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## PROBLEMS

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### *People and Property: The Structure of a Medieval Seigneurie*

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The early Middle Ages was a predominantly agrarian world. Most people lived on the land and derived their livings directly from it. To study the economic and social history of the early Middle Ages is to study a rural society. It is largely for this reason that the peasantry and the seigneurial regime<sup>1</sup> have traditionally been areas of active historical interest. Consistent scholarly activity has shed light on many of the economic mysteries of the period and, more recently, added further insights by examining many of the social factors acting on the peasants' milieu.<sup>2</sup> This paper examines the interaction between the economic and demographic structures of such a milieu in order better to understand both the organization of a villa and the relationship of the peasant tenements to it.

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<sup>1</sup> Naturally not all the farmers of the early medieval period lived on villas. Many no doubt, were independently working lands without seigneurial lords; and they owed none of the responsibilities and dues incumbent on the dependent peasantry. They, however, are virtually lost to us due to the exigencies of medieval documentation and source survival. This paper will concern itself only with peasants within a seigneurial regime.

<sup>2</sup> The literature on the manor and the medieval peasantry is too extensive to list here. For example of some of the more significant work on the social and economic history of agrarian life see M. BLOCH, *French Rural History* (Berkeley, 1966); G. DUBY, *La société aux XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles dans la région mâconnaise*, second edition (Paris, 1971); J. A. RAFTIS, *The Estates of Ramsey Abbey* (Toronto, 1957); R. FOSSIER, *La terre et les hommes en Picardie jusqu'à la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1968). For a good bibliographical guide see G. DUBY, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West* (Columbia, S.C., 1968) or the *Cambridge Economic History*, vol. 1: *The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages*, second edition (Cambridge, 1966).

The discussion divides into two parts. The initial section deals with the question of the structure of the seignury. It focuses on the manse or *mansus*, the basic farming unit. The manse was a primary component of the early medieval agrarian economy. It was a unit of taxation and an administrative unit for recording the peasantry. What I do first is describe it as it exists in the documentation. I then show how its size and the number of people living on it relate to the organization of the villa as a whole. At this point, it is possible to demonstrate the interrelationships of personal and tenorial taxes and status, the types of land and population size, and the amount of land let to the peasants and the amount reserved for the use of the lord and the local church.

After showing the organization of the villa as a coherent agricultural unit, I turn from an economic analysis to an essentially demographic one. For the manse was as much a peasant farm on which people lived and raised families as it was a taxing unit. The second part of this paper, therefore, is a discussion of how scholars have traditionally approached the farms. They have assumed a uniformity among them; and on the basis of this supposed uniformity, they have theorized about variation in farm sizes and population conditions in Carolingian Europe.

The fluidity of manse sizes is intimately related to the problems of differing peasant needs, family sizes and structures. The main point of this section, and indeed, this paper, is that it is incorrect to assume a homogeneity of either family structure of the subdivisions of a villa. I shall show that we have created historical anomalies where none, in fact, exists. An intelligent use of land is reflected in the manses, and this can be related to the mutual need of landlord and peasant family. By relating them, a totally different appraisal of the peasant farms themselves becomes both realistic and reasonable. We may, moreover, begin to see anew the structural unity of the manor and reasoned pre-capitalist agricultural management.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, we may begin to question our usual interpretations of population growth, over-crowded manorial conditions, and the breakdown of these peasant farms in Carolingian Europe.<sup>4</sup>

For the purposes of this paper, I will concentrate on the estates belonging to the monastery of Saint Germain-des-Prés in the early ninth century. The Ile-de-France (the area in which Saint Germain's seigneuries were primarily located) was a rich and prosperous region. It was a region, moreover, considered by many to have had a highly developed form of villa organi-

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<sup>3</sup> There is a significant school of agricultural economists who find that traditional agriculture is both economically viable and reasonable within its own context. For example, T. W. SCHULTZ, *Transforming Traditional Agriculture* (New Haven, 1964), 37, has found that «there are comparatively few significant inefficiencies in the allocation of factors of production in traditional agriculture». Also see W. A. LEWIS, *The Theory of Economic Growth* (Homewood, Ill., 1955).

<sup>4</sup> See *infra*, pp. 18 ff.

zation. This interpretation is in large part due to the survival of the polyptych of Saint Germain.<sup>5</sup> This polyptych is one of the earliest and most complete of Carolingian manorial extents, or tax censuses. For modern historians, it is their foremost example.<sup>6</sup> In it are recorded the lands and people dependent on the monastery as seigneurial lord and the rents, taxes, and services due from them. The census, furthermore, has the added advantage for us of having its information systematically obtained and reported for some twenty-four villas spread throughout the Ile-de-France.

The organization of the data in the polyptych is quite straight-forward, possibly following a formulary whose antecedents may be traced back to the fourth century.<sup>7</sup> Each villa was given a separate chapter or *breve*. The demesne land was the land reserved for the lord; it was worked by the tenants of Saint Germain as part of their services. This was generally listed first in the *brevia*. Within the section on the demesne, the editors reported the amount of arable land, the lands set apart for viticulture, meadows, and forest. Any buildings on the reserve were noted, including mills and ovens. Next followed a description of the glebe, or the land reserved to the local church, and, occasionally, the church building if it was exceptional.

The major part of each *breve* was devoted to a description of the peasant holdings. These were recorded by manse. There was a consistent pattern within the framework of the mansus. First the peasants dependent upon the monastery as manorial lord and living on the seigneurie were enumerated. The individuals on each tenure were classified by nuclear family; the husband (by name and status), wife (by name and status), and children — if any (usually by name). If there was more than one nuclear family on the farm, each was listed in the same way. Single people unattached to any nucleus were noted individually.<sup>8</sup> This was followed by an enumeration of the type and amount of lands belonging to each manse. The paragraphs for

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<sup>5</sup> The document, which is dated between ca. 801 and ca. 829, has been edited twice. The first edition was by BENJAMIN GUÉRARD, *Polyptyque de l'abbé Irminon... avec Prolégomènes*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1844), whose detailed introduction provides a fundamental starting point for all who have and will follow in studying it. The second edition was by AUGUSTE LONGNON, *Polyptyque de l'abbaye de Saint Germain-des-Prés rédigé au temps de l'abbé Irminon*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1886-1895), who reduced the introduction to more immediately manageable proportions, amended some of Guérard's paleographical and geographical interpretations, and added a significant section on the names in the census. The original manuscript is preserved today in the Bibliothèque Nationale (*Fonds latin*, 12832).

<sup>6</sup> W. GOFFART, *From Roman Taxation to Medieval Seigneurie: Three Notes*, *Speculum*, 47 (1972), p. 376.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377.

<sup>8</sup> For example, *Polyptyque*, XV, 20: Amalgis, colona sancti Germani; Jonam colonus et uxor ejus colona, nomine Actildis, habent secum infantem I, nomine Frotgaudis; Martinus colonus et uxor ejus colona, nomine Wandreverta, homines sancti Germani, habent secum infantes... his nominibus, Gislehardus, Jenesia, Waldedrudis.

each tenement then ended with the redevances due by both peasants and lands. Each manse had a status (such as « free » or « servile ») as did each individual,<sup>9</sup> and both owed taxes accordingly. Taken together, the brevia give description of some 55,000 acres, excluding forest. There were some 2600 nuclear families on some 1700 farms. And the population on the lands of Saint Germain included more than 9400 peasants.

The problem of understanding the manse is a difficult one.<sup>10</sup> Medieval editors used it differently in different contexts. On some occasion, it meant simply a house and its cottage garden; in other instances, it meant a

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<sup>9</sup> There are four peasant statuses recorded in the polyptych of Saint Germain-des-Prés. *Liberi* were free *de jure* if not *de facto*. *Coloni* were, theoretically at least, the descendants of free Roman peasants tied to the soil by late Roman legislation. It would seem, however, that there was some mobility within the servile social hierarchy and that some of these ninth century coloni were the products of socially mixed marriages. (See E. R. COLEMAN, *Medieval Marriage Characteristics: A Neglected Factor in the History of Medieval Serfdom*, « Journal of Interdisciplinary History », 2 (1971), pp. 205-219). *Lidi* formed an intermediate group between the coloni and the *servi*, the latter being the descendants of slaves. The *lidi*'s origins are somewhat obscure. Some think them to have been the descendants of Germans introduced into Gaul as auxiliary soldier-farmers (*laeti*) during Diocletian's reign. They then gradually lost their status during the dissolution of the Roman world. Others believe the word to be a simple transcription of the Germanic word for free men. See A. LONGNON, *Polyptyque, Introduction*, for the statuses and their respective dues and responsibilities.

<sup>10</sup> In this paper, I will deal primarily not with the *mansus indomiticatus* or *demesne* but with the peasant tenements. For studies dealing cursorily with the manse, see M. BLOCH, *French Rural History*; A. DOPSCH, *The Economic and Social Foundations of European Civilisation* (London, 1953); B. H. SLICHER VAN BATH, *The Agrarian History of Western Europe, A.D. 500-1850* (London, 1966); R. LATOUCHE, *The Birth of Western Economy* (N.Y., 1966); G. DUBY, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West and The Early Growth of the European Economy* (Ithaca, 1974); F. L. GANSHOF, *Manorial Organization in the Low Countries in the Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Centuries*, « Transactions of the Royal Historical Society », fourth series, 31 (1949), pp. 29-59; H. PIRENNE, *La terre et les classes rurales*, « Histoire économique de l'occident médiévale » (Bruges, 1951); A. DÉLÉAGE, *La vie économique et sociale de la Bourgogne dans le Haut Moyen Age*, 3 vols. (Macon, 1941); R. FOSSIER, *La terre et les hommes en Picardie*.

For more specific and detailed discussion of the manse in France and north-western Europe see D. HERLIHY, *The Carolingian Mansus*, « Economic History Review », 13 (1960), pp. 79-89; CH.-E. PERRIN, *Observations sur le manse dans la région parisienne au début de IX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, « Annales d'histoire sociale », 7 (1945), pp. 39-52 and *Le manse dans le Polyptyque de l'abbaye de Prüm à la fin du IX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, « Etudes historiques à la mémoire de Noël Didier » (Paris, 1960), pp. 245-258; C. DES MAREZ, *Note sur le manse Brabançon au moyen âge*, « Mélanges offerts à Henri Pirenne », vol. 1 (Brussels, 1926), pp. 131-138; F. LOT, *L'origine des manses de l'époque franque*, « Nouvelles recherches sur l'impôt foncier et la capitation personnelle sous le Bas-Empire » (Paris, 1955), pp. 78-89 and *Le jugum, le manse, et les exploitations agricole de la France moderne*, « Mélanges offerts à Henri Pirenne », vol. 1 (Brussels, 1926), pp. 307-326; H. DUBLED, *Encore la question du manse*, « Revue du moyen âge latin », 5 (1949), pp. 203-210; R. LATOUCHE, *Quelques aperçus sur le manse en Provence au X<sup>e</sup> et au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, « Recueil des travaux offert à M. Clovis Brunel », vol. 2 (Paris, 1955), pp. 101-106; O. TULIPPE, *Le manse à l'époque carolingienne*, « Annales de la société scientifique de

peasant « family »; and in still others. It was a finite set of land holdings.<sup>11</sup> However, when we examine the question for the ninth century, virtually all modern scholars agree that the classic manse is in the process of disintegration.<sup>12</sup>

It seems clear, then, that the first task at hand is to understand the meaning of mansus on the seigneuries we are analyzing. We can then compare the two main types of mansus in the polyptych, the servile and the « free ». There are differences in the sizes of the two kinds of farms, and these differences are connected to the taxes the farms owed. From here,

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Bruxelles », sér. D, Science économique, 56 (1936), pp. 238-252 and *De l'importance des exploitations agricoles au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle dans l'Île-de-France*, « Annales de géographie », 40 (1931), pp. 307-310; P. LE SAINT JACOB, *La structure du manse*, « Annales de Bourgogne », 15 (1943), pp. 173-184 and *Recherches sur la structure terrienne de la seigneurie*, « Annales de l'Est », mémoires, 21 (1959), pp. 425-433; and, most recently, W. GOFFART, *From Roman Taxation...*

<sup>11</sup> Yet, for all the complexities involved in the subject, and they are myriad, some degree of historiographical consensus has been reached on certain points: First, for the early Middle Ages, the manse was an agrarian taxing unit, and a basic one. Some scholars have argued backwards from this and suggested its origins within the late Roman fiscal policy of the *capitatio-jugatio* legislation and practices. [One of the foremost proponents of this older view was F. Lot. See, in particular, his *De l'étendue et de la valeur de caput fiscal sous le Bas-Empire*, « Revue historique de droit français et étranger », fourth series, 4 (1925), pp. 5-60 and *Le jugum, le manse, et les exploitations agricoles de la France moderne*. For the most recent discussion from the this perspective see W. GOFFART, *op. cit.* B. GUÉRAUD, *Polyptyque, Prolegomènes*, pp. 577-610, differed slightly in that he felt that while the mansus was, indeed, an administrative unit, it was one artificially created to fit the needs of the villa].

It is also sure that mansus derives from the root-word *manere*, to remain, implying some type of inherent stability; but there is division over whether this meant stability of the land as a heritable unit or as a taxing unit; in fact, many associate the term with the stability of the persons, the *manentes*, on the land. Still, there can be little doubt that the manse — whatever it was in essence — was a fairly widespread institution in the early Middle Ages. The word itself varied widely throughout Europe: hide in England, *hoba* (modern German *Hufe*) in areas to the east of Francia, *meix* in Burgundy or *mas* in Provence, and so on. And, finally, about one other thing there is consensus. The manse was intimately related to the family. The only medieval demographic definition comes from Bede; he glossed the hide as the *terra unius familiae*, the land of a family. [For example, D. HERLIHY, *op. cit.*, takes Bede's definition as a given in his article. Also see P. SAINT JACOB, *La structure du manse*, and *Recherches sur la structure terrienne de la seigneurie*, who argues for a greater geographical and less juridical emphasis, stressing the enclosure surrounding the house of a manse; this seems to stress the land as supporting a population rather than as a more abstract taxing unit. T.M. CHARLES-EDWARDS, *Kinship, Status, and the Origins of the Hide*, « Past and Present », 56 (1972), pp. 3-33, makes an elaborate case for the interrelationship between the hide and the kinship structure of Anglo-Saxon society; he also provides a useful bibliography on the question for Britain. See W. GOFFART, *op. cit.*, p. 166, on this point which he describes as "circular lexicography"].

<sup>12</sup> See, among others, CH.-É. PERRIN, *Observations sur le manse...*, pp. 51-52; M. BLOCH, *French Rural History*, p. 153; G. DUBY, *Growth of the European Economy*, p. 82; R. BOUTRUCHE, *Seigneurie et féodalité*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1959), 117 ff.

we can proceed to examine how the manses fit within the larger unit of the villa. With this, we can later test the assumptions on which the theories of manse breakdown are founded.

The polyptych of Saint Germain-des-Prés is quite specific about what constitutes a peasant manse. It was a unit of land, a unit of habitation, and a taxing unit. It included the amount of arable land allotted to the tenement, the amount of land cultivated in vines, and the amount of pasture or meadow to which that tenure was entitled. But just as important as the lands were the people who lived on them. In fact, the peasants — men, women, and children — took precedence over the lands in the systematic listings made by the census-takers. After the lands are delineated, each manse had its specific taxes set down. And since this, too, followed a formula, the dues and services are often abbreviated to a simple « *solvit similiter* » or « it pays the same » as the tenures listed above it.

But let us reconsider for a moment the organization of each breve. First the *mansus indomnicatus* or demesne is enumerated in some detail. This is followed by the glebe, or church lands. They are reported in much the same way as the average peasant farm, with the main exception being an occasional description of a church building. The tenant farms are next, and many of the brevia end with a list of people owing taxes to the villa although not possessing land on it.

This offers us an insight into the priorities of the monastery as manorial lord. The organization of the census suggests a rank ordering in the brevia. The demesnes were of the most immediate interest.<sup>13</sup> They did, after all, produce the eatable necessities for the monks and abbot. The local church was next. It should be remembered that the polyptych was produced at the instance of a religious institution, here manorial lord. The peasant manses followed. And, finally, the editors noted those not totally dependent upon the seignury but paying nominal taxes.

This hypothesis of reasoned ordering does two things. It gives a simple rationale for the uniformity of organization we find throughout the polyptych; and it suggests an analogue for the structure of the manse listings. First came the peasants. They were followed by the type and amount of land constituting their mansus and by the dues and services they owed. This implies a recognition of the critical importance of people. People worked the seigneurial lands. People paid the taxes. The lands without people to work them were waste. The manses were important units for describing the population as well as divisions for purely taxing purposes.

These formulas, of course, allow for some variation. For example,

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<sup>13</sup> It is highly unlikely that the polyptych's organization followed traditional lines without adaptation to the needs of Saint Germain-des-Prés. First, not all the ninth century polyptychs followed the same form. Second, the *mansus indomnicatus* in the Carolingian censuses are not generally found in earlier tax documents which are thought to be their antecedents. (I am grateful to Walter Goffart for this information).

the peasant manses on the lands of Saint Germain are divided into two main types: servile and *ingenuile*. The servile tenures' status corresponded to the personal status of the *servus*. The *ingenuile* tenements were, technically, « free ». The tenurial status corresponded to the status of the manses' original inhabitants.<sup>14</sup> Originally, an *ingenuile* tenure was worked by a colonus and a servile tenure by a *servus*. There was another type of farm, the *mansi lidiles*; but they are mentioned for only one villa in the polyptych, *de Colrido*, in Breve XIII. They are an exception to the main division of land for the villas of Saint Germain. This division discounts the *hospicia*, or land newly cleared and admitted to the manor. And, again, each status of land owed a separate and distinct series of dues to the lord just as did each personal position for the peasantry.<sup>15</sup>

These tenures have been noted many times and studied occasionally in some detail.<sup>16</sup> To a large extent, it is from them that historians have derived their information about common types of holdings, the average size of farms, and their composition. And an oft-mentioned situation is the preponderance of *ingenuile* or « free » manses over the number of servile farms. In fact, out of some 1700 manses in the census, 1108 were *ingenuile* and only 183 were servile. This represents a ratio of approximately six to one. Yet there were 7457 coloni and 501 servi listed. This is a ratio of nearly fifteen to one. By the ninth century, it is not difficult to find coloni working servile lands and servi on *ingenuile* manses.<sup>17</sup> But the status of the tenure was immutable and reflected the social condition of the original inhabitants.<sup>18</sup> It is clear, then, that the number and percentage of servi had declined by the time of the census's redaction.<sup>19</sup>

However, different tax burdens and the disproportion in number are not the only distinctions between the two types of peasant farms. Their sizes are also of some moment here. Almost everyone who has studied the

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<sup>14</sup> B. GUÉRARD, *Polyptyque, Prolégomènes*, pp. 582-588; A. LONGNON, *Polyptyque, Introduction*, pp. 88-89; R. BOUTRUCHE, *Seigneurie et féodalité*, vol. 1, p. 90; A. DÉLÉAGE, *La vie économique et sociale de la Bourgogne*, vol. 1, pp. 548, 551, 559-560.

<sup>15</sup> A. LONGNON, *Polyptyque, Introduction*, p. 119.

<sup>16</sup> B. GUÉRARD, *Polyptyque, Prolégomènes*; CH.-E. PERRIN, *Observations sur le manse*. Perrin did a sample study of four villas: *Palatiolum, Vedarariae, Spinogilum* and *Theodorum*. He did not do a complete survey.

<sup>17</sup> By the time we reach the ninth century, very little correlation between personal and tenurial status endured. The major reminder of the earlier situation is the fact that the average number of people per status group sometimes related in a minor way to the status of the land. For instance, on the villa of *Gaugaco* (Breve I), the number of coloni per free manse averaged 2.92 while the servi trailed behind at 0.15; and in the Breve *de Villari* (Breve VII), there were 0.71 coloni per servile manse as opposed to 4.23 servi. It is, in fact, highly unusual to find a situation such as Breve XX where the tenure status does agree with that of the tenant.

<sup>18</sup> See above, note 14. Also see H. SÉE, *Les classes rurales et la régime domanial en France au moyen âge* (Paris, 1901), p. 69.

<sup>19</sup> See E.R. COLEMAN, *Medieval Marriage Characteristics...*

census has noted, at some point or another, that the farmers on servile lands worked much smaller plots than did those on free tenures.<sup>20</sup>

This point is worth investigating. But in order to do so, several difficulties must be confronted. One of them is the obvious question of grouping the data. My calculations of manse size include only those lands belonging to Saint Germain-des-Prés which could be determined as either ingenuile or servile. Within these types of tenure, the arable acreage constituted the lion's share of the peasant tenements. Rather than using the land committed to vines or meadow as a gauge, therefore, I judged the size of the plots according to the amount of land in cultivation. Demi-manses were tenures noted separately by the redactors as fractions of a manse; and occasional free tenures were listed as multiple manses, generally a manse and a half or two manses. I included them both when they were listed in the polyptych as single taxing units.<sup>21</sup> The census makes it clear that the demi-manses functioned as discrete tenements and the multiple manses as unified units. And our purpose here is to ascertain the actual size of these types of peasant holdings in the ninth century.

One more problem must be confronted. Early medieval manorial measurements have never been satisfactorily defined.<sup>22</sup> The two major attempts — those of Guérard and Guilhiermoz — while approaching the problem from completely different perspectives, arrived at very similar conclusions. Yet the complexities and difficulties of conversion to modern equivalents continue. Therefore, in order to simplify the issue somewhat, I will use the original manorial measurements in the text and supply modern approximations (based on Guérard) in the footnotes.

The range in size of the peasant tenements of Saint Germain was quite large. The manses in general went from less than one *bunuarium* to 60 *bunuaria*. That is to say that some tenures possessed about three acres of arable land and some possessed more than 200 acres. Most of the manses,

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<sup>20</sup> Two of the more important examples are M. BLOCH, *op. cit.*: ... *we do in fact find that their servile manse is always smaller than the free one...* (153); and CH.-E. PERRIN, *Observations sur le manse*. In this sample of four villas, Perrin omits from his calculations demi-manses and multiple manse units.

<sup>21</sup> There was only one case which demanded a decision not directly dictated by the document. Manse 33 in Breve XX was composed of lands that were both a standard servile plot and a *hospicium*, or newly admitted piece. I included it with the servile holdings for the purposes of computation.

<sup>22</sup> See B. GUÉRARD, *Polyptyque, Prolégomènes* and P. GUILHIERMOZ, *De l'équivalence des anciennes mesures*, « Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes », 74 (1923), pp. 267-328, for the major studies. Also see L. MUSSET, *Observations historiques sur une mesure agraire: le bonnier*, « Mélanges d'histoire du moyen âge dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen » (Paris, 1951), pp. 535-541; H. NAVEL, *Recherches sur les anciennes mesures agraires normandes*, « Bulletin de la société des antiquaires de Normandie », 40 (1932), pp. 29-138.

however, had between about one bunuarium and 22 bunuaria.<sup>23</sup> Still, the patterns of size are different if we look at the farms divided according to tenurial status. The largest of the servile tenures had 13 bunuaria. The largest of the ingenuile tenements had 36 bunuaria.<sup>24</sup> Yet the differences are even more interesting than so summary an observation as this suggests, as may be seen in Table One.

TABLE 1  
SERVILLE AND MANSE SIZE <sup>25</sup>

Manse Size	Servile Manses		Ingenuile Manses	
	No.	%age	No.	%age
1 bunuarium	5	2.73	2	0.18
1-2	11	6.01	29	2.62
2-3	26	14.21	87	7.85
3-4	35	19.13	129	11.64
4-5	38	20.77	158	14.26
5-6	29	15.85	118	10.65
6-7	13	7.10	124	11.19
7-8	7	3.83	86	7.76
8-9	11	6.01	78	7.04
9-10	2	1.09	44	3.97
10-11	0	0.00	57	5.14
11-12	1	0.55	33	2.98
12-13	3	1.64	59	5.33
13-14	2	1.09	12	1.08
14	—	—	92	8.30
Total	183	100.00	1108	100.00
Mean	4.7		8.4	
Mode	4.5		4.5	
Median	4.4		6.3	

The largest single group for either type of mansus was that with four to five bunuaria of land. But there the similarities end. The percentage of farms accounted for differ markedly. Over three-quarters (78.7%) of the servile tenures were under five bunuaria of arable. Yet less than half (47.2%) of the free farms were. More than half the ingenuile tenements

<sup>23</sup> One *bunuarium* equals 1.39 *hectares* and 3.43 acres; 60 bunuaria equal 83.40 *hectares* and 206 acres; 22 equal 30.58 and 75.53.

<sup>24</sup> 18.07 *hectares* or 44.63 acres and 50.04 and 123.6.

<sup>25</sup> The amount of arable and apportioned to each manse was not necessarily an integer number. Therefore, the sizes have been arranged as less than one full bunuarium, between one bunuarium and two bunuaria — yet not quite two, and so on. To facilitate the calculations for mean size which follow in the text, the manses with less than one bunuarium were computed at 0.5, those between one and two at 1.5; etcy. Again, these calculations omit newly cleared and, therefore, generally quite small plots of land.

possessed over five bunuaria of cultivable land. In fact, 92 (or 8.3%) of the free farms had more than 14 bunuaria of arable land. Not one of the servile manses did. Certainly the vast majority (nearly 92%) of free farms had less than 14 bunuaria. But the mean size of each type of mansus was different. The ingenuile tenures had a mean of 8.4 bunuaria while the servile tenures mean was only 4.7. Quite simply, the average ingenuile farm was nearly 44% larger than the average servile farm.<sup>26</sup>

Of course, the consistency of this pattern — as important and strong as it is — must not be exaggerated. It is neither correct nor just to make a blanket statement « that the servile manse is *always* [italics mine] smaller than the free one ». <sup>27</sup> As Table One shows, some servile manses were larger, and some significantly larger, than some ingenuile tenures. Yet the pattern is clear. The findings confirm those of previous researchers: people on the manses of lower status worked less land than people on higher status peasant plots.

But we can go further. Here we can find evidence of symmetry and balance in the organization and structure of the seigneurie. Just as personal status had a general analogue in the tax structure, so did tenurial status.<sup>28</sup> Although various labour services imposed on the peasant tenements of Saint Germain were paid by many manses irrespective of their status,<sup>29</sup> there were certain responsibilities differentiated between them.<sup>30</sup> To take one example from the many provided by the polyptych: Manse 3 in Breve XVII, *de Murcincto*, was ingenuile. Its redevances consisted of labour in the fields, the cutting of trees, cartage, and corvées; it also owed three chickens and fifteen eggs.<sup>31</sup> Other free manses at Murcincto had their responsibilities listed as « the same ». On the other hand, servile manses on the villa usually owed less in direct labour. They followed the regime of manse 41, paying two

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<sup>26</sup> Five bunuaria are equivalent to 6.95 hectares and 17.17 acres. Eight point four bunuaria equal 11.68 and 28.84; and 4.7 bunuaria are 6.53 and 16.14.

<sup>27</sup> M. BLOCH, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>28</sup> A. LONGNON, *Polyptyque, Introduction*, p. 134: « La capitation ou le chevage, *capaticum, cavaticum, capitale, census de capite*, etc., était un cens personnel, c'est-à-dire qui se percevait sur les personnes et non sur les choses », p. 137; etc. 120: « Les cens et les services se réglèrent d'après la condition des manses et non d'après celle des personnes »; 124-5; etc.

<sup>29</sup> B. GUÉRARD, *Polyptyque, Prolegomènes*, 745; A. LONGNON, *Polyptyque, Introduction*, 159, 164, 182. It should be pointed out that despite the fact many of the services were not specifically relegated to a particular manse status, a certain degree of correspondence between them existed. This correspondence, however, is more visible and viable in examining the totality of tenurial responsibilities than its components.

<sup>30</sup> B. GUÉRARD, *ibid.*, 745: « Il y avait toutefois plusieurs services qui n'étaient exigés que d'une classe de manses... Dans le Polyptyque, on appelle *servitium ingenuile* le service du par les manses ingenuiles, et *debitum servile* le service du par les serviles ». See *Polyptyque*, IX, 139 and XIII, 176 for two examples.

<sup>31</sup> *Polyptyque*, XVII, 3: « Curvasas, caplim, caroperas, manoperas, quantum ei injungitur, pullos III, ova XV ».

hogsheads of wine at Easter, another measure of wine, 50 pieces of wicker, and three chickens and fifteen eggs;<sup>32</sup> some paid less still. Servile tenements owed more in payment in kind. Free tenures owed more in direct labour to the lord.<sup>33</sup>

An explanation for the different types of exactions is not hard to find. The status of the mansus corresponded to the personal status of its original inhabitant, or at least to its original household head.<sup>34</sup> The payments owed by a servus because of his personal position were originally quite heavy in time and labour services.<sup>35</sup> The colonus paid higher personal taxes in coin and in kind but owed less of his time in direct labour to the seigneur. The redevances due from the manses, as tenures and discounting their inhabitants, were the reverse. Servile tenements owed greater payment in goods and tangible items. Ingenuile manses owed more manual labour.

One can easily imagine that the lord acknowledged the impossibility of demanding that a servus, on his servile plot, devote all his physical abilities and waking hours to the service of a seigneur or seigneur's demesne. Giving a slave a plot of land would not have been enough. He needed some time to work it and a chance to enjoy some of its rewards. On the other hand, the colonus could be made to devote some of his labour at peak periods of agricultural need without destroying his ability to cultivate his own lands. Or, to approach the question from a different perspective, since the servus had less land, he could contribute more labour to the demesne. Since the colonus had more land, he could contribute more in rents. These explanations, of course, suggest a practicality in the early make-up of the seigneurie.

We can test this assumption by an examination of these peasant manses in the context of the whole villa, rather than as isolated entities. The size of the early medieval seigneuries have often been calculated and, occasionally, the amount of reserved land compared to the amount of land let out to the peasantry.<sup>36</sup> These estimates and figures, however, have never been subjected to rigorous analysis. Yet the relationships are more subtle and meaningful than general surveys would indicate.

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<sup>32</sup> *Polyptyque*, XVII, 41: « Solvit in pascione [sic] de vino modios II, senapi sestarium I, ausarias [sic] L, pullos III, ova XV ».

<sup>33</sup> The point here is not the ultimate value of the exactions; this may well have been the same for both. The important distinction is the way the exactions were levied.

<sup>34</sup> See above, note 14.

<sup>35</sup> By the ninth century redaction of the polyptych of Saint Germain-des-Prés, most of the taxes were due from the mansi. However, other polyptychs maintained a marked distinction in the amount of labor due from coloni and servi. Generally, the former owed several weeks per year to service on the demesne, and the latter owed three days each week. For Prüm, see CH.-E. PERRIN, *Une étape de la seigneurie: l'exploitation de la réserve à Prüm, au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, « Annales d'histoire économique et sociale », 6 (1934), 455-56. See also R. DOEHAERD, *Le haut moyen âge occidental: économies et sociétés* (Paris, 1971), p. 172. These labour obligations were specific in the Bavarian and Alamannic law codes at the beginning of the eighth century.

<sup>36</sup> For example, R. BOUTRUCHE, *op. cit.*, 98 ff.

The next question, then, is how these farms fit into the structure of the villa as a whole. In order to pursue it in a more than superficial fashion, I shall use the relatively simple statistical technique of product-moment correlation. This allows the comparison of one set of data with another and tests their degree of interrelationship.<sup>37</sup> And for the moment, I shall deal only with the arable land of the villas.

The arable land was the most significant portion of the estate for the peasantry. The wines produced were of moment to the lord; but they could not support the peasants. Greater portions of the villas were committed to arable land than to vines. And the size of the populations on the manors was closely connected to the amount of arable land on those manors. Most of the difference in the numbers of people on the lands of the seigneuries related directly to how much of the estates were devoted to cereal agriculture. The correlation was +0.93 on a +1.0 to -1.0 scale. This indicates a very high degree of correspondence between the numbers of peasants and the acreage committed to food crops. In fact, 86.5% of the variance in the size of the peasantry on each villa can be explained quite simply and solely by the amount of food crop land in cultivation on the villa. The vineyards,<sup>38</sup> on the other hand, had only the smallest connection to the numbers of men, women, and children on the seigneuries. Population size was not dependent upon viticulture. The peasant population had a correlation of only +0.15 with the land committed to vines. The relationship between the number of people and wine production was slight. Barely over 2% of the differences in the size of the peasant population on the various villas can be related to the amount of viticulture on them. There was, then, a realization of a necessary balance between people and property. But, even more, specific kinds of land were obviously acknowledged of greater importance than other types of land.

The balance between the peasants and the arable land of the manor was not the only structural relationship. The connection between the cereal acreage let to the tenants of Saint Germain was closely connected, too, to

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<sup>37</sup> Correlation allows the comparison of one set of data with another. One set is considered the independent variable and the other (the dependent variable) is measured against it. If there is a correlation, then the dependent variable will change proportionately as the independent variable fluctuates. The closer the relationship between the fluctuations of the variables, the higher the degree of correlation. The correlation coefficient is the number indicating the closeness of the relationship on a +1.0 to -1.0 scale. If it is positive, the association between the data sets is a direct ratio. (As A goes up, so does B). If the coefficient is negative, the association is an inverse ratio. (As A goes up, B goes down). For a more detailed description of the technique (and my use of it in another context) see E. R. COLEMAN, *A Note on Medieval Peasant Demography*, «Historical Methods Newsletter», 5 (1972), pp. 53-58.

<sup>38</sup> The lands devoted to vine cultivation were measured in *aripenna*. An *aripennum*, or arpent, equals 0.42 hectare or about an acre.

the arable acreage reserved to the demesne and glebe. (See Appendix One). The soil in cultivation among the peasant holdings ranged from a low of 43.5% of all the cultivable land of a villa to an extreme high of 100%. Commonly, however, it averaged between 60% and 80%. Generally, then, from about two thirds to about three-quarters of the soil devoted to food crop agriculture was worked by the tenant farmers of a seigneurie for their own maintenance, including the payments they owed the lord. Only one-quarter to one-third was reserved for the sole exploitation of the seigneur.

But averages can be deceiving. Some of the subtleties of the demesne and tenement balance are glossed over, and it is here that correlations are helpful in perceiving more of the situation. For example, the averages noted above made it clear that there was some relationship between the amount of arable land among the farms and the arable at the disposal of the demesne and glebe. However, the intimacy of the relationship could not be gauged. Yet there was a close connection between the two. The more land the peasants had for food-crop agriculture, the more land was reserved for seigneur and church. The correlation was high, +0.85%.<sup>39</sup> This explains almost three-quarters of the variation (72%) between the tenement cereal acreage and the reserved cereal acreage among the villas. To put it another way, almost three-quarters of the differences in the amount of ploughland each manor separated for the lord and local church can be explained simply by the number of acres in ploughland the peasants worked.

There is a strong and clear alliance, as well, between the tenements and the demesne, omitting the glebe lands. Again, the more land the peasants had for cultivation, the more reserved land on each villa. The seigneurial demesne arable has a correlation of +0.76% with the arable of the tenant farms. The amount of ploughland retained for the sole exploitation of the lord was largely determined by the amount of ploughland the farmers had to support themselves. Nearly three-fifths (58%) of the differences in arable acreage on the *mansi indomnicati* belonging to Saint Germain can be explained by the varying acreage the peasants sowed with food crops. The less land they had for this, the smaller the demesne. Some of the variance may be explained by the differences in soil fertility among the seigneuries, of course. But this would not necessarily determine the number of manses on the villas. Yet the balance between peasant tenement and demesne maintains itself when viewed from this perspective. The greater the number of peasant tenures, the larger the reserve. The fewer dependent mansi, the smaller the reserve. There is a correlation of +0.78% between the number of peasant plots and the lord's private land. Nearly two-thirds (61%) of the variation in the amounts of reserved land on the manors can

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<sup>39</sup> This is a simple correlation. A multiple correlation would, of course, yield a still higher result.

be explained by a direct relationship with the total farming tenures on them.<sup>40</sup> The reserve was clearly linked to and dependent upon the quantity of manses on the villa.

The association between the non-peasant arable lands and the cultivable peasant holdings clearly was not haphazard. There is a real equation among the number of peasant farmers attached to the manor, the amount of territory which supported them,<sup>41</sup> and the part of the seignery set apart for the lord. It makes sense, of course. The reserve was worthless if unworked. It was worked by the peasantry.<sup>42</sup> And the number of people who were supported by the agriculture of the seignery and, therefore, were available to work the demesne lived on the manses. It is improbable that seigneurial lords and agents would have been unaware of the simple fact that their people needed land to live on. The amount of reserve that could be worked by peasant labour depended upon how many people could be fed by the dependent tenements. The more people on the manor, the greater, the acreage committed to the demesne. The demesne arable needed to be cultivated by the farmers on the seignery. The correlation between the amount of demesne arable and the population of each villa was +0.82%. The reserves varied in size in direct and intimate proportion with the number of people available to work them. More than two-thirds (67%) of the variations in amounts of seigneurial land can be accounted for simply by the size of the populations on the seigneuries.

Yet the situation becomes even more interesting when we distinguish between the servile and ingenuile manses. Both types of tenure are directly associated with the structure and organization of the villa. Both have the same degree of association. Servile and ingenuile manses have the same correlation with the size of the reserve's arable land (+0.57). One-third of the variation in demesne size, therefore, is immediately related to the number of servile tenures. One-third of the variation is immediately related to the number of free tenures. The greater the number of servile tenements on an estate, the larger the estate's reserve. The greater the number of ingenuile tenements on an estate, the larger the estate's demesne.

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<sup>40</sup> Of course, the number of peasant tenements is, to a certain extent, bound by the amount of land available to them. But this is not wholly constraining given the enormous variation in manse size, partition and partible inheritance, and the possibility of accreting new farming lands to the villa.

<sup>41</sup> The correlation between the size of the manses and the number of people on them was +0.81.

<sup>42</sup> It was not essential to have a demesne on a villa. Breve VII of the polyptych has all its acreage committed to peasant holdings. It was also possible to have the reserve lands cultivated by slaves or prebendaries. However, this paper is investigating the structure of the villa as delineated in the polyptychs — and the polyptych of Saint Germain in particular — where peasant labour on the reserve is a predominant characteristic.

It is significant that both types of tenure have the same relationship to the reserved lands of the seigneuries. The number of servile manses on each villa out of a total of 183 and the number of ingenuile manses on each villa out of a total of 1108 both explain the same degree of difference in the demesnes. The manses retained the mark of their original farmers' status. It appears, then, that there was some degree of balance between the number of servi and coloni — with their respective personal and tenurial dues, that as the seigneurial units slowly came into being there was an attempt to create or maintain a proportion between them. And it would seem that this balance, however it arose, was collated with the division of land into tenement and reserve.

The land devoted to the manorial church was also tightly integrated into the structure of the seigneuries. There is a correlation of +0.85 between the demesne arable and the glebe arable on Saint Germain's villas. The more ploughland committed to the lord, the more ploughland committed to the church. In fact, almost three-quarters (72%) of the variation in the size of the local ecclesiastic's land can be related to the variation in the amount of land the manor had in demesne. The glebe arable alone has an association of +0.09 with the arable of the peasant tenements. Again, the more lands the peasants cultivated for themselves, the more land the priest had. The less land the peasants worked for themselves, the smaller the portion devoted to their church. This simple relationship between the two explains 81% of the variation. Moreover, there was a correlation of +0.78 between the glebe arable and the size of the peasant populations. The more people there were on the villa, the more land was allotted to the glebe. The land reserved to the church on churches of each seigneurie, then, is also intimately linked to the size of the peasant populations and the amount of peasant lands.

What can be made of this? The first thought might be that it is all coincidence. But the strength of the correlations makes this unlikely. It seems fair to discuss the coherent creation of the seigneuries over the course of time. The organization and structure of these villas of Saint Germain show a balance and coordination of people and land, of personal and tenurial taxes. Each component of the villa was related to every other component in an intricate and subtle manner. We may presume that the purpose of this synchronization of elements was to maintain a functional equilibrium between the needs of the peasants and the needs of the seigneurs. That, at any rate, was the result.

We can now return to the problem of the ninth-century mansus and the historical consensus that it was in the process of disintegration. This scholarly agreement proceeds from the premise of an initial uniformity of size among the peasant tenures. Based on this presupposition, the fluidity of tenement size and the varying peasant family associations on the tenements are anomalies which necessitate explanation.

My contention is that they are not anomalies. I will focus on the

differences in manse sizes, and I will relate them to the requirements of the peasants living on the manses. These various requirements acted in conjunction with those of the seigneurs who derived taxes and services from the tenures. We will then see that the dimensions of the ninth century mansus were reflections of different types of family groups on the land. The mansus allowed for the heterogeneity of human activity within a homogeneous administrative form.

We have found that there was an internal unity and symmetry to the villa as a whole. The lords and peasants were both apparently aware of the relationships among land, taxes, and labour; and they were aware of relative values of different kinds of land. It is, therefore, only reasonable to look for the same type of perceptions in the make-up of the peasant farms. Instead of noting apparent irregularities and peculiarities, it would be judicious to place the manses in a slightly different context, to seek a generalization that will encompass and explain variety not only as a norm but as a solution to varying conditions. In order to do this, I will concentrate on the demography of the peasantry rather than focusing purely on the economy of cultivation.

Virtually everyone who has ever studied the question of the manse in general, or the polyptych of Saint Germain-des-Prés in particular, has had occasion to note the differences in size between servile and ingenuile tenures. Moreover, they have noted the differences *within* these categories as well. (See above and Table One). Various explanations have been devised. Among the more important theories is one based on geography. According to this hypothesis, put forward most strongly by O. Tulippe,<sup>43</sup> it is the physical characteristics of the villa which broadly determine the extent of the manses. For example, those manors on plateaux would have larger tenorial units than those in rich valley land. This is certainly useful in describing the inequalities in the average sizes of the holdings among the seigneuries; but it is somewhat less helpful on an intra-manorial level. Tulippe assumes the overwhelming importance of regional characteristics. He further assumes that the manses were units of measurement; this being so, they would have been roughly uniform. Therefore, he posits that they were fiscal abstractions by the ninth century. Moreover, he continues, not only were they unrealistic in physical terms but in demographic terms as well. The farms were over-populated, many possessing two or more « families » (i.e. nuclear families of husband, wife, and children).

Marc Bloch tried to solve the problem differently.<sup>44</sup> He felt that minor discrepancies in size could easily be accounted for by local customs or variations in soil fertility. But major differences surely had another cause.

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<sup>43</sup> His analysis and conclusions can be seen easily in « De l'importance des exploitations agricoles au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle dans l'Île-de-France » and « Le manse à l'époque carolingienne ».

<sup>44</sup> M. BLOCH, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-167.

And he found this cause ready to hand: « The only conclusion to be drawn is that in the distribution of manses certain occupants were favoured at the expense of others ».<sup>45</sup> He was uncertain as to whether this favouritism took place at the very genesis of the institution or whether it developed during the course of seigneurial evolution. But this had to be the reason. As proof, he noted that the differences were particularly apparent in the ninth-century Ile-de-France where « the decomposition of the manse apparently set in at an early date ». For Bloch, as for Tulippe, the decomposition was signalled by manses supporting multiple nuclei.

Still another perspective to the question was given by Charles-Edmund Perrin, one of the foremost students of Carolingian polytypchs.<sup>46</sup> He accepted Bloch's explanation as satisfactory for the abnormally large peasant plots of land found in the census. But he felt that this was insufficient as a hypothesis to account for the particularly small tenures. Something was missing: the sale or alienation of manses, or parts of manses, by the tenants to other peasants. These alienations completely disrupted the general homogeneity of farm size which must have characterized the villas' origins. Or, at the very least, they exaggerated the small discrepancies that might have existed at the start. But Perrin did not stop there. He also suggested that some of the tiny tenures were the result of active land clearance which antedated the preparation of the census. However, he joined the others in stating that — whatever the causes of the inequalities — there could be no doubt that by the early ninth century, the institution of the manse was « une institution abâtardie et menacée de ruine »<sup>47</sup>. Again the consequence: the multiplicity of « families » on so many farms and their over-population.

Most of the studies dealing with the economy of early medieval northern Europe, both surveys and specialized analyses, rely on one or more of these theories. And they are all at least partially correct. However, since these hypotheses are basic, we must examine their underlying assumptions. From whatever angle scholars approach the question of the manse, they take for granted three interrelated propositions. (1) They all have an implicit belief that the original tenant farms were essentially uniform. They proceed from there to explain an apparent anomaly. (2) They all presume that the tenures were demographic units — but more than that, demographic units of a very special kind. They were the lands devoted to a family, *terra unius familiae* in Bede's words.<sup>48</sup> And to a man, historians

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>46</sup> His views may be easily found in his now classic article « Observations sur le manse... » as well as in many of his other works. See, for example, *Recherches sur la seigneurie rurale en Lorraine d'après les plus anciennes censures* (Strasbourg, 1935).

<sup>47</sup> CH.-E. PERRIN, *Observations sur le manse...*, p. 51.

<sup>48</sup> This was the only medieval demographic definition. Bede refers, of course, to the hide not the Carolingian mansus. However, scholars have used this definition for descriptions and analyses of conditions on the continent. See above, note 11. W.

have translated this family as a nuclear family. Bloch suggested, in passing, that the family might be a « family group, smaller than the clan ».<sup>49</sup> But he then consistently ignored his own suggestion and discussed the breakdown of the manse in terms of having several « families » on one tenure. Which leads to point three. Everyone is willing to agree that the classic manse was undergoing a process of « bastardization » and disintegration by the time we see it clearly in Carolingian documents.

These premises have been consistently enshrined in surveys. An example of the general position can be seen in such statements as:

Irminon's polyptyque, like the others, shows that these units, each representing in theory the "land of one household", no longer coincided with teams of workers united by ties of kinship. The system lived on because manorial officials were anxious to preserve the basis for apportioning dues and services. But, in two or three generations, demographic change had caused it to break down. Some of these manses were settled by several couples and apparently over-populated.<sup>50</sup>

Let us look at the theory of « land supporting one family » another way. It is not necessary to assume that the « family » was nuclear. There is no evidence that the land meant to support it was allotted on the basis of a husband, wife, and their children. If we suppose instead that the family was, in reality, often an extended one — including more than one generation or collateral relatives, the entire historiographical perspective on the manse changes. Bloch himself, in *Feudal Society*, spoke of the larger network of kinship which he felt only really started breaking down in the eleventh century.<sup>51</sup> In fact, the assumption of larger kinship ties and units for the early Middle Ages has long been a cliché in the literature on the period.

Historians, of course, have come to understand that extended or attenuated kinship ties are not independent of the society surrounding them. They are greatly influenced by such fundamental conditions as the political and economic security of their milieu. They expand or contract according to people's perceived needs for unity and self-defence and the ability of a larger political entity to fulfill these needs.<sup>52</sup> No social or

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GOFFART, *op. cit.*, 166, points out that the equation of *familia* with nuclear family is not sure. *Familia* is an ambiguous term used ambiguously by Bede.

<sup>49</sup> M. BLOCH, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>50</sup> G. DUBY, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, p. 79.

<sup>51</sup> M. BLOCH, *Feudal Society*, vol. 1 (Chicago, 1965), chapter IX.

<sup>52</sup> G. DUBY has himself pointed this out exceptionally well in his *La société aux XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles dans la région mâconnaise*. For example: « En réalité, la famille est le premier refuge où l'individu menacé vient se mettre à l'abri pendant les défaillances de l'Etat; mais dès que les institutions publiques lui promettent des garanties suffisantes, il esquivé la contrainte familiale et le lien du sang se relâche. L'histoire du lignage est une succession de contractions et de détentes, dont le rythme suit les modifications de l'ordre politique » (122).

economic historian of the Middle Ages would deny a model of flexibility and fluctuation for the period.

Yet a major difficulty remains. Virtually all the effort that has gone into studying the mutability of family structure for the early Middle Ages has been devoted to the aristocratic layer of society. There have been few detailed investigations of peasant human relations. And so, to a large extent, those clichés and commonplaces swiftly being discarded for the other levels of the social scheme still cling to the people at the bottom. Scholars who display the greatest sophistication and subtlety in their analyses of the nobility accept long-known and never-scrutinized assumptions about the servile tenantry.

Actually, there is little need to belabour this point. Scholarly opinion has pronounced two judgments on the early medieval peasantry. On the one hand, the peasants' family structure was relatively large and ill-defined. The norm was the extended family. The nuclear family came into prominence later with changed economic and social conditions. On the other hand, the peasant family was characteristically nuclear. And this is the way Bede meant it when he described the manse as land to support a family. Almost the full weight of recent demographic scholarship is on the side of the extended kin for this early period of violence and insecurity.<sup>53</sup>

It is clear that neither generalization will satisfactorily explain such a complex situation. The family (or at least the cohabiting members) was, and is, a relatively sensitive social barometer reacting to fluctuations in priorities and needs, growing and shrinking to suit varying responsibilities and necessities. This was, and is, as true for people at one end of the social scale as for people at the other. Rather than seeing the family structure of the early medieval peasantry as uniform and unvarying, it would be more fruitful to view it as complex and changeable. (This is particularly true given the findings on aristocratic families). Any theory must, of necessity, include the effects of a family cycle and the continuing familial fluidity inherent in it. Quite simply, it seems much more likely that where it was preferable to them and practical, the peasants maintained an extended family situation. And where it was not, they did not.

What can the polyptych tell us? The peasants of Saint Germain lived within a multiplicity of associations. Approximately 40% of the tenant farms supported extended families, including married adult siblings. But the

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<sup>53</sup> A partial exception is T.M. Charles-Edwards who, using primarily linguistic evidence, argues overly that the hide in the British Isles was, in fact, the land of a nuclear family. But he goes from there to the creation of a complex model of extended family-kinship relations based on lineages, using the hide as an essential component. He also implies the distinction between the domestic group and the lineage which the literature for the continent does not. See his «Kinship, Status and the Origins of the Hide» and «Some Celtic Kinship Terms», *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 24 (1970-72), pp. 107-111.

other 60% were not always simple conjugal families. There were widows and widowers with children and independent single people. In fact, to do any justice to the complexities of organization with which the tenant farmers lived, it is necessary to break the « families » down into six distinct categories.<sup>54</sup>

Moreover, the expectations of all the peasants were not necessarily the same in terms of family structure. The « peasantry » is not a uniform mass. There was differentiation among them. Some people wished to live among their relatives outside the nucleus. Since the area generally operated under a system of partition or partible inheritance, two or more brothers could at once come into possession of a single manse. They could work it jointly and raise their respective conjugal families on it. They could, in fact, function as an extended family (if not extended household). The fact that in many cases the men of a farm had different status<sup>55</sup> can be easily explained by the simple process of their father's marriage successively to women of different social ranks. The women passed their status on to their children.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, the presence of demi-manses suggests that this did not represent the only choice. In many instances, co-inheritors may well not have been friends even if brothers. When the opportunity presented itself, they simply divided their estate and went their separate familial and economic ways.<sup>57</sup> There were different means to different ends.

The status of the manse was maintained in perpetuity. This tenurial status corresponded to the personal status of the tenure's original inhabitant or household head.<sup>58</sup> (This, incidentally, would not necessarily be detrimental to the peasants. New land cleared and brought into cultivation — *hospicia* — had lighter tax burdens. This in itself could have acted as a stimulus for some men and women to undertake the onerous burdens of land clearance, something to the advantage of both the lords and the peasants). *Hospicia* aside, however, there was a division between servile and free farms within the manor. And, as already noted, this affected not only the taxes and

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<sup>54</sup> I intend to handle this point in some detail in the near future. At this point, however, and without digressing into a complicated demographic analysis of the peasant family, it can be said with confidence that time, death, and the economy caused the population on the manse to expand and contract, that any isolated documentary evidence can only give a glimpse at a living entity.

<sup>55</sup> For example, *Polyptyque*, VII, 20; IX, 16, 17, 25, 73; XI, 2; XIII, 7; etc.

<sup>56</sup> E.R. COLEMAN, *Medieval Marriage Characteristics...*, p. 213.

<sup>57</sup> This is not a situation isolated to the ninth century in the north of France. See, for instance, R.A. LAVINE, *Intergenerational Tensions and Extended Family Structure in Africa*, in « Social Structure and the Family: Generational Relations », eds., E. Shanas and G.F. Streib (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965), pp. 188-204, on the tensions inherent in larger groups which could lead to their breakdown. G.C. HOMANS, *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century* (N.Y., 1960), 111, notes that « either the tenement was physically divided among the sons and each of them lived on his own, or it was held jointly by the sons as a group of co-heirs, living in common ».

<sup>58</sup> See above, notes 14 and 18.

dues required of the peasant inhabitants but the size of the manses themselves. Whether or not the proposition that this reflected logic and balance is accepted, it cannot be denied that the differential certainly mirrored an acknowledged distinction between the two types of lands. The servile farms had a mean size of 4.7 bunuaria, the ingenuile 8.4. (See Table One, above). Allowing for alienation and acquisition, for land clearance, and so on, the separate categories were almost certainly not apportioned equally at the start.

There is a simple and straight-forward explanation available for the differences in size between the manse statuses. There is also a rationale available for the variation — or much of the variation — within them. It is, in fact, not only possible but reasonable to explain a large proportion of the differences among the manses of the same type and between the differing types as marking some of the original features of their original

TABLE 2  
MANSE POPULATIONS BY ARABLE LAND<sup>29</sup>

Arable in Bunuaria	No. of People	No. of Manses	Ave./Manse
1	74	40	1.85
1-2	277	76	3.64
2-3	603	139	4.34
3-4	1055	223	4.73
4-5	845	164	5.15
5-6	873	155	5.63
6-7	482	100	4.82
7-8	538	104	5.17
8-9	324	47	6.89
9-10	449	67	6.70
10-11	300	43	5.98
11-12	618	89	5.94
12-13	250	32	7.81
13-14	293	30	9.97
14-15	138	21	6.57
15-16	276	31	8.90
16-17	186	19	9.78
17-18	235	25	9.40
18-19	46	4	11.50
19-20	167	21	6.95
20-21	76	8	9.50
21-22	46	5	9.20
22	153	21	7.29

<sup>29</sup> This table counts the total number of people on each manse for each size category. It does not break the populations down into nuclear families. It instead counts the total populations that the farms supported. Larger populations are composed of two or more nuclei, and there is every indication within the census that these multiple nuclei formed extended families (if not extended households).

peasant families. The variation in manse sizes could well be seen as a reflection of the variation in family sizes. The polyptych itself gives every indication of this, as may be seen in Table Two.

Some peasant families or households were larger than others at the times throughout the centuries when they joined the seignury. When they joined, they accepted specific taxes and labor obligations. Yet they also must have seen advantages for themselves. And these advantages — including protection — must have outweighed the benefits of legal independence in times of political chaos and social upheaval. One factor which could have made the villas seem more attractive was the option of maintaining existing and satisfactory family units. Larger peasant families simply worked larger plots of peasant land. It is possible, too, that some peasants joined a nearby seignury voluntarily, bringing with them their already cleared plots in exchange for protection.<sup>60</sup> There was no advantage for either lord or peasant in giving up part of the tenure.

Moreover, throughout the later Roman Empire and early Middle Ages labor was scarce.<sup>61</sup> In the later Empire, lords recruited farmers to their estates when they found themselves short of laborers.<sup>62</sup> The presence of *hospites*, *advenae*, and *extranei* on the lands of Saint Germain indicate that the practice continued through the early Middle Ages.<sup>63</sup> Since the emphasis was on attaining workers, there is every reason to believe that the size of the plots offered varied with the number of possible tenant farmers. The more people willing to work, the larger the tenure. On the other side, poorer peasants, peasants who were separated from or without a larger network of relatives, and people looking for land would be given smaller plots. They would have been tenures to meet the needs of an individual or a nuclear family. This, of course, makes sense for both sides. The lord gets the willing laborers and taxable people he wants. The peasants get land to work and the chance to work their lands under someone's

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<sup>60</sup> A. H. M. JONES, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602. A Social Economic and Administrative Survey*, vol. 2 (Norman, Oklahoma, 1964), p. 818, suggests insecurity as a factor of importance in the abandonment of land by free peasants throughout the third through seventh centuries. This insecurity would also act as an impetus for free farmers to put themselves and their lands under the protection of nearby lords. Also see JONES, *The Roman Colonate*, in «The Roman Economy. Studies in Ancient Economic and Administrative History» (Totowa, N.J., 1974), p. 305. Here he describes peasants joining an estate, but «under a law of Justinian they were even entitled to move if they acquired a farm of their own sufficient to support them and requiring their full time attention». At a later point, they could well have found themselves again amenable to joining an estate.

<sup>61</sup> A. H. M. JONES, *The Roman Colonate*, pp. 299-300. There is no evidence for any marked population growth in the early Middle Ages before the ninth century, and this, too, might be called into question. (See below, 31 ff.).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>63</sup> *Polyptyque*, IX, 13, 22, 80, 108; XIII, 9, 12, 27, 26, 45; XX, 6, 7, 25; XXI, 54, 66, 81, 82, 84; etc.

protection, in proximity to other farmers. Furthermore, they could still maintain their original network of family relations.

Certainly, in the ninth century, there is a significant correlation (+0.81) between the amount of arable land a manse has and the size of the population it supports. The more cultivable acreage on a tenure, the more people it has on it. This situation could hardly have been created by chance. (See Table Two).

Again, in economic terms, this would have been to the advantage of the lord. The manse was a taxing unit for the seigneur. The purpose for the redaction of the polyptych itself was to record the taxes due; and they were reckoned by manse. The status of the tenement determined the taxes of the farm. But the manse itself could not pay them. For that people were necessary. The land was of little real value without people to work it. Furthermore, it must not be forgotten that the manses were not the sole taxing units. Individuals paid personal taxes, too.

In the traditional view, a piece of land large enough to support two or more nuclear families would have to have been divided into two or more plots and taxed as separate manses. An extended family would have been allotted tenements corresponding to the number of conjugal families within it. Relatives would not have had the option of remaining together. Two brothers, for example, and their wives and children would have worked and been recorded on separate manses; they could not have pooled resources to cultivate a joint farm and pay their taxes jointly. This would have produced the uniform system of manses, each supporting a nuclear family, that the theories on manse breakdown assume.

But a critical factor during the centuries preceding the preparation of the polyptych was a shortage of labour. An object was to attract and retain farmers. One easy way to do this was to allow them to maintain the family structure they found most congenial, be it extended or conjugal. An extended family, upon joining the villa, might well have been given a mansus whose lands would have supported two nuclear families of husband, wife, and children. The dissolution of their family unit would have been no incentive to them to enter a seigneurie. Conversely, during the centuries in which seigneuries took form, many lords must have come into possession of peasant tenements already supporting an enlarged kin network. There was no reason to break a functioning unit into smaller parts. The personal taxes and services due from the peasants would have been the same either way. Moreover, the important criterion for personal taxation was not the size of the family but the status of its members. And, as we have seen, the taxes owed for the land were the obverse of the personal dues. The higher the personal redevances were in direct labour, the lower the tenurial. The lower the personal payments in coin and in kind, the higher the tenurial.

Finally, the manses, as administrative units, corresponded to amounts of land but not necessarily to any particular, geographically defined piece of

ground.<sup>64</sup> Their purpose was to delineate the redevances due from the tenant farmers for the use of the land. They also circumscribed the number of people who were responsible for the payment of these dues. The collection of taxes from the peasants, using the mansus as a unit of reckoning, in no way demanded that the peasants live only among conjugal families.

This approach gives us further insight into the dichotomy between servile and free manses. While it is possible that coloni could often have maintained family ties and extended households, it is unlikely that slaves frequently did. In fact, slaves were lucky to marry at all; and their marriages were tightly controlled by their masters. The ancestors of the servi and the predecessors of those holding servile manses were the slaves and the *servi casati* (« housed slaves ») of the later Roman Empire. In order to create a greater incentive for them to work the land independently, they were given plots of land from which to derive some private profit. They also acquired the right to marry and raise children with the expectation that the children would inherit these plots.<sup>65</sup> At the outset, most must have been single people or, at best, a couple with a child or two. Their families were small and the lands allotted to them commensurate with this. This would certainly help to explain the fact that nearly 79% of their manses in the polyptych consisted of less than five bunuaria. And, as Table Two shows, in the ninth century, farms with less than five bunuaria still averaged from less than two people to about five people per tenement.

The main point of this discussion is, of course, to show that it is incorrect to assume a homogeneity of either family structure or the subdivisions of the manor. Until it can be proved conclusively that the various manse types stemmed directly from the *jugatio*, that the *jugatio* was always uniform within a category of soil fertility or a region, and that this uniformity of categorization was linked to land *and* peasant status, it is better to work from the documents of practice at hand.<sup>66</sup>

The idea of the fluidity of manse measurement is, naturally, just a hypothesis. Yet it does lend itself nicely to the other theories on farm sizes

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<sup>64</sup> I would like to thank Walter Goffart for bringing this point to my attention and stressing its importance.

By the ninth century, it is possible that the mansi did represent specific pieces of land within a villa, but the polyptych gives no information on this score. Be that as it may, it is not impossible that at their creation as taxing units, the holdings were stipulated as to size but — retaining the same amount of land — could be rotated in position on the seignury. See above, note 11, for works dealing with the mansus as an administrative unit.

<sup>65</sup> D. HERLIHY, *Carolingian Mansus*, p. 88.

<sup>66</sup> The problem of the *capitatio-jugatio* legislation is particularly intricate and difficult. For our purposes, it is interesting to note that the *jugum* is mentioned in only one law for Roman Gaul, coming from the time of Constans (*Codex Theodosianus*, XI, XII, 1). See A. H. M. JONES, *Capitatio and Jugatio*, in « The Roman Economy », pp. 280-292 and, of course, W. GOFFART, *op. cit.*

mentioned above. Geography must certainly have played a part in determining variations among villas. It must, of necessity, have determined the minimum amount of land possible to support any given peasant family or any sized peasant family. Bloch's theory that preference was given to certain families over others easily fits our scheme as well. In fact, alienation and acquisition of land may have ratified and enhanced some of the original discrepancies in size.

But what is perhaps most important is that this view provides another way of exploring some aspects of early medieval economic history. It has enormous implications for the interpretation of the extant documents of these centuries.

Approximately 40% of the tenant farms listed in the polyptych of Saint Germain-des-Prés were occupied by more than a single nuclear family. It is virtually a historiographical rule to interpret them as evidence of the disintegration of the classic mansus. The multiple nuclear tenures are, moreover, often seen as a sign of the growing population on the manors:

The names borne by tenants further suggest that overpopulated manses were often occupied by a family man and his sons-in-law, or by several married brothers. The evidence indicates that pressure was being exerted internally by population growth on the ancient component parts of the manorial economy. But this pressure also seems to have been contained: a section of the population could not find anywhere to expand freely and so was condemned to overcrowding.<sup>67</sup>

We know that the population growth on the lands of Saint Germain was slight. There were 4659 adults to 4772 children (although the number of adults probably includes members of more than one generation).<sup>68</sup> Evidence of massive population growth has never been presented in any form other than the interpretation of multiple nuclei farms as over-populated. Yet this is certainly not the only way to interpret them.

I would suggest that the farms supporting multiple nuclei found in the polyptych represented as much of a norm as the so-called « normal » manses supporting only a single conjugal group. Bede's cryptic remark has never been totally or satisfactorily explained.<sup>69</sup> The Latin word « *familia* » does not apply exclusively to either a conjugal family or an enlarged group of relatives. Let us, therefore, interpret it in both its senses. Sometimes it meant a husband, wife, and their children. In many cases, however, Bede's « family » was an extended family. « *Familia* » gives us no reason to believe

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<sup>67</sup> G. DUBY, *Early Growth of the European Economy*, p. 79.

<sup>68</sup> On the use of the polyptych for demographic purposes see E. R. COLEMAN, *L'infanticide dans le Haut Moyen Age*, « *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations* », 29 (1974), pp. 316-317. It should be noted here that in an earlier article (« Medieval Marriage Characteristics »), I thought that the population in the ninth century Ile-de-France was, indeed, growing. Further research has led me to change my position.

<sup>69</sup> See W. GOFFART, *op. cit.*, 166 on the problem of "circular lexicography".

that it was abnormal for two or more conjugal families to be supported by one manse.

At this point, the high correlation (+0.81) between the amount of arable land of a mansus and the number of people the farm supported should be remembered. (See Table Two). Larger farms had larger populations. The small tenures generally had small nuclear families. A better case for crowding, demographic pressure, and over-population could be made if extended families and large numbers of people were consistently found on the small and small-to-medium sized manses. Furthermore, overcrowding presupposes the lack of outlet for an excess of population. In that case, it is difficult to explain the number of hospicia and evidence for land clearance in the census. And, finally, if the villas were over-crowded and-populated, why are there cottars, *advenae* and *extranei* — newly arrived strangers — listed on the lands?

Of course, it must be made clear that I am in no way suggesting that the family structure of the peasantry was immutable, that the peasants of the later Roman Empire lived with the same configuration of relatives as did the tenant farmers of the ninth century. Quite the opposite. Family organization responds to varying perceived needs. Each peculiar situation calls forth its own peculiar set of responses. In the ninth century Ile-de-France, there are some peasants on relatively large plots of land with few co-inhabitants. Perhaps those peasant plots had initially had extended family networks which, for some reason, disappeared. Perhaps there was a fusion of lands through marriages in previous generations. Conversely, there are indications that some tenures were increasing in size through land clearance while apparently maintaining a compact family organization. Further, a simple family cycle would, through time, drastically change the visage of any family group in the polyptych. Future efforts, therefore, should be directed not at explaining an over-population for which there is little real evidence but at what changes in family structure can tell us about the types of needs the lands were required to meet. Peasants without lands to work are unimaginable. Lands without people to work them are fallow.

It could well be that the manse was breaking down. Yet multiple nuclear families on a farm are not relevant to this question. Demi- and quarter-manses might well point to the demise of the manse as it was once conceived and as it once functioned. But it is probably not breaking down due to some vast growth of population resulting in over-crowded farms. If it was disintegrating, it was doing so as a result of partition and partible inheritance carried to their ultimate conclusion. Many brothers may no longer have wanted to work their farms jointly and may have divided them. Moreover, many of the "normal" farms must have been formed by people joining together in the relatively new and precarious process of land clearance at the fringes of the manor. The number of extremely small plots worked by bachelors suggests that this may have been the case. (Perhaps, occasionally,

older brothers even supported younger ones in the early stages of the clearance of virgin land in return for the total possession of the old and well-established farms). Furthermore, many single nucleus manse doubtless resulted from the deaths of the siblings of the conjugal household head. And the factor of desertion from the villa cannot be discounted. In fact, what we could be seeing through the breakdown of the manse is a collapse of the large family system among the peasantry of the Ile-de-France.<sup>70</sup>

Certainly not every member of early medieval society was intimately involved with a network of relatives. What is essential is that the historian should not impose an artificial homogeneity on the manor, its inhabitants, or its subdivisions. No society functions which does not somehow allow for the individual needs of its members. The manor and the manse allowed for these needs.

To sum up, then, I have tried to show several things: the villas of Saint Germain were a coherent whole. The lord was aware that his income and, indeed, his basic source of fiscal and physical supply depended on a balance between the needs of the peasantry and the needs of the seigneurie. The seigneurial structure maintained that balance between people and land, between labour services and payments in coin and kind.

United with this concept of co-ordinated agricultural management is an alternative approach to the manse. I have suggested that these farms be not viewed as an originally uniform mass somehow crumbled into uneven pieces during the course of the early Middle Ages. Their fluidity in size related to the fluidity of family size among their tenants. They were an institution arising from a peculiar combination of peasant and managerial needs. And they answered them. They allowed for variegated living conditions within a uniform administrative unit.

Finally, I raised the issue of whether or not it is correct to say that the classic manse was in decline. The question, of course, remains open. But the premises on which the disintegration of the mansus is based — the multiplicity of nuclear families on single farms and the over-crowding of these farms — can no longer be maintained. Over-population of the villas has never been proved, and it is illogical to argue its existence from the evidence at hand.

Institutions are decrepit when they no longer solve the problems for which they were designed. The historian's task, is to comprehend the subtleties in the situations and conditions the Carolingian manor and mansus met. To insist on the traditional approaches to these central problems is to leave social history the step-child of institutional history. It is to deny the importance of the peasants under the guise of explaining their world. Rather, we can more fruitfully investigate both the land and the peasantry as mutually influential members of society.

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<sup>70</sup> I intend to discuss this point in some detail in the near future.

## DIVISION OF ARABLE LAND

Breve	Peasant Arable (in Bun.)	(in Acres)	Percentage of Total	Demesne/ Glebe Arable (in Bun.)	(in Acres)	Percentage of Total	Total	
							Bunuarua	Acres
1.	231.5	794.1	—	—	—	—	231.5	794.1
2.	494	1694.4	61.87	504.5	1044.4	38.13	798.5	2738.9
3.	378.5	1298.3	81.66	85	291.6	18.34	463.5	1589.8
4.	106.6	365.6	68.95	48	164.6	31.05	154.6	503.2
5.	301	1032.4	53.94	257	881.5	46.06	558	1913.9
6.	299.5	1027.3	64.48	165	566	35.52	464.5	1593.2
7.	384.5	1318.8	100.00	—	—	0.00	384.5	1318.8
8.	160	548.8	72.40	61	209.2	27.60	221	758
9.	3438.2	11793	84.43	634	2174.6	15.57	4072.2	13967.7
11.	104.5	358.4	72.32	40	137.2	27.68	144.5	495.6
13.	194.7	2725.8	76.55	243.5	835.2	23.45	1038.2	3561
14.	444	1522.9	71.38	178	610.5	28.62	622	2133.5
15.	337.5	1157.6	62.91	199	682.6	37.09	536.5	1840.5
16.	559	1917.4	74.63	190	651.7	25.37	749	2569.1
17.	236	809.5	65.37	125	428.8	34.63	361	1238.2
18.	98.5	337.9	62.15	60	205.8	37.84	158.5	543.7
19.	676.5	2320.4	69.00	304	1042.7	31.00	980.5	3363.1
20.	28.5	97.8	43.51	39	133.8	59.54	67.5	231.5
21.	712.5	2443.9	69.21	317	1087.3	30.79	1029.5	3531.2
22.	692	2373.6	77.06	206	706.6	22.94	898	3080.1
23.	146	500.8	—	—	—	—	146	500.8
24.	924.5	3171	81.85	205	703.2	18.15	1129.5	3874.2
25.	329	1128.5	57.72	241	826.6	48.28	570	1955.1
Frag. Duo	108.5	372.5	75.09	36	123.5	24.91	144.5	495.6
Total	11,985.4	41,109.9	75.27	3938	13,507.3	24.73	15,923.4	54,617.3

1 bunuarium = 3.43 Acres.