>53</sup> Young men requisitioned for military service.

<sup>54</sup> The “béates” are pious celibate women grouped in Le Puy, who educate young girls and little children in the villages and hamlets. The revolutionary authorities weave a veritable black legend around them which the sub-prefect echoes here.

As for the mayors, deputies and municipal councilors:

“without having any infidelities to reproach them with, I do have to complain of their little courage; we could say they are afraid of public opinion and don't dare show themselves openly when it is a matter of going after refractories and deserters<sup>45</sup>”...

Evidently we have to tone down this picture of the situation before the Empire which reflects, on one hand, the view of the central power and, on the other hand, the concern of the bureaucrat to excuse himself better from his bad results. Nevertheless, we can see clearly the three factors mixed in the massive opposition to the Revolution: political resistance (the counter-revolutionary parties), religious resistance (the role of priests and of the “béates”) and the rejection of the draft.

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## **CONCLUSION**

From 1789 to the end of the Empire the diocese of Le Puy and most especially the district of Issengeaux have, therefore, lived through an opposition more or less overt but continuous to the central power. It's in such an ambience that Champagnat and Courveille lived their infancy and youth. The suppression of the diocese at the Concordat seems to have only slightly braked the religious opposition started by Bishop de Galard and continued by Doure, Issartel and Richard, really heads of a quasi-diocese, not counting the numerous refractory former priests having reoccupied their posts. The diocese of Lyon, firmly held in hand by Fesch, the Emperor's uncle and former constitutional priest, seems to have been in a totally different situation, not to say opposed.

Consequently seminarians like Champagnat and Courveille formed in a Catholicism of resistance must have finished their formation in an ambience much more loyalist. It could even be that the concern of the diocese of Lyon to bring back Courveille, born on its land, was as much an act of defiance towards Le Puy as the concern to obtain another seminarian.

And as Courveille, coming to Lyon, could reinforce a refractory spirit

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<sup>55</sup> This moderate attitude seems to have been largely that of J.B. Champagnat during the Revolution.

which the departure of the Sulpicians and the captivity of the Pope heavily contributed to rekindle, Fr. Bochard watches carefully over his actions, keeping the first Marists under his thumb and carefully avoiding to authorize them to go back to a territory where there reigns a spirit which he disapproves.

No matter. Courveille and Champagnat can be understood in depth only if we see them as men from Le Velay, spiritually turned towards Le Puy. This common origin will weigh heavily on their collaboration and make their separation so much more tragic. We can wonder, besides, if their break cannot be caused in part by a different experience of the Revolution, Champagnat being raised by his family in a rather religiously and politically moderate attitude, whereas Courveille, by his family and his studies in the seminary of Le Puy, would be raised more in a refractory spirit, exemplified by Bishop de Galard, the vicars general and the priests of the district of Issengeaux. Let's not forget either that Champagnat's work finds in the Haute-Loire an important center for recruitment starting in 1822.

Finally, the Marist style owes much to the refractory spirit, and the points common to the ideas of Bishop de Galard and the Marist manifesto are far from negligible. These similarities are not at all surprising if we recall that the plan for the S.M. came from Le Puy, that Courveille found it under the form of a dominant refractory mentality or copied a pre-existing plan which, improbable hypothesis but not to be rejected flatly, the Jesuit Bertrand could have brought along.

Bro. André LANFREY, 21/10/2005

# *Catholic Reform and Political Revolution*

## **Jean-Baptiste Champagnat and the Penitents of Marlies**

**Bro. André LANFREY, fms**

One of the most significant documents of the history of Marlies on the eve of the Revolution is the “book for the treasurer of the confraternity of the white penitents established in the locale of Marlies”<sup>56</sup> Though essentially composed of financial accounts, it shows us, even at a casual glance, important aspects of the religious, social and economic life of the parish from 1660 to about 1820. Evidently its importance for Marists comes from the fact that one of the authors of this register is Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, Marcellin’s father, treasurer of the confraternity from 1779 to 1788.

This register is not our only source on the confraternity and we will be able to confirm in part and complete our information by comparing it to the register of the confraternity’s secretary, recopied in part in the XIXth century by Mr. Convers, notable inhabitant of Montfacon en Velay.

We will proceed, then, in three stages: first a relatively deep study of the two documents, then a look at the significance of the confraternities in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries in the context of Catholic Reform. Finally, we will work on Jean-Baptiste Champagnat by trying through financial accounts, to get a better focus on his personality about which we know little.

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<sup>56</sup> This is a manuscript 34.5 x 24 format whose 154 pages have been handwritten. It is covered by a parchment.

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## **I. TWO COMPLEX DOCUMENTS**

The following commentary, then, will stem from two sources, one original, the other being only the partial copy of a lost document.

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### **A. STATE OF THE TREASURERS' REGISTERS**

The regular keeping of the accounts starts only on 3 June 1748, the day when Jacques Peyron is named treasurer of the "confraternity of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar" of the parish of Marlhès, p.12<sup>57</sup> The account of receipts covers pages 12-93 between 1748 and 1834, interrupted understandably between 1791 and 1801: the Revolution. Some 20 blank sheets follow which is of great importance since they suggest that the confraternity died out before being able to finish the register. In fact, it seems to have lasted for a good part of the XIXth century.

There follows the "chapter of expenses", pp.94-141. As in the first part, there are some pages (94-101) on the confraternity in the XVIIth century, from 22 June 1663 to 26 May 1678 it seems. Then there are the accounts from 1748 to 1788 which take up again in 1801-1807. Then only one receipt from pastor Duplay in 1826 (p.141) witnesses to the confraternity's existence. The register ends with 35 blank pages.

At the end of the register, written inversely to what precedes, the list of those who presided at the "reynages [royal feasts]", namely those who were the organizers (kings) of the celebrations and procession. The list covers the years 1716 to 1786 (pp.142-154). We will come back to this.

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### **B. HISTORY OF THE CONFRATERNITY SEEN IN THE REGISTER?**

From this description we can try to get at the history of the manuscript

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<sup>57</sup> Page 1 has the title, to which is attached, twice, the name of E. Epalle, from the hamlet of Royons, treasurer of the confraternity at the time of its reconstitution in 1801. The second page has only one addition and the third repeats the title of the first page in a different handwriting: "Book for the treasurer of the confraternity of the white penitents established in the locale of Marlhès". Pages 4-11 form one bundle, a fragment of the confraternity register from August 1663 to April 1679. The original pagination is done in Roman numerals by counting the sheets. Since wear has often erased the marks, I have established a pagination which will serve me as reference.



and in part that of the confraternity. The chapter of the expenses (p.94...), which has not been cut off like that of the receipts, starts on 22 June 1663. After 1670 the confraternity seems to be dying.

The register seems to have slept until 1716, date when it is taken up again backwards to note the 'reynages', namely the processions of the Assumption, Corpus Christi or the octave of that feast, practically up to the Revolution.

The register, reactivated in 1748, then continues the accounts started in the XVIIth century. After the revolutionary crisis the accounts are kept correctly from 1801 to 1811. From 1812 and until 1827 the receipts are down to three or four items per year. From 1827 to 1834 they are recorded in pencil and the dates are rarely noted.

To sum up, according to the register the confraternity of the penitents of the Blessed Sacrament of Marlhès would have started and failed in the XVIth century, begun again with difficulty around 1716, had a brilliant period in the second half of the XVIIIth century, and a fragile restoration at the beginning of the XIXth century. But we are aware of the fact that the more or less proper accounting in the register does not indicate necessarily a more or less prosperous confraternity, administrative negligence not being a sure indicator of more or less great religious fervor. Nevertheless, payments of dues and more or less massive recruitment are not signs to spurn. Finally, we can crosscheck the information in this financial register with another source concerning the confraternity.

### **C. THE CONVERS PAPERS IN THE D.A. OF LE PUY**

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Mr. Convers, XIXth century erudite, left in his papers<sup>58</sup> part of the copy of the "Book for the secretary of the confraternity of the white penitents established in the church of Marlhès under the name of the Most August and very Holy Sacrament of the altar in which are recorded by him all the acts of the establishment of this confraternity as well as those which will be done in the course of his tenure, delivered to Mr. Jean Riocreux, secretary; the said confraternity created on 15 June 1662."

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<sup>58</sup> Kept in the Departmental Archives of Le Puy.

The court hearing on the establishment recalls that the confraternity is founded on 19 September 1660 in presence of the notary royal and the pastor. The latter, in his homily at Mass, asked for a convocation of the assembly of inhabitants which was held immediately afterwards, certainly in the church, in order to deliberate on and consent to the official establishment of the confraternity. The notary receives the approval of the following eminent people:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Function</b>
1/ Claude Forest	Priest	societary <sup>59</sup>
2/ Antoine de la Borge	Nobleman	Captain
3/ Jean de Colomb	Canon of the Temple	Doctor of Law
4/ André Verne	Doctor of Law	Judge
5/ Jean Bayle		State Prosecutor
6/ Jean Baptiste Fontfeyde		State Prosecutor
7/ Jacques Fontfeyde	“honorable”	
8/ Antoine de Colomb	“honorable”	
9/ Gabriel Piard		
10/ Jean Chaleyey		Merchant in Le Rozey
11/ Benoît Riocreux	“honest”	Merchant
12/ Jean Riocreux	Brother of the latter	Practitioner (medical doctor?)
13/ Jean Tuvelle		Merchant
14/ Antoine Courbon		
15/ Antoine Ducros	<i>Does not know how to sign</i>	
16/ Louis Vallet		
17/ Antoine Vallet	Brother of the latter	
18/ Claude Baboin		
19/ Antoine Epalle		
20/ Claude Riocreux		
21/ Jean Drevet	<i>Does not know how to sign</i>	
22/ Benoît Delorme		Practitioner
23/ Jean Mirandon	Father and sons	
24/ Laurent Fioreison	<i>Does not know how to sign</i>	
25/ Giraud Paret	“inhabitant”	
26/ Jean Desjoyaux	<i>Does not know how to sign</i>	
27/ Jacques Verne	“Bourgeois of Marlhès”	
28/ Antoine de Colomb		

<sup>59</sup> In many parishes there were priests called “societaries” or “regulars” or again “godchildren” born in the locale. They exercised functions connected to religious services.

All these men, therefore, serve both as municipal council and parish finance team in France under the Ancien Régime where the distinction between spiritual and temporal is relatively slight. They are then 28 eminent men, priests, noblemen, and commoners, certainly listed by order of precedence as was the custom in the Ancien Régime. Almost all of them are able to sign their name. They are the elite of Marlhes. Among them no Champagnat<sup>60</sup> nor Chirat but a Ducros.

After this come the acts asking the bishop of Le Puy for the authorization of the confraternity<sup>61</sup>. The reception of the confraternity members takes place on Thursday 8 June 1662 around 7 a.m. in the tribune of the parish church. The candidates have made their Confession and received Communion. They carry the penitent's habit in their hand. This habit is blessed before they put it on. They are exhorted to be faithful to the statutes. Thirty signatures follow, which is a lot, and give us a good idea of the cultural level of the confraternity. Only six members did not know how to sign. The list of the members must not be very different from that of 1660.

The nomination of officers takes place on 15 June 1662:

- Rector: Mathieu Paret, notary royal, from the locale of Marlhettes
- Vice-rector and 1st councilor: Solicitor Jean de Colomb, from Chambaud, judge in the district of La Faye
- 2nd councilor: S(olicitor). André Verne, judge in the district of Clavas
- 3rd councilor: Mr. Jacques Fontfreyde, bourgeois of Marlhes
- 4th councilor: Solicitor Jean Bayle, court prosecutor for the district of La Faye
- Secretary: Mr. Jean Riocreux local practitioner
- Choir master and Master of ceremonies: Sr. Jean Chaleyey, from Le Rozey

In 1663, at a cost of 220 pounds, the confraternity has the church gallery enlarged, where it celebrates its services, by Pierre Méa, master mason and carpenter of the city of St-Didier (in Velay). This enlargement is “built on 4 pillars supporting five arcades of cut stone up to and flush with the cover of the said church with a round window on the face of the said edifice; composed, besides, of two degrees<sup>62</sup> inside the said church on both sides of the main entrance of this church, for accessing the said chapel”.

<sup>60</sup> Marcellin's great-grandfather was born in 1683 in St-Victor-Malescours in the Haute-Loire, 10 km from Marlhes.

<sup>61</sup> The authorization by the Vicar General is dated 24 September 1660, signed by de Montauban, v.g.

<sup>62</sup> Stairs.

On 27 July 1664 the confraternity contracts with Pierre Malescours, master carpenter residing in Le Mas, near St-Pal-de-Mons, to build “two wooden degrees<sup>63</sup> to access the chapel”, seats for the confraternity members, paneling, an altar, for the sum of 93 pounds.

The chapel for the confraternity members, then, seems to constitute a tall church covering a good part of the nave. This arrangement evidently is the result of a compromise: in Marlhès as in many other places, the clergy do not want a chapel for the penitents independent of the parish church and the members do want their own place. Apparently they did not skimp on the expense, which confirms the fact that the confraternity is recruiting among the better known, and only among men. It is certainly in this chapel that J.B. Champagnat and his wife were received as confraternity members at the end of the XVIIIth century.

The register takes up again on 10 July 1715 to indicate the work of repairing and improving. On 25 January 1734 the confraternity receives a sum of 100 pounds which it uses “to repair and restore our chapel which has been in ruins for about eight months”. For the generous donors it sets up a perpetual foundation for the benefit of Jean Pollet and his wife Antoinette Bayle, including the Office of the Dead and a Mass in perpetuity for the repose of their soul.

The court account of the contract made with the builder gives us the list of the eminent people in the confraternity which seems very different, at least the names, from that of the XVIIth century.

<b>Confraternity Members 1660-64</b>	<b>Confraternity Members 1734</b>
Barralon Antoine	Aulagnier Guillaume
Bayle Jean, prosecutor	Bayle Claude
Bergier	Bayle Jean
Borye (Antoine de la), nobleman	Bayle Mathieu
Bosc Didier, merchant	Bergeron B(arthélem)y, rector
Celle Jean, merchant	Chausse Claude
Chaleyser Jean, merchant	Coignet Antoine
Colomb (Jean de), judge	Courbon Antoine
Courbon Jean	Copurbon Jean Baptiste

<sup>63</sup> Apparently the “degrees” stated in the preceding contract were not built or were not satisfactory.

<b>Confraternity Members 1660-64</b>	<b>Confraternity Members 1734</b>
Delorme Benoît, practitioner	Devaux François (son)
Ducros Antoine	Devaux Jean (father)
Epalle Antoine	Epalle Pierre
Epalle Jacques	Faverjon Louis
Fontfreyde Jacques, bourgeois	Forizon Jean
Forest Claude, priest	Frapa Pierre
Fuvelle Jean, merchant	Frappa Jean
Grangier Jean	Grangier Jean
Grivel	Guichard Jean-Pierre
Mirandon Jean	Jabrin Jean Baptiste
Mourgue	Larbret Jacques
Paret Mathieu, notary royal	Peyron Claude
Prudhomme	Pollet Claude
Rachatin Claude, practitioner	Sabot Jean
Rachetin	Souvignet Antoine
Riocreux Jean, practitioner	Teyssier Jean Baptiste
Vallet Antoine	Viallette J.B.
Verne André, judge	
	“for our other illiterate members <sup>64</sup> ”

Only four family names from 1660-64 reappear in 1734. For three of them (Bayle, Courbon, Grangier) the similarity of the given names in both dates makes us strongly presume a family continuity between grandfather and grandson. On a total of 28 and 26 names that is very few. The confraternity seems to have greatly modified its social base.

In 1717 Madeleine d’Allier, widow of Colomb, gives 10 pounds for the reception of her grandson and herself. That is the first time we note the admission of a woman. That same year the catalogue of penitents is started: Marguerite Desjoyaux is received on 23 May 1717. In a list all too brief<sup>65</sup> the copyist notes: M(ari)e Thérèse Chirat wife of J.B. Champagnat in Le Rosey, r(eceiv)ed on 17 June 1787. The last woman penitent on the register is received in 1802.

The copy also gives a list of 71 members received from 1707 to 1803<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> The illiterate members who certainly took part in the debate but did not sign.

<sup>65</sup> Evidently the copyist has not listed everybody. Suspension points between 1717 and 1746 show that he omitted the receptions between those two dates.

<sup>66</sup> The presence of suspension points in the text suggests that not all the names are given.

Among them, in 1715 “s(on) Champaignac” and “Jean Champaignac de la Faurie”<sup>67</sup>; en 1760 Jean Champaignac de La Faurie<sup>68</sup>; “Claude Champaignac... 1763<sup>69</sup>”; Jn. Bte. Champagniat, treasurer, from Le Rosey, 21 June 1778<sup>70</sup>” and finally, “B(arthélem)y Champagniat, from Le Rosey, 16 October 1803<sup>71</sup>”. Apparently from the beginning of the XVIIIth century the heads of family of each generation of Champagnats join the confraternity. This adhesion signifies certainly religious fervor but also the pursuit of social honorability.

The register tells us the numerous posts of the confraternity in 1746: 1 rector, 1 vice-rector and first councilor, three councilors, one master of choir and ceremonies, one secretary, 2 choristers, 4 sacristans, 1 treasurer, 2 to visit the sick, 2 stickmen (standard-bearers), 1 crucifix-bearer, 2 bearers of the dais for the Blessed Sacrament, 4 lantern-bearers to escort the Blessed Sacrament, 1 master of novices. Ten confraternity members, among them a “Champagniat”, do not seem to have any function. This gives us a total of 36 members, if the list is complete.

These posts are evidently on two levels: political in some measure from rector to secretary. Then there are tasks rather technical, for the operation of the confraternity. Chanting the office and having processions constitute the major functions. No doubt that the holders of the first posts are dignitaries. For instance, the vice-rector and 1st councilor in 1748 is “nobleman Christophe de Colomb l(or)d of Ecotay”; the 3rd, Jean Sabot, is notary royal. He will become rector in 1755. The secretary is Mr. Jean Lardon, notary. It can be nonetheless that starting in 1755 with the election of Jean Riocreux, from Le Rosey, who seems to hold his post until 1765, the confraternity democratizes.

In the course of the century the Champagnats hold some modest functions in the confraternity. In 1752 Claude Champagnat and Jean-Baptiste Champagnat are listed among the four choristers. In 1756 Mr. Cl(aude) Champagnat, from La Faurie, is elected treasurer. In 1762 he seems to be choir master and in 1765 master of novices. In brief, the Champagnats are not notables.

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<sup>67</sup> This is certainly Jean-Baptiste Champagnat I born in 1683, who in 1716 marries Louise Crouzet from the hamlet of La Faurie. He is admitted at age 32.

<sup>68</sup> Certainly Jean-Baptiste Champagnat II, born in 1719. He is received when over 40 years old.

<sup>69</sup> Uncle of Marcellin Champagnat.

<sup>70</sup> Born on 25 January 1752. Therefore he is 26 years old.

<sup>71</sup> Born on 12 March 1777. He is 26 years old, like his father. The confraternity seems to have admitted only men of legal majority, namely 25 years old or more.

This register shows us that Marllhes in the XVIIth century is far from being a cultural desert. The great number of people who know how to write witnesses clearly to a noble and bourgeois religion adhering to the principles of the Catholic Reform. The creation of the confraternity is clearly the fact of an elite broadly cultural, religious, well-to-do and social.

The confraternity after 1715 seems different: it admits women, and the higher posts of the confraternity seem to be held by men of more common origins, especially after 1750. We see perhaps a progressive dissociation between social elites and religious elites, the notables detaching themselves progressively from a confraternity too popular for their taste, and the more popular milieux looking for both a deeper religious expression and a social climbing through the confraternity. We will come back to this point.

Thus, the Convers document seems to confirm the chronology of the treasurers' register: there is clearly a renovation and transformation of the confraternity towards 1715-1717, followed by a time of stagnation before the years 1750.

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## **II. PENITENTS AND CATHOLIC REFORM**

The Marllhes confraternity is situated precisely in the cultural zone of Southern France since it is based in Le Puy and not Lyon. As for the parish of Marllhes, it is under the missionary influence of the Jesuits of Le Puy and made illustrious by Saint John Francis Regis, deceased on 31 December 1640 in La Louvesc. His process of canonization begun in 1676 by the bishop of Le Puy leads to his beatification in 1716 and his canonization in 1737. His life, published in 1716 by Father Daubenton, will be continuously reedited.

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### **A. PENITENTS AND MISSIONARIES**

Marllhes had an extremely strong contact with Francis Regis: in 1635 (Daubenton, pp.78-81) the pastor, Jacques André, who asked him to preach a mission there, states:

“After the mission I no longer recognized my parishioners, so much did I find them changed and transformed into other men.”

And, still according to the pastor, Regis was not satisfied only to preach in the church, but he traveled to the neighboring hamlets, villages and towns during the winter of 1635-36: Clavas, Bourg-Argental, Saint-Sauveur-en-Rue, Saint-Julien-Molin-Molette, St-Apollinard. He returned to Marllhes in November 1637 for a new mission. The only letter we have from him written in French is addressed to the pastor of Marllhes.

But the exceptional life of Francis Regis must not hide the essential: Marllhes is a typical example of the rural territory reconquered and transformed by the Catholic Reform thanks to the collaboration of the ecclesiastical authorities and missionary orders. The effort of renewal continues after Francis Regis and the establishment of the confraternity of the penitents of the Blessed Sacrament is one of the characteristic manifestations of this reconquest.

## **B. CONFRATERNITIES AND PENITENTS**

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The Middle Ages knew confraternities of crafts which grouped people in the same craft under the name of a patron saint. There were also luminary confraternities, in charge of maintaining the lamp of the Blessed Sacrament. As for the penitents, they constituted a form of association very common in the Mediterranean world. The entire South of France - Marllhes was situated at the northern limit of this group - is familiar with this type of association.

First of all, the penitents<sup>72</sup> are gathered to honor the Passion of Christ. Often created in the XVIth century, these associations keep some medieval traits such as the devotion to the Passion and the Eucharist but also a tendency to live shut up on themselves. Their statutes are demanding: recitation of the office of the Passion on Sundays and civil holidays; attendance at parish Mass and Vespers; fasting and using the discipline; confession and communion at least four times a year. Furthermore, the penitents must refrain from blasphemy, gambling, cabarets. Therefore, as a confraternity of devotion they form a militia able to fight for the extirpation of heresy.

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<sup>72</sup> I take this from the work, *Confraternities, the Church and the City*, Acts of the Marseilles colloquium, 22-23 May 1985, Alpine and Rhodanian Center of Ethnology, Grenoble 1988. The article by M.H. Froeschlé Chopard, pp.5-37, is my main source.



The clergy appreciate these militants at first, but then quickly look askance at their independence which leads them to gather in their chapel and neglect the parish services. In the course of the XVIIth century, therefore, a profound change takes place: people insist on the worship of the Blessed Sacrament, individual perfection and submission to ecclesiastical authority. The penitent movement, until then largely limited to Provence, spreads to other places but in a different spirit.

The confraternities of penitents are also influenced by the creation of the confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, enriched with numerous indulgences, created in 1539 by Pope Paul III in the church of Saint Mary of Minerva in Rome, which makes up a sort of honor guard around the priest and the altar in the tradition of the ancient luminary confraternities or the confraternities of *Corpus Christi*, but under the strict control of the clergy.

The synthesis of these two currents takes place in the course of the XVIth century by the confraternities of the penitents of the Blessed Sacrament, of which Marlhès is a characteristic manifestation: on the one hand the concern to honor the Eucharist, on the other that of rebuilding a Christian society by the example of the confraternities careful to live "according to the laws of God and the Church". These new penitents receive encouragement from the hierarchy insofar as they no longer claim their independence. In northern France the confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament, even if they have strict rules, are no longer called "penitents" and no longer have a separate chapel. In Marlhès, people are in between: the confraternity does not have a separate chapel but its gallery is fairly similar.

### **C. THE STATUTES OF THE CONFRATERNITY**

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We do not know the statutes of the confraternity in Marlhès but the *Religious Week of Le Puy* of the end of the XIXth century has a series of articles on the confraternities of penitents and gives the statutes of the Chouméris confraternity especially in detail, certainly very close to those of Marlhès. Here is a look:

- "1/ The most holy sacrament of the altar being the sacrament of peace and union, the faithful Christians of both sexes who will want to gain the indulgences granted by His Holiness to the fore-mentioned confraternity will unite themselves first of all to God by a good confession and

communion and with their neighbor, if there is any ill will, by a genuine reconciliation. That done, they will present themselves to be enrolled in the book of the fore-mentioned confraternity without being obliged to give anything, other than whatever their devotion encourages, to maintain the lamp, celebrate Masses and other expenses that should be made to honor the said Most Holy Sacrament of the altar.

- 2/ The fore-mentioned confraternity will be directed by the pastor with the assistance of the two rectors and such and such a number of 'bayles' and 'baillesses'<sup>73</sup> that will be judged necessary according to the size of the parish and who will be taken from each village, those finishing their term will be authorized to name others in the presence of the fore-mentioned pastor and, to do this, they will assemble on Pentecost day, after Vespers, in the fore-mentioned church.
- 3/ The fore-mentioned rectors will be in the fore-mentioned church on Corpus Christi and the Sunday within the octave as also every third Sunday of every month in order to write in a book designated for this all the men and women who want to be enrolled in the fore-mentioned confraternity and they will receive whatever each of them wants to give gratuitously for their admission as well as for the other annual distributions which are made to pay for the expenses of the fore-mentioned confraternity, which money will be put in a safe with two keys one of which will be kept by the pastor and the other by one of the fore-mentioned rectors."
- 4/ 'Bailes' and 'baillesses', if they can, will escort the Blessed Sacrament when it is carried to the sick<sup>74</sup>.
- 5/ When a confraternity member is sick the 'baile' or 'baillesse' is to be notified and they will visit him, prepare him to receive the sacraments, and alert the pastor<sup>75</sup>.
- 6/ If there is a quarrel between the men or women members, the 'bailes' or 'baillesses' try to resolve the conflict with the help of the pastor or somebody else they judge capable<sup>76</sup>.

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<sup>73</sup> Those who hold office.

<sup>74</sup> This item and those that follow are summarized.

<sup>75</sup> In Marlies two officers are designated to visit the sick.

<sup>76</sup> J.B. Champagnat is reputed to be a good mediator.

- 7/ All the members will recite 5 *Paters* and *Aves* every week in thanksgiving for the gift of the Eucharist given to men by God. Every morning upon rising and every evening on retiring they will say "in heart and mouth": "Blessed be the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar".
- 8/ Every third Sunday of the month the members will go to confession and receive communion. They will form an escort for the procession of the Blessed Sacrament. For the exposition of the Holy Sacrament there will always be two members kneeling. The members will attend the sermon, catechism and benediction of the Holy Sacrament. They may sing during the services and dress in white for the procession.
- 9/ The confraternity has a special devotion for Corpus Christi and the Sunday within the octave. The latter is the day when rectors and 'bailes' take up their duties<sup>77</sup>.
- 10/ 8 days after they leave office the former rectors give an account to the pastor and the new rectors "to whom they will give<sup>78</sup> what they should when they stop and close their accounts in order to record their receipts or expenses which they also will make at the end of their year<sup>79</sup>."
- 11/ In the case of the death of a member, all the others pray for him and if possible attend his burial dressed in white.
- 12/ The Sunday within the octave of Corpus Christi the pastor will read the list of the members deceased that year. The next day there will be a Mass of the Dead for their intention "which all the members are likewise urged to attend and pray God for them".

The confraternity of penitents, then, is not a vague socio-religious association. It is a confraternity of devotion exacting precise religious practices and exemplary conduct. Jean-Baptiste Champagnat III, Marcellin's father, lived that from his admission in 1778 to 1804, date of his death. And we will see that his involvement in the Revolution is not explained in spite of his engagement as penitent but more probably because of it.

<sup>77</sup> This seems to be the case in Marlies.

<sup>78</sup> "Bailleront" = "will give".

<sup>79</sup> These statutes seem to confuse the function of treasurer and that of rector.

## D. THE ACCOUNTS OF THE CONFRATERNITY

The confraternity had three principal sources of income: the collections from the members made at certain great feasts of the year: first Sunday of the year (Epiphany), feasts of the Blessed Sacrament, St. John the Baptist, All Saints... It also receives important amounts for celebrating services for the dead some of whom foresaw in their will a sum for the confraternity. Finally, there are receptions of men and women members who seem to give most often 6 sols, and a pound and a half. Those richer or more generous go up to 3 L. But a certain number pay in kind: between a half-pound and two pounds of wax.

Sometimes the newly admitted declare they will "take the 'reintage'", an expression which calls for an explanation further on.

For the years in the XVIIth century the accounts are imprecise and especially few in number. For the XVIIIth century the results are much surer, for at each change of treasurer precise expertise is revealed. After 1811 accounts are kept rather loosely.

<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Dates of his duties</b>	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Jacques Peyron	3/6/1748 - 20/2/1756	313L. 6s.	262L. 5s.	+51L. 1s.
Claude Champagnat	20/2/1756 - 18/6/1758	292L. 13s.	215L. 3s.	+79L. 15s. 6d.
Gabriel Durieu	18/6/1758 - 13/6/1762	246L. 13s. 9d.	263L. 5s. 6d.	- 16L. 11s. 9d.
Accounts interrupted for three years				
Jean Frapa	27/5/1765 - 15/7/1770	247L. 7s.	228L. 7s.	+19L.
Pierre Gourgaud	15/7/1770 - 27/1/1776	216L. 10s.	277L. 16s.	-61L. 6s.
Accounts interrupted. On 25 March 1779 a collection totaled 8 pounds 7 sols.				
Jean-Bapt. Champagniat	13/6/1779 - 5/6/1788	536L. 2s.	323L. 8s.	+212L.
Marcellin Riocreux	15/6/1788 - 1/11/1791	159L. 16s.	?	
Register interrupted for 10 years: Revolution				
Jean Bapt. Epalle	19/7/1801 - 16/5/1803	217L. 6s.	192L. 3s.	+22L. 3s.
Jean-Bapt. Epalle	16/5/1803 - 29/6/1811	449L. 10s.	510L. 11s.	-61L. 1s.
Peyrard	1811 - 1834	647L. 7s.	988L. 10s.	

The confraternity had to get through two financial crises which caused a break in the accounts over three years. Probably this was due to the time needed for the lame duck treasurer to clear the debts and to the fact that nobody was willing to take over a situation in such poor condition.

Apparently then, the confraternity suffered two economic crises which provoke an interruption of accounts for three years: probably the time the outgoing treasurer needed to balance the book, and nobody was willing to take over such a bad situation. We can see that under the management of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat (1779-1788) there were record receipts. The collections among the members count for 46%, services for the dead 43% and dues for enrolments 11%.

As for the expenses from 1779-1788 these are broken out as follows:

- oil for the sanctuary lamp:	4 L. 11 s.
- candles:	23 L. 7 s. 6 d.
- wax:	45 L. 2 s.
- Masses for the dead:	22 L. 10 s.
- Masses for deceased members:	44 L. 10 s.
- Repairs and work on the chapel of the penitents:	134 L. 18 s.
- To the rector of the penitents for advances given:	47 L.
Namely, a total of:	323 L. 8 s.

These expenses clearly reflect the nature of a confraternity whose function is to honor the Blessed Sacrament by supplying the oil for the sanctuary lamp which must never stop burning.

But the major expenses come from supplying wax and candles and fees given to the celebrants of the numerous services for the dead, be they celebrated for the intention of specific deceased or for the deceased members, friends and benefactors.

As a confraternity is also a place to socialize, its chapel requires upkeep and costly changes which take up more than 40% of the budget. Basically there are three big expenses in the budget:

- Wax, oil, candles:	73 L. more or less
- Masses for the dead:	67 L.
- Maintenance and improvements of the chapel:	134 L.

## E. ADMISIÓN DE COFRADES

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The table of admissions below shows a considerable inflow of candidates starting in 1765. The imbalance men-women appears in the 1770-79 decade and increases in the time of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat. It narrows after the Revolution, then women disappear from the register and we do not know why. We can suspect, however, that a new religious sensitivity enters in and makes the confraternity an archaic form of association: not political enough for the men; too much so for the women.

<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Dates of his duties</b>	<b>Men admitted</b>	<b>Women admitted</b>
Jacques Peyron	3/6/1748 - 20/2/1756	1	1
Claude Champagnat	20/2/1756 - 18/6/1758	2	1
Gabriel Durieu	18/6/1758 - 13/6/1762	6	5
Jean Frapa	27/5/1765 - 15/7/1770	31	35
Pierre Gourgaud	15/7/1770 - 25/3/1776	7	14
J-B Champagniat	13/6/1779 - 15/6/1788	20	94
Marcellin Riocreux	15/6/1788 - 1/11/1791	8	31
Jean Bapt. Epalle	19/7/1801 - 29/6/1811	17	41
Peyrard	1811 - 1818	22	0

We notice immediately that the profitable managements of Frapa and Champagnat are also times of massive recruitment. Evidently there is a link between these two facts since each member upon admission brings a certain sum and contributes to the collections of the confraternity. But neither can we omit the fact that between 1758 and 1776 the confraternity hesitated between two attitudes: to form an elitist society or a more open one. Starting in 1779 the option in favor of a broadly open confraternity seems clearly taken.

In sum, the confraternity is democratized, the Revolution only confirming a mass movement. It seems that in the XIXth century energy flagged in spite of a rather remarkable renewal which shows clearly that the Revolution is still alive for some time as in an interlude.

The real change of religious ambience in Marlhès, then, would be between 1820-1830. If on the eve of the Revolution the religious and community vitality of the parish appears remarkable, we seem to glimpse the sexual dimorphism so characteristic of France in the XIXth century which

makes women the guardians of religion whereas the men stand at a distance or think of religious life differently. This evolution appears widespread, besides. Noting a general feminization of confraternities of devotion starting in the XVIIIth century, Marc Venard<sup>80</sup> declares:

“We could almost state the rule that the more the requirements of piety are stressed, notably in the practice of the sacraments, the greater the proportion of women in the confraternity.”

### **F. THE 'REINAGES'**

The confraternity register gives, written at the end of the volume and inversely, the list of ‘reinages’ sometimes spelled ‘rennages’, ‘renages’, ‘reynages’, from 1716 to 1790. Jean-Pierre Gutton<sup>81</sup>, who notes that this institution is attested to more particularly in the Massif Central, tells us that a ‘reintage’ is a sale in public and yearly auction of titles (of king, queen, but also of dauphin, dauphine, captain...) in the church or at its entrance. The offers are made in pounds but more often in oil for the sanctuary lamp or in wax. This is, then, a way for the faithful to acquire an honorific title and make a public act of devotion in exchange for a service for the parish.

There can be multiple ‘reinages’: in honor of such and such a saint for example. In other cases, the ‘reintage’ confers the right and the duty to organize the patron feast. But J.P. Gutton recalls that this costume evolves greatly and he thinks that at the end of the Ancien Régime the festive ‘reintage’ declines in favor of the devout ‘reintage’, under the pressure of the pastors who do not want “carnival feasts”, another name for ‘reinages’, which promote dances and various abuses<sup>82</sup>.

In the registers of Marllhes the ‘reinages’ evolve notably in the course of the XVIIIth century. Consequently, from 1716 to 1749 the names of the kings and queens of the feast of “Our Lady of August”, namely of the Assumption, are listed. Here and there, but more and more often as the century moves

<sup>80</sup> “What is a confraternity of devotion?” in *Confraternities, The Church and the City*, op.cit., pp.253-261.

<sup>81</sup> “‘Reinages’, abbeys for youth and confraternities in the villages of ancient France,” in *Cahiers d’histoire*, t.XX, 1975, pp.443-453.

<sup>82</sup> In his *Annals* Bro. Avit talks reprehensibly of the carnival feasts.

on, mention is made of the 'reinales' of Corpus Christi and its octave, signifying a transfer of the traditional devotion (August 15 is the national feast) to a cult centered more on the Eucharist, according to the spirit of the Council of Trent and also according to the purpose of the confraternity.

In many cases three or four persons organize the 'reintage'. At the beginning of the XVIIIth century the sums agreed to are high: around 15 L. in all. It is not rare for the king or queen to give 5 to 6 L., others more modestly, ending by giving a pound or two. We get the impression that later on these total sums decrease: 5 to 10 pounds. And the tendency goes to a single king and queen. This is reversed at the beginning of the term of J.B. Champagnat who notes in May 1780:

“'Reintage' to organize on the Sunday of the Holy Sacrament in 1781,

Gabriel Durieux, rector and Françoise Ploton des Vialletons: 2 L.

And Jean Favier de la Planche and Catherine (no name) de la Faye: 2 L.

And François Tardy and wife

And Jean - Baptiste Veyrier clkmr (clockmaker?) and Roze Marque and Jeanne Marie Marque: 2 L. All in the par(ish) of Marlhes this 28th May 1780”.

For the 'reintage' of 1785 there are four: three men and a woman, who give a total of 5 pounds. For the year 1786 there are ten, among them Gabriel Durieux, rector, and J.B. Champagnat: the only men. Each gave 1 pound.

On 13 June 1789 the treasurer who succeeds Champagnat notes that: “The king are” five men who have each given 18 sous. As for the queens, there are thirteen: eleven paid 18 sous; the two others each promised a pound of wax: the equivalent of 18 sous.

All told, those who took “charge of the 'reintage'” furnish 12 pounds and 8 sous and for a pound and thirty-six sols of wax. But eighteen people are needed to reach such a result then whereas fifty years earlier four would have been needed. Clearly something has changed in the behavior of the confraternity men and women, which seems tied to the fact that the confraternity has become very popular and has admitted people - especially women - of weak means and who must get together. The motive of devotion seems then to take over from ostentation.



## **G. SIGNS OF A RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION?**

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Thus is confirmed an impression given by the foregoing pictures: the confraternity loses its meaning as elitist and male club to become a reflection of the society. It is a small mental, social and religious revolution which explains in part why the Revolution, in Marllhes as in the French countryside in general, is well received. Here it is not the Enlightenment which causes the Revolution but a current of religious consciousness-raising stemming from the Catholic Reform and of which the confraternities are an important agent. In sum, the idea of equality is established by religion.

Jean-Baptiste Champagnat certainly adhered to this new sensitivity. Besides, it is during his tenure as treasurer that the 'reinales' become collective and that the men and women members increase. Especially, his attitude under the Revolution is explained in large measure by a deep adherence to a change which he would no doubt have wanted different but which he seems never to have completely renounced.

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## **III. J.B. CHAMPAGNAT IN THE CONFRATERNITY**

We know through the *Convers* register that Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, born in 1755, married in 1775, becomes a member on 21 June 1778. Becoming treasurer one year later seems rather surprising. His record of accounts seems approximative, but neither more nor less so than that of his predecessors. His spelling and even his grammar are very defective: he seems to think in patois and write in French, as it was spoken at his time. But his writing is that of a man used to holding a pen.

Though an account book is not the usual place for expressing intimate thoughts, we do find therein some interesting reflections. Thus on 10 June 1787 J.B. Champagnat closes his annual accounts with an "Amen. Everything comes from God." Which we already see with treasurer Frapa in 1760: "Adieu, Have a good day or have a good night. Everything comes from God".

At the end of his long tenure and ending the list of his expenses, Champagnat is a little more wordy: "In a little while I am going to leave my post

as treasurer, amen. The first of June 1788". And at the end of the chapter of admissions:

"I expect that these will be the last men and women I will record and I must turn over my records one of these days. The 10 June 1788. Champagnat, treshuror. The women's chapel (is not) rich but the last ones admitted will fortify it. We have been very reasonable. Amen<sup>83</sup>. God bless them for us."

These words, then, express a certain fatigue and the sibylline reflection on the women members ("we have been very reasonable") is tied to the list of eleven women admitted from 1787-1788 who gave 14 L. 12 s., whereas from June 1786 to June 1787 the 17 women admitted brought only 13 pounds and 10 sous. Among these eleven "very reasonable": his wife Marie-Thérèse Chirat who gives 3 pounds, a sum truly exceptional.

### **THE 1788 DEBT**

For the Champagnat couple the most difficult thing lies ahead, for Jean-Baptiste's accounts reveal a benefice of 212 pounds which, evidently, he does not have. The amount is important and the accounts book indicates it: 2 pounds (1 kg) of yellow wax is worth 3 pounds of money. Now, for four days' work a roofer is paid 4 pounds and the masons who rebuild the wall in the penitents' sacristy contract for 24 sols each per day, namely 1 pound and 4 sols. The sum owed by Champagnat is then approximately the equivalent of 200 days of artisan work.

Not the least explanation is given by Champagnat who, perhaps, was the first one to be surprised by this disappearance of confraternity money, caused, it seems, by loose management over nine years. He could have counted as given the amounts pledged that were not turned in and not recorded all the expenses incurred. But it is more probable that he somewhat confused his personal finances with those of the confraternity.

### **DEBT AND 'REINAGES'**

The democratization of the confraternity is perhaps not foreign to this problem, for J.B. Champagnat's accounts are cluttered with items indicat-

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<sup>83</sup> The original spelling and grammar, very defective, have been improved.

ing people, essentially women, who at the time of their admission pay nothing but promise a pound or two of wax or “organize the ‘reinage’”.

At the time of Jean Frapa (1765-1770), one of the predecessors, we find five payments in wax and one in lumber. These are clearly payments and not just promises. He admits only the man or woman who pays, almost always in money. It is at the end of Pierre Gourgaud’s tenure in 1775 that a slipping seems to occur: on August 15 three women are admitted who promise to give a pound of wax. Of the three men admitted two promise three pounds of wax and the third two pounds. We do not know if they fulfilled their promise.

On 18 June 1783 Champagnat records the admission of a couple who promised two pounds of wax. Of the eight other women admitted that day, seven promise one pound of wax or organize the ‘reinage’. Only one pays 11 sous 6 deniers in cash. On 13 June 1784 one man and nine women are admitted. The man gives 1 pound 16 sous. The women, except for one who pays 18 sous, all promise to organize the ‘reinage’ or furnish one pound of wax. And Champagnat concludes on 29 May 1785:

“They<sup>84</sup> did not make good on their promise. They clearly promised but they gave nothing. Amen”.

Again on 10 June 1787 of the eight women admitted five promise to organize the ‘reinage’ and three pay. In May 1788 a man is admitted but: “He gave nothing and simply said he did not have any money”. In June Champagnat declares of a man admitted gratis: “we asked him for nothing because he is not very rich”.

We see, then, a rush to the confraternity, women especially, because the admission conditions are more flexible, and perhaps also because the treasurer is having trouble keeping track of the many promises kept or not kept. Furthermore, in that part of the register which treats of the ‘reinaiges’ he recorded only some of them and belatedly: for the 1783 ‘reinage’, 5 L. received but, apparently, two persons promised 2 L. without giving them. On 13 June 1788 when he closes his accounts that seems to be all he noted. He

<sup>84</sup> J.B. Champagnat combines masculine and feminine.

then adds the 'reinales' for 1785 and 1786, and that is all. So there is no record for the 'reinales' of 1782, 1784, 1787, 1788 and 1789, namely 50 to 60 pounds.

### **A DEBT ADMITTED AND NEVER PAID**

J.B. Champagnat does not deny the fact that he owes this money and the register notes at the end of his accounts:

"I signed here below at the end Jean Bte Champagnat treasurer of the aform. Chapel having handed over the present book I find myself owing the sum of two hundred twelve pounds which I promise and obligate myself to pay to the said confraternity and to whoever is in charge a year from now this twentieth of February one thousand seven hundred eighty nine.  
Champagnat<sup>85</sup>"

But he will not hand in the money at the appointed date. On the same page of the register there is a second text admitting the debt and dated 1801:

I Jean Bte. Champagnat undersigned from the locale of Le Rozey town of Marlhès treasurer until now having handed in his accounts above dated from the twenty-ninth of February one thousand seven hundred eighty nine having been liable for the sum of two hundred and twelve pounds explained here above, and verified<sup>86</sup>, and today with interest amounting to the sum of two hundred and ninety six pounds, interest over seven years, in cash, amounting to that of sixty three francs and five centimes in banknote. Amounting to twenty two francs ten sols including the repairs made in the chapel the sum of thirty pounds remaining to be paid the sum of two hundred sixty three francs which I promise and pledge to pay to the said confraternity and the one in charge a year from today. This sixteen Messidor year nine<sup>87</sup> now  
Champagnat"

This text, apparently very confused, is explained by the text on the next page:

"I Jean Peyrard undersigned from the locale of Lallier parish in Marlhès declare that the annual sum of thirteen francs three sols to the capital of two

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<sup>85</sup> The text is then barred with a cross.

<sup>86</sup> Controlled.

<sup>87</sup> Namely, in June 1801.

hundred sixty three francs created and constituted to my profit by Barthélemy Champagnat from the locale of le roset does not belong to me having been created and constituted to my profit only in my quality as treasurer of the confraternity of penitents of the fore-mentioned parish but it is due and belongs to the said confraternity.

Marlhes 9 January 1823  
Peyrard”

This belated declaration of Peyrard tells us then that the confraternity is continuing to function in the midst of the revolution since he claims to have acted as treasurer, apparently in 1796, at a time when the capital and interests due rise to 263 pounds. Champagnat pledges, therefore, to pay back 13 F. 3 centimes annually, namely 5% of the capital.

In 1796 the banknotes are worth next to nothing. The creditors do not want to be paid in banknotes but must agree to make it easier for their debtors to pay in money, because it is better for them to recoup lesser debts that are worth next to nothing if paid in banknotes.

In all strictness Champagnat owes 212 pounds plus interest each year at 5% of the capital which also increases each year. This comes to:

1790	:	212	+	10.6	=	222.6	
1791	:	222.6	+	11.13	=	233.93	
1792	:	233.93	+	11.69	=	245.62	
1793	:	245.62	+	12.28	=	257.9	
1794	:	257.9	+	12.9	=	269	
1795	:	269	+	13.45	=	282.45	
1796	:	282.45	+	14.2	=	296.57	rounded out to 296 Pounds

Peyrard and Champagnat apparently considered an interest of 3.5% and not adding to the capital owed. This comes to:

1790	:	212	+	7.42	=	219.42	
1791	:	219.42	+	7.42	=	226.84	
1792	:	226.84	+	7.42	=	234.26	
1793	:	234.26	+	7.42	=	241.68	
1794	:	241.68	+	7.42	=	249.10	
1795	:	249.10	+	7.42	=	256.52	
1796	:	256.52	+	7.42	=	263.94	rounded out to 263 Pounds

In 1801 this amount is still owed but Champagnat seems to have acquitted himself of his interests either in money (22.5 F.) or by working for the confraternity (30 F). For the years 1797-1801 the interests go up to 13 F 3 sous, namely  $13.15 F \times 4 = 54 F$ . Champagnat pays 52.5 of that amount.

When the confraternity is reconstituted on 19 July 1801 the treasurers note that there is no money except the acknowledgment of Champagnat's debts written in the register. A little further the register states:

"On 10 January of the year 1802 we held a service in the chapel for Mr. Champagnat of the locale of Le Rozet who has not paid<sup>88</sup>".

In the middle of November:

"I received from Champagnat of Le Rozet the sum of 12 L for the interest on what he owes the confraternity and consider the matter settled for this year 1802: 12 L.

...

Likewise on 8 December of the year 1802 received from Champagnat of Le Rozey: 6 L".

And the register continues to give news of the Champagnats:

"Jean Bte. Champagnat<sup>89</sup> son was buried on 8 August (1803) and his service was held on the 26th of that same month. The 9 L. have not been paid. (p.11)... Mr. Champagnat of le rozet died on 13 June 1804 and his service was held on 1 July of the same year (p.12)... On the Sunday of the Most Holy Sacrament 1804 received three members who are barthelemi Champagnat of le rozet who gave 3 L. (p.13)... On 4 June 1804 received from Jean Baptiste Champagniat of le rozey the sum of 36 L. namely for a service held and for a little bit more owed by him and the rest for the interests on the bill owed the confraternity [but] stopping on the day mentioned above received here 36 L. (p.14)."

On p.17 pastor Alliroit writes:

"Champagnat from Le Rozey owes the capital fund 263 L. June 4

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<sup>88</sup> The very bad spelling has been corrected.

<sup>89</sup> Born in 1780.

The income acquitted until 1804 June 4  
7 years at 13 L. totaling 91 L.  
received 51  
remaining to be paid 40”

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#### **IV. POPULAR RELIGION AND REVOLUTION**

According to Bro. Avit “J.B. Champagnat had a great reputation, an incomplete judgment, a weak character and schooling rather advanced for his time”. He gives him the title of rector of the penitents, which he never was. He would have been admired and willingly called as expert to settle quarrels. “He was not mean our older people say according to their parents, but his weak character (under the Revolution) made him do some reprehensible things”. (Avit, t.1, pp. 4 and 9).

The contradictory character of these judgments is evident and it is difficult to understand how a person can at the same time have a great reputation for fairness and a weak character. In fact, the Revolution has blurred his image as it did for many others and the advantage of this accounts book of penitents is to give us a pre-Revolutionary J.B. Champagnat placed in a village society in which, though not exactly a notable, he does stand out, thanks to his schooling, as spokesman for the peasant world. He has a good - if not great - reputation and thus recognized authority.

Treasurer of the confraternity of penitents, he finds himself at the juncture of three areas eminently delicate to manage at once: money, religion, society.

For society we have seen that the policy of the confraternity is clear: we can enter for a very modest sum, an offering in kind, and even, if one is too poor, without paying anything. The confraternity, consequently, is invaded by the most common and the least fortunate peasant layers, namely especially women and, among them, even domestic help. We can think that did not please many notables. J.B. Champagnat is certainly not the only one to advocate this admission policy, not very selective socially, but for nine years in the post of treasurer it is clear that he adheres to such a policy.

As for money, Jean-Baptiste Champagnat is not in an easy situation: peasant himself and occasional merchant, he does not possess any important capital and has no experience in handling money as, for example, a notary would have. Besides, it is significant that the confraternity chose a young man for the post he occupies and that he remained there so long: the position must have been little wanted.

J.B. Champagnat, therefore, has to have money come since he lives in a society largely self-sufficient in which money is so rare that people often still pay in kind: wax for instance. But also, the little money they do have (the famous woolen stocking) is carefully kept and a peasant does not dole it out willingly. The result Champagnat obtained (a positive balance of 212 pounds) is therefore remarkable and shows that he had a real influence on the men and women members in spite of the difficulties which his accounts mention.

His weak point appears in the handling of this money which forever comes and goes and would require rigorous accounting, perhaps judicious investments, as well as a strict separation between his personal affairs and those of the confraternity.

However, he certainly did not practice usury as was frequent in the countryside, for he was far from becoming rich and Bro. Avit found no reproach on this score in the criticisms made in the XIXth century. In today's terms, then, we could define him as a good politician, a sociable man but a bad manager. It is true that the three qualities seldom go together.

In any case, the fact that at the beginning of the Revolution he is named secretary and clerk is not insignificant: the new municipality could have been seeking in him not only technical competence but also support for the confraternity and the class of small property owners. Besides, he accepted his nomination only on condition of being paid for the work (G. Michel, *The Obscure Years*, ch. VI), which is an acknowledgment of his mediocre economic condition, and at the same time a reminder of the camp in which he finds himself. And the cantonal elections of 19 June 1791 that must choose 7 delegates to go to St-Etienne and elect the constitutional pastors is held in the chapel of the penitents of the Blessed Sacrament.

On July 14 having been named colonel of the National Guard of Marllhes, Champagnat delivers in presence of the twelve guardians of the peace



he recruited then and there a rather standard speech on the victory of liberty, on despotism, and on the need to maintain the rights regained. Then they all swear to fight until death if need be against the enemies inside and outside (G.M., p.37)

The mistake would be to believe that in acting thus J.B. Champagnat is adhering to the new ideas and placing himself in opposition to his past engagements, for the Revolution achieves politically a democratization which the confraternity of Marlies had begun under the banner of religion and by admitting women.

J. B. Champagnat does not yet see that the religious policy of the Revolution is draining this continuity from the religious to the political. When the split Revolution-Church becomes manifest, he will remain no less faithful to this first vision at the cost of compromises that retrospectively we can judge severely but which are not without a certain basic logic. Like the mass of Frenchmen, Champagnat adheres to a sort of third party refusing both a return to the past and revolutionary extremism.

Until his death in 1804 he will probably feel he is a good Catholic and a good patriot and the members of the reconstituted confraternity seem to have thought like him since they celebrate his funeral service in spite of his political past and his debt still outstanding. His son Jean-Barthélemy will himself join the confraternity.

Therefore, to judge men like J.B. Champagnat one must avoid spreading, and especially transferring to the village, a vision of the Revolution too ideologized which will take shape only in the course of the XIXth century. Bro. Avit and Bro. Jean-Baptiste, not to say all the Brothers of the mid-XIXth century, will live steeped in this binary conception of the Revolution and their judgment on the Founder's father is strongly marked by it. In fact, the latter succeeded because, when it explodes, it is already fixed in many minds and in all levels of society, often less by the spirit of the Enlightenment than by an egalitarian aspiration coming out of the Council of Trent and of which the confraternities are not negligible agents.

## **DEVOUT SPIRIT, RELIGION OF THE POOR AND REVOLUTION**

It may seem paradoxical to link thus Revolution and religion but historians have already highlighted this relationship, notably in reference to Jansenism. The historian Maurice Agulhon has likewise underlined the link between penitents and revolution. As for Louis Châtellier, he has shown<sup>90</sup> how devout people, those in the Marial congregations in the schools, bourgeois or groups of more modest crafts, had little by little secreted a new Catholic society founded on promoting the laity and outlining a pastoral policy adapted to each milieu. Thus, at the dawn of the XIXth century we find a much larger Catholic elite, preoccupied with social and even political action: “like an announcement of what we will later call Christian democracy”.

In another book, *The Religion of the Poor*, Châtellier recalls this time the XVIIth and XVIIIth century missionary apostolate in the countryside, trying to turn village people into people who know their religion and are even able to pray and meditate. They also teach Christian justice made of arbitration, restitution and reconciliation. They announce “a religion in which the earth and human problems would have a bigger place”. And he concludes that, if in certain places and among the elite, notably the Jansenists, this strategy has led to detachment, it is in the zones of very intense missionary activity that Catholic fidelity has been preserved up to our time.

Marlhes is a typical village like those Louis Châtellier describes and when J.B. Champagnat serves as mediator between peasants, he seems to fit right into the Christian mores taught fairly recently by the missionaries and recommended by the confraternity statutes. Let us add, furthermore, that one of the means missionaries took to prolong the fruits of the mission was the establishment or restoration of a confraternity.

Basically J.B. Champagnat is one of those Christians who came out of XVIIth and XVIIIth century pastoral activity, followers of a sort of rural and Christian democracy which the Revolution seemed for a while to realize.

## **FROM FATHER TO SON**

His son Marcellin Champagnat, through him and his clerical formation, adheres to the same religion, that of devout people and especially the poor that became dominant in the XIXth century. What is he doing, in fact, in

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<sup>90</sup> *The Europe of Devout People*, Flammarion, 1987.

gathering Brothers if not bringing culture and religion to the countryside by a sort of confraternity of teachers?

We also find in him the defects and qualities of the father: a taste for action more than for calculation, in which he uses money to serve a cause, without much care of going into debt, but with, thanks to his bookkeeping status, much better help from well-to-do elites.

Like his father, who was never able to become a notable but stayed in an intermediate state between elite and common folk, Champagnat felt himself more auxiliary than leader. In 1816 while the other Marist candidates dream of the missions, he has only a secondary task in mind: the education of children. And he will need lots of time to accept himself as founder.

When we consider knowledge, we see in Marcellin this feeling of being only a half-scholar even though he studied a long time, which did make him learned for his time. But we would say that the paternal model remains the strongest.

There would also be a certain similarity in the matter of political engagement: at the beginning of his work Marcellin seems very imbued with the ideals of politico-religious restoration; in 1830 he does not have much trouble having people recognize that his work is not tied to politics and the singing of the *Salve Regina* which he inaugurates seems to signify that the Institute recognizes only one royalty: Mary's.

On one point, perhaps, Marcellin differs from his father: a certain sharpness in claiming his due. Is it the memory of family straits and the father's economic disappointments? But a thorough study of this matter is prevented by the lack of documents.

Consequently it seems to us advisable to nuance the Marist tradition concerning Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, who not only initiated Marcellin to manual work but also formed him to a dynamic religious life concerned with influencing his time.

Bro. André LANFREY



## *Document:*

# *Excerpts from the Accounts Book of the White Penitents of Marthes Kept by Jean-Baptiste Champagnat*

**from 20 June 1779 to 29 June 1788**

Reading the register is difficult because the spelling is very haphazard, sometimes phonetic, and there are very numerous proper names of people and places. We have chosen to give two samples of what J.B. Champagnat wrote: one in 1779-1780; the other in 1787-1788.

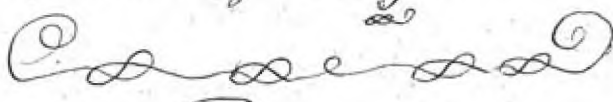
*N.B. The author has used bold print to designate the parts which are important.*

"Fol. XXIII Account of money received by Jean Bap(tis)te Champagniat from the locale of Le Rozey, treasurer of the said chapel elected by deliberation 13 June 1779			
<b>Firstly</b>	<b>Pounds</b>	<b>Sols</b>	<b>Deniers</b>
I received for my first collection 20 June 1779 this <sup>91</sup>	24	17	6
I received for the collection for the service of Jean Bati(st)e. Duporet (?)	5	4	
We received three penitents on 18 July 1779 Françoise Courbon who gave And Françoise Patouillard who gave here And Catherine Tampère here		18 18 12	

<sup>91</sup> Perhaps an abbreviation for "this" or "here".

1<sup>o</sup>  
premier page

Compte de Depense pour Jean Bapt  
Campagnial Du Lieu Du Rozej  
Tresorier De La Chapelle Des penitents  
De Marthea Elus par La Deliberation  
Du 13, Juin 1779



Premierement Livres sols deniers

Jey Donnez a M<sup>r</sup> Le prieur L'ne mesme pour 6 Dap  
ordr St Lante pour Jean Bapte Du poijet deuilley . 1<sup>re</sup> 10<sup>s</sup>  
 plus Jey Donnez quatre mesme a M<sup>r</sup> Le prieur pour des  
 penitens qui sont mort cy ou pour Tour Les Croixes de saint  
 plus Jey a portez Les chieuz pour La chapelle huit Livres  
 a 17<sup>s</sup> La Livres cela fait cy . . . . . 6<sup>re</sup> 16<sup>s</sup>  
 Le 1<sup>o</sup> octobre 1779  
 plus Jey Donnez une mesme <sup>M<sup>r</sup> Le prieur</sup> pour Catherine Jobina . 15<sup>s</sup>  
 plus Jey Donnez au breteur Gabriel Durieux le 20<sup>o</sup> juiun 1779 17<sup>s</sup> 6<sup>de</sup>  
 plus Les Durieux a Donnez a M<sup>r</sup> Le prieur pour mesme 3<sup>s</sup> 15<sup>s</sup>  
 Et celle Et a Deduire sur La somme cy dessus qui avoit  
 plus Jey Donnez pour faire aranger Le fies cy . . . 10<sup>s</sup>  
 plus nous avon fait Deux offices pour Les marieres  
 Du poijet Et francoise Durina Les Croze qu'il sont  
 Landez dans Le Courana Du moy Decr Et Leur office  
 fut au moy de sepembre 1780 Jey Donnez Les Deux  
 mesme a M<sup>r</sup> Le prieur cy . . . . . 1<sup>re</sup> 10<sup>s</sup>

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Total 742<sup>re</sup> 75<sup>s</sup> 6<sup>de</sup>

<b>Firstly</b>	<b>Pounds</b>	<b>Sols</b>	<b>Deniers</b>
I received for the collection for Ploton father who died 26 August 1779 and his service was held on the 29th of the same Month	3	19	
Plus for the collection for Catherine Fabrina this (added): Catherine Favrina was buried on 17 October 1779 (crossed out): 17 October 1779 this from a collection	6	12	
Plus for a service we held for Compat, from Les Chères, received this	3		
Plus from a collection this	1	1	
1780 (in the margin) plus for the collection on the first day of the year this around (?) 1770	6	12	
Plus for another collection on 16 January 1780 this	3	17	6
Plus for another collection on 20 February 1780 this	6		
I received for the collection for Louis Revier this	3	16	6
<b>The collections are a proved (approved)</b>			
<b>Total of</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Continuation of the receipts on 2 May 1780</b>			
I myself, called Champagniat, treasurer, received for the collection for the wife of Coupas, from Piron, this	1	14	
Plus for the collection of Jean Revier, from La Chaux, who was buried on the 4th of May, and his service held on the 7th of May for the collection this	3	4	
We received two penitents: one called Jean Favier, from La Planche, who gave a pound of yellow wax to the chapel and one called Jean Charrain, from Marlhette, who gave money		15	
From a Mass here They are received on 15 May 1780			
We received a penitent who is Jean Pierre Verdier, from Marlhes, on May 25, who gave this		15	
Plus I received from Jean Planchet from Bichy 17 s. for a pound of wax for a 'renage' on the Sunday of the Blessed Sacrament, this on 28 May 1780		17	

<b>Firstly</b>	<b>Pounds</b>	<b>Sols</b>	<b>Deniers</b>
Plus we received six women penitents and one man who are Janne Marie Murgue and Roze Murgue both from the locale of Pincet here		12	
Marie Moullin, from Marlhes, who took on the 'reinage'		6	
Anne Moullins, from La Frache		15	
Marianne Courbon, from Le Rozey		10	
And Françoise Dumas, from the locale of Les Croze	1	14	
And Pierre Bonnet, from the locale of La Touche			
All of them, par(ish) of Marlhes, they are received the Sunday of the Blessed Sacrament 28 May 1780			
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	
14th page. Continuation of the receipts of Jean Bte. Champagnia, treshurer, 20 May 1787			
We received two women who are Catherine Didier from the locale of Lallier who gave this		12	
And Marianne Vacher from the same locale who gave this		12	
We received eight women on the Sunday of the Blessed Sacrament 10 June 1787 who are Anne Vialleton from the locale of La Touche who gave this	1	4	
And Janne Vachier from Lallier who promised to organize the 'reynage' for her reception			
Toinette Ponchon from Lallier promised the same			
Anne Grégoire from Le Champ remaining maid at La Vidallière the same			
Marianne Monmartin who promised the same			
Catherine Abrial from Le Faily (Fail) who gave this		12	
Marie-Madelaine Tamet, from Montaron, wife of Mr. Jacques Crouzet, who gave this		12	
Fleurie Ambroize, maid of Jean Bte. Barralon, from La Vidallière who promised to organize the 'rennage' herself			
<b>Amen. Everything comes from God. This 10 June 1787, Champagniat treshurer</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	



<b>Firstly</b>	<b>Pounds</b>	<b>Sols</b>	<b>Deniers</b>
15th page fol XXX. Continuation of the receipts of Jean Bate. Champagniat, treshuror, on 17 June 1787			
We received two women this day, who are Anne Frapat, from Peubert, wife of Jean Peyraverney, who gave for her reception three pounds here	3		
<b>And Marie Thérèse Chirat wife of Jean Bte. Champagniat treshurer of the locale of Le Rozey, who gave likewise three pounds for her reception here</b>	<b>3</b>		
The 18th page Chapter of receipts. 12 May 1788			
And on the 2nd feast of <i>Quoque</i> we received Michel Morellon, from the town of Marlhes, who gave here twelve sols		12	
Plus we received Jean Bapt(ist)e. Peyron from the locale of Richiny. He gave nothing and only said he didn't have no money			
Plus we received likewise Françoise Favergon, wife of Antoine Jabrin, from Colombier, who gave ten sols		10	
<b>I figure that these will be the last men and women whose reception I will record and I have to hand in my accounts one of these days this 10 June 1788. Champagniat treshurer</b>			
<b>The women's chapel is not rich but the last ones we received will strengthen it we ave ben very reasonable. Amen</b>			
<b>God bless them for us</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Total</b></span>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	
The 19th page. Fol XXXII Chapter of the receipts of Jean Bapte. Champagniat treshurer. 14 January 1788			
I received for a collection on June 15 the sum of eighteen pounds fifteen sols here	18	15	
Plus the same day we received 12 women who are Claudinne Lherbrel from the locale of Pinasse, who graciously gave here		18	
Plus Anne Favier, from Peubert, who gave here		15	
Catherine Chasse, from Le Play, gave here		15	

<b>Firstly</b>	<b>Pounds</b>	<b>Sols</b>	<b>Deniers</b>
Marie Padel, from Le Combaux, gave		14	
Jeanne Grangier, from Lallier, who gave here		12	
Marianne Grangier her sister here		12	
Catherine Nayme, living in the village of Lallier, and he declared her in charge of the 'renage' mentioned and to be organized the Sunday of the Blessed Sacrament in the year 1789			
Marie Tamel, from Le Play, who gave here		15	
<b>This page amounts to twenty three pounds sixteen sols</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	
Twentieth page, continuation of the receipts of Jean Bte Champagniat treshurer elected by deliberation on 13 June 1779			
From 15 June 1788 We received Marianne Courbon, wife of Jean Padel, from Le Play, who graciously gave one pound four sols here	1	4	
Plus received the same day Jeanne Cheynnet from the locale of La Peyrinière who gave eighteen sols here		18	
Plus received Marianne Moullin, from Le Play, who gave fifteen sols here		15	
Plus we received the same day Catherine Viallette, from the town of Marlhès, gratis, we asked her for nothing because he is not very rich			
Plus we held a service which Mathieu Coupat, from Les Cheize, had a service for the dead said and he paid for it the same day. He gave three pounds fourteen sols on 22 June 1788 here	3	14	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	
Twenty first page, Fol XXXIII. Continuation of the receipts of Jean Bte. Champagniat treshurer elected by deliberation on 13 June 1779			
From 24 June 1788 I received for the collection on the day of the St. John the Baptist the sum of twenty five pounds here	25		

Firstly	Pounds	Sols	Deniers
Plus I received from Jean Bapte. Epalle, from Peubert, treshurer with me, he turned over to me twenty five pounds which he had in hand (otherwise?) which he had received from several here	25		
Received the above sum on 29th June 1788			
<p><b>I Jean Bte. Champagniat, undersigned here at the end, treasurer of the said Chapel having handed over the present book I find myself owing the sum of two hundred twelve pounds which I promise and obligate myself to pay to the said confraternity and the one in charge one year from now this twenty second of February one thousand seven hundred eighty nine.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Champagniat</b></p>			
<p><b>I Jean Bte. Champagniat undersigned from the locale of le rozey town of Marlhés until now treshurer having handed in his accounts above dated from the twenty ninth of February one thousand seven hundred eighty nine having owed the sum of two hundred twelve pounds explained above, and verified, and today with the interests rising to the sum of two hundred ninety six pounds interest in money over seven years coming to that of sixty three francs and five in banknotes (?) to that of twenty two francs ten sols taking into account the repairs made in the chapel the sum of thirty pounds remaining owes the sum of two hundred sixty three francs which I promise and obligate myself to pay to the said confraternity and the one in charge counting from today this sixteen Messidor year nine (5 June 1801) here</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Champagniat</b></p>			
<p>Following page</p> <p><b>I Jean Peyrard undersigned from the locale of Lallier parish of Marlhés declare that the annual income of thirteen francs three sols to the capital fund of two hundred sixty three francs created and constituted for my benefit by Barthélemy Champagnat from the locale of le roset does not belong to me having been created and constituted for my benefit only in my capacity as treasurer of the confraternity of penitents of the above-mentioned parish but that it is due and belongs to the said confraternity.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Marlhés 9 January 1823 Peyrard</b></p>			
<p>Fol. XXXVI account of the receipts of Marcellin Riocreux, from Le Montel, treasurer of the penitents of the parochial church of Marlhés by deliberation on 15 June 1788...</p>			
<p>Fol. XXXIX</p> <p><b>We the undersigned members of the penitents of the confraternity of the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar erected in the church of Marlhés.</b></p> <p><b>That Mr. Jean-Baptiste Epale of Royon and Mr. Jean Granger from Lallier have been elected treasurer of the said confraternity on 19 July 1801 and took office only on 8 November of that year and found no money other than a promise agreed to by Mr. Champagniat of le rozet which is to the sum of two hundred sixty three pounds which is recorded on the register</b></p> <p><b>I approve the above: Allriot pastor; Durieu rector; Séauve, Barralon, Courbon, Chirat, Chorain, Epalle of Royon treasurer, Granger treasurer.</b></p>			



# *The Alirot Inquiry* (1790)

**Bro. André Lanfrey, fms**

The Departmental Archives for Le Puy have under the serial number 18 J a collection containing a very large number of documents on Marlhes going back to the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries. Among these a “State of the population of the parish of Marlhes for the year 1790” by “Fr. Alirot, prior and pastor of Marlhes”. This 85-page document, published in 2004<sup>92</sup> by the association of Friends of Marlhes is an exceptional witness to the religious, social, demographic and economic life of this parish<sup>93</sup>. The following study, based on a photocopy of the original document, aims at situating the Champagnat family in a global socio-economic context.

The bundle 18 J 1 gives necessary information on Mr. Convers, the one who collected all the documents stored. Born in St-Pal-de-Mons in the Haute-Loire on 14 May 1850, he studies at the minor seminary of Monistrol (1865-1866), then with the Marist Fathers of Saint-Chamond<sup>94</sup>. He earns his licentiate in law on 9 December 1874 and becomes a magistrate in 1877. He serves at least part of his judicial career in Riom, near Clermont-Ferrand in Auvergne. It is certainly during his retirement<sup>95</sup> in Montfaucon-en-Velay in the Haute-Loire very close to Marlhes that he starts to collect some ancient documents, among them the one we are studying.

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<sup>92</sup> Under the title “State of the population of the parish of Marlhes in 1790”. The introduction to the document insists on the demographic aspect and on the patronyms of the inhabitants. The publication did not retain a list of the poor at the end of the register.

<sup>93</sup> The Friends of Marlhes have just published a census of the population, made up essentially of photos of the inhabitants, entitled *Marlhes 2005*.

<sup>94</sup> There are numerous documents in the dossier on his studies at the school of St-Chamond.

<sup>95</sup> His letter paper states he is a “former magistrate”.

## I. STATE OF THE DOCUMENT

Each page has six columns and Alirot himself tells us what they mean:

- 1/ The name of the hamlet
- 2/ The name and age of each individual
- 3/ A cross indicates he made his First Communion
- 4/ A second cross means he was confirmed
- 5/ Indication of matrimonial status: "m" for husband; "f" for wife; "v" for widow, widower, or elderly never married
- 6/ Mention of economic situation and social status: "p" for property owner; "h" for inhabitant; "L" for tenant; "d" for servant; "r" for ribbon-maker; "s" for sabot-maker; "g" for granger or farmer.

At times in the free space the pastor adds details indicating profession like "assistant baker" or a status somewhat strange: "poor" for example... He ends on p.80 with a total of 2,724 inhabitants<sup>96</sup>. The last pages give a list of the poor: there are 86 names<sup>97</sup>, most of them with a number from 1

Jean Furelle	80			v.	.	.
Marianne Durand	81	+	+	m	p.	!
Jean Bapt. Champagne	47	+	+	f	.	.
Mari Therese Chirac	42	+	+	.	.	.
Mari-an Champagne	41	+	.	.	.	.
Sty Champagne	18	.	.	.	.	.
Anna Marie Champ	12	-	.	.	.	.
Jean Bapt. Ch	10	.	.	.	.	.
Margt. Noze	6	.	.	.	.	.
	37					
<hr/>						
Nozey						
Jean Pierre Champ.	3	.	.	.	.	.
Mercutio Champ.	2	.	.	.	.	.
Jean Bapt. Champ.	.	+	+	d	.	.
Jean Pochon	.	.	.	.	.	.
Sty Bourcier	24	+	+	d	.	.
Jean Fupa	43	+	+	m	?	!

to 4 which could correspond to the number of people living in the house. In this case there would be about 175 poor. Sometimes the reason for being poor is given: two people have been “crippled” and four others disabled, but we find 21 widows and 3 “spinsters”, namely women adults who never married. Nobody at Le Rozey is mentioned as poor. The proportion of those who in Marllhes live from hand to mouth, therefore, would be in a bracket from 3 to 6%.

We get the impression that Alirot drew up his catalogue by successive pastoral visits aimed at such and such a part of the parish. So, once the city of Marllhes was surveyed, he went to the hamlets in the East of the parish, Le Rozey among them, almost all located between 1000 and 1200 m.: that is to say the mountain slopes as opposed to the center and the West, most often between 900 and 950 meters.

### A RURAL SOCIETY

The parish of Marllhes takes in about 75 hamlets of very unequal importance. Not counting the city of Marllhes (about 330 inhabitants), we can break them down as follows<sup>98</sup>:

1. From 96 to 187 inhabitants (Le Champ: 96; Peybert: 101; Lallier: 187)
2. From 85 to 64: 10 (La Faye: 85; Le Monteil: 84...; Le Rosey: 64)
4. From 58 to 41: 10
5. From 26 to 38: 12
6. From 16 to 23: 9
7. Under 14: 30

Without mentioning it in his introduction, Alirot was careful in his statistics to separate by a small dash the “hearths”, that is to say the households of the parish which make up that number of economic and social units. And it is to the head of that “hearth”, in principle the husband, that he gives a title, unfortunately not very clear to us, because he is interested less in the assets as such than in the socio-economic status tied to the land. There would then be in the parish of Marllhes:

- 205 “property owners”

<sup>96</sup> A list of 93 names was added later.

<sup>97</sup> The list dates after the inquiry: a few poor widows still have their husband in the census. 14 names were crossed out at a later date.

<sup>98</sup> *Marllhes through the Centuries*, p.249. Certain hamlets have not been counted. My own count using the same source as Alirot often gives results somewhat different.

- 125 “farmhands”
- 112 “tenants”
- 82 “grangers” or “farmers”

The status of property owner seems to mean that the household has a significant amount of land. The grangers exploit land of a certain importance which is not theirs. Evidently farmhands and tenants have a less favorable rapport with the land: farmhands seem to own very little, whereas tenants rent some parcels insufficient to guarantee their economic independence. Thus, on 29 poor families and individuals whose socio-economic status I could ascertain, there are 15 farmhands, 12 tenants and 2 property owners<sup>99</sup>.

Be that as it may, we end up with a total of 524 “hearths”, namely economic units of various sizes. We can think that the 205 property owners and 82 grangers live for the most part in relative material security. As for the farmhands and tenants their status must each be much more variable: a few draw their means from relatively profitable crafts; the others, especially the “spinsters” and widows, barely survive at the edge of misery making ribbons, sabots, hired for the day... Two situations seem particularly frightening for these populations: the first years of marriage, when children in early infancy are a burden too young to work and the years of premature old age, when one of the spouses disappears and the children’s education is not yet finished. Thus, Jean-Baptiste Gautier from the hamlet of Malzaures, whose name is listed among the poor, is a 33-year-old “inhabitant” who has to provide for the needs of his wife and four children 1, 3, 5 and 7 years old. As for Catherine Vialet from Marlhès, she also is an “inhabitant” and declared poor: at age 50 she finds herself widowed with two girls 18 and 6 years old.

If we take a perspective more social and demographic than economic, counting couples and widowers or widows heads of households, the tally indicates 392 couples and 162 widowers or widows<sup>100</sup>, namely 554 hearths. To that we would have to add a certain number of households of persons living alone or having a somewhat special status such as sabot-maker, ribbon-maker, pastor or priest, Sisters of St. Joseph... A count between 560 and 570 hearths would be a reasonable estimate.

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<sup>99</sup> These are two widows, whose difficulties stem from their widowhood more than from an unfavorable economic situation.

<sup>100</sup> The Friends of Marlhès, *cp.cit.*, p.15, tally 406 couples, 48 widowers and 107 widows.



The population of Marlhès would come to about 2,700 inhabitants divided among households having on average 4.9 inhabitants per “hearth”. If we consider that married people number 784 (27.8%) and widowers 162 (5.7%), the number of children, young people and unmarried people would come to about 1,800, namely slightly more than two-thirds of the population. This is a young population, therefore, but we must not forget that people can stay “single” a very long time since parents keep their holdings most often until they die, preventing first-born sons from marrying even though often rather on in years.

Many young people are placed provisionally as servants. Alirot lists 186, most of them young. Some twenty of them, older, seem established in long-time domestic help. Sixteen ribbon-makers, men and women, are mentioned but actually that is an activity which women practice in a very large number of households. Alirot, then, seems to count only persons specialized in that activity.

### THE CITY OF MARLHÈS

With 320 to 330 inhabitants the city of Marlhès numbers some 72 hearths, namely 4.5 inhabitants per household, which is a bit less than the entire parish. 36 households have a father, mother and children. In 7 others a widower or widow lives with the family. 14 households, often less well-off, are headed by a widow. The property is divided thus:

- Landowners: 16 (22.2%)
- Farmhands: 22 (30.5%)
- Tenants: 22 (30.5%)
- Grangers: 3 (4.1%)

As for crafts, there is a diversity which clearly shows that Marlhès is a central hub: 8 sabot-makers, 8 ribbon-makers, 3 makers of dress and furniture ornaments but also three notary publics.<sup>101</sup> 2 bakers’ assistants, 3 cabinet-makers’ assistants, 1 tailor and 2 assistant tailors, the pastor and his assistant, but also an elderly priest, a blacksmith, 1 mason, 1 farm superintendent and 1 assistant farm superintendent<sup>102</sup>, 1 employee. A dozen of these specialized craftsmen live alone. There are 20 servants.

<sup>101</sup> One of them, very elderly, has retired.

<sup>102</sup> Both in charge of taxes.

The association of The Friends of Marllhes<sup>103</sup> single out a census of 219 inhabitants of the city population at that same time. This census lists 6 sabot-makers, 2 shoemakers, 4 café-owners, 2 carriage-men, 1 clockmaker, 1 merchant, 2 bakers, 1 maker of knife handles, 1 ribbon-maker, 1 wool carder, 4 suit tailors, 1 lace-maker, 3 makers of dress and furniture ornaments, 1 maker of woolen stockings, 1 mason, 1 carpenter, 2 blacksmiths, only 3 servants and 3 day laborers.

The most populated hamlet after the city of Marllhes is Lallier. Its 187 inhabitants are broken down into 38 households, headed by 23 couples and 13 widowers or widows<sup>104</sup>, namely 4.9 inhabitants per household. The property status is divided thus:

- Landowners: 17, including J.B. Champagnat (44.7%)
- Farmhands: 13 (34%)
- Tenants: 7 (18.4%)
- Grangers: 3 (7.8%)

There are 1 sabot-maker and only 5 servants.

This simple count significantly highlights the qualitative difference between the city and Lallier: the first has artisan crafts and service industries which explain in part the weak proportion of property owners. Lallier is nothing but a big agricultural hamlet.

## LE ROZEY

We can now focus our study on the place most dear to us: the hamlet where in 1790 Marcellin Champagnat has just finished his first year. Here is the complete list of the population:

<b>Name, given name</b>	<b>age</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Confirmation</b>	<b>Family Status</b>	<b>Social status</b>
Charles Frapa	29	+	+	Husband	Landowner
Jeanne Courbon	35	+	+	Wife	
Anne-Marie	1				
Marie Decelières <sup>105</sup>	10				

<sup>103</sup> *Marllhes through the Centuries*, p.154.

<sup>104</sup> Two situations are not clear.

<sup>105</sup> Child from a previous marriage, niece or orphan?

<b>Name, given name</b>	<b>age</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Confirmation</b>	<b>Family Status</b>	<b>Social status</b>
Alexandre Larcher	24	+			Servant
Louis Rivier	18	+			Servant
Joseph Diot	17				Servant
Marie Crouzet	18	+			Servant
Pierre Robert <sup>106</sup>					
Vital Bonnet	72	+	+	Widower	Farmhand
Pierre Bonnet	44	+	+	Husband	Farmhand
Annette Peirard	40	+	+	Wife	
Jeanne Bonnet	16	+			
Jacques Bonnet	14	+			
Jacques Pierre Bonnet	13	+			
Marie Bonnet	6				
Catherine Bonnet	4				
Denis Bonnet	1				
Claude Courbon	40	+	+	Husband	Landowner
Marie Sovignet	38	+	+	Wife	
Jean-Claude Courbon	34	+	+		Blacksmith
Joseph Courbon	32	+	+		
Antoine Courbon	26	+	+		
Marie Anne Courbon	37				
Jean Toron	42	+	+	Husband	Tenant
Marie Ferret	34	+	+	Wife	
Marie Toron	6				
Joseph Toron	2				
Mathieu Toron					

<sup>106</sup> Name added to the list later. It seems he was a servant.

<b>Name, given name</b>	<b>age</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Confirmation</b>	<b>Family Status</b>	<b>Social status</b>
B(arthélem)y Crouzet	48	+	+	Husband	Farmhand
Marie Rouchouze	39	+	+	Wife	
Anne Crouzet	16	+			
Catherine Crouzet	13	+			
Marie Crouzet	11	+	+		
Anne Crouzet	2				
Jean Baptiste Fuvelle	43	+	+	Husband	Farmhand
Marie Celarier	48	+	+	Wife	
Jean Fuvelle	18	+			
Marianne Ducros	61	+	+	Widow	
Jean Baptiste Champagnat	47 <sup>107</sup>	+	+	Husband	Landowner
Marie Thérèse Chirat	42 <sup>108</sup>	+	+	Wife	
Marie Anne Champagnat	14	+			
Barthélemy Champagnat	13				
Anne Marie Champagnat	12				
Jean Bapt. Champagnat	10				
Marguerite Rose	6				
Jean Pierre Champagnat	3				
Marcelin Champagnat	2				
Joseph Benoit Champ. <sup>109</sup>					
Jean Pochon		+	+		Servant
B(arthélem)y Bouvier	24	+	+		Servant
Jean Frapa	43	+	+	Husband	Landowner
Antoinette Celle	35	+	+	Wife	

<sup>107</sup> In fact, born in 1755; only 35 years old.

<sup>108</sup> Born in 1746; she is 44 years old.

<sup>109</sup> Name added later.

Name, given name	age	Communion	Confirmation	Family Status	Social status
Marie Anne Frapa	12				
Denis Frapa	10				
Madeleine Frapa	5				
Jeanne Frapa	34				
Jean Pierre Frapa					
Catherine Legat	21	+			Servant
B(arthélem)y Riocreux	30	+	+	Husband	Landowner
Marie Anne Courbon	30	+	+	Wife	
Jean Pierre Riocreux	10				
Antoinette Riocreux	9				
Jacques Frapa	35	+	+	Husband	Tenant
Françoise Bonnel	34	+	+	Wife	

The hamlet of Le Rozey has 10 “hearths” and 65 people, which gives us an average of 6.5 inhabitants per household, very superior to the average. There are 4 property owners, 4 farmhands, 2 tenants, and 1 granger. As elsewhere, therefore, the society of Le Rozey is very little homogeneous. Two families draw our attention: that of Charles Frapa who has at least four servants and that of the Champagnats who have two servants. In two of the families, one of them the Champagnats, a widower or widow shares the family roof, as is frequently done.

On the religious sphere we see that the age for Communion is late: after 12 years of age. A servant 18 years old seems not to have yet made Communion. Confirmation seems to be a sacrament for adults: it is not received before 25 years of age.

The age of the Champagnat parents is given erroneously: the father is given 12 years more and his spouse is given 2 years less. As for the children, their age is about right: in fact Marie-Anne was born in 1775 and is 15, not 14; Anne-Marie is 11 rather than 12; Marguerite Rose, born in 1782, is 8 and

not 6. More interesting: the census notes the presence of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat born on 11 November 1780, not dead in childhood as Marist chronology says, but at age 23. Finally, Joseph Benoît, born on 27 October 1790, and who will die at age 13, is added to the family list, which shows that Alirot took his census a bit earlier.

In 1790 the Champagnat family is in a delicate situation: 13 people, 8 of them children under 16 years of age. The oldest son, Barthélemy, is only 13 and cannot yet do an adult's work fully. The presence of two servants is explained perhaps by comfortable family conditions but also by the necessity to have workers.

### **THE CHAMPAGNATS AND THE CHIRATS**

We know that Marcellin's great-grandfather was born in 1683 in St-Victor-Malescours in the Haute-Loire, 10 km west of Marlhes. His son gets married in Marlhes in 1716. In 1790 14 people in the parish have that name without their coming necessarily from the same family.

In Marlhes there are Jeanne, 66, and Thérèse Champagnat, 37, both of them Sisters of St. Joseph. We know that the second one is the sister of Jean-Baptiste, Marcellin's father. There is also Anne Champagnat, 42, wife of Antoine Faure, farmhand, 33. They have no children.

In Lhorme an Antoine Champagnat, 18, is an assistant cabinet-maker or miller with Barthélemy Colombier, landowner. In La Frache Claude Champagnat, 43, landowner, and husband of Anne Sengland, 38, has two children: Marie, 12, and Barthélemy, 9. Madeleine Champagnat, 41, sister of Claude, lives in the family. In Lallier we find a Catherine Champagnat in the household of Jacques Murgues, 70, farmhand and widower with four children. We do not know her age and we can suppose she is a servant.

Basing ourselves on this list, then, we can reconstitute fairly accurately the members of the generation of Marcellin's father, 35 years old at that time: Anne [42], Madeleine [41], and Thérèse [37] would be his older sisters, and Claude [43] his older brother. Jeanne, 66, is their aunt. Marcellin's grandfather, therefore, would have had 5 children. The low fertility of this generation is notable, with women remaining spinsters or marrying late. Jean-Baptiste, with his 10 children, is the exception.

As for the Chirats, we find a Marcellin Chirat, 44, farmer in Marlhès, husband of Catherine Fraga. The household has 7 children 12 years old down to a few months old and two servants.

In Malcoignière Barthélemy Chirat, 49, brother of Marie-Thérèse, and his wife Rose Courbon, 36, have no children but take in a 15-year-old niece, Marie-Anne Roux. There are four servants: two men 25 and 21 and two women 18 and 15. Therefore, Marie-Thérèse Chirat, Marcellin's mother, would have two brothers. Marcellin, 44, is perhaps her twin brother. Rather unprolific like the Champagnats, the family seems more affluent.

The given names of the children of Jean-Baptiste and Marie-Thérèse will repeat a certain number of those of their maternal uncles and aunts, like Barthélemy, Marcellin, Rose... Though Marcellin is surrounded by numerous brothers and sisters, he has almost no men or women cousins from the Chirat side.

## DEMOGRAPHY

The example of the Champagnat family has shown us that the ages stated in the pastor's census are only approximate. Nevertheless it seems useful to use them to bring out the structure by age. The table then compares the populations of some of the most populated places.

Age groups	City of Marlhès	Le Rosey	La Frache	Richiny	Lallier	Monteil	Le Champ	La Touche
# of men	294	61	67	58	173	81	82	113
Ages (%)								
0-9	20	26.2	20.8	24.1	28.3	18.5	32.9	28.3
10-19	17.6	29.5	20.8	24.1	24.2	23.4	21.9	24.7
20-29	18.7	8.1	8.9	20.6	16.1	19.7	7.3	10.6
30-39	18.7	14.7	14.9	13.7	13.8	13.5	15.8	10.6
40-49	12.2	16.3	17.9	8.6	8	13.5	13.4	7.9
50-59	6.4	1.6	8.9	5.1	9.2	6.1	4.8	10.6
60-69	4.7	1.6	2.8	3.4	2.3	4.9	2.4	5.3
70 and +	1.3	1.6	4.3	0	0.5	0	1.2	1.7

Two demographic schemas seem to appear: one, that we could qualify as normal, is that of the city of Marlhes which sees the age groups decline rather regularly. The large hamlets of Richiny, Lallier, Monteil follow the same pattern just about. On the other hand, Le Rozey, La Frache, Le Champ, La Touche show a collapse in the 20-29 age group, which seems to indicate a strong emigration of youth, by marriage or taking up work as servants or definitive emigration. These last hamlets, furthermore, have a common characteristic: they are in the eastern part of the district, between 1000 and 1100 meters, namely the coldest zone.

In order to confirm this distortion I broadened the inquiry to all the hamlets located East of Marlhes, most of them located between 1000 and 1200 meters. I then compared them to a large sample of hamlets located in the center, to the West and even to the Northwest of the district where certain hamlets are slightly below 1000 m.

Age groups (%)	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and +
East of the parish 879 inhabitants	30.1	21.2	12.7	14.4	12.4	4.3	4.5
Center and West 785 inhabitants	23.9	22	18.7	13.6	9.5	7.1	4.9

The contrast is striking: the East of the parish, which has perhaps a birthrate above the rest of the area, undergoes a rapid erosion of the age groups 10-29, which shows that it is affected by an emigration of teens and young adults and perhaps a higher infantile and juvenile mortality rate. The rest of the parish could benefit rather largely from this emigration.

The parish of Marlhes, therefore, is not demographically homogeneous, the contour seeming to oblige the mountain people to emigrate at least temporarily, and a more stable population on the plateau. We can suppose without much risk of error that the economy of these two areas also has contrasts: the mountainside, too cold to cultivate economically, has to take up especially herding and forest exploitation. However, installing sawmills next to rivers is not easy because of the relatively slight slopes and especially because the soil is spongy in many places.

These general considerations are not useless for situating the Champag-



nat family since the latter seems settled at the far edge of an area economically rather unfavorable. Young Marcellin's departure for the seminary is part of a rather general mood of emigration in the area where he lives.

### **A CHRISTIAN LAND**

In this register of souls and bodies kept by Alirot information on religion seems rather skimpy at first view because of the great uniformity of the data. He does not at all indicate if everybody is baptized: that is too evident. At 13 years of age almost nobody has made their First Communion; at 15, almost everybody has. As for Confirmation, very few receive it before 25 but after 30 everybody has. Marlhes is typically a Christian land, like so much elsewhere in the XVIIIth century in France where historians note in many places the triumph of the Catholic Reform characterized by a level of sacramental practice and religious education never reached in the past.

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### **CONCLUSION**

Though difficult to reach, with a tough climate and an essentially rural economy, Marlhes is not a cluster of hamlets but a world administratively and economically structured by a city that has its own notary, pastor, notables, craftsmen, distributors and merchants. Furthermore, Marlhes is a transit station, secondary but not negligible, for travelers and merchants going from St-Etienne to Le Puy or the Rhône Valley. We have to note, though, the rather surprising absence of a medical doctor or surgeon, a schoolmaster, millers, butchers, sawyers... This weak specialization, due in part to the nature of the document, also reflects an economic activity in which the peasants themselves, by necessity and lack of financial means, take up numerous crafts.

In this world structured by Catholicism and very dispersed houses we are surprised not to find any chapels in the hamlets and only two priests to provide certainly heavy parish service since they have not only to preside at services but also visit the sick, anoint the dying, baptize and catechize the children. There again the inhabitants themselves also have to ensure a certain number of these tasks, for example Christian education. The Sisters of St. Joseph, in town, must have catechized the young and cared for the sick. The hamlet of Lallier has kept to this day a house of the blessed which

reminds us that Marthes must have benefited from the presence of a certain number of these saintly women consecrated to the education of girls and little boys while at the same time working manually, perhaps making ribbons. We are surprised that pastor Alirot does not indicate any of them.

One can also ask about Sunday practice. The distances, long for most of the inhabitants and particularly difficult in the winter, must prevent regular practice. Besides, even supposing two or three Masses, the parish church must be too small to welcome at least 1,500 “communicants”.

To sum up, pastor Alirot’s census reveals a territory deeply Christianized whose daily routines are largely unknown to us. It seems that on a cultural and religious level, and so too for the economy, people manage largely informally but productively. Contrary to the city, if almost nobody is rich and if many live on the threshold of poverty, there is apparently little deep misery because community ties are very strong.

Bro. André LANFREY

# *Grandeur and Decadence of the Champagnats*

## **What the Notarized Documents Tell Us**

**Bro. Gabriel MICHEL, fms**

*Tome XXVI of the defunct Bulletin of the Institute (1964-1965) had a series of three articles by Bro. Gabriel Michel (pp.466-476, 570-575, 675-680) entitled "Marcellin Champagnat's obscure years".*

*This relatively brief collection was gathered later in a notebook 21x29, 7 out of 182 pages published by the Motherhouse around the year 2000<sup>110</sup>. The exact title is "Marcellin Champagnat's obscure years. The Revolution in Marlbes, Loire, 1789-1800, reading archives". This is the result of the patient archival research of Bro. Gabriel Michel who in his account always interweaves general history, regional history and local history. But basically his hero is Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, Marcellin's father, minor actor in the Revolution, who tries to stay afloat in the midst of the political convulsions.*

*The article below, written long ago, and which seems not to have been published yet, takes up this research again and adds valuable complements which furnish us an important synthesis on the fate of the Champagnat domain. That is why "Grandeur and Decadence of the Champagnat Family Domain" would strike us as a more adequate title than the one the author chose.*

*Bro. André Larfrey*

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<sup>110</sup>No date of publication. Presentation by Bro. Henri Vignau, Councilor General.

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## I – JEAN-BAPTISTE CHAMPAGNIAT III<sup>111</sup> STARTS OUT

On 21 February 1775 Jean-Baptiste Champagniat (he has the same given name as his father and grandfather) marries Marie-Thérèse Chirat. Their marriage contract is dated February 9. Both are termed “honest”, an epithet characteristic of the bourgeois world. On both sides we have a family of “merchants”, social category which is not specified, for it must concern the selling of fairly diverse things.

In a region where weaving is already fairly developed this can mean ribbons or other cloth, and we will see that there are looms in the house. But since the newlywed is also a known expert for felling certain trees, he can also sell wood and livestock, like his forebears from La Mure in St-Victor-Malescours.

Can we evaluate the assets of the newlyweds? The wife’s dowry is noted in the marriage contract. She receives from her father Charles Chirat:

- 2,700 pounds
- + 100 pounds for wedding clothes
- + a beech tree (or the equivalent: 50 pounds)
- + a wardrobe made of pine or fir (or the equivalent: 12 pounds).

These 2,862 pounds constitute what the law of that time called her “legitimate”, that is to say what the parents owe their children. The legitimate rights of the bride’s father are evaluated at 70 pounds. The “surplus” of 2,862 minus 700, namely 2,162, comes from the legitimate rights of the mother, namely Catherine Pollet, her mother. Like almost all the marriages we will see, this marriage is under the dowry law and not under the community or “joint-spouses” law. This means that if one of the two makes bad business deals, the other nonetheless keeps his or her own belongings. This is a solution between rich families dictated by prudence<sup>112</sup>.

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<sup>111</sup> Spelling adopted by Jean-Baptiste. We will call him Jean-Baptiste Champagniat III in order to distinguish him from Jean-Baptiste Ch. II, his father, and Jean-Baptiste Ch. I, his grandfather.

<sup>112</sup> Under the dowry law there is no joint-spouses property at all within the marriage. Each partner brings his or her dowry and keeps it the entire time of marriage. In practice all acquisitions (they are called “acquireds”) made in the course of their conjugal life belong to the husband and must be used as he judges best. The patrimony (what the father possesses) consists then of: “what he brings” when he marries, plus the profits of the marriage (the acquireds), and that is what is passed on to the next generation under the name of legally legitimate paternal rights, with nothing given the wife unless the marriage contract stated otherwise: for example 500 f. in the case of Jean-Barthélemy’s wife, 200 f. in the case of Jean-Pierre’s wife. — After the middle of the 19th century people will lean more frequently towards the custom of “the joint-spouses reduced to the acquireds”. In this case each partner always keeps what they had at the beginning, but what is acquired during the marriage through work or otherwise is divided equally between husband and wife. Therefore, if the husband dies, the widow has, besides her dowry, half of the fortune acquired during the marriage. Psychologically this marks a turning point: relations are less patriarchal and more conjugal. The death of the wife will be important, not only the death of the husband.

Charles Chirat is there with his oldest son, Barthélemy, his “universal donor”, and they bring the sum of 1,300 pounds in cold cash. Besides that, they promise to pay the spouse the 1,500 pounds that are missing, in 5 payments of 300 francs per year. As for the 62 pounds in cash or in goods, these will be handed over before the nuptial blessing<sup>113</sup>.

That’s it then from the Chirat side: 2,862 pounds.

From the Champagniat side, Jean-Baptiste receives from his mother, Marianne Ducros, all movable property and real estate, names, rights, reasons and actions present and to come of this Marianne Ducros. Marianne’s older brother, Jean-Baptiste Ducros, is there and he gives away *inter vivos* everything his sister Marianne Ducros owns, with the newlywed, however, obliged to lodge and feed her mother, this duty not being left imprecise as is shown in the text itself of the act.

We cannot give a total for this dowry, but the Ducros family was a rich family from Jonzieux. Jean-Pierre, Marianne’s nephew, was going to act like a lord when he marries in 1783 and offer the church the princely gift of a bell of 320 pounds.

As for Jean-Baptiste Champagniat II, father of J.-B. Champagniat III, he had left his son “the entire heritage” by last will and testament on 3 November 1760.

We can consult this last will and testament, but it shows rather poorly what the new husband receives from his father’s side. The entire heritage of the paternal domain falls to J.-B. Champagniat III, a child of 5, and his two sisters, Louise and Marie-Madeleine, have a legitimate of 800 francs, a bit more than what Marie-Thérèse Chirat received from her paternal side. But since it is difficult to evaluate “the entire heritage” left by Jean-Baptiste Champagniat III, we try to see better from an inventory of the testator’s goods which is drawn up the same day as the last will and testament. Actually we do not get to see clearly if this inventory, drawn up on 3 November 1760, shows intense merchant activity or a Champagniat tendency to go into debt.

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<sup>113</sup> I would have to see the last will and testament, which I have not seen, but we can remember that under the Ancien Régime, contrary to the Napoleonic Code, the father can favor very clearly one of his children, in view especially of not dividing the domain, the other children receiving a dowry in cash. In general, though, the favored heir does not receive more than one-fourth of the fortune. That is a rule which is part of the statute law (Marlhes, like the South, is a region governed by statute law), as well as by customary law (Auvergne next door, like the North, is part of the customary law). The idea of preserving the domain undivided is also a way to protect the family: elderly parents and their unmarried children stay on the natal farm, under the protection of their older brother or sister who has received the character of universal donor.

If J.-B. Champagniat II had an inventory of his property drawn up, it is especially to have a notary control his many bills, and that when he dies his property is not put under seals, imaginary creditors claiming debts clearly paid.

The notary, therefore, describes the 25 bills that amount to 5,000 francs. Nevertheless, we do not know the value of the estate that J.-B. Champagniat III inherits at age 5.

The legitimate of the two sisters, however, lets us think that the Champagniat were at least as rich as the Chirats and in fact, when J.-B. Champagnat married in 1752, he had 2,400 pounds legitimately his, the universal heir being his oldest son Claude, from La Faurie. The 2,400 pounds must represent the legitimate from father and mother, for the father, J.-B. Champagniat I, is already dead at the time of the marriage. The 2,400 pounds of 1752 correspond roughly to the 2,862 of Marie-Thérèse Chirat fifteen years later, taking devaluation into account.

Specialists who want to look attentively at the contracts will be able to estimate the fortunes more exactly, but we can reasonably think, counting what Marianne Ducros brings, that the heritage that Jean-Baptiste Champagniat III will receive is not less than what his father had received.

Thus, therefore, the marriage of J.-B. Champagniat III with Marie-Thérèse would be a marriage of at least 5,000 pounds, which, when we refer to Maurice Garden's data<sup>114</sup>, would place the new couple in the richest 10% of a city like Lyons. This fortune is really not extraordinary, but all things considered it gives the newlyweds a starting nest egg which, if well managed, can develop quickly enough, especially in the merchants' profession.

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## **2. AT THE START OF THE REVOLUTION**

Jean-Baptiste Champagniat II, in marrying Marianne Ducros, had come to live with his wife or, if we prefer, in the house of her parents: Maurice Ducros and Anne Chabanolle who owned a domain in Le Rosey. Claude Champagnat, Jean-Baptiste II's older brother, would remain on the farm in La Faurie.

It is then in this house in Le Rosey that Jean-Baptiste Champagniat III is going to make his social climb which must also have been, for a brief moment, a financial rise.

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<sup>114</sup> Cf. Maurice Garden, *Lyons and its Inhabitants in the 18th Century*, Flammarion 1975.

In his *Annals* Brother Avit tells us that “his terrible cousin (Jean-Pierre Ducros) drew him into material matters from which he skillfully profited. His victim’s fortune, which older people evaluate at 80 to 100,000 francs, was severely dented.”<sup>115</sup> This remark is interesting, but it calls for a certain number of considerations:

- a) The estimates given by the “older people” consulted by Bro. Avit are collected a century after the events. Therefore, they easily have a certain mythologization. What they do translate, though, is an accurate idea: Jean-Baptiste Champagniat III was well-off, perhaps even rich, but more or less through Ducros’ fault, this situation sharply deteriorated.
- b) The money Bro. Avit knows is the “franc”, for the term “pound” is used less and less starting at the beginning of the 19th century, but the two words are equivalent.
- c) The big sums quoted by Bro. Avit are difficult to interpret. If we want to say that that was Champagniat’s fortune before entering into politics, we are talking about a considerable fortune. A better and simpler criterion for judging would perhaps be the “property tax” of 1791, if we can find it for Marllhes the way we do for La Valla, for instance. It could very well be, in any case, that when Bro. Avit was inquiring, people knew about this revealing document. Since it deals with income tax it can provide a scale of the size of the fortunes.
- d) But then we have to take into account the evolution of the banknotes. J.-B. Champagniat III enters politics, as far as we know, in June 1791. Theoretically he could have bought national goods, from that moment up to 1794, date when the situation turns against him. It is possible, then, that during this period he got involved in speculations, like Ducros, much more venturesome than he. But following the date when we evaluate J.-B. Champagniat III’s fortune, the value of the numbers is totally different. In a private document (Diana, Montbrison, not listed) we find a table of exchange for banknotes in Basle (Switzerland). Starting with a value of 100 for the banknote in 1789, we see this value fall to 68 at the end of 1791, to 18 at the beginning of 1795 and to 1 in November 1795. This is simply a useful reminder, but anyway there would be no sense in thinking that the “older people” evaluate the Champagniat fortune by a banknote worth 1, for then that would be talking for nothing.

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<sup>115</sup> Bro. Avit, *Annals of the Institute*, vol.1, A Hard Road to Climb, p.12, n° 41.

- e) However, we will see that Champagniat and Ducros were really victims of people who took revenge on speculators while speculating themselves.

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### 3. TOWARDS THE END OF THE FIRST PART OF THE REVOLUTION

There were, in fact, purchases of national goods by Jean-Baptiste Champagniat III as well as by Ducros. That was not forbidden. The immense possessions of the Order of Malta, the Carthusians, the priories, etc. were nationalized by Assembly decree on 2 November 1789.

Besides, this law had been voted in a bourgeois spirit, and at the suggestion of Le Chapelier, as capitalist as anticlerical, it foresaw that these goods would be sold in vast portions (14 May 1790). This made them accessible only to the rich, like the Ducros or the Champagniat. As Georges Lefebvre wrote<sup>116</sup>, “It is the hardest blow that the Constituent dealt to the revolutionary enthusiasm in the countrysides.”

But it is not worth being scandalized by it. The bourgeois, no more than the *sans-culottes* a little later, are not virtuous. They are looking out for their interests and it is useless to ask the foxes to leave the chickens alone if we allow the two of them to circulate freely.

So then, the rich buy some national goods. We suppose they pay the right price, but evidently the people in charge easily have priority. Now, the Champagniat as much as the Ducros become more and more the officials of the municipality and even the district.

There would be very much to research to find the acts of purchase that are not necessarily with the local notary. But the few documents we do know are enlightening enough. Several concern Ducros and one concerns Champagniat. Their date, when we match them with the degradation of the banknote, allows us to see that they were very bad dealings, ruinous for the seller.

Jean-Pierre Ducros, for example, on 23 April 1795 sells Jean-François Dupin a prairie of 18 “métanchées”<sup>117</sup> for 26,000 pounds, and this sum is so ridiculous that later Widow Ducros will obtain, between 1800 and 1803, a revision of “more than half” the price.

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<sup>116</sup> G. Lefebvre, *La Révolution française*, PUF 1968, p.185.

<sup>117</sup> Métanchée=météree=1000 m<sup>2</sup>



In that case, why have sold in those conditions? When we know that Jean-Pierre Ducros is going to get killed by the Royalists two months after this sale, we could imagine that he is looking to sell as many of his goods as possible, to flee abroad for example. And that would be one explanation.

The document concerning Champagniat, though, is explained by a different motive. This concerns a resale in auction of a prairie of 9 “métérées” and a quarter which had been adjudged to him for 3,950 pounds on 20 August 1793 and which they oblige him to sell for 8,500 pounds on 8 Messidor Year III, namely 21 June 1795. Now, a banknote worth 100 in 1789 is down to 31 in the month of August 1793 and to 3 in June 1795. Therefore, in order to have the equivalent of 3,950 1793 pounds in June 1795 one would have to ask for 40,000. This is then a considerable loss, and if Champagniat acquired some other properties that he is obliged to resell in manipulated auctions, he can evidently be ruined. That is one way for the Royalists to take revenge on the Jacobins who, the day before, made the law.

It is clear enough that J.-B. Champagniat III's prairie is a national good (dependent on the prebend of St. Jean-Baptiste of the Temple). That Champagniat does not make this sale willingly is seen in the text as a whole. We recall that this prairie was adjudicated to him, but it is decided that this definitive adjudication will not take place until now, 8 Messidor, or rather in a 10-day week and a half (23 Messidor): time to organize an auction as fraudulent as seemingly honest. The organizers seem to thumb their nose at Champagniat: as much as your cousin, you had your piece of the cake when you were in power. Your cousin, we killed him last June. As for you, we are going to make you at least give back the goods acquired while you were in charge.

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#### **4. FROM 1795 TO 1804**

Thus paid in worthless banknotes, Champagniat could see his fortune melt away. Was he able to recoup something at his new promotion in 1797 when the Jacobins returned to power? On this score, we can consult another document: the marriage of Marianne Champagnat, his eldest daughter. She marries Benoît Arnaud who is almost the same age as Jean-Baptiste. The latter retook power and for a year now has been president of the Marllhes municipality. (Contract: 27.01.1799, marriage 29.01.1799). Let us

see then what dowry he can offer his daughter<sup>118</sup>.

First of all, this young lady of 24 has 400 francs “in her possession” which she must have earned by weaving. Then her parents give her 1,600 francs, plus a wardrobe worth 18 francs. The legitimate rights from the mother are estimated at 350 francs; therefore, the rights from the father come to 1,618 minus 350, namely 1,268 francs.

If we compare Marianne’s legitimate rights at her marriage with those of her mother 24 years earlier, they are weaker, though without a considerable difference. On the other hand, we would have to know how many living brothers and sisters Marie-Thérèse Chirat had at the time of her marriage in order to be able to compare comparable things<sup>119</sup>.

Likewise, we can see what is happening at the marriage of another daughter, Anne-Marie, in 1804. She receives from her parents the same sum as her sister: 1,600 francs cash in gold and silver (300 francs from the legitimate from the mother and the difference: 1,600 minus 300, namely 1,300 francs from the legitimate from the father). But this perhaps does not prove much when it comes to possible financial losses by Jean-Baptiste, because the legitimate rights must have been fixed for the children who were not inheriting the domain itself. After J.-B. Champagniat III’s death, there is an inventory of his goods. Each object is followed by an estimate, the total coming to 370 pounds to which is added:

40 loads of hay	480
of wheat	540
4 oxen + 6 cows + 1 heifer	1000
Namely	2390

There is in addition a study of titles, but, for the most part, they are those of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat II which we have seen above. As for liquid cash, it seems he did not have much and the years ahead reveal, alas! especially debts.

Evidently there is the domain and perhaps also a few “woolen socks”. But to guarantee to the children still to marry (Jean-Barthélemy, Anne-Marie,

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<sup>118</sup> Beginning with the Convention a decree of 10 March 1793 gives heirs a legal right to their parents’ goods. In particular, the parents will not have the right to disinherit a child who has opted for the Revolution. Therefore, the law is in effect surely in 1799. The Napoleonic Code will also support the equality of rights without making it obligatory. There can be a privileged heir who receives as much as 1/4 of the total, on condition that the others have an equal right on the remaining 3/4.

<sup>119</sup> As for the franc, it became normal again comparable to the franc of 1775: banknotes having ceased to circulate.

Marguerite-Rose, Jean-Pierre) or to supply in view of a vocation (Marcellin) an inheritance equal to the first two, we do not see clearly where Marie-Thérèse will draw in order to guarantee the legitimate rights from the father, unless the domain is sold.

## 5. MARIE-THÉRÈSE FACED WITH DEBTS

Jean-Baptiste Champagniat III's body was still warm when the creditors show up. In the two years ahead Marie-Thérèse must pay:

to Denis Faure	687.70	on November 22	1804
to Jean Fanget	324	April 1	1805
to Jean Crouzet	87	May 17	1805
to Madeleine Blanchard	40.50	May 22	1805
to Jean Lachal	200	July 1	1805
to Madeleine Blanchard	135	July 6	1806
to Jean Malescours	176	September 26	1806
to Jean Lachal	400	December 10	1807
to Claude Courbon	300	December 14	1807
Namely	2,350.20 pounds		

To manage to confront this, she had to borrow on 16 May 1806 from her brother Barthélemy Chirat 1,000 francs which are added to the 1,000 others which Jean-Baptiste Champagniat III already owed Barthélemy. Other creditors agreed to wait and Marie-Thérèse signed promissory notes:

to Terra	400 francs	November 26	1805
to Crouzet	300 francs	December 12	1807
to Frappa	200 francs	December 13	1807
to Souvignet	69 francs	December 13	1807

Truly, then, if Jean-Baptiste Champagniat III did die of an infarction, it is easy to see how anguished he was over so many debts. Did he hide them from his wife? And did she see them swoop down on her week after week like birds of prey: "Listen, Ma'am, I'm very sorry but I absolutely need the money; or I have here a promissory note which your husband signed,...let's not talk about interest..."

The years 1805-1807 must have been tragic. And we understand why

Benoît Armand, husband of Marianne the eldest daughter, said to Marie-Thérèse when Marcellin talked about the seminary: “He is going to have you make useless debts”. Meaning: you have enough already! Marcellin had said, “I have some money”. We are told he had put 600 francs aside thanks to his lamb business, but these 600 francs, even so, were not going to pay for 10 years in the seminary. It is not that the room and board were expensive: 10 months at 12 francs, namely 120 francs a year. In 1809-1810 the rate went to 15 francs a month and we see in fact that during his Second Year class (Humanities) in 1810-1811 the cost of room and board Champagnat paid is 150 francs<sup>120</sup>.

Be that as it may, at the end of 1807 (December 19) Marie-Thérèse rents for 6 years a building and garden which earn 200 francs a year, and then she makes her last will and testament (20 December 1807). She will die, though, only 2 years later. Like all good Christians of that time she pays for a certain number of Masses for the repose of her soul and she makes Jean-Barthélemy her universal heir, which gives him one-fourth of the total goods, but also the duty to pay one-fourth of the debts<sup>121</sup>.

As for the other three-fourths (of the goods) they will have to be divided among the same Jean-Barthélemy, Jean-Pierre, Marcellin, Marianne, Anne-Marie and Marguerite-Rose. This does not tell us the corresponding total, but we will see that Marguerite-Rose will demand 2,800 francs.

During the two years 1808-1809, after having paid the biggest debts, the family must have rallied together to get back on their feet, a bit from farm work, a bit from trimmings, for in her last will and testament Marie-Thérèse is termed ribbon-maker and when Marguerite-Rose marries in 1813 she also is termed ribbon-maker.

But let us allow Marie-Thérèse to die peacefully on 24 January 1810. She surely did all she could to correct a rather bad situation. We would have to look for the year her parents died to see if that gave her some part of the inheritance, but that is only slightly probable because she had received her legitimate when she married.

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<sup>120</sup> Cf. O.M.4, doc. 894, p.16.

<sup>121</sup> The case of Jean-Barthélemy who receives one-fourth of the total goods and one-fourth of the total debts agrees with the Napoleonic Code, but the documents I have been able to find do not show how the remaining children were able to pay three-fourths of the debts which must have been divided among them.

## 6. THE DIFFICULTIES OF JEAN-BARTHÉLEMY AND JEAN-PIERRE UPTO 1813

### a) *Jean-Barthélemy's marriage*

For almost two years more Jean-Barthélemy and Jean-Pierre are going to run the farm with, it seems, a great spirit of agreement, but no doubt not enough realism. On 11 March 1811 they must want to free themselves of some debts, because they sell to Claude Barralon:

1° The buildings in the stated place of Le Rosey: house, barn, stables;

2° A part of the garden located in the same place and above the barn and stables of the vendors, coming to about 2 ares 97 centiares [1 are=100 m<sup>2</sup>; 1 centiare=1 m<sup>2</sup>].

We are surely not talking here of the house where they were born, because we see clearly that it is not abandoned and that they continue to be its owners. We would have to study the description given in the notarized act. In my opinion, we could be talking about the mill in Le Rosey that the two brothers sell with some outbuildings. In any case, it is a rather small domain because the price given is 1,500 francs.

Jean-Barthélemy marries Marie Clermondon on 12 October 1811. She is from a well-to-do family in St-Genest-Malifaux. Other than a few savings valued at 72 francs, plus 487 francs, she has a dowry of 600 francs from her mother's side and 3,400 francs from her father's side, plus a suit, a wardrobe, a loom.

Jean-Barthélemy, on his side, can offer his spouse "half of the inheritance which will belong to him in case of death" if she outlives him. And if, in this latter case, she remarries, that will be turned into a capital of 500 francs. Evidently this does not mean that "half of the inheritance which will belong to him" is worth only 500 francs, but that finally there is perhaps there an indication that, once the debts have been paid, what would remain to Jean-Barthélemy would not be considerable, as we will see below.

In any case, behold, two months after his marriage he has to face a debt perhaps unknown till then. Jean-Baptiste Epalle, from Peubert<sup>122</sup>, seems to have discovered in the papers of his father, dead 7 years, an old story of a loan going back to 1781. That year Jean-Baptiste Champagniat III had received from Epalle the sum of 200 francs and had agreed to an annual increase of 10 francs which would oblige him to pay Epalle every December

<sup>122</sup> Usual spelling for Peybert in the manuscripts of that time.

17 up to a limit of 200 francs. These annuities had never been paid. It was a matter, then, of admitting again this debt now by having it start in 1811 and, of course, increasing it by an interest of 20 years. It was enough to be thoroughly discouraged.

On April 26 for the sum of 1,000 francs, they sell to Marie Chirat, their cousin who lives in Malcognière, land measuring 2 hectares 16 ares which they own in La Frache.

### **b) *Marriage cf Marguerite-Rose***

Little by little the house where they were born is going to empty out. One day in 1838 Marcellin Champagnat will remind his sister-in-law Clermondon<sup>123</sup> of the time when they were 13 or 14 in the house she lives in: parents, grandmother, Aunt Louise, 8 children, a few servants.

In 1813 this is not the case, but in the final analysis if we want to leave room for the children who will be born in Jean-Barthélemy's household, it is clear that others have to leave the house. Besides, Marguerite-Rose is almost 30 years old<sup>124</sup>: it is time for her to get married.

Her legitimate is estimated at 2,800 francs. They will be given her by her two brothers, Jean-Barthélemy and Jean-Pierre, according to an act dated 12 September 1810. The groom must be the oldest in the family, because his father promises him one-fourth of all the movable and immovable goods, which does not allow us to get a total for his fortune. In any case, for the Champagnat brothers that is yet another sum of money to find.

### **c) *Jean-Pierre's marriage***

Jean-Pierre marries within a few days of his sister, on 17 February 1813. His wife, Marie Ravel, brings a considerable dowry, 3,200 francs, plus a wardrobe, plus a loom for making satin ribbons and a suit, evaluated all told at 200 francs (600 francs from her legitimate from the mother and 2,800 francs from her legitimate from the father). In addition, an aunt promises to put her down for 500 francs in her last will and testament. As for Jean-Pierre, he can promise his wife, if she lives longer than he, the sum of 200 francs.

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<sup>123</sup> Cf. L.M.C., vol.1, Texts, doc. 180, p.364.

<sup>124</sup> An American author who published a study of the peasants of Marlies in the 19th century: *The Peasants cf Marlies*, The University of North Carolina Press, by James P. Lehring, 1980, gives a series of pictures for the period 1841-1880. The average age at which the women of Marlies get married remains very constant: 25 years old, as well for the daughters of landowners as for non-landowners. 30 years, then, represents a relatively advanced age, but not to the point of being exceptional.

## **7. THE DIFFICULTIES OF JEAN-BARTHÉLEMY AND JEAN-PIERRE FROM 1813 TO 1819**

And now Jean-Pierre and Jean-Barthélemy, still together, are going to try to each have a separate domain. So they sell lands to liquidate their debts, but at the same time Jean-Pierre buys land to establish a domain in Leygat, another hamlet of Marlhes in the district of Le Monteil.

First of all, here are the debts they pay up to 1819:

- 400 francs on 4 June 1813 to Lachal (part of the legitimate of their sister Anne-Marie);
- 600 on 3 July 1813 to Cheynet, Marguerite-Rose's husband (same reasons);
- 712 francs on 17 November 1814 to Lachal (same reasons).

Now here are the sales they make to find money:

- 18 July 1813, sale of 47 and a half ares in La Frache to Marie Chirat, Courbon's widow (200 f);
- 5 December 1814, sale of 80 ares (territory in Le Rosey) to Ruard (600 francs);
- 24 November 1817, sale of 1 hectare 60, plus 40 ares to Murgues (2,000 francs);
- 27 November 1817, sale of a woodland of 90 ares to Gerey: 1,000 francs.

On the other hand, Jean-Pierre buys these lands:

- 2 prairies in Le Monteil territory on 4 April 1816: 700 francs; (he will finish paying for them in 1821);
- 3 terrains of 3 hectares 90 ares in Le Monteil: 4,550 francs which he pays for that same day, 30 May 1819 or the next day;
- a very small plot of land: 12 ares for 50 francs on 27 December 1819.

As for finding money through loans, that must become difficult, because those who have been paid do not want to chance new high-risk loans. There is even one instance, on 9 July 1817, when Jean-Barthélemy is threatened by Jean-Pierre Terra who has a bailiff from St-Etienne intervene to exact payment, within 24 hours, of the lovely sum of 1,700 francs which Jean-Barthélemy had borrowed from him on 23 October 1815.

This is really to have a gun at one's head. As the two brothers always act in concert and Jean-Pierre has Jean-Pierre Riocreux loan him 1,700 francs on 17 September of that same year, we can think that the two brothers must have looked for every means to get out of this bad plight. As we see that on 6 September 1817 Jean-Pierre's spouse receives precisely 1,700 francs

from her legitimate, she is the one, surely, who this time saved the situation. And it is quite probable also that that is the moment when this story told in the life of Marcellin Champagnat takes place: "One of his brothers, finding himself in great need, came to see him and begged him importunately to loan him a sum of money," that Marcellin gave in, but the brother had scarcely left when Marcellin sent somebody to reclaim the sum<sup>125</sup>.

In fact, Marcellin started his congregation on 2 January 1817. His community has no resources, and, furthermore, he is taking care of some orphans. Marcellin, therefore, has to make an agonizing decision, but he decides in favor of those whom he has taken in charge. However, he has to follow the matter and a very short time later we see that he helps his brothers pay back another debt.

Among their loans there was, in fact, a sum of 600 francs owed two Sisters of Saint-Joseph: Anne-Marie Bertail and Louise Teyssier, to whom they had pledged an annual perpetual sum of 24 francs. In 1817 they still had paid nothing. Whence the worry of the two religious who, no doubt, talk about it to their fellow religious Louise Champagnat, the debtors' aunt, who talks about it to Marcellin who pays the three annuities on 17 November 1817. Besides, the act has a post-scriptum saying that Marcellin was then repaid by his brother.

These sad years of the Champagnats in Marlihes can even help explain the worries that Marcellin finds in La Valla where the reproaches made him are largely of a financial nature. Civil or ecclesiastical charity has to intercede: "Those Champagnats are all the same. The father died up to his eyes in debt, and the sons are all following in the same track."

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## **8. THE DIFFICULTIES OF JEAN-BAPTISTE AND JEAN-PIERRE FROM 1820 TO 1830**

### **a) *Difficulties in common.***

Let us now look at the years that follow.

In 1820 on September 8 the two brothers give 600 francs to Anne-Marie, wife of Lachal, to complete the rest of her legitimate rights. On April 17 they give 1,929.25 francs to their sister Marguerite-Rose, wife of Cheynet.

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<sup>125</sup> *Life of M.J.B. Champagnat*, ed. 1989, p.385. Bro. Avit in the *Annals of the Institute*, vol. 1, "A Hard Road to Climb," p.8, notes that it is Philippe Arnaud who was sent to recoup the 500 francs loaned.



In 1821 on January 20 Jean-Barthélemy sells land measuring 30 ares to Gabriel Chalayer for 300 francs. Jean-Pierre is a witness. He no longer lives in Le Rosey but in Leygat, district of Le Monteil, as we have seen. It is part farm, part mill, as we will see below. It is to settle there, then, that he had bought a certain number of hectares in that region. On 8 May 1821 Jean-Pierre finishes paying for the two prairies he had bought in 1816 (700 francs) in this district of Le Monteil. Henceforth he is called farmer and miller. That is being poor. Is it being miserable? In any case, the debts have not yet been paid.

Until 1825 there are no outstanding difficulties for either one of the two brothers. On 4 September 1825 Jean-Barthélemy sells a bit of land to his cousin Marcellin Courbon from Malcognière for the sum of 100 francs. But in 1830 at the death of Marguerite-Rose, wife of Cheynet, the difficulties are going to get worse. While she was alive she perhaps restrained her husband, but now the blacksmith Guillaume Cheynet claims the remainder of the deceased's legitimate. The two brothers pay 1,150 francs and they are notified that there are still 2,000 francs due the children of the deceased.

Anguish from debts starts over again, therefore, and on 9 April 1832 we see the two brothers borrow 1,000 francs from Marcellin Brunon. And then unforeseen debts surface anew. A Jean-Pierre Farizon from Riotord remembers that Jean-Baptiste Champagniat III had given him a promissory note 30 years before. He lost the note, but the notary has a copy and the debt is real. So Farizon comes and makes his claim on 28 August 1833. The two brothers must have the impression that they will never get out from under. Barthélemy's wife seems to have been more comprehending, Jean-Pierre's less so. And what follows is going to reveal that we see here only the tip of the iceberg.

### **b) *The end of Jean-Pierre***

Brother Avit tells us, without mentioning her name, that Marie Ravel did not make Jean-Pierre happy. We can imagine that he was rather crushed by life and his wife's reproaches. "I brought you a handsome dowry and you, debts and always more debts." Finally he falls deathly sick and several of his children as well. Jean-Barthélemy sees only one way out. He comes to the Hermitage to find Marcellin: "This time it is not some average sum we need. Jean-Pierre is sick, deathly sick; rather, they are all deathly sick." They talk with Philippe Arnaud who married Jeannette Patouillard and who lives on the spot where the rear of the actual Hermitage chapel lies. "You and your wife, can you take in Jeanne-Marie who is 14 and will

take care somewhat of her younger brothers: Jean who is 4 and Marcellin who is 3. There is also Barthélemy who is 17 but he is considering the religious life. He will be admitted among the postulants.” Philippe Arnould agrees.

Such is the plausible scenario at least, for in October 1833 these five persons come to the Hermitage. Two other daughters, Anne and Anne-Marie, are going to enter the novitiate of the Marist Sisters in Belley in December 1834. Anne-Marie, who is 15, is going to die there the following September. Anne will go back home and later will go live in Firminy where she is still alive around 1885.

Of the entire group that came to the Hermitage, Jean-Pierre will be the first to leave. He dies at 46 years old on 17 November 1833, a few weeks then after his arrival. Marcellin was not able to save his life on earth but at least he was able to help him find a peaceful abode to prepare himself for life eternal. Jean-Pierre will not have the deep sorrow of seeing almost all his children follow him to the grave in the space of 2 or 3 years. Jean is 4 years 10 months old when he dies on 28 March 1834. That is Good Friday. He is the first deceased buried in the new cemetery at the Hermitage where a few years later his saintly uncle will be laid to rest. Jean-Marie dies on 1 August 1834 at 15. Barthélemy has had time to make his religious profession. He dies, then, a Marist Brother on 17 September 1834 at 19. Three years later Marcellin dies on 8 December 1837. He is 7 years old. To die on the Immaculate Conception for this child who has just about reached the age of reason, that is no doubt an illumination for Uncle Marcellin.

“I who gave up having a family receive in my home at the Hermitage the entire family of the brother I love the most, and he who has the same given name as me enters into life eternal on a day particularly consecrated to Mary; isn't that a sign? Five have died at the Hermitage, one with the Marist Sisters. How to hope for a better preparation for life eternal?” For the man of faith that Marcellin is, life eternal is so much the true and only worthwhile investment!

Did Marcellin Champagnat give advice to Jean-Pierre's wife? In any case, the brother-in-law Guillaume Cheynet does not want to lose the money coming to him from the legitimate of his deceased spouse. He called a family council on 25 August 1835. And the court in Saint-Etienne decided to put Jean-Pierre's real estate in adjudication “in order to pay, from the money received, the numerous creditors of the succession”. A decision on 14 December 1856 decides the adjudication of the real estate definitively in favor of Denis Joubert for 12,375 francs.

Cheynet will settle the remaining accounts with Convert who is running the farm since Jean-Pierre's death. What is left over for the widow? No doubt her personal money, since she is not married under the joint-spouses regime? But 12,375 francs are not enough to pay the creditors. Guillaume Cheynet has foreseen that. "The patrimony of his pupils (for he was the tutor for Jean-Pierre's two children who are still alive) being absorbed and exceeded by the debts made by their father..."

In an inventory of Jean-Pierre's goods in 1835 we note that the house he had in Le Monteil is especially a series of three mills: 1 for wood and 2 for rye. We could be astonished that they waited two years to make that inventory, but the widow and the family judged that it was not worth the trouble. In fact, the estimated value of the removable objects will come to only 181 francs.

Before the liquidation Widow Champagnat will have to pay the formidable Guillaume Cheynet on 17 July 1836 the sum of 405 francs, "charge for the tutoring which the said Widow Champagnat has against the succession of her deceased husband". She still can, if needed, find 85 francs which she received from Favergon for the sale of a cow by Jean-Pierre before his death.

### **c) *The end c.f Jean-Barthélemy***

In 1837 Anne-Marie Champagnat, Jean-Barthélemy's daughter, marries Jean Margot from St-Victor-Malescours, village of Jean-Baptiste Champagniat I. The contract tells us that Jean-Barthélemy has donated to his daughter one-fourth of the property he possesses in the place called Le Rosey or in the neighborhood, composed of buildings for living, for exploitation, yard, garden, prairies, lands, plus furniture, etc. The mother donates one-fourth of her dowry rights which come to 4,000 francs.

The evaluation of the rural property is not made<sup>126</sup>. Is it in the same class as Jean-Pierre's mill (12,000 francs?). The removable objects, among them 3 cows and 1 goat, are evaluated at 325 francs and this time they evaluate the debts which amount to 7,540 francs.

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<sup>126</sup> It is always difficult to appreciate the value of a domain. The value of the lands is relative to their location, their distance from the farm building. In Jean-Pierre's case there was a liquidation because that became the only solution. But that was rare, the same for division. Even at the end of the 19th century only 7% of the cases end in liquidation or division. Everything possible and more is done to keep the domain intact. Besides, it must be noted that parents work almost always until death and stay in the house. That is one of the causes for prolonging celibacy: children have to wait until their parents are willing to settle a marriage contract. In the case of Jean-Pierre the liquidation allows the creditors to be paid, but also to save a minimum for his children who, like his wife, are "privileged creditors".

Jean-Barthélemy is going to die at the very beginning of January 1838, leaving a so-so situation, but which Marcellin appreciates honestly in faith. At that moment he is in Paris where he will have to stay until the month of April, and he writes to his sister-in-law on March 16:

“...My dear sister-in-law, the one you are mourning and whom I myself mourn, if he did not leave you a big fortune, he did leave you and your children the example of a very Christian life and this is how I like to remember that he was my brother...”<sup>127</sup>

It would remain to be seen what the widow did about the 7,540 francs of debts left unpaid. Brother Avit tells us that Jean-Barthélemy was obliged “to sell the paternal house to Mr. Courbon who assumed the debts left by J.-B. Champagnat senior.”<sup>128</sup> He must not have invented this detail, but it seems there was no such sale while Jean-Barthélemy was alive. We would have to study the acts starting in 1840 to see if his widow one day made that decision.

#### **d) Jean-Pierre’s enormous debts**

Jean-Barthélemy died in January 1838. Marcellin had to stay in Paris until the month of May. Jean-Pierre’s insolvency is announced on April 12. All the creditors must have come by for a few days because the report is 30 pages long. The number of creditors comes to 37. There are creditors privileged for 4,266.33 francs and non-privileged for 11,857.72 francs. Namely, a total of 16,124.05 francs. As the sum to be distributed (the sale of the domain) came to only 12,525 francs, the privileged debts will be paid in full, the non-privileged approximately at 2/3.

It is probable that in the village the news did not go unperceived. But whom could they take it out on? Perhaps they pitied as much as they blamed children who had not been able to redress a situation that people made their father responsible for? “He wasn’t a bad person,” Bro. Avit has the older people of 1884 say, repeating what their parents told them, “but he had a weak character.”<sup>129</sup>

Perhaps also it must be said that there is a certain love of adventure in the Champagnat blood. They have trouble keeping out of big business. Marcellin, more than the others, will be a big businessman, but only for God. Thinking of the bad business deals of his brothers he perhaps said to him-

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<sup>127</sup> L.M.C., vol. 1. Texts, doc. 180, p.366.

<sup>128</sup> Bro. Avit, op. cit., p.8.

<sup>129</sup> Idem, p.9.

self: in their place I think I would make out better. His successor, Bro. François, in any case quoted a reflection he made one day: he could have been a good pastor of a parish or also a good farmer; the Lord gave him another job, much harder, but he was happy with it<sup>130</sup>. In any case after having often courted catastrophe - counting men, he was ending his life at the head of 280 Brothers spread among 50 schools. Bit by bit he had built a very big house (the Hermitage) which was soon to become too small for a congregation in full expansion. He had had to find a lot of money, but he was dying leaving a totally sound situation.

Never had he been imprudent, but constantly audacious, confident, not in himself but in the Lord Whose will he had discerned beyond the fearful wisdom of many of our contemporaries. "People blame me because I'm building; I have to house the Brothers, for we must build or stop receiving postulants." People objected, saying he didn't have enough money: "I've always done things this way; if I had waited to have the money to start, I would still not have put one stone on another."<sup>131</sup>

So while the blood family of the Champagnats of Le Rosey was almost dying out in the region, the youngest one was founding a spiritual family thousands of members strong throughout all the continents. *Who leans on the Lord is like Mount Zion.*<sup>132</sup>

Bro. Gabriel MICHEL

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<sup>130</sup> Cf. Bro. François, Notes 1, AFM, 5101.310, original p.77.

<sup>131</sup> *Life of M.J.B. Champagnat*, ed. 1989, p.307.

<sup>132</sup> There remains the problem of J.-B. Champagniat III's character. Since he wound up with so many debts, it seems we have to think that he had either a lack of realism or a very great generosity. Lack of realism: that is always the accusation the wily peasant makes who is wary of the revolutionary and ready to mock him if he does not succeed. Generosity: it seems clear that the "re-sales" people had Champagnat make were ruining him in 1795, but once back in power in 1797 he had the opportunity to take his revenge and recoup his lost money. There have been studies made, perhaps, of the re-evaluations of properties, for it seems that that was not a case unique with Widow Ducros. I saw by chance that in Feurs there are operations like these. To be studied.



# *Inventory of Personal Property, Effects and Papers of the Deceased J. B. Champagnat*

Bro. André LANFREY, fms

Brother Gabriel Michel, one of the pioneers of renewal in Marist research, has a photocopy of the inventory of personal goods of the Champagnat family in his archives dated *15<sup>th</sup> vendémiaire, year 13*, which was September 7, 1804 a few months after the death of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, Marcellin's father which occurred June 13, 1804. This sudden and rather premature death – he was only 49 years old – may have prevented him from making a will. However, it is more probable that he went along with the customs of Marlhès: James R. Lehning has in fact noted that from 1850 to 1865, 67% of the deceased of Marlhès left no will at all.<sup>133</sup> This appears to him to have been a strategy which allowed family properties to remain as homestead for the younger generation, and the surviving spouse was thus able to remain as head of the family without having to share the property.

On June 14, 1804, the very day following the death of Jean-Baptiste, the family held counsel in the presence of the justice of the peace in the district Saint-Genest-Malifaux, so as to assure a legal tenure to that custom. Marie-Thérèse was named guardian of the minor children and Benoît Arnaud her son-in-law was appointed surrogate guardian, meaning he would eventually replace her. Born in 1760, he appears a mature, educated person at 44 years. It is easy to understand that the family would have entrusted that task to him.

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<sup>133</sup> *The Peasants cf Marlhès*, ch. 8, p. 77

Once this procedure was ended the family might have done no more and just waited for the demise of Marie-Thérèse Chirat, 58 years old by then. Apparently they decided to go through setting up a will and it seems the inventory of the estate was the first step. The confused financial situation of J.B.Champagnat may have been the immediate reason for deciding on this inventory, especially since close scrutiny of the documents would help to update the claims and debts he might have left behind.

This document, never commented on as far as I know, sheds much light on the Champagnat family life during Marcellin's adolescent years. It is written in the juridical terms of two centuries ago and thus is doubly archaic, often difficult to understand even for a French person. We shall begin by drawing some essential elements from it before commenting. The document appears in its entirety at the end of this exposé.

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### **THE CHAMPAGNAT FAMILY IN 1804**

The heirs follow here:

**Marianne**, born in 1775 (age 29), married Benoît Arnaud in 1799. In 1804 she had two children.

**Jean-Barthélemy**, born in 1777 (age 27) unmarried.

**Anne-Marie**, born in 1779 (age 25) recently married Jean Lachal on February 8, 1804:

**Marguerite-Rose**, born in 1784 (age 20), minor

**Jean-Pierre**, born in 1787 (age 17), minor

**Marcellin**, born in 1789, (age 15), minor

There were three adult children, two of whom were already settled and three minors. The mother lived in the Champagnat house with four children and the paternal grandmother who died in 1806. Clearly then, Jean-Barthélemy's role was to continue running the farm. The problem lay with the three younger children, especially the two boys who were far from adult status and who would have to settle elsewhere because the property was too small for three men; what is more, Jean-Barthélemy was of marriageable age.



## DEVELOPMENT OF THE INVENTORY

And so, at the request of Marie-Thérèse Chirat, the notary Jean Reboud was in Rosey, September 7 at 9 o'clock. He summoned two assessment experts: Joseph Souvignet and Joseph Faverjon, both farmers who lived in Marlhes; Benoît Arnaud was there as well.

The visit began in the kitchen which served as sitting room, work room and even bedroom: not only were kitchen implements found there but also a loom for weaving ribbons, three beds with clothes cupboards, a small cabinet used as a desk where documents were kept, a few receptacles and a clock. A worm-eaten pine wood kitchen cabinet held eighteen earthenware plates, eight pewter spoons and thirteen iron forks. All of which were valued at 132.3 francs, the clock (36 francs), the bed linen (35 francs) and various containers (19.5 francs) were the principal items.

The hearthside where the bread was baked, contained a kneading trough and a basin, probably for laundry. It was a pantry as well, with a salting-tub and drying cage for making cheese, a small wine keg, a butter dish and boulder for sifting flour and a few wood "saws". The lot was valued at 19 francs. In the cellar there was only a "small chest" for cheeses. In short, in this cold damp country, people worked, restored themselves, slept and preserved food stuffs all around the fire.

There were two rooms on the upper floor: one occupied by Marie-Anne Ducros, Jean-Baptiste Champagnat's mother who had a bed and wardrobe there. The other room, just over the kitchen and so a bit warmer, seemed as generally useful as the ground floor area. There they kept used trunks, a spinning wheel, equipment for making wooden clogs, a few scythes. It is also where servants might have stayed since their old clothes were found in a chest.<sup>134</sup> Although no wooden beds are listed there is mention of a warming pan used to warm and dry beds before going in to sleep; certainly a necessary item for unheated rooms. All of this lot was valued at 36 francs.

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<sup>134</sup> A census by the *curé* Alirot in 1790 mentions two servants at the Champagnat home. They were probably no longer there in 1804 when the father and three sons, not to mention the women, would have sufficed for the task. One could imagine occasional seasonal workers.

The living area was composed of four rooms on two levels. We might note that although there were three beds in the kitchen, only two had any kind of linen. Probably the Champagnat family did not have individual beds and so Marcellin surely slept with his brother Jean-Pierre. Nonetheless, the beds spoken of were real furniture made of wood and made up a mini bedroom closed off by curtains; this does not rule out the presence of more simple beds or straw mattresses which would have had no commercial value and therefore were not even mentioned.

The notary then went on to the annexed structure. In a *chałpi*, a small open shelter, there was a carpenter's workshop with three workbenches, saws, an auger and adze, various sized planes, hammers, squares, iron wedges and a wood turn... there was a store for tools used for more general tasks: axes, iron squares, scythes, and a grinding stone, all valued at 68 francs.

A bit further was an open shed with six carts, four of which had iron clad wheels and four ploughs, valued at 120 francs. Finally the barn contained at least sixteen tons of hay<sup>135</sup> and sheaves of "*bled*"<sup>136</sup>, most probably rye, waiting to be threshed during the autumn ahead. All of which might have yielded a ton of grain and could be estimated at 1020 francs. In the lower part of the barn, the stable housed four oxen, six cows and one heifer: 1000 francs.

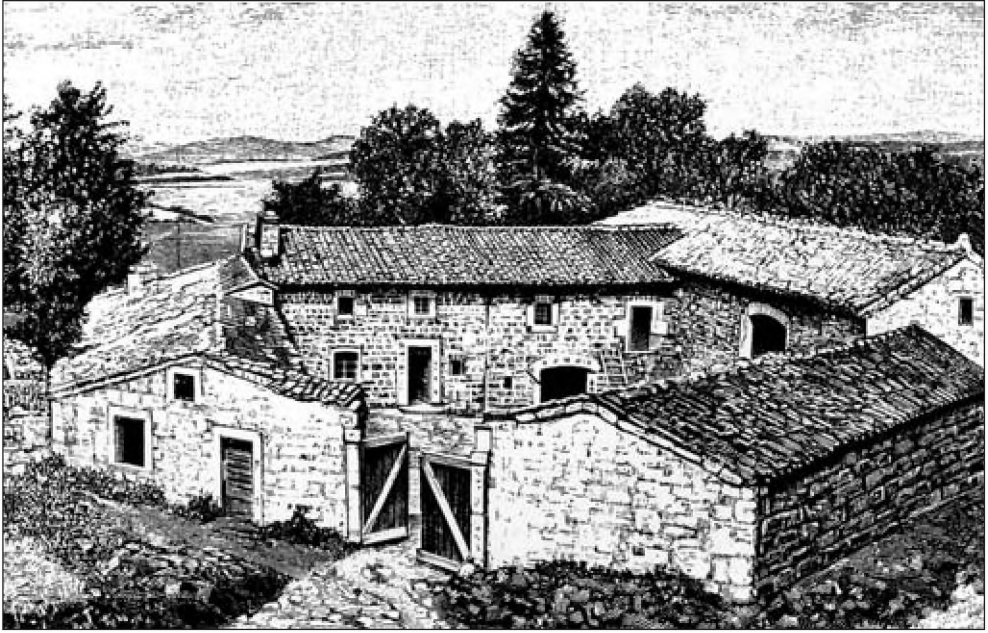
"As there was nothing else to stocklist", the notary went on to examine papers found in the kitchen cabinet. However, these contributed nothing more the Champagnat fortune. There is no mention of any debts which might have added to the property capital.

The inventory ended at seven in the evening. The total value of the property rose to 2391 francs at the beginning of September 1804, but this was just after harvest time and the reserves of hay and cereals would be consumed during the winter ahead. The non-expendable or *durable* goods hardly totaled 1300 francs, cattle making up the bulk of the value.

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<sup>135</sup> In *The Peasants of Marlbes* p.28, J.R. Lehning notes that more than two hectares of hay is needed to feed a cow all winter, and harvest nets 18 to 22 quintals per hectare. If we agree that 40 quintals of hay are needed per cow, or 4 tons of hay, the Champagnat family had enough to feed four cows. In fact they had eight cows and so their provisions were insufficient. We can suppose an average produce of 20 quintals per hectare and estimate they must then have had about 8 hectares of meadows.

<sup>136</sup> A term meaning "cereals". J.M. Lehning, *cp.cit.*p.10, indicated a yield of 6.5 hectolitres of rye per hectare at St.Genest. Maifaux in 1837. The reserve of "*bled*" would then be the production of about 1.5 ha of meadow.



Marcellin's house

### Signs of poverty

Everything indicates that the Champagnat family was of a modest situation although not poor. The inventory constantly uses depreciative terms referring to the articles reviewed: the kitchen table and bed linen are worn; the buffet is worm-eaten, dishes are cracked, the wood saws are badly worn; three of the four chests stored on the upper level are only good for fire-wood.... As for the tools: three of the four scythes are completely worn, the three carpenters benches, three pick axes and five axes are dull and useless... Even the harvest was in a bad state: half of the hay was "almost rotted" because of the summer's bad weather and the cereal was as bad for the same reason. A small chest which appears almost new and a somewhat new scythe hardly compensated for the general shabbiness everywhere.

A few less conspicuous signs confirmed this impression: thus the furniture, except for the table top of hard wood were not of any worthwhile wood species like chestnut, oak or walnut but of pine or fir<sup>137</sup>. The cutlery

<sup>137</sup> Quite ordinary species of that area.

was pewter or iron. There were eighteen earthenware plates all right, but most of the dishes were crocks of rough earthenware and the few bowls were mostly cracked. The linen and children's clothing was not evaluated probably because they were seen as personal belongings.

One noted as well the absence of significant furnishings: no mirror, not one book. There is no mention at all of any religious object. This may be for the same reason as the clothing: they are personal or symbolic goods and therefore would not enter into any eventual sharing. Finally, there was only one superfluous object of any value in that house: the clock.

### **Self sufficiency**

This poverty was not destitution. The house seems to have had domestic servants, at least seasonal ones, and the family was able to feed them. There was milk from six cows which went into butter and cheese<sup>138</sup>. Even the cereal yield albeit of inferior quality, at least provided bread which was baked in the kitchen oven. They surely had a kitchen garden, though no mention is made of potatoes; perhaps because the harvest was still to come, the cellar was empty.

As for the animals, the notary recorded a farmyard, where the open shed sheltering the carts was found but there is no mention at all of any poultry, since these undoubtedly would have had no value worth mentioning. More surprising is the absence of any pig on the list. What's more, despite all that we know about Marcellin as a very young lad having raised sheep, there is no mention of sheep. Yet, the presence of a "wheel used to make spools" in the house would suggest that they may have spun wool<sup>139</sup>. In any case, since there are six cows in the stable, we get the idea that it was a farm of ordinary importance and the milk produced was more than the family needed.

### **Many Activities**

Brother Jean.-Baptiste and Brother Avit did remind us that Jean-Baptiste Champagnat ran one or two mills at a fair distance from the house. Since

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<sup>138</sup> J.M.Lehning, op.cit. remarks that in the second half of the XIX<sup>th</sup> Century, four cows and 5 hectares of meadow would yield one "*biche*" (container) of 12.5 liters of milk. These six cows owned by the Champagnats should then have provided close to twenty liters of milk per day.

<sup>139</sup> It was more probably a spinning wheel. This implement would not have been used for spinning silk for the ribbon making since the silk thread was usually delivered ready to weave.

this is real estate property, quite normally it did not enter into this inventory. However, a miller usually owns special equipment such as bags, shovels... which are not found in the house and since no one went to the mill to make an inventory one may conclude that for Jean-Baptiste Champagnat this was a secondary activity<sup>140</sup>.

On the other hand, the presence of four oxen in the stable and six carts—four of these having iron clad wheels - in the open shed, seems to indicate the activity of a conveyer. The wedges, axes and saws also point to another complementary activity such as wood cutting. We can thus suppose that Champagnat transported different goods, probably wood, either for his own profit or for another person's gain. His carpentry workshop quite well equipped does logically point to a man dealing in wood, as do his tools for clog making. Besides, these activities of woodcutting, conveying, making wooden clogs and milling were all activities that could be carried out during the low farming season

In identifying J.B. Champagnat as “merchant” and “farmer,”<sup>141</sup> Bro. Avit seems to list these as two main areas of his activities but he does not specify what they really take in. In the *Vie (ch. 1)*, Bro. Jean-Baptiste declares that Marcellin's father “who carried on all sorts of activities” taught the boy carpentry, brickwork and “all other useful tasks needed to run a farm” but there is no mention of mercantile activities.

Their income was not only from the men's work: the farm must have produced a surplus of butter and cheese to be sold in the market places<sup>142</sup>. The ribbon weaving trade probably carried out by Marguerite-Rose and her mother<sup>143</sup> also netted some income.

In fact, this inventory clearly confirms the Marist tradition: the father was among the class of poor farmers of his time and his country.

Having said this, the inventory does invite us to correct certain aspects of his activities or at least to wonder about their importance. The mill work for instance may have been a side line whereas his activities as merchant

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<sup>140</sup> This is precisely what is suggested by Bro. Avit in the *Annals of the Institute*, t.1, Rome 1993, p.4.

<sup>141</sup> *Annales*, t.1 p.4.

<sup>142</sup> He went to St-Genest-Malifaux on foot every Tuesday.

<sup>143</sup> In her will dated 1807 she is identified as a *ribbon maker*.

and conveyor seem to dominate. Perhaps it was better to present the founder's father as a peasant, closely connected to the soil rather than as a merchant going about here and there stirring up enough money and enjoying a reasonable amount of happiness.

### **Economics, religion and politics?**

The Champagnat inventory does present some contradictions: we see the father owning a rather complete carpenter's workshop and yet the furniture was in dreadful condition. Another delicate question concerned the absence of books, whereas Jean-Baptiste Champagnat knew how to read and write and his wife could at least read. Both of them belonged to the *confraternité cf penitents* and the children had a religious education. What's more, Bro. Jean-Baptiste in *la Vie* (ch.1, p. 3) points out that Mme Champagnat would herself read the lives of the saints or have others read them and "other edifying books"; besides, in 1810, all the Champagnat children could sign their name.

This inventory, even if we recognize it as a document of juridical and economic importance, seems strangely devoid of religion or culture when we know that it was in this same family that a future holy educator was formed.

However, it is not impossible that the Revolution obliged families to hide any signs of religion like catechisms and devotional books<sup>144</sup>. In any case, the Revolution certainly made their diffusion rare. It is likely that because the religious pacification of 1801 was still quite recent and not really tested as yet, the custom of hiding signs of any religious connection would still be maintained or even that the family had not yet bought any recent popular religious publications.

### **From a country life to the seminary**

At the time of this inventory, Marcellin's destiny is in the balance: there is question of his entering the seminary despite the fact that he seems to have given a lot of importance to farm work and other business affairs.

A strange tradition in which Champagnat is set as the hero (*Vie, ch. 1 p. 7.*), does make us reflect. It is the episode of the two or three lambs giv-

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<sup>144</sup> This dearth of any kind of religious books or signs has been attested to at Lyon by Msgr. Mioland.

en him by his parents and which the adolescent Marcellin would have used for commercial purposes to save up a nest-egg of about 600 francs in the doing – an amount equal to two years' work for a common laborer.

Besides this “he was making plans to spread this business a bit further. One of his brothers was to join him; they were to combine their savings and remain together all their lives”.

Besides, in the tale of the visit by a traveling cleric recruiting candidates for the Verrières seminary (*Vie ch. 2 p. 16*), Bro. Jean-Baptiste notes that Marcellin and his brother “who were together at the mill” appeared!

Even if the two younger brothers of the family were closely linked, the story of the lambs is still too far-fetched to be credible. We can hardly imagine that Marcellin in two years time (age 14 to 16) could have accumulated a capital equal to almost half of the family property.

However, Bro. Jean-Baptiste does give details about the fierce determination to achieve which Marcellin had even as a child. We can take this fact as quite true since it does not flatter him and gives an idea of the economic relations within the family:

“He would not allow anyone to touch his personal savings, not even to buy his clothes which he claimed should be bought from the family coffers as were his brothers' clothes.”

We get the impressions that the two youngest brothers at 14 and 16 were becoming young adults able to take on a part of the father's duties and, following his example, they were doing business in several activities of which selling lambs was only a part. There probably never was a sum of 600 francs but that could represent the final amount Marcellin and his brother hoped to attain in order to set themselves up in a business. Their sister Marguerite-Rose, by working the ribbon weaving, had also saved up her own money in view of her marriage.

This conclusion is well substantiated by J.R. Lehning<sup>145</sup> who remarks that young people had two possible means to build up their own private sav-

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<sup>145</sup> *The Peasants cf Marlbes*, ch.9, p.90

ings in order to establish themselves: either working as domestic servants with other families or carrying on some activity at home, notably ribbon making for girls. Their net gain even after many years of saving hardly could reach beyond 300 F.

And so, even if the Champagnat family inventory taken at the father's death seems to indicate a rather menial existence, it does not give the full picture of the family riches since each member seems to have been managing his or her own personal capital outside of the property listed as fields, buildings and personal goods. What's more, an apparent cultural and intellectual deficiency is not as serious as might be suggested by the inventory since Marcellin was keen on studying.

### **Solidarity within the clan?**

It was apparently during Easter holidays 1804 and just a few months before the death of J.B. Champagnat, that a priest came to recruit Marcellin for the Seminary at Verrières. To gain a reasonable level of schooling he spent some time with his brother-in-law Benoît Arnaud who conducted an elementary Latin school at St-Sauveur-en-Rue. The latter had two reasons for taking in the boy: the two were related by marriage, but especially, Arnaud was the subrogate guardian of Marcellin and thus duty bound. Bro. Jean-Baptiste gives him the title of *uncle* (*Vie p.12*), which he was not in the strict sense but he did carry out that responsibility in practical terms.

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## **CONCLUSION**

Such an inventory set in its historical context gives us a picture of the Champagnat family at a crucial historical moment: the Revolution was over but remained quite present in the people's minds and mores; the Church had regained its influence and was once more offering a career to ordinary families. Clearly the Champagnat family had not gained any profit from the Revolution and was still functioning as it had under the former regime: an economically/politically structured unit whose mainsprings were solidarity within the clan and the communal activity of those who were not yet established. Its main assets were the physical and mental aptitude of the women and men who composed it.



For all that, this communal enterprise did admit some individual activities and revenues among the younger members. We can suppose this to have entailed very intense and continued labor. Trained within such a harsh system, Marcellin who may have worked as a domestic servant in other homes, had probably experienced life apart from the family and he set to work on his studies with the same determination as he had for physical work. We might even wonder if some of the intellectual difficulties he encountered were not due to a tendency of confusing physical and intellectual efforts.

Although the father's death in 1804 was a catastrophe it was partially compensated by the chance given the youngest son to continue his studies with little cost. He would have been covered by the clan as a long term investment by them and backed by his own quite substantial savings. This foresight seems to have been useful because much later on, Marcellin took in his brother Jean-Pierre and his children at the Hermitage. What's more, we can surmise that the absence of the youngest son was easily taken in stride on a farm where there were two other men.

The Civil code, published that very year 1804, provided for equal distribution of a heritage among heirs and was later to hinder carrying out the custom by which the patrimony was maintained by the eldest son. It would be a serious problem for the Champagnat family when time came for the distribution of the legacy in 1810; but that is another story. The 1804 disappearance of the father made it more urgent for Marcellin to leave home since the process of succession was beginning.

Bro. André LANFREY



# Document

## Champagnat Inventory

### 1804

“Year 13 of the Republic<sup>146</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> *vendémiaire*<sup>147</sup> at about seven in the morning, before us, Jean Reboud, notary public resident of the commune of Marllhes in the Loire department, and undersigned, at our study in the locality and *Commune* of Marllhes.

Appeared Marie-Thérèse Chirat, widow of the deceased Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, guardian of their minor children, residing in the locality of *Rosey*, a region of the said Commune of Marllhes, who declared that by a deliberation of the parents of their children and of the deceased Champagnat, held before the justice of the peace of the district of St Genest-de-Malifaux the twenty fifth *prairial* last<sup>148</sup>, she was appointed guardian of their minor children, that *Sieur* Benoît Arnaud of the locality and commune of St Sauveur was named surrogate guardian, that by the aforesaid deliberation she was authorized to initiate the inventory of personal goods and effects, foodstuffs and cattle, titles and documents left by the said deceased Champagnat, by the first notary she would call on, unless there was need of a special legal commission, and that the summoned notary would be assisted by two expert assessors; that wishing to proceed to the said inventory, she requested that we should go to the locality of *Roze*y, to the dwelling of her late husband for the purpose of carrying out the inventory in the presence of the said Arnaud subrogate guardian<sup>149</sup>, who should

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<sup>146</sup> This was under the Consulate of Bonaparte. The Empire was to be proclaimed December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1804

<sup>147</sup> September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1804

<sup>148</sup> June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1804

<sup>149</sup> Replacement *guardian*. The word “guardian” forgotten in the original sentence was added at the end of the paragraph.

go to Rozey and see that we were assisted by experts, this being, under his reserves and protests of neither harming nor causing detriment to her rights to the matrimonial dowry and conventions; she declared herself unable to sign.

We, notary aforesaid, having acknowledged the words and requests of the said Chirat widow of Champaignat and having accepted them immediately, went to the locality of *Rozey* to the home of the deceased Champaignat which we reached at about nine that morning and where we found the said Arnaud, subrogate guardian, who told us he was waiting there so as to be present and to assist at the said inventory. We immediately sent for Joseph Souvignet, local farmer of the commune of Marlhes and Joseph Faverjon also local farmer of the commune of Rozey, who, upon arrival, were informed of their mission by the reading of the present party. Then having received the oath which they took separately, promising to proceed to the aforesaid assessment without favor nor support and according to their conscience following their fairest knowledge, we began and proceeded in the presence of Arnaud and of the widow Champagnait as follows :

In the kitchen of the dwelling:

A table with two drawers, the table top of wood <sup>150</sup> , assessed at six lbs	6 F
Three spoons <sup>151</sup> for soup and milk products, one iron, two wooden, worn, estimated at one franc:	1 F
Two racks <sup>152</sup> and a shovel of iron for the fire, assessed at one franc fifty centimes	1,50 F
A frying pan assessed at 1 f 80 centimes	1, 80 F
Three iron cauldrons of various <i>containment</i> <sup>153</sup> , the first of about thirty bowls, the second of twelve bowls and the third of four, assessed at eight francs.	8 F
A loom for ribbon making, with equipment <sup>154</sup>	3 F

<sup>150</sup> Meaning hard wood and not of coniferous timber as was the rest.

<sup>151</sup> These were most likely ladles.

<sup>152</sup> These were used to turn the spit on which meat was cooked.

<sup>153</sup> Sizes

<sup>154</sup> Probably meant with all its parts and in working condition

A wood bed <sup>155</sup> of pine wood having two rows of green curtains, garnished with a blanket, a pillow, a <i>balçfière</i> (?) and curtains; the wood was <i>infixed</i> <sup>156</sup> , all non-assessed; the rest quite worn estimated at twenty francs	20 F
Joined to the bottom of the said bed was a wardrobe with a wooden clock box, all attached and not estimated. The clock in the wooden box was assessed at thirty-six francs.	36 F
Near the entrance door at the right were the following objects, also infixed: A small cabinet having a lock in which are found, according to the declaration of widow Champaignat, certain securities and papers dealing with succession, the description of which are set at the end of the inventory.	
A non furnished wooden bed connected to the cabinet with another wooden bed next to this, separated by a door giving onto the stable from the kitchen, this one furnished with a blanket two sheets, a <i>head rest</i> <sup>157</sup> , and a <i>balçfière</i> , all of which were more than just half-worn, estimated at 15 F	15 F
A buffet of worm-eaten pine wood on which were 18 earthenware dishes, eighteen pewter spoons, thirteen iron forks assessed in total at six francs.	6 F
A worm-eaten wardrobe having two doors and a key and estimated about 7 F. This wardrobe contained only children's clothes; these were not assessed	7 F
A shabby pine wood buffet having one door. Inside and under the door were stored heavy earthenware pots, a few cracked bowls all for household purposes and assessed with the chest at 4.50 F.	4,50 F
A two-door wardrobe with a drawer in the middle of pine or fir well-worn and estimated at 3 francs. Nothing was inside.	3 F
A well-worn wicker basket and an iron milking bucket, a <i>romane</i> (?) able to contain some 5 <i>quintal</i> <sup>158</sup> all assessed at nineteen and one half francs.	19, 50 F

<sup>155</sup> A wooden bed referred to an enclosed sleeping area all made of wooden planks.

<sup>156</sup> Meaning fixed and not movable

<sup>157</sup> Probably a pillow

<sup>158</sup> *Quintal* = one hundredweight

Having descended into the cellar next to the kitchen we found nothing other than a small chest for cheese. This was not assessed as it had so little value.	
In the fireplace at the rear of the fireplace was a kneading trough of fir wood and a salting bin for cheeses, all made of pine or fir and estimated at twelve f.	12 F
A tub on its stand <sup>159</sup> quite useless, a drying box for cheese, a small iron clad keg for containing wine, a butter pan small boulder <sup>160</sup> for the flour and a carder for measuring <i>bled</i> all estimated at 6 francs.	6 F
Two hand saws <sup>161</sup> for wood, one of which had no blade and the other was quite worn, estimated at 1 franc	1 F
In the room over the kitchen were four pine wood chests, three of which were useless except as firewood and the fourth quite small and new worth two francs.	2 F
A wheel <sup>162</sup> for spool-making assessed at one franc.	1 F
Inside the chests were the clothes of domestic servants	
Four very worn scythes and one almost new estimated at 7 francs.	7 F
A copper warming pan <sup>163</sup> estimated at 5 francs	5 F
A <i>granar</i> <sup>164</sup> of pine wood, quite worn out and estimated at nine francs.	9 F
Tools for making wooden clogs; ten pieces in all worth eight francs	8 F
In a room next to the one just visited and where Marie-Anne Ducros, mother of the aforesaid Champaignat lives, was nothing other than a bed and a wardrobe which the aforementioned Ducros said was her own ; it was not assessed.	

<sup>159</sup> Probably used for laundry

<sup>160</sup> A sifter used to work wheat

<sup>161</sup> The word saw may not be correct as these were surely only very sharp tools.

<sup>162</sup> Probably a spinning wheel to be used for loading spools which were wooden tubes or long reeds

<sup>163</sup> To warm and dry the beds before going in to sleep

<sup>164</sup> A chest for storing grain

In a <i>chapti</i> <sup>165</sup> adjacent to the bread oven, three carpenter benches, one of which was still equipped with its very worn clamp, assessed at twelve francs	12 F
Two hand saws assessed at 6 francs	6 F
Three dull pick-axes estimated at 9 francs	9 F
Five quite worn axes estimated at ten francs	10 F
Two augers (drills), two adzes, a pair of pliers and a hammer assessed at seven lbs	7 F
Two planes <sup>166</sup> et two larger trying-planes <sup>167</sup> and a <i>corssier</i> (?) estimated at five francs.	5 F
A square, a compass, a potter's wheel assessed at twelve francs	12 F
A grinding stone with its <i>bachat</i> <sup>168</sup> almost useless and worth only one franc	1 F
Three iron wedges <sup>169</sup> , three cycles assessed at six francs.	6 F
In a shed in the farm yard below were six carts, four of which had iron clad wheels and the others not, all dilapidated and estimated at one hundred twenty francs.	120 F
Four ploughs <sup>170</sup> , estimated at fifteen francs	15 F
In the barn, forty carts of hay weighing forty <i>myriagrammes</i> <sup>171</sup> half of which was already rotted by the heavy rainfall during the recent months of <i>messidor</i> and <i>thermidor</i> <sup>172</sup> . Assessed at twelve francs per cart it totaled four hundred and eighty francs.	480 F

<sup>165</sup> Also spelled "*chapi*"; an open covered hangar.

<sup>166</sup> A tool for planing wood made of a sharp blade and two handles

<sup>167</sup> A large plane having a long cylindrical neck and a handle

<sup>168</sup> Probably not a portable stone but a circular one with a recipient under it (*bachat*) for water and used for grinding all farm implements and tools

<sup>169</sup> A woodsman's tool, placed in a tree trunk and serves to split the trunk

<sup>170</sup> Probably only simple ploughs without wheels or other accessories judging from the low assessment

<sup>171</sup> About 10 kgs. A cart contained about 400 kgs of hay and so the forty carts equaled sixteen tons.

<sup>172</sup> *Messidor* harvest month (June and July) and *thermidor* hot month (July-August)

These bundles were not yet threshed <sup>173</sup> and could yield one hundred <i>myriagrammes</i> <sup>174</sup> of very bad <i>bled</i> <sup>175</sup> , already partly germinated; estimated at six francs for five <i>myriagrammes</i> thus totalling five hundred forty francs.	54 F
As there was nothing more to inventory in the barn we went down to the stable below and found there four oxen, six cows and a heifer all of which were estimated at one thousand francs	1 000 F
As there was nothing more to list but securities and papers we proceeded again to take the oath from the aforesaid Souvignet and Faverjon which they gave into our hands in the customary fashion, saying they acted according to their mind and conscience with no support or favor and according to their fairest knowledge of the facts. Souvignet signed and Faverjon declared he was unable to sign.  Signatures: <i>Arnaud Souvignet</i>	

Whereupon the widow Champagniat led us to a small cabinet in which were certificates and papers of the aforesaid deceased Champagniat; in her presence and before the named Arnaud, we proceeded to sort these: De creed these (?) – hereafter<sup>176</sup>, the others not being of worth were tied in a separate bundle.

- 1° Consignment of the will of Jean-Baptiste Champagniat in favor of Mariane Ducros, mother of the above named deceased Champaignat, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> Novembre 1760, classified and signed in the R (egister?) Me (Hon?) Lardon, Notary n°1
- 2° Consignment of (?) receipts (?) and documents of Jean-Baptiste Champagniat, first of the name dated 3 November 1760. Deed received from M. Lardon, classified and signed in n° 2.
- 3° Consignment of the marriage of the named Champagniat last of this name, dated 9 February 1775. Received from Hon. Lardon. Classified and signed as n° 3.

<sup>173</sup> Threshing was done with a flail. As it was time-consuming it was only done gradually.

<sup>174</sup> Therefore one ton

<sup>175</sup> The word «bled» O.Fr. referred to «cereals». It was most probably rye, as wheat would not grow at the altitude of Marthes.

<sup>176</sup> The meaning is clear: Important documents are described and the others set apart though some words in old French are difficult to understand.



- 4° Consignment of a receipt given by Jean-François Barrallon to Marianne Ducros W. Champagnat indicating the entry of 69 L (pounds) 19 to the capital of 1399 L. 19 *deniers* given by the named Ducros to the benefit of Marianne Robert and others by deed of M. Lardon.  
Classified and signed as n° 4.
- 5° Request and summons by the said Marianne Ducros against Marianne Bergeron and Riocreux, hired by Mouton, Sergeant, 4 April 1775. Registered and signed as n° 5.
- 6° Petition and ordinance bearing defense in favor of Marianne Ducros and the said Champagnat his son against Jean Antoine and Antoine Courbon, father and son, listed on July 4 1777. By employ of Mouton, Sergeant, classified and signed as n° 6.
- 7° Consignment of a sale's contract given by Jean Bte Fuvelle to the deceased Champ(agna)t last of that name dated 11 April 1780:  
Received from the aforementioned M. Lardon joined with letters of purification (?) classified and signed as n° 7
- 8° Finally consignment of the transfer carried by Pierre Ducros to the aforesaid Champagnat 11 January 1783. The deed was received by M. Diguaron, Notary, registered and signed as n° 8 and last.

There being no other certificates or documents to inventory we have left those described above as well as others, furniture, goods and effects, foods and cattle within the jurisdiction and guardianship of the said Chirat, widow Champagnat who remained thus responsible for giving account when asked by the rightful person according to the promises and submission required in such circumstances. The aforementioned Champaignat agreed by oath that nothing was hidden, stolen or diverted and nothing to her knowledge had been removed, stolen nor altered of the said deed and finality at the named location of Rozey the days, months and year above affixed at seven o'clock in the evening.

Arnaud signed and the said Champaignat, summoned and present, declared she could not sign.

*Arnaud Reboud*

Registered at Bourg Ar(gental) 30 Vend(émiaire), year 13  
Four francs forty centimes  
P.G.Valois (?)



# *J.B. Champagnat and J.P. Ducros*

## **Intertwined Destinies**

**Bro. André LANFREY, fms**

Jean-Pierre Ducros was Marcellin Champagnat's cousin, since the latter's grandmother, Marie-Anne Ducros, had married Jean-Baptiste Champagnat II in 1752. Ducros married Marguerite Châtelard on November 13 1783. He was sufficiently well off at the time to present a bell to the parish church on that occasion. May 21, 1789, Marguerite Châtelard, his wife, became god-mother to Marcellin the son of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, declared "trader at Rosey"<sup>177</sup>. We get the impression that Ducros and Champagnat, even before the Revolution, had family and business connections.

When the city of Lyon revolted against the Convention, May 1793 and there followed a siege and occupation of the city in October 1793. the Revolution took a radical turn since all the revolutionary forces of the Rhone and Loire departments were mobilized to subdue the Lyonnais people and their partisans. It is an era when J.B. Champagnat and his cousin Ducros were given the task of supervising the district of Marlhes by the delegate of the Javogues mission, concerned with the terrorist activities in the Loire. They were to arrest any opposing element and in particular all refractory clergy.

Such a commitment on the side of the Revolution certainly cost untold reprisals to Jean-Baptiste Champagnat. As for his cousin, more involved or at least less hidden than Champagnat, it cost him his life. He died June 3, 1795 in the prison of St. Etienne where he was held as a former terrorist and

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<sup>177</sup> See Gabriel Michel, *La Révolution à Marlhes*, p. 73

was assassinated by a group of counter-revolutionaries who attacked the prison<sup>178</sup>. According to the official document, Ducros was 26 or 27 at the time, which means he was born in 1768 or '69 whereas Jean-Baptiste Champagnat born in 1755 was already 40.

We are interested in these two cousins here not for political reasons but because their death brought about an inventory. Comparing the two documents, which were compiled just ten years apart, helps us to shed light on the economic position of the Champagnat family and raises a few questions about the development of the family fortune.

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## THE DUCROS INVENTORY

The inventory of furniture, personal effects, securities and documents of Jean-Pierre Ducros in the presence of his widow, of Jean Chovet his maternal uncle and his minor children, of François Sabot first cousin of J.P. Ducros took five days: 15 – 20 *messidor* year 3, i.e. July 3 – 7 1795, one month after his assassination. The document comprises a bundle of 31 pages<sup>179</sup>; the sum total of goods is estimated by the Notary at 37,457 L, 16 cents<sup>180</sup>. The inventory of household goods numbers 124 items. It then goes on to review the value of wood, sawed or cut, since Ducros seemed to have carried on intense activity in the sawing and sale of wood. Documents in the name of the deceased number about 120, such as receipts, deeds of sale...

Let us keep in mind that the Champagnat inventory required some 9 pages. The personal effects are grouped in 36 items and the papers only on 8 pages and it was done in a single day. The sum total of the Ducros effects is of no common measure in comparison to that of his cousin's 1300F<sup>181</sup>, the debts being far superior to this amount. These indications of a purely quantitative nature point to the fact that there are here two distinct socio-economic levels for each of these two men otherwise related and of very similar political color.

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<sup>178</sup> For more on these events see G. Michel, *La Révolution à Marlbes*.

<sup>179</sup> Photocopied by Bro. Gabriel Michel and entered into the Provincial Archives at St-Genis-Laval.

<sup>180</sup> A few errors were committed in this estimation.

<sup>181</sup> Excluded are the evaluation of the hay and "*bled*" since the Ducros inventory was in July, before harvest time and that of Champagnat in September.

The table below gives a global view of the two inventories and of their homes.

Location	Champagnat effects	Value	Ducros effects	Value
Kitchen	14 items	132, 3	1 - 40	1367
Cabinet	Not evaluated		41 - 47	600
Parlor			48 - 55	272
Fire place	3	19	56 - 63	115
1 <sup>st</sup> Room	18 - 23	32	64 -85	1947
2 <sup>nd</sup> Room	Not evaluated		86 - 88	97
<i>Cbarnier(?)</i>				Not estimated
Parlor			89 - 92	650
Cabinet			93 - 95	190
3 <sup>rd</sup> Room			96	70
Barn	35 - 36	1020	97 - 104	451
Stable	37	1000	105 - 116	7345
Hangar/ <i>chałpi</i>	24 - 34	203	117 - 124	124
Total	36	2406,3 L.	124	13 228 L

Because of their number and names, the rooms in the Ducros residence would indicate a manor, whereas the Champagnat domicile is nothing more than a farm house. Looking at the effects piece by piece the differences are even more remarkable. Ducros possessed 4 walnut tables, a valuable wood, one table with legs of ashwood. He had 14 chairs: 6 of which were caned and 6 of tapestry and two unidentified. Five armchairs are noted as well as ten wardrobes some of which had locks. There were two desks and two buffets of walnut.

Strangely enough, the Ducros inventory made no mention of spoons or forks of iron or any other metal. As for glass objects there were three mirrors, 70 cm x 55 cm and one other broken one as well as 50 bottles of black glass. As for dishware, there were 32 plates and 6 platters all earthenware. Nine beds, seven of which were “*afixed*”, i.e. of wooden planks garnished

with local woolen blankets, pillows and *balufières* (?). Two of the beds however were “*duchess style*” probably with a canopy having curtains and a mattress. There was even a bathtub of pine wood and the beginnings of a library: a history of Roman emperors in nine volumes. The Champagnat family had almost none of these signs of affluence and whatever little it did possess was very insignificant.

Another item about which the Champagnat inventory was silent while that of Ducros was expansive was linen and clothing. If the clothes and linen of the Ducros widow and her children are willingly excluded from the assessment, the inventory does point out, beyond the bed linen often of good quality, fourteen linen sheets valued at 420F and the clothes left by Ducros: trousers, vests and shirts valued at 570F.

As for the carpentry tools, Ducros was not well equipped and the farming machinery was quite sparse: a harrow with an iron blade and three ploughs with their ploughshares having no value. In fact, Ducros seems less a farmer than a wood worker. He had two large wagons for transporting tree trunks, five new *bramards* (wagons?) four new pairs of wagon wheels and ten iron bars for reinforcing at least two wheels, and he was said to have at Rouchouse, a *new saw*, probably hydraulic. Experts estimated his wooden plank reserve at 60 wagons with an assessed value of 2400 F. The tree trunks, mostly pine and fir were already at the saw mill and numbered about forty wagons full for a value of 1600 L. He still had in diverse wooded areas some 66 pine trees already felled and valued at 1270 L. Thus the inventory of wood stock added 5270 L to cousin Ducros' property capital. The stable also reflected his activities as an enterprising peasant farmer: a mare which he must have used for riding about rather than for work, two oxen for hauling tree trunks and for field work, six cows, a bull and two bull-calves, three heifers and a calf.

We've also seen that Jean-Baptiste Champagnat was himself very well equipped in provisions and animals for conveyance which goes to confirm our ideas that the two men were probably closely linked in professional activities. Besides, the Champagnat mill which is spoken of in Marist sources and which was hardly mentioned by the notary in 1804 must have been of very insignificant importance compared to Champagnat's mercantile business. Furthermore, a sales report concerning exchange of trees found in the office of the Marllhes notary, dated 24 *prairial* year 7 (June 12, 1799) indicates that J.B.Champagnat was an active buyer. Although he may have missed

out on the purchase of 33 fir trees and on another of 95 pine trees, he did succeed in getting hold of *17 fayards(?)* for a sales price of 210 F.<sup>182</sup>

Finally, Ducros had in his keep a “*tenant farmer*” who paid in 180 L of rent yearly, another *barn leaser* who gives him 200 L annually and another farmer who owed him 400 lbs yearly. His widow admitted to finding 2830 *assignats*<sup>183</sup>, but no hard cash at all.

Throughout this inventory, Ducros appears much like a well-established peasant farmer: for the most part his residence is of a farmer but there is semblance of a bourgeois home and even of a gentleman farmer. In fact we get the impression of recently acquired affluence which may have been partly due to the recent Revolution.

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## **PURCHASE OF NATIONAL PROPERTIES**

To clarify this impression we need only examine the many documents with the notary. There we find several bills from the tax collector of the District of St. Etienne as “records of national goods acquired by him” on the following dates:

- 24 September 1792 : 100L
- 5 October 1792: 199L 17s. 6 d

A second wave of purchases was carried out at the end of 1794. Three major purchases occurred on *3 and 29 vendémiaire* of year 3, which was September 24 and October 20, 1794:

- House, garden and pasture at St-Genest-Malifaux, coming from a former church yard: 2450L
- Purchase of a pasture for 1375L
- Purchase of a building at St. Etienne named *the Bible(?)*: 80,100L
- House and land property at St. Romain les Atheux<sup>184</sup>
- A wooded area at St. Romain which belonged to Sisters of St. Joseph: 6600L
- Land at Jonzieux (no date): 750L

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<sup>182</sup> Found in the archives of F.Gabriel Michel stored at St-Genis-Laval.

<sup>183</sup> Banknotes used during the Revolution

<sup>184</sup> A commune next to Jonzieux

Within just a few days, Jean-Pierre Ducros has acquired, mostly on credit, properties valued at 92,575L. At least two of these properties were of ecclesiastical origin. Ducros, as an agent of the terrorist Javogues, no doubt profited from his political connections for such operations. However, all of this occurred at the end of the years of Terror, and counter-revolutionary reactions had already started up. What's more, although buying national properties in the first revolutionary days awakened no disapproval it now seemed quite dishonorable. In the meantime, we can wonder if a good part of the personal goods found in the Ducros homestead were not originally property of the nation more or less recently acquired.

Ducros, however, had to pay less friendly, perhaps even hostile owners for these goods. At the beginning of year 3 he seems to have been financially in bad straits: on 11th *brumaire* (November 1, 1794) he sold a property worth some 6100L., and the 17th (November 7) he was replaced by a relative called Jean Choivet to carry out the purchase of a wooded area at St. Romain for 3600L<sup>185</sup>. His situation seems to improve from then on. The 16 *frimaire* (Dec. 6, 1794) he made a down payment of 8032L. for the purchase of the building at St. Etienne: on 6 *nivoise* (Dec. 26, 1794) he paid 399L. 17s. 6d. for the land at Jonzieux; on 7 *prairial* (May 26, 1795) he spent 3503L10s. 6d. Besides all of this and at undetermined dates, he paid out 133 L.2s. 6d and 145L. 12s. 6 d<sup>186</sup>

On 2 *floréal* year 3 (April 21, 1795) he sold "a field, land and pasture" for 2300F specifying clearly that the amount was to be "paid in currency and not in *assignats* of the time". The zealous revolutionary had not lost his keen sense for business affairs and was still in a strong enough position since the revolutionary currency was by then hardly worth anything and he was able to insist on good money as payment.

We can only estimate all the bills and credit notes at a relative value, whatever the real value of the goods exchanged. These are nonetheless sufficient to convince us that Ducros, while he may have been a revolutionary, was certainly a businessman who could profit from political relations for his own enrichment. His assassination at St. Etienne on June 2, 1795 may have been due to reasons that were more economic and social than political.

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<sup>185</sup> He was probably trying to avoid any attention and gave in to pressure.

<sup>186</sup> Bro. Gabriel Michel in *La Révolution à Marlbres* points to the sale of a meadow for 26,000L on April 23, 1795.



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## WHAT WERE THE ECONOMIC LINKS BETWEEN CHAMPAGNAT AND DUCROS ?

We see by the Champagnat inventory of 1804 that although he was a relative and had some political alliance to Ducros he did not want to get into personal enrichment through a clear, durable political commitment to the Revolution. Bro. Avit, at the beginning of the *Annals* of the Institute mentioned a clear commitment of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat to revolutionary service but he may have exaggerated the influence of Ducros on Champagnat in an effort to exonerate the latter.

On the other hand, looking at the financial side of the matter there are two surprising sentences:

“What’s more, his terrible cousin involved him in financial business from which he drew all the benefits to himself. His victim’s fortune which had been assessed at 80,000 to 100,000 was badly reduced”.

Except for the purchase of a meadow for 3950 L on August 20, 1793, which he would be obliged to sell in doubtful circumstances on *messidor* year 3, just after Ducros’ assassination<sup>187</sup>, we know of no other acquisitions by Champagnat. Besides, if Ducros and Champagnat joined together in some financial business, why is there no trace of this at all in their two inventories? Then again, why were the Champagnat documents so meager and why did they not contain any record of purchases or sales or any bills of sale in the name of Jean-Baptiste between his marriage in 1775 and his death in 1804? There is something very strange in all that, as if someone had “*tidied up*” the papers before the notary arrived.

As for J.B. Champagnat’s fortune, evaluated at 80,000 or 100,000F., it might all be a fairy tale if the Ducros inventory was not so clear in showing his personal goods and properties easily totaled that amount at the time of his death.

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<sup>187</sup> Bro. Gabriel Michel, *cp.cit.* p. 120

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## CONCLUSION

It now seems that the memory of those who were questioned or the interpretation of Bro. Avit may have intertwined the destinies of the two cousins attributing to one the wealth of the other. However, there must be more to it and we would need to have further information on the destiny of the Ducros family as well as on the ties it had with the Champagnat family after 1795, keeping in mind all the time that Jean-Baptiste's mother, Marianne Ducros, lived with the Champagnats at Rosey. Clearly the assassination of Ducros in June 1795 caused some break within the two families, even *between* the two families. At any rate, if the Revolution took the life of one of these two men, it might also be that it ruined the other or at least it thwarted any attempt on his part to climb the social ladder.

Bro. André LANFREY

# *The Champagnat Succession in 1810*

## **The Inevitable Decline of the Champagnat Estate**

**Bro. André LANFREY, fms**

Marcellin's father, Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, died on June 13, 1804 leaving no will. In December 1807, his widow, Marie-Thérèse Chirat, who was ill, made her will, but it was only after her death that the succession among the children was carried out by an act of notary of which there are two copies<sup>188</sup>.

The differences in the context of the two deeds – one the original the other a copy – are very slight. At the back of the official bundle, on a stamped document we see the date and reason for the copy: a transaction of Benoît Arnaud and his wife with Barthélemy-Jean and Jean-Pierre Champagnat, delivered by the notary Chorain on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1815, the day Napoleon landed at Antibes intending to re-conquer France after having escaped from the Island of Elbe.

The first part of the document clearly indicates the troubled circumstances under which it was issued: it bears two stamps, one of the French Empire, the other of royalty. We can suppose that the notary used up some left-over official paper pre-stamped under the Empire to which he added the royal stamp. Then the preamble contains two significant *slips of the pen*. One is the omission of the title of Louis “King of France”, and the other when he declares himself *imperial* notary!

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<sup>188</sup> From the resources of Mr. Piat, a sage of Marthes, who wrote to Bro. André Bardyn of the Rosey community.

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## INTRODUCTION

Before we read this document we need to recall the Champagnat family history at the time when it sets down an act which will have heavy bearing on its future.

Marie-Thérèse, the mother, died January 24, 1810 but the act of succession is not signed until September 17 of the same year – that is, just under eight months after her death – certainly a long delay.

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## THE HEIRS

At the time of this apportionment in 1810, the Champagnat progeny was down to six children:

1. – **Marie-Anne**, called simply Marie in the document, (December 11, 1775–1816), spouse of Benoît Arnaud former seminarian and teacher at St. Sauveur<sup>189</sup>. The act does not specify their marriage date which, in fact, was February 5, 1799<sup>190</sup>. A deed was presented by the Champagnat spouses, 8 *pluviôse* year 7 (1798-99) granting to their daughter a dowry of 1600 F. and a wardrobe. Marie died June 29, 1816, having given birth to eight children, three of whom died as infants and one in adolescence. In 1810 Marie-Anne had four living children.
2. – **Jean-Barthélemy**, called Barthélemy-Jean in the deed, born March 12, 1777, as yet unmarried in 1810. On October 29, 1811 he married Marie Clermondon with whom he was to have eight children. He died January 20, 1838. As the eldest, he inherited the paternal home and one fourth of the personal property, as was the custom, besides his own part of the apportionment. According to Bro. Avit, he later had to sell the house to M. Courbon who was to take on the debts<sup>191</sup>.

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<sup>189</sup> Annales of Bro. Avit (AA), t.1 p.8

<sup>190</sup> *Marlbes au Long des Siècles*, p. 191

<sup>191</sup> A.A. t.1 p.8

3. – **Anne-Marie**, born February 20, 1779. In 1810 she had been married to Jean Lachal since February 8 1804. They had seven children, five of whom died as infants or as adolescents. In 1810, Anne-Marie had two living children. She died March 28, 1835.
4. – **Marguerite-Rose**, called simply Rose in the deed of 1810, was born February 20, 1782. She was still unmarried in 1810 and later espoused Guillaume Chénet on March 1, 1813. She had six children four of whom grew to adulthood. She died April 15, 1829.
5. – **Jean-Pierre**, born December 26, 1787, married Jeanne-Marie Ravel on February 17, 1813. Bro. Avit confirmed that Jeanne-Marie did not make him happy and that they had six children<sup>192</sup>. In 1830 he settled in the Ecotay valley at the Leygat mill site after having sold the Rosey mill, possibly because of water problems. He soon became ill and apparently separated from his wife. He was reduced to destitution and died at l'Hermitage in 1833. His four sons followed him to the Hermitage and died there in 1834 and 1837 (Avit.t.1, p. 9). Two daughters entered the convent at Belley but one returned to Marlhes to care for their mother, before later marrying. Marcellin seems to have given shelter to that branch of the family which could not manage and suffered the shame of bankruptcy. In 1836 the goods and property were adjudged by the tribunal at Denis Joubert to be valued at 12,375 F. which was insufficient to cover all the debts. According to the notarized deed of July 7, 1836, the domain was composed of a rural property located at Légat and nearby there were residential buildings and three mills one of which was a saw mill<sup>193</sup>.
6. – **Marcellin**, listed as a student in the deed, born May 20, 1789, died 6 June, 1840. He was still at the minor seminary of Verrières in 1810 and would be ordained priest in 1816.

<sup>192</sup> The *répertoire* of the *Amis de Marlhes* indicates there were nine children.

<sup>193</sup> *Marlhes au Long des Siècles*, p. 379

## A FAMILY SITUATED BETWEEN TWO TRADITIONS OF INHERITANCE

The deed specifies that Jean-Baptiste died “*with no provisions of a will*” on 24 *prairial*, year 12, which would have been June 13 1804. According to F.Avit he was found dead in his bed (AA. T.1, p.13). His death occurred just a few months after the Civil Code which the State Council had begun to elaborate in July 1801, was promulgated (i.e. March 21, 1804). The deed also sets forth the principle of equal sharing among the heirs, contrary to the former custom of favoring the eldest son so that the patrimony would not be scattered and he would not be overwhelmed by indebtedness.

## DEBTS BEYOND EXTINCTION

Jean-Baptiste Champagnat left numberless debts which his wife tried to reimburse with very little success. Bro. Gabriel Michel has made a list of debts and reimbursements:

Acreeedor	Date	Amount reimbursed (F)	Amount borrowed or recognized as due (F)
Jean Gauthier	year 13	1.200	
Denis Faure	22/11/1804	687, 70	
Jean Granger	1/4/ 1805	324	
Jean Crouzet	17/5/1805	87	
Madeleine Blanchard	22/5/1805	40, 50	
Jean Lachal (son-in-law)	1/7/1805	200	
Pierre Terra	26/11/1805		400
Barthélemy Chirat (her brother)	16/5/1806		2.000 (of wich 1.000 loaned in 1803)
Madeleine Blanchard	6/7/1806	135 (loaned in year 8)	
Joseph Bouard	25/8/1806		370
Jean Malescours	26/9/1806	176 (loaned in year 12)	
Total		2.850, 20 F	2.770 F

Thus when he died, J.B.Champagnat owed at least 3850 F, including the 1000 F borrowed from his brother-in-law. To this we can add 260 F owed to the Confraternity of Penitents, all of which totals more than 4000F. At the end of 1806, Marie-Thérèse Chirat had reimbursed almost none of this; instead she had simply transferred creditors. Her illness at the end of November 1807 became worrisome to these latter, and more credit notes began to appear:

Date	Type of document	Beneficiary	Debt (F)	Reimbursement (F)
10/12/1807	Reimbursement	J. Lachal		400
12/12/1807	Claim recognized	B. Crouzet	300	
13/12/1807	Idem	F. Frapa	200	
13/12/1807	Idem	L. Souvignet	60	
14/12/1807	Reimbursement	Cl. Courbon		300
Total			560 F	700 F

And so it was, just a few days before December 20, the date of her own will, Marie-Thérèse Chirat reimbursed 900 F. and recognized other very large debts. Once again she seems to have borrowed from some to pay back others or asked the more demanding creditors to be a bit more patient by recognizing the amount owed them. When she drew up her will, Marie-Thérèse had no less than 3000 F owing to creditors, though 2000 of these were owed her brother who seemed a patient man.

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### **THE WILL DRAWN UP DECEMBER 20, 1807**

The deed (q.v. in the Appendix) is drawn up according to the requirements of the Civil Code recommending inheritance “by equal apportionment” though it does benefit from a clause of the code – allowance made to the tradition of the birthright - which granted the right of one fourth of the inheritance to one of the designated heirs: in this case, Jean Barthélemy. Naturally this also signified one fourth of the debts, not to mention the burial costs and 50 F for masses. Marie-Thérèse was to live just a bit beyond two years later since she died January 24, 1810.

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## THE LEGACY

The act of succession is dated September 17, 1810. In it we see that Jean-Baptiste Champagnat owned “a small furnished residence” at Rosey. The inventory after J.B. Champagnat’s death indicated that the personal effects and furnishings came to a bit less than 2400 F. As for the buildings, there was no mention of the mill spoken of by Bro. Avit among the property owned, but it does seem to enter into the domain and constitutes the portion of Jean-Pierre Champagnat. Marie-Thérèse Chirat, mother, reserves a total of 3262 F. as her right of dowry.

What is most surprising is that the deed makes no mention at all of any known deficit; it would seem that between December 1807 and September 1810 the family managed to sponge up all the heavy liabilities.

Two thirds of the domain was given into the hands of Barthélemy and one third to Jean-Pierre. The other four children were granted a lump sum of 2800F. after the evaluation and the subtraction of one fourth given by the mother to Barthélemy. We can estimate the sum total of goods and properties of the Champagnat family to have equaled  $2800 \text{ F} \times 6 = 16\,800 \text{ F}$ . + the ? portion given to Barthélemy, making a grand total of 22 400 F.

The financial burden left to Barthélemy and Jean-Pierre since they are keepers of the domain and property and must compensate their brothers and sisters were the following:

Name	Already received	To be given
Marie Arnaud	1600F (350 of which she received from her mother) A wardrobe	1200F by Barthélemy and Jean-Pierre in September 1811
Anne-Marie Lachal	1600F (350 of which she received from her mother)	1200F by Barthélemy and Jean-Pierre (600 F. within 18 months and 600F one year later)
Rose		700F within one year (1811) 700F in 1812, 1813, 1814.
Marcellin		1000 F within two years (1812) 1000 F within four years (1814) 800 F. within six years (1816)



What is surprising is not the size of the amounts due but rather the tight calendar set for date of payments since the two brothers are seemingly expected to pay up the entire 8000 F. in proportionate 2/3 and 1/3 disbursements within six years.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Beneficiary</b>	<b>Amount</b>
September 1811	Marie Arnaud Rose Champagnat	1.200 F 700 F
March 1812	Anne-Marie Lachal	600 F
September 1812	Rose Champagnat Marcellin Champagnat	700 F 1.000 F
March 1813	Anne-Marie Lachal	600 F
September 1813	Rose Champagnat	700 F
September 1814	Rose Champagnat Marcellin Champagnat	700 F 1.000 F
September 1816	Marcellin Champagnat	800 F
<b>Total</b>		<b>8.000 F</b>

### **AN EXORBITANT DOMAIN**

The settlement dates of 1811 and 1814 were especially devastating! Between 1700 and 2300F. seems to have been way beyond their means. At that time an ordinary workman might earn 1 or 2 F. daily, about 300 to 600F. annually and a parish priest 1500F, while a civil servant earned about 4000F and a Bishop 10 000 F. yearly. Even granting their best activities to yield 5 F. per working day for one and 3 F. for the other, and that is quite a bit since their annual revenue for some 300 working days x 8 would net 2400F and so just above the settlement amounts.

It appeared very clearly even at the time of signing the deed, that they would not have the means to keep to that calendar. Besides, the act of succession foresaw a 5% interest for late payments, so the two brothers could not even hope or wish for an extension of the limited time. As did their mother, they were forced to borrow from some to pay back others. The deed, written up to the advantage of Benoît Arnaud on March 1, 1815, betrays his hope of carrying forth the rights claimed by his wife.

The fact is that the financial balance of this family of minor landowners was upset by three factors: the publication of the new Civil Code, the father's untimely death and Jean-Pierre's inability to establish himself outside the family circle. The parents during their lifetime had provided for a dowry of 1600F for each of the married daughters all of which suggests they also hoped to do as much for the younger children so as not to compromise the family estate. Thus Barthélemy should normally have expected to become head of the estate with no unbearably heavy debts; at most these would have come to a manageable 1600 x 3 or 4 800F.

There was no choice left for Marie-Thérèse Chirat as she found herself the victim of a collection of circumstances. The eldest son as well as the youngest, who was clearly inept, would inherit the patrimony as tradition dictated. However, as they were beset by enormous responsibilities imposed by the Civil Code which confronted them, they were doomed to bankruptcy.

It is not surprising that the two sons should have accepted this prejudicial arrangement. They were of a traditional society for which land and patrimony were symbolic capital rather than just of financial value. Guarding the patrimony was a duty for them and being thus the landed heirs there was no alternative solution. Nor can we blame the other siblings who had families of young children either at school or about to wed and who badly needed their part of the inheritance as soon as possible.

Given these considerations, the transaction still holds some measure of mystery since the Champagnats were not ignorant and could not willingly have intended ruining the paternal name or estate. They seem then to have counted on some valuable credit notes coming in. But from where? Could it have been from the family of cousin Jean-Pierre Ducros, we are tempted to suggest.

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## **SPIRALING TOWARDS RUIN**

The summary of this apportionment can be found in an article of Bro. Gabriel Michel entitled, *Grandeur et décadence des Champagnat*, in which he sets down all the juridical deeds concerning the two brothers. The amounts owed their sisters are set in bold italics. Jean-Pierre was to die penniless November 17, 1833 and Barthélemy-Jean also very much in debt, died January 1838.

Date	Document	Amount	Beneficiary
11/3/1811	Sale of a building and garden	1500F	Claude Barralon
26/4/1811	Sale of 2 hectares, 16 <i>ares</i> <sup>194</sup>	1000F	Marie Chirat
<b>3/7/1813</b>	<b>Payment of legitimate amount due</b>	<b>60 F</b>	<b>To Marguerite - Rose</b>
<b>4/7/1813</b>	<b>Payment of legitimate amount due</b>	<b>400F</b>	<b>To Anne - Marie</b>
18/7/1813	Sale of 14.5 <i>ares</i>	200F	To Marie Chirat (veuve)
<b>17/11/1814</b>	<b>Payment of legitimate amount due</b>	<b>712F</b>	<b>To Anne - Marie</b>
5/12/1814	Sale of 80 <i>ares</i>	600F	Ruard
17/9/1815	Loan taken by Jean- Pierre	1700F	From J. P. Riocreux
23/10/1815	Loan taken by Barthélemy	1700F	From J.P. Terra
4/4/1816	Purchased 2 fields in town of Monteil	700F	By Jean - Pierre
9/7/1817	Barthélemy reimbursed -urgently	<b>1700F</b>	To J.P. Terra
24/11/1817	Sale of one ha. 60 <i>ares</i> + 40 <i>ares</i>	2000F	To Murgue
27/11/1817	Sold a wooded area of 90 <i>ares</i>	1000F	To Gery
30/5/1819	Purchased 3 ha. 90 <i>ares</i> at Monteil	4550F	By Jean- Pierre
25/12/1819	Purchased de 12 <i>ares</i> at Rozey	50F	By Jean - Pierre
<b>8/9/1820</b>	<b>Payment of official amount due</b>	<b>600F</b>	<b>To Anne - Marie</b>
<b>17/4/1820</b>	<b>Payment of official amount due</b>	<b>1929F</b>	<b>To Marguerite - Rose</b>
20/1/1821	Sale of 30 <i>ares</i> by Barthélemy	300F	To G. Chalayer
4/9/1825	Vente d'un terrain par Barthélemy	100F	To M. Courbon
<b>1830</b>	<b>Payment of official amount due</b>	<b>1150F</b>	<b>To Marguerite-Rose</b> <sup>195</sup>
9/4/1832	Loans taken by Barthélemy & Jean-Marie	1000F	From M. Brunon
<b>17/7/1836</b>	<b>Payment of official amount due</b>	<b>405F</b>	<b>To Marguerite - Rose</b> <sup>196</sup>
	<b>Epilogue</b>		
14/12/1836	Assessment of goods and property of Jean- Pierre	12,375F	By Denis Joubert
1837	Liabilities of Bathélemy	7540F	
1838	Remaining liabilities of Jean- Pierre	3749F	

<sup>194</sup> One *are* was equal to 100 square meters.

<sup>195</sup> She had just recently died and her husband, Guillaume Cheynet was demanding the payment.

<sup>196</sup> In fact, to completely pay up this debt a sum of 2000F. would have been required.

We have noticed that the amounts to be paid to Marie Arnaud and Marcellin are not mentioned in the deeds that come from the office of the notary in La Valla. It may be that the two eligible parties waited patiently or did not insist on their due. Another possibility is that the agreements made with them were registered at another notary office, in which case we must add 1200 F. + 2800 F. to the total amounts paid as listed above.

It is difficult to know how the family assumed the financial burden of seminary tuition since the savings of 600F which Marcellin was said to possess was not to be taken seriously. The publication *Origines Maristes* does give a bit of information on this account: In 1808 – 09, under the heading “parents’ occupation” and next to Marcellin’s name we read: “farmer and land owner” (Doc. 11); in 1811 (Doc. 15) the same register indicates “farmer” as does again (Doc. 21) 1812 – 13. At St. Irénée, November 1, 1813, the register notes “farmer, land owner”. However, from November 1, 1814 (Doc. 32) and again November 1, 1815 (Doc. 44), there is no longer mention of Marcellin’s parents.

We can easily understand that while his mother was still living, Marcellin continued to declare his parents’ occupation. More surprising is that it took three years for the seminary to register the fact that he no longer had parents. Would this mean that his brothers, now in possession of the estate, continued to pay the board? In any case, if there is no reference to Marcellin’s parents from November 1, 1814, it would mean that he received at least part of the 1000 F which his brothers owed in September 1814. This was the date when he became financially independent; he was by then 25 years old.

A list of scholarship and partial-scholarship holders dated 1816<sup>197</sup> indicates 21 grant holders at 200 F. and 42 partial-grant holders at 100 F. per semester. Marcellin is among the latter as are Jean-Claude Colin, Etienne Terrillon and Pierre Déclas. His financial situation was thus more or less shaky. He certainly did not receive the entire 2800F owed him by his brothers but probably just enough to finish his studies.

His financial situation in 1817 was not brilliant. We do know that after little more than a year at La Valla, on October 1<sup>st</sup> he bought a house in partnership with Courveille, each of whom made a 500F payment on the spot.

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<sup>197</sup> Archives of the archdiocese of Lyon, 2 II 104, Séminaires.

There is a second bill of sale concerning the same house dated April 26, 1818. Here Champagnat is the only buyer with the payment of 1600F (O M 1 docs.57 and 58). If we suppose that Courveille did not immediately request the refund of 500F paid the previous year, still Champagnat had to add 600F to the amount given in 1817 for the house. Perhaps the 1100F paid out came, at least partially, from his inheritance. However, the fact that he had need of Courveille's help does indicate that the major part of 2800F due him had never been paid by 1817. What's more, the poverty of the La Val-la community is proof of his meager resources since he needed to work in order to live and to enlarge the house.

We know that there was a long time-lag between the due dates and the date of payments for the amounts legally due Marcellin's two sister.

Beneficiary	Date due	Amount due	Date paid	Amount paid
Anne-Marie Lachal	March 1812	600 F	4/7/1813	400 F
Anne-Marie Lachal	March 1813	600 F	17/11/1814	712 F
Anne-Marie Lachal			8/9/1820	600 F
<b>Total</b>		<b>1.200 F</b>		<b>1.712 F</b>
Marguerite-Rose (spouse of Cheynet)	September 1811	700 F	3/7/1813	600 F
Marguerite-Rose (spouse of Cheynet)	September 1812	700 F	20/1/1821	1.929 F
Marguerite-Rose (spouse of Cheynet)	September 1813	700 F	9/4/1832	1.150 F
Marguerite-Rose (spouse of Cheynet)	September 1814	700 F	17/7/1836	405 F
<b>Total</b>	<b>From 1811-1814</b>	<b>2.800 F</b>	<b>From 1813-1836</b>	<b>4.084 F</b>

The above table speaks volumes: clearly the two brothers could not pay on time. Since the act of succession foresaw an added 5% interest yearly in the case of late payment, the accumulation of interest over long periods made the payments all the more difficult. In order to carry them out with the least delay, the two Champagnat brothers sold real estate which means they either sacrificed part of their basic capital or they borrowed. We get the impression that after 1821 both brothers were fighting a losing battle: loans had to be taken, sales and payment of apportionment dues follow one another.

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## CONCLUSION

This document does give a key to understanding the disastrous history of the Champagnat estate and easily confirms the views of Bro. Gabriel Michel. Barthélemy and Jean-Pierre were probably not very enterprising<sup>198</sup> and very unlucky but they were especially wiped out by the transformation of a community culture marked by concern for preserving the family estate to an individualistic culture as established by the new Civil Code which completely destabilized it.

Was their case an exceptional one? We do know that indebtedness is one of the plagues of rural dwellers. M. Luirard and O. Massardier have this to say on St. Genest Malifaux at the end of the Ancien Regime: “Even if he is reduced to begging only in really extreme cases, every peasant is at one time or other constrained to become indebted, sometimes through lending to his neighbor when he can. Bills of sale make up the greatest part of notarized documents.”

In a country with no banking network, Jean-Baptiste Champagnat must have been an example of this: granting credit to some and becoming indebted to others. How is it that we only know about his debts? In our view his financial situation was linked to that of Ducros by some unwritten arrangements<sup>199</sup> or even by a written agreement forced from Champagnat in some way at the time of his cousin’s assassination around 1795. As well, we have a very unbalanced view of the financial situation of J. B. Champagnat in 1804 and this simply because we only know of his liabilities. Thus it could be that payments received between 1807 and 1810 may explain, albeit partially, the fact that the family was able to wipe out some of their debts. We may even wonder if the succession of 1810 which puts Barthélemy and Jean-Pierre in such an unfavorable situation was not due in part to their hopes of recuperating important financial claims. The gradual disintegration of the Champagnat estate certainly seems to us to have been due to revolutionary events.

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<sup>198</sup> We can admit that in setting himself up as miller Jean-Pierre did show proof of initiative.

<sup>199</sup> Ducros’ death certainly put an end to any hope of completing any transactions that were in progress.

The business of sharing out the estate also shows that the cost of Marcellin's studies was not seen by the family as a way of paying the inheritance, but some later arrangements may have occurred between Marcellin and his brothers.

We also know that when Marcellin Champagnat began his life's work many cried out in warning: he is going to go bankrupt with this! This prejudice may have been supported by the Champagnat family's history of ill luck. Besides, the gradually breaking down of his brothers' financial situation and especially Jean-Pierre's ruin were certainly a cause of great suffering to Marcellin.

Bro. André LANFREY





*Document*

*Will of*  
*Marie-Thérèse Chirat*  
*December 20, 1807*

**(on stamped paper costing 50 centimes)<sup>200</sup>**

**Bro. André LANFREY, fms**

“Before us, Jean Reboud, notary of the empire at the residence of the commune of Marlhès, Loire Department, undersigned and before the present witnesses hereafter named.

Appeared Marie-Thérèse Chirat, widow of Champaignat, ribbon maker, resident at Rosey, commune of the aforementioned Marlhès, who, although ill and bedridden, nevertheless free and in all her faculties, as it appeared to all of us notary and witnesses, wished and voluntarily made and dictated her will *nuncupatit*<sup>201</sup> inscribed by myself, notary, as follows:

I recommend my soul to God; I wish the burial place of my body to be the parish cemetery. As for funeral honors and holy works I leave that to my legal and universal heir hereafter named; other than the ordinary church services I request that in the year following my death and for the repose of my soul masses be celebrated equal to and costing fifty francs<sup>202</sup>, at the location and by whichever priest he will deem fitting.

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<sup>200</sup> Spelling and punctuation in the original French have been normalized.

<sup>201</sup> From the Latin *nuncupatio*; a term used solemnly in reference to an heir: spelling of the word doubtful.

<sup>202</sup> A rather large sum of money as it equaled 50 working days.

I name, verbally and legally as my universal legatee and heir Jean Barthélemy Champagniat, my eldest son and that of the deceased Jean-Baptiste my husband, and give to him *preciput*<sup>203</sup> and with no division, the fourth of all my goods and property present and to come, whatever it is now and might be, this beyond the part which is his due according to law, for him to possess immediately my decease, less the costs – this beyond the funeral expenses and masses herewith mentioned - to pay the fourth of other debts with which my property is beset.

As for the goods which have not been bequeathed nor disposed of I wish these to be divided among the named Jean-Barthélemy Champaignat, Jean-Pierre, Marcellin, Marianne, Anne-Marie and Marguerite-Roze my children and those of the late Champaignat, in equal portions, and with these as well my responsibilities by right, to set them up each of them as my particular legatees.

Therefore this certificate made and accepted at the said location of Rozey, home of the testator and by her bedside, being in the kitchen of the home, the afternoon of the twentieth December 1807, in the presence of Matthieu Teyssier, Barthélemy Riocreux, Jean Lachal and of Barthélemy Crouzet, all farmers residing in Rozey.

The present having been read to the witnesses, Riocreux and Teyssier, with myself appointed notary have signed. Lachal and Crouzet declared separately that the testator, called on and so requested was unable to sign.

Riocreux, Teyssier  
Reboud

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<sup>203</sup> In advance

*Document*  
*Champagnat Succession*  
*1810* <sup>204</sup>

**Bro. André LANFREY, fms**

“Louis, by the grace of God, King of France<sup>205</sup> and of Navarre, to all present and to come, greetings.

Let it be known that:

Before us Jean Chorain, imperial notary at the residence of Marlhes, district of St. Genest Malifaux, Loire Department, undersigned and in the presence of the witnesses named below:

Appeared Benoît Arnaud, farmer, and under his expressed authority, Marie Champagnat, his wife, residents in the locality and town of St. Sauveur en Rue; Jean Lachal, farmer, and under his expressed authority, Anne-Marie Champagnat his wife, residents at the locality of Olagnières, commune of Marlhes;

Rose Champagnat, full-aged daughter, and Marcellin Champagnat, student, these two residing in Rosez, commune of Marlhes, on one hand, & Barthélemy-Jean & Jean -Pierre Champagnat, both farmers, residing in the named location of Rosey, on the other hand. These Champagnat brothers and sisters, children and co-heirs by equal part and portion of the deceased Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, who died without a will the twenty fourth *prairial* and of Marie-Thérèse Chirat who died twenty fourth January 1810, this

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<sup>204</sup> The inaccurate punctuation in the original French document was noted here as corrected.

<sup>205</sup> The official version states erroneously “Louis by the grace of God & of Navarre”

last having made her will in favor of the named Barthélemy-Jean Champagnat, her eldest son, of one fourth of all her goods<sup>206</sup> by a deed received and signed by the notary below.

These parties declared:

that by the marriage contract of Marie Champagnat with the said Benoît Arnaud on eight *pluviose* year seven, by an act received by the deceased M. Reboud & partners, notaries and duly registered, the said deceased spouses Champagnat & Chirat, the wife having been authorized by the husband, gave and accorded in dowry to the said Marie Champagnat, their daughter, the sum of sixteen hundred francs, a wardrobe with two doors of pine, spruce and ash woods valued at eighteen francs, of this amount three hundred and fifty francs was to stand as her legitimate maternal right and the surplus to stand as her legitimate paternal rights, which sum in cash was to be paid in four equal & annual payments of four hundred francs each, the first payment to begin in the year starting on the day of the marriage contract, without interest and only on the expiry of each term, the said dowry was to be paid by a notarized bill under certified and registered dates; as for the wardrobe it was to be delivered, as stipulated, before the date of the said marriage; it was indeed signed in as received on that day.

That by the marriage contract of Anne-Marie Champagnat with the named Jean Lachal by certificate received from the same notary on the date of fifth *pluviose* year twelve, duly registered the nineteenth of the same months, the aforementioned spouses Champagnat & Chirat, the wife having been authorized as mentioned above by the husband, did establish a dowry for the named Anne-Marie Champagnat their daughter accepting (?) the sum of sixteen hundred francs three hundred of which should stand as the legitimate maternal rights of the named Anne-Marie Champagnat and the rest as her legitimate paternal rights; the said dowry paid and duly billed as received within the marriage contract.

As for the aforesaid Marcellin & Rose Champagnat, who having received no amount at all from their deceased father and mother in advance of their inheritance.

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<sup>206</sup> These were not the goods and property of the spouses but hers and hers alone, since the father had not made a will in favor of his eldest son.

Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, father of both, left only a small estate with its furnishings situated in the locality of Rosey and & the said Marie-Thérèse Chirat widow of Champagnat, mother of the two named, who left only her rights of dowry, marriage conventions and survival gains which came to three thousand two hundred and sixty two francs as it is set in her contract with the named Champagnat on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1775 by deed received in the hands of the deceased M. Lardon, notary and duly registered.

The aforesaid Marie Champagnat, spouse of Arnaud and Anne-Marie Champagnat, spouse of Lachal who by their obligation to report what they had received as part of the inheritance here in question, but wishing to forestall any *return*<sup>207</sup> acknowledged that the portion due each of the said Marie, Anne-Marie, Rose and Marcellin Champagnat in the goods and property of the legacy of the deceased spouses Champagnat and Chirat their common father and mother, after the removal of the quarter given to the said Barthélemy Jean Champagnat by the named Marie-Thérèse Chirat his mother by her will set down about as well as the few debts which they would incur from the present deeds of succession, and having confirmed the value of the personal goods and having evaluated the properties and having established the said inheritance, as well, concerning assets and liabilities, both acknowledged before us that the part and portion owed to the named Marie Champagnat, spouse Arnaud, Anne-Marie Champagnat spouse Lachal, Rose & Marcellin Champagnat could come to a total of 2800 francs for each of them, including, of course, the amounts received by the espoused Anne and Anne-Marie Champagnat, both in the course of their marriage contract dated above and of the notarized bills as explained previously.

Consequently the said By.-Jean, Jean-Pierre, Marcellin & Rose Champagnat wishing to dispense the spouses Arnaud and Champagnat and the spouses Lachal and Champagnat from the return to which they might be held...

The parties being well-informed of their respective rights and advised by their counsels and friends, negotiated an irrevocable compromise expressly forfeiting all rights and returns due to Marcellin, Marie, Anne-Marie, Rose Champagnat, the wives duly authorized by their husbands, of the goods be-

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<sup>207</sup> The meaning implied is : to avoid any restitution of the amounts already paid out

queathed by the aforementioned spouses Champagnat & Chirat whether it be in capital or accessories and as follows:

1. The aforesaid Marie, Anne-Marie, Rose & Marcellin Champagnat, the women having been duly authorized by their husbands *to those present sold as if sold by those present* with a promise to maintain, guarantee and allow with no interference the named Barthélemy-Jean, & Jean-Pierre Champagnat, the latter owner of one third and the named Barthélemy-Jean owner of the other two thirds. The two here present accepted and acquired in ownership and at their own risk all the rights and claims which might be due Marcellin, Marie, Anne-Marie and Rose Champagnat of the personal goods and properties of every sort which make up the legacy of the said common father and mother and in all that comprises assets and liabilities in capital sums and accessories no matter what these rights might be and with no reserve nor expectations from Barthélemy-Jean and Jean-Pierre Champagnat who are to share the aforesaid rights as they see fit and to carry out the actions of selling and paying back or claiming whatever necessary as would have done the assignors who, having given up the rights freely and being thus exempt of any and all personally incurred debts and mortgages and the aforesaid B-Jean & Jean-Pierre Champagnat who accept these rights at their own risk as is explained above, promise to answer for the assignors of all actions before any creditors of the inheritance of the deceased spouses Champagnat and Chirat if there be any. The present parties declare they know of none. The sale transfers have been carried out as we know by the named Marie Champagnat wife of Arnaud, duly authorized by him and up to now the supplementary amount of 1200 francs each franc being worth only one pound *tournois(?)* which having been added to the 1600 francs received by them as explained above comes to a total of 2800 francs, the sum of their rights. To this amount the supplementary sum of 1200 francs the aforesaid Barthélemy Jean and Jean-Pierre promise faithfully to pay to the named spouses Arnaud and Champagnat in gold and silver coins in current use within one year from this day and with interest of 5% (in case of ?) late payment.
2. For what concerns the named Anne-Marie Champagnat, spouse Lachal and duly authorized by him in our presence, for the similar supplementary amount of 1200 francs which being added to the 1600 francs

received by them at ( ) of their marriage contract specified above, forms a total of 2800 francs for the amount of said rights to which amount the supplement of 1200 francs for the reasons mentioned above the named Barthélemy Jean & Jean-Pierre Champagnat, firmly promise as above to pay to the spouses Lachal & Champagnat in coins in current use in two equal payments of 600 francs each, beginning in eighteen months from today and the other one year later with interest of 5%.

3. As to the named Marcellin Champagnat who having received nothing at all of the inheritance from their common father and mother which came to the amount of 2800 francs each franc worth only *one pound tournois* (?), the named Barthélemy Jean & Jean-Pierre Champagnat promise and are firmly committed as for the above, to pay in three parts to the named Marcellin Champagnat their brother, the two first payments of 1000 F each and the third of 800 Francs every two years beginning in two years time from today and continuing thus every two years with interest at 5% and no deduction.
4. And finally for the named Rose Champagnat who did not receive anything either of the similar amount of 2800 francs each franc worth only *one pound tournois*, the named Barthélemy Jean and Jean-Pierre Champagnat promise and commit themselves firmly as above, to pay to the named Rose Champagnat their sister in four equal payments of 700 francs each the first of which in one year from today and continuing thus one year at a time until the final payment with interest of 5% and no deduction

The participants declare that the property rights ceded above by each of the assignors are worth 1000 francs and following all that is stated above except the privilege of mortgage of the assignors until the complete payment of the amount due them. Each one in virtue of what concerns him/her, has done this to aid the named By-Jean & Jean-Pierre Champagnat their brother and brother-in-law, including the losses, investitures and exchanges of property required in each case.

The present deed, carried out and accepted at the place and town of Marllhes, in the office of the undersigned notary, September 12, 1810 in the presence of Denis Dubouchet weaver and of Antoine Faure day laborer, being required witnesses residing in the place and town of Marllhes who signed

with the parties and ourselves, notary, except the named Jean Lachal who declared himself unable to sign. All of which was done after the document was read.

Signatures: Champagnat, Champagnat, Arnaud, Champagnat, Champagnat, Dubouchet, Faure and Chorain, notary.<sup>208</sup>

Registered at Chambon, this 17 September 1810, N° 14 C.2.3.4.&5. Received 352 Francs

Bocoste (?) Co.

Two francs received ( ) recipient J. (?)

We inform and order all bailiffs called upon, to carry out and execute the present deed; all royal procurators to uphold them; all commanders and officers to assist whenever there be a legal requirement. In witness whereof we have signed and sealed the present deed to allow a copy and delivered it to the aforementioned Arnaud this 1<sup>st</sup> March 1815.

Chorain

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<sup>208</sup> These signatures appear on the last page of the original document which is dated September 1810.



# *Marlhes, the Champagnat Family and Military Service*

Bro. André LANFREY, fms

The wars of the Revolution and the Empire went on almost uninterruptedly from 1792 to 1815 and one of the main causes of rejection of the new regime was the endless tapping of the young male population to defend the country or to spread revolutionary ideals beyond national boundaries. Four of the Champagnat sons were thus called on for this difficult task and it is not time wasted to study how the commune of Marlhes, especially during the time of the administration of Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, 1798-1800 managed this very thorny constraint.

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## **THE CONSCRIPTION LAW OF 1798**

Initially the Revolution called on volunteers and occasionally ordered levies on men to complete the numbers. In the end, the *Jourdan law* of 19 *fructidor* year 6, (September 5<sup>th</sup> 1798) called the law of conscription, obliged all French males over 20 to be registered on the recruitment lists and to remain there until their 25<sup>th</sup> year. These conscripts were divided into five categories and not all were actively called on, but the war minister called on the youngest to make up the needed contingents (the drafted), before sending off the next category. Only those registered as maritime conscripts (in the navy) and married men were exempt from service before 1798.

Logically, the four Champagnat sons should have been on the list of conscripts: Jean-Barthélemy, born in 1777 was 20 in 1797, Jean Baptiste, born

in 1780 was 20 in 1800; Jean-Pierre was born in 1787. We know that Marcellin was not on the conscript list because his exclusion as an ecclesiastic student was requested by Cardinal Fesch. For the three eldest we do not know for certain just how they avoided military service but we can work it out.

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## **CONSCRIPTS WHO RESISTED MILITARY SERVICE**

The first inkling comes from what we know about general history time which has long been analyzing the phenomenon of military service as a sign of loyalty or resistance to the Revolution and/or the Empire. For example, as soon as the *Jourdan law* was voted in, the legislative body ordered the levy of 200,000 men but administrative chaos, sabotage and the revisionary councils who checked on the physical fitness of the conscripts all united to bring the number down to 143 000 men! Only 96,000 men were drafted as many of those called failed to report. The area of the *Massif Central* where Marlihes is located, were particularly resistant. On April 17, the Assembly ordered the levy of 150 000 men drawn at random from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> categories. However, only 57 000 answered the call<sup>209</sup>. When the military situation worsened, another appeal was made; this time the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> categories were called up with the same results.

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## **A WEAK DICTATORIAL REGIME**

France at that time was governed by the *second Directory* which had been set up after a military *coup d'état on 18 fructidor year 6* (September 14, 1797). Fearing the return of the Royalists, this Directory organized a second Terror, pursuing the refractory clergy, the returning immigrants, agents back from England and those conscripts who had not yet answered the call.

The fact is, however, that this Terror had neither means nor legitimacy: the army was either out of the country or on the borders, revolutionary enthusiasm was at a low ebb, extreme poverty and serious crime were ram-

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<sup>209</sup> Denis Woronoff, *La République bourgeoise de Thermidor à Brumaire, 1794-1799* New History of Contemporary France, Point n°3 History, 1972, p. 187.

pant, royalist activism was gaining ground and whole areas of the country were beyond any central authority.

Each of the departments was under the jurisdiction of a departmental *Directorie*, and these named a president of the municipal administration for each commune, as well as an agent, both of whom were to carry out the dictatorial orders under the control of a *commissaire*. Thus it was that on 9 *nivôse* year 6 (December 29 1797), the *Directoire* named Jean-Baptiste Champagnat Departmental President of Marlhes which comprised the communes of Marlhes and Jonzieux<sup>210</sup> under the control of a very ruthless *Commissaire* named Trilland, a surveyor at Saint Sauveur en Rue.

Champagnat reluctantly accepted this nomination<sup>211</sup> on 23 *pluviôse*, year 6 (February 11, 1798); he swore hatred to royalty and to anarchy and vowed fidelity to the Constitution. He remained at that post until 15 *floréal* year 8 which was May 5, 1800.

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### **PASSIVE RESISTANCE**

The entire history of his administration seems to have been spent facing Trilland's badgering as the latter was intent on having all government orders carried out immediately. However, Trilland did not obtain much satisfaction despite all the declarations of good will expressed by the municipality who, in concert with the people, was loath to attack the clergy, or to pay taxes or even to send their children off to war. The incidents connected to this local war have been narrated in detail by Bro. Gabriel Michel in *Les années obscures de Marcellin Champagnat ou la Révolution à Marlhes, Loire, 1789-1800*.

A passive resistance of this nature is not without risks. Thus on 27 *messidor*, year 6 (July 15, 1798) Trilland carried out a search in private homes of Marlhes and Jonzieux where it was suspected priests or agents coming from England were harbored. On 27 *thermidor* (August 14, 1798), he ordered another round of searches this time by *gendarmes* and volunteers recruited from St. Etienne and Bourg-Argental. All of these proved futile, it seems.

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<sup>210</sup> No one at Jonzieux would accept the presidency of the municipality.

<sup>211</sup> In fact he felt the post was beyond his personal competence.

In the final months of 1798, attention was focused on conscripts who were resisting military service. The assembly had just voted a new levy for 200 000 men. Trilland raged again on 23 *brumaire*, year 7 (November 13, 1798), threatening to imprison all who were hiding men called up for active duty from ages 18 to 25, “meaning all those who by August 23 were 18 years old” and were in the first category of conscripts. As well, those who concealed any “conscripts aged 20 or 21” were to be arrested; these would have been of the second category. Jean-Barthélemy (21) and Jean-Baptiste (19) were two Champagnat sons within this group.

On 27 *germinal*, year 7 (April 16 1799) Trilland clamored for the list of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> category conscripts. The 3 *floréal*, year 7 (April 22, 1799) the local administration received the news that they were to provide twenty-three conscripts (18 from Marllhes and 5 from Jonzieux) but no one appeared to be registered. Then on the 23 *floréal* (May 12, 1799) Trilland called on the *gendarmes* from St. Etienne and Bourg-Argental to carry out a house search hoping to find refractory priests, those who had been requisitioned and the agents believed to have emigrated from England. As usual, the results were negative. In fact, on 21 *prairial*, year 7 (June 9, 1799) the conscript list had been published but not one of them appeared to go off. What’s more, “National guards were to be stationed at the homes of parents of these young conscripts and those called up; the administration will know their homes”.

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## CHAMPAGNAT’S POLITICAL DEMISE

The coup d’état of 18 *brumaire* (November 9, 1799) which resulted in Bonaparte becoming master of France put an end to this game of hide-and-seek. On 12 *frimaire*, year 8 (December 3, 1799) Trilland was replaced by Perret a cloth printer of La Rouchouse, though this transfer was simply reported with no explanation on 7 *pluviôse* year 8 (January 27, 1800). Trilland may have managed to fiddle his relationships in such a way as to have been widely appreciated for his zeal in favor of the central government.

J.B. Champagnat’s political destiny was also played out at this conjuncture of two dictatorships in the years 1799 and 1800. Perret’s appointment seemed to seal his victory and that of moderate republicans, but Trilland’s return meant total defeat for Champagnat since there was no place assigned to him in the new administration. The *Directoire* lost but Trilland was the victor!

It is easy enough to understand the overall reasons for this downfall: Bonapartes policy was to try to reestablish the internal State authority, while continuing to wage war externally. He had no time for administrators who might hamper his two objectives.

Things changed from then on: the national guard was reorganized on *19 ventôse* year 8 ( March 19, 1800) in order to fight the local banditry, since communes were generally responsible for crimes committed on their territory. The national guard chose three among its 90 men to go to war. Triland himself named these on *8 floréal* year 8 (April 28, 1800), and had his decision confirmed by the district administration. Here were written for the first time in the report the names of the conscripted recruits. The fact that on *8 germinal*, year 8 (March 29, 1800) a military detachment arrived “to activate the departure of the men who were summoned, the deserters and conscripts”, certainly speeded things up, especially since the military, a dozen or more, were housed “with the most well-to-do parents of the summoned conscripts and deserters”.

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### **J. B. CHAMPAGNAT'S DIFFICULT POLITICAL CAREER**

Following on the indecisive *Directoire* which had threatened widely but achieved very little, there came a robust regime which commanded instant obedience and took the means to obtain it. Clearly, Champagnat was to pay for his stubborn political resistance to the civil society of this new state dictatorship.

Besides, although he may have succeeded in preventing his two eldest sons and indeed many other young men from going to war, he must have compromised himself in the eyes of many as loyal to the abolished regime. In fact, although the J.B. Champagnat of 1798-1800 was a very different person from the one of 1789-94 who had avowedly rejected royalty, he did show that he was not in favor of a return to the Ancien Regime and this did not go down well with everyone, especially at a time when royalist activism was intense and many accepted it as the only way out.

Something of Champagnat's complex personality and of what people think of him appears in the register of the Marllhes municipality on 23 pluviôse, year 6 (11/2/1798) : “I, the undersigned J.B.Champagnat of Rozey,

being named [...] president of the municipal administration of the district of Marllhes, **although I should not have been named in this position since my knowledge is too disorganized to fulfill such a function**, do hasten to obey the orders of the government and accept the said duty and swear hatred of royalty and of anarchy and promise loyalty to the constitution of year three”.

The provision was surely inserted in this declaration as a measure of political safety but it also shows the clear knowledge he had of insufficient education probably expressed within the family and which later caused Marcellin to desire so keenly to study. Besides this relative cultural mediocrity may have been one of the factors that excluded J.B.Champagnat from public service.

However, we must not belittle the fact that for two years J.B.Champagnat gave up his peace, his freedom, his goods and even his life as he faced the very threatening Trilland. We can even wonder if the frequent house searches carried out under Trilland’s orders, or even the placement of soldiers among the well-to-do resitants might explain the fact that there were no official papers or signs of any religious adherence noted in the inventory of personal effects found after his death in June 1804. In such an atmosphere of permanent insecurity any compromising or precious object would have been stored away safely.

Coming back to the question of military service of Jean-Pierre Champagnat born in 1787 and thus in the 1807 category, he certainly was conscripted because from 1806-1810 conscription was well established and only 13% were listed as resitants<sup>212</sup>. These were not yet the last years of the Empire (1813-1815) when the number of resitants was much greater. Whatever the cause, it does seem Jean-Pierre did not go to war, whether it was because of a *lucky draw*, or perhaps his family was able to pay a substitute.

Unlike so many others such as Trilland, who profited from their commitment to the Revolution as a means of climbing the social ladder, J.B. Champagnat seems to have almost suffered defeat. We find him back to the ordinary life of a simple peasant in 1800, worn out by the troubles and dan-

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<sup>212</sup> Louis Bergeron, *The Napoleonic episode, 1799-1815, internal questions*, New History of Contemporary France, Point-Histoire, n° 4, 1972

gers of the risky administrative position which in his case did not make merely new friends.

Bro. André LANFREY, fms





## *Bereavements from 1803-1804 and Marcellin's Vocation*

**Bro. André LANFREY, fms**

Beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Institute began to research documents dealing with the brothers and sisters of Marcellin. Brother Avit (*Annales de l'Institut t. 1p. 5*) was careful to consult all baptismal records in the parish at Marlhes. He has given us the list here below (an \* indicates that the godmother or godfather has signed):

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of B.</b>	<b>Godfather</b>	<b>Godmother</b>	<b>Offic. cleric</b>
Marie-Anne	11/12/1775	Charles Chirat grandfather*	Marianne Bonnefoy	Boët de Lacombe, prior pastor
Jean-Barthélemy	12/3/1777	Barthélemy Chirat, uncle*	Madeleine Champagnat, aunt*	Boët de Lacombe, prior pastor
Anne-Marie (1°)	20/2/1779	Charles Chirat, first cousin*	Anne-Marie Valadier, aunt by marriage	Lacombe sacerdote parish priest
Jean-Baptiste	11/9/1780	Jean-Baptiste Ducros, great uncle*	Marguerite Chirat, aunt*	Lacombe, parish priest
Marguerite-Rose	20/2/1782	Jean-Pierre Ducros, first cousin*	Marguerite-Rose Courbon, aunt by marriage*	Allirot, prior pastor
Marguerite-Rose (2°)	1/8/1784	Pierre Ducros, paternal uncle*	Marguerite Chirat, maternal aunt*	Allirot

Anne-Marie (2°)	25/7/1786	Jean-Barthélemy, her brother	Marianne Champagnat, her sister	Laurens, curate
Jean-Pierre	26/12/1787	J.-P. Ducros*	Marianne Champagnat, his sister	Laurens, curate
Marcellin Joseph-Benoît	20/5/1789	Marcellin Chirat, uncle*	Marguerite Chatelard, cousin by marriage*	Allirot, prior pastor
Joseph-Benoît	27/10/1790	Jean-Baptiste Champagnat, his brother	Anne-Marie Champagnat, his sister	Laurens, curate

Marianne and Anne-Marie became godmothers at age 11 and their brother Jean-Baptiste at age 10<sup>213</sup>. If the elder Champagnats are deemed worthy to be godparents to their younger brothers and sisters it means they were catechetically well instructed to assume this function. Though they were unable to sign their names, we can suppose that through the study of the catechism they were able to read. Despite this, it doesn't appear that they had received their first holy communion. In 1790 a study by the parish priest Allirot notes that only Marie-Anne had made her first communion. Marcellin was to receive his first communion in 1800. This is an early age for a parish in which the ceremony seems to have been carried out between ages 12 and 14.

Brother Avit does say clearly that of the 10 children, four died "before 1804" though he gives no precise date of their deaths. And, true to his usual caustic tone, he criticizes Brother Jean-Baptiste saying he would have done better when he wrote the *Vie*, not to affirm that the Champagnat couple had six children with Marcellin as the sixth.

The institute's chronology closely follows information given by Brother Avit, though it only says "died at a young age" when speaking of the children who died before 1804. The book *Marthes au long des siècles* (p. 186) does add some important details to this outline when Brother André Bar-

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<sup>213</sup> Strangely enough the institute's chronological record does not refer to this fact and simply declares he died in early childhood.

dyn, after consulting the burial register, says: “Jean-Baptiste Champagnat age 23 died at Rozey on August 8, 1803” and “Benoît Joseph Champagnat died at age 13 at Rozey on December 20, 1803”. As for the two girls who died, the first Marguerite-Rose born in 1782 and Anne-Marie born in 1786, they are simply declared as having “died at an early age”. Since the burial register doesn’t even mention them they may have lived only a short time.

Therefore in the Champagnat family eight children lived until 1803 in two different sibling groupings separated by some ten years and the birth of only one girl as indicated in the table below:

<b>Born between 1775 et 1780, and living in 1803</b>	<b>Born between 1780 et 1786, and living in 1803</b>	<b>Born between 1787 et 1790, and living in 1803</b>
Marianne (1775)	Marguerite-Rose (2 <sup>o</sup> ) (1784)	Jean-Pierre (1787)
Jean-Barthélemy (1777)		Marcellin (1789)
Anne-Marie (1779)		Joseph-Benoît (1790)
Jean-Baptiste (1780)		

We can surmise that the four eldest acted more or less as uncles and aunts towards the three last children. That accounts for their being godfather or godmother to their younger siblings who probably had different relationships with one another than with their elders. With the parents, the aunt who had been a religious, and grandmother Ducros, there were about a dozen persons living under the same roof up to Marianne’s marriage on February 5, 1799. Between 1795 and 1803 the parents and the older children made up a strong work force which must have afforded them a certain affluence especially as the younger ones were already beginning to help.

So it is that Marcellin’s childhood and part of his adolescent years unfolded in a large, hard-working family of five boys and three girls. Brother Jean-Baptiste in the *Vie*, refers to the influence Marcellin’s father, mother and aunt exercised on him but fails to mention any influence of the older siblings which must have been significant, as well.

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## **1803 – 1804 TERRIBLE YEARS**

In less than one year an avalanche of trials assailed them: Jean-Baptiste died age 23 on August 8, 1803 and Joseph-Benoît (13) died on September 20 the same year. Anne-Marie was married February 8, 1804 and Jean-Baptiste their father was suddenly taken from them June 12, 1804. Thus whether by death or marriage, the household was deprived of four members, three of whom were adults. The daughter's marriage must have depleted the family budget through payment of the dowry, and creditors came running as soon as the father died in order to claim their due.

Thus it was that after two deaths and a marriage, Marcellin decided during Easter holidays that he would go to the seminary. It does seem curious that the father's sudden death soon after did not alter his plans, especially in a family that had lost an important element of its work force and was facing serious financial difficulties.

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## **TAKING ON A PATERNAL ASPIRATION**

It seems fitting to wonder if this avalanche of painful losses might have played a decisive role in Marcellin's decision, causing him suddenly to shed adolescent carelessness (he was 15 years old) and to wish to consecrate his life to more significant responsibilities than farming. The shock seems to have been so great that his resolve to continue studies did away with all obstacles.

Thus the words of the recruiting cleric in 1804: "God wills it" cannot be separated from such a distressing personal experience, all of which may have generated sudden maturity in him. Besides, are studies not one of the means of coping with deep consternation, all of which may partially explain the poor intellectual results Marcellin showed at first?

We can also link this period to that of 1800 when Marcellin was sent off to school but then decided to give it up because of the incompetence of the school master; he then seemed to turn to the life and work of a peasant by taking care of sheep.

The first impressions also show Marcellin choosing to take on the active side of the *father model*, but then the father's death called him to study and to follow another aspect of that personality, that of the man who regretted not having acquired sufficient education, and making this known as he undertook the duties of president of the Marllhes administration early in 1798 saying he was sorry his *knowledge was too disorganized to fu.fill such a function*.

The Champagnat family, the mother in particular, seem to have accepted this mission since they did not oppose Marcellin's intentions and even encouraged him despite having to face heavy financial difficulties themselves.

Did Marcellin wish to become a priest already in 1804 when he began studying? He was more likely carried forward by a desire to be educated and to educate others. Through his father, he acquired one of the major longings of the rural community and understood that the efforts of one individual would never be enough. A few years later, this intention took concrete form in two resolutions (OMI, doc.17): "My Lord and my God, I promise [...] to teach the catechism to the poor as well as to the rich"<sup>214</sup>. And again: "We must have brothers". Finally, the deathbed instructions of a young man of 17 probably reminded him of the untimely death of his two brothers and convinced him to carry out a project nascent in 1803-1804.

All in all, Marcellin's priestly vocation seems to have been grafted after some time onto an earlier educational project of which J.B. Champagnat, by his hopes and through his sudden death, appears to have been the inspiration.

Bro. André LANFREY

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<sup>214</sup> See the testimony of Julienne Epalle concerning Marcellin's teaching during his seminary holidays, in the bicentenary edition Appendices 1 and 2 of Chapter 3, 1

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