

## CHAPTER II The domus

Whether friendly or oppressive, the nobility, the lords and the Church existed mainly outside Montaignou, away from the village itself. If we exclude the case of Béatrice de Planissoles and the little-known *vice-châtelain* who replaced her dead husband as commander of the local fortress, all the inhabitants of the village, including the priest, belonged to local peasant families. Even the few artisans in the parish still had some agricultural activities and relationships. The distinction between farmers and day-labourers which gave the village its characteristic segmentation in the north of France here took on particular forms. Despite the pre-eminence of two or three families who were comparatively rich or at least less poor (the Clergues to begin with, followed by the Belots and the Benets), there were certain factors which somewhat diminished inequality. Poor young men who in the Paris basin would have stayed where they were and formed a proletariat or semi-proletariat of day-labourers, in Montaignou were, so to speak, expelled from the social structure of the village and became shepherds in the nearby mountains or in distant Catalonia.

This being so, the best way to understand Montaignou is to abandon temporarily the problems of social stratification within it and go straight to the basic cell which, multiplied a few dozen times, went to make up the village. This basic cell was none other than the peasant family, embodied in the permanence of a house and in the daily life of a group co-resident under the same roof. In local language this entity was called an *ostal*; and in the Latin of the Inquisition files it was called a *hospicium* or, more often, a *domus*. It should be noted that the words, *ostal*, *domus* and *hospicium* all and inextricably mean both family and house. The term *familia* is practically never used in the Fournier Register. It never crosses the lips of the inhabitants of Montaignou themselves, for whom the family of flesh and blood and the house of wood, stone or daub were one and the same thing.

Many passages show the crucial role – emotional, economic and lineal – played by the house-cum-family in the preoccupations of the average inhabitant of the Pays d’Aillon. One of the most illuminating on this subject is a conversation between Gauzia Clergue and Pierre Azéma of Montaignou. Gauzia, the wife of Bernard Clergue the second, proposed

to confess to Bishop Fournier certain heretical facts which she had witnessed or been an accomplice to.<sup>1</sup> Pierre Azéma answered Gauzia, saying: '*Vain and foolish woman! If you confess all these things, you will lose all your possessions and put out the fire of your house. Your children, their hearts full of anger, will go and beg for alms . . . Let the sleeping hare lie, take another path so as not to wake him, or he will wound your hands with his feet . . . I can see an even better way to keep your house standing. For I, as long as the Lord Bishop shall live, will be of his house; and I can do much good; and I can give my daughter as wife to one of your sons. And so our house will be more successful, more comfortable. But if you confess to have meddled in heresy, you, your house and your sons will be destroyed.*' Gauzia Clergue added: *These words were exchanged without witnesses between Pierre Azéma and myself. And because of that, I gave up the idea of confessing anything.*

Everything is contained in this dialogue, positing as a supreme value the prosperity of houses, whether or not allied to each other by marriage. The essential concept of the *domus*, the domestic group of co-residents, involved various central and subordinate elements: the kitchen fire, goods and lands, children and conjugal alliances. It was a fragile reality, threatened and sometimes destroyed in each generation by epidemics, bereavements, remarriage. It could also be broken up by the Inquisitors. Nonetheless, for the average inhabitant of Montaillou the idea of the *domus* was a core reference.

The same text shows Pierre Azéma using the term *domus* in a derived and somewhat distorted sense, that of relationships (*parentela*). When Azéma speaks of being of the Bishop's house, he does not mean that a mere peasant such as he lives in the Bishop's palace in Pamiers; he merely claims to be a sort of distant relative of Jacques Fournier.

Nothing shows more clearly the importance of the *domus* as a unifying concept in social, family and cultural life than the key role it played in the construction or reconstruction of Catharism in upper Ariège and in Montaillou itself.

*One day, says Mengarde Buscailh of Prades d'Aillon, the next village*

<sup>1</sup> iii.366, 367. This Bernard Clergue was the son of Arnaud Clergue, and not to be confused with the Bernard Clergue who was the son of Pons Clergue and *bayle* of Montaillou.

to Montaillou (i.499), *I met my brother-in-law, Guillaume Buscailh, on the way to my parish church.*

*'Where are you going?' asked Guillaume.*

*'I am going to church.'*

*'What an excellent ecclesiastic you are!' answered Guillaume. 'You would do just as well to pray to God in your own house as in the church.'*

*I answered that the Church was a more suitable place to pray to God than one's own house.*

*Then he simply said to me: 'You are not of the faith.'*

Thus for Guillaume Buscailh, so zealous a supporter of Cathar ideas that he one day tried to make his sister-in-law stop feeding her baby and let it die in *endura* (i.499), the Albigensian faith was something which existed and was practised at home, unlike the Roman faith, properly celebrated in the parish church. This was a generally held idea. One peasant told Jacques Fournier that when heresy entered into a *domus* it was like leprosy and entrenched itself there for four generations or for ever (ii.100). Aude Fauré of Merviel, a neurotic, lost faith in the Eucharist and confided her doubts to her neighbour and relative Ermengarde Garaudy. The latter, horrified, warned her against the evil consequences her scepticism might have for the house and village she lived in. *'Traitor!' said Ermengarde (ii.87). 'This village and this ostal have always been pure from all evil and heresy. Beware lest you bring evil upon us from another place, lest you make our own place accursed.'* Conversely, the violence of the Inquisition was regarded by its victims as an act of aggression against the heretical *domus*, and only secondly as an attack on the liberty or life of the individual. When the priest of Montaillou was arrested after being denounced by two spies (ii.281), Bernard Clergue exclaimed: *These two traitors have brought misfortune upon our house and upon my brother the priest.*

People might be converted to heresy house by house, rather than individual by individual. Pierre Authié, the Cathar missionary, preferred the group method. To the assembled family of Raymond Pierre he said (ii.406): *'It is God's wish that I come into your house to save the souls of those who dwell in it.'* Pierre Maury of Montaillou quotes the case of a *domus* at Arques which was converted 'like one man'. He says (iii.143): *I believe that Gaillarde, sister of Guillaume Escaunier and wife of Michel Leth, and Esclarmonde, Guillaume's other sister, who might well have been twelve years old, were believers [credentes] in the heretics. And*

in my opinion the same was true of Arnaud, Guillaume's brother. All these people were converted at once, the whole household at a blow, together with Gaillarde, the mother of Guillaume Escaunier and Marquise, her sister. In Montaillou itself the missionary work of people like Authié was based on a network of certain houses. Béatrice de Planissoles relates: *When I lived in Montaillou and Prades d'Aillon the rumour among the believers in heresy had it that the heretics frequented the houses of the brothers Raymond and Bernard Belot, who at that time lived together; also the house of Alazaïs Rives, sister of Prades Tavernier the heretic. Also the house of Guillaume Benet, brother of Arnaud Benet of Ax. All the people of these various houses came from Montaillou.*<sup>1</sup> Béatrice was shrewd enough to see one of the secrets of heresy's success in her village: dangerous ideas crept like fleas from one *domus* or domestic group to another. Once heresy was implanted, the *domus* acted as a kind of conservatory, a barricade limiting compromising contacts with houses which were not heretical. The secrecy of the new faith was preserved to the utmost when whispered beneath the door of the *domus* (ii.10) or, preferably, when shut up in the damp fug of the *ostal's* four walls. In Montaillou itself, Alazaïs Azéma spoke heresy only in her own house, with her son Raymond (i.319). But she also did so with the members of the house of Belot (the three brothers – Raymond, Bernard and Guillaume – and their mother, Guillemette) as well as with the members of the house of Benet (Guillaume, his son Raymond, and Guillemette, Guillaume's wife) related by marriage to the house of Belot. (Note how, in the list given by Alazaïs Azéma, the men, whether young or old, regularly take precedence over the women, even when the women are old.) Similarly, Raymonde Lizier, later to become Raymonde Belot by another marriage, and end in prison for heresy, *entertained a great familiarity with Guillemette Belot and with Raymond, Bernard and Arnaud Belot; she frequented their house and spoke much in secret with them.*<sup>2</sup> Both in Montaillou and in the other villages one could go on indefinitely giving

1 i.233, and iii.161. Heresy was introduced to Montaillou by the Authiés in 1300, in the house of Guillaume Benet (or rather re-introduced, for heresy had already been present to a modest degree during the last decade of the thirteenth century, according to Béatrice de Planissoles's evidence about Raymond Roussel, I, 219). The fact that Guillaume Benet was the brother of Arnaud Benet of Ax, himself the father-in-law of Guillaume Authié, clearly made contacts easier between town and village.

2 ii.223. Arnaud was Raymonde Lizier's future husband.

examples underlining the special social links between houses belonging to the heretical movement.

This communicating yet exclusive network acted as a logistic support to Cathar clandestinity. But the role of the network derived from prior social links between the *domus*; it made use of these social links, it did not create them. Certain other *domus*, just because they were not Cathar, served as a structured social outlet for people who were good though perhaps vacillating Catholics. Jean Pellissier, a shepherd in the village, declared that he was not a heretic, at least in his youth (iii.75): *I used to visit four houses in Montaillou, and not one of them was heretical.*

In Montaillou the usual collective organization, the assembly of heads of families, was perhaps not entirely absent, but, if it functioned at all, seems to have enjoyed a somewhat ghostly existence. It was probably paralysed by the internal division of the village into religious factions and antagonistic cliques. As for the confraternities, societies of penitents, and other usual ingredients of Occitan social life, they were absent, if not from the period in general, at least from the mountain communities with which we are concerned. This being so, I see Montaillou first and foremost as an archipelago of *domus*, each one positive or negative in terms of the currents of heterodox beliefs.

The peasants and shepherds of Montaillou were conscious of this situation. The farmer Guillaume Belot and the brothers Pierre and Guillaume Maury, both shepherds, out one day for a walk together, made an informal census of the village, dividing it up into houses of believers and houses of unbelievers – the belief in question being, of course, heresy. Among the houses which the two Guillaumes expressly described as ‘believing’ were the house of Maurs, the house of Guilhabert, the house of Benet, and those of Bernard Rives, Raymond Rives, Maury, Ferrier, Bayle, Marty, Fauré and Belot.<sup>1</sup> The eleven ‘believing’ houses often corresponded to nuclear families each formed of two parents and their children. One of the eleven heretical *domus*, however, departs from this model, consisting of an aged mother (Guillemette ‘Belote’) and her four grown-up sons, all still bachelors at that period. The eleven ‘believing’ houses, according to this list, consisted of thirty-six heretics in all; but this total must be regarded as incomplete since for many of the couples listed Belot and the Maury brothers mention

1 iii.161. The list is incomplete: Maury and Belot do not mention the important house of Clergue.

only the names of the husband and wife and not those of the children, the latter probably being considered a negligible quantity.

The rest of the enumeration shows that the *domus* was not always coextensive with the opinions of its members. Maury and the two Belots mention a certain number of maverick heretics in Montaignou not attached to a *domus* (which would then, ipso facto, be considered as 'believing'). The 'houseless' heretics (iii.162) were nine in number, and included two married couples (the Vitals and the Forts), who probably lived in houses belonging to other people; two married women (whose opinions perhaps differed from those of their husbands); an illegitimate daughter; and two men, members of families but mentioned separately.

Other houses in Montaignou which were not regarded as 'believing' adopted a collective attitude of benevolent neutrality towards Catharism. One of these was the *domus* of the Liziers (iii.162, 490). Maury and the Belot brothers said there was nothing to fear from the Lizier *domus* since the murder of Arnaud Lizier, an anti-Cathar. After his death, the house of Lizier came into the sphere of influence of the Clergues, and even into the personal harem of the priest, since Pierre Clergue took Grazide Lizier as his mistress.

In Montaignou, Catholicism also went by houses. Jean Pellissier, farm servant and shepherd, said there were five houses in the village which were not heretical. These were the house of Pellissier itself, probably 'non-nuclear' because it included five brothers of whom some at least were grown up; the house of Na Carminagua, Madame Carminagua, mother of the Azéma brothers (the brothers sometimes showed something more than reserve towards heresy); the house of Julien Pellissier; the house of Pierre Ferrier, which according to Maury and Belot afterwards went over to Albigensian sympathies; and finally the house of a woman called Na Longua, mother of Gauzia Clergue, herself related by marriage to the Clergues, but not a heretic as they were.

So among the houses listed there were in all eleven heretical *domus*, five Catholic *domus*, some houses which changed sides (for example, the Clergues) and a few mixed, neutral or divided houses, sometimes containing people with 'split' hearts, volatile and treacherous (ii.223). The list is incomplete, since in the decade beginning 1300 Montaignou probably contained over 200 inhabitants, in other words at least about forty houses. But out of these forty houses the majority at one time or another showed some weakness in favour of heresy. In all, according to

Guillaume Mathei and Pons Rives, two well-informed witnesses, there were in MontailloU only two houses *untouched by heresy* (i.292). As for Guillaume Authié, the Cathar missionary who enthused about MontailloU, about Clergue the priest and about the house of the Clergues (*No, he said, I have nothing to fear from Clergue the priest nor from the house of the Clergues. If only all the priests in the world could be like the priest in MontailloU*), he confirms what Mathei and Rives say about the two anti-Cathar houses: *In MontailloU there are only two men whom we have to be careful about.*<sup>1</sup> (Rives and Mathei speak of two anti-Cathar houses, i.e. one anti-Cathar individual for each house.)

All the evidence we have emphasizes the mystical, religious and central significance of the *domus* for the people of MontailloU. Conversely, *as one measly pig contaminates the whole sty*, an individual infected with dogmatic deviation soon spread the disease to all his *domus*. Though there were exceptions, a person's belief was generally that of his house. It took the great waves of repression after 1308 to break up the network of Cathar *domus* in MontailloU, and to turn the village into a tragic rat-race where everyone worked to encompass his neighbour's ruin, thus, mistakenly, hoping to avert his own.

Whatever the dénouement, it is certain that for the people of MontailloU the house (*ostal*) occupied a strategic position as regards worldly possessions. Here is Jacques Authié addressing the shepherds of Arques and MontailloU and adapting for their benefit the Cathar myth of the Fall (iii.130; ii.25): *'Satan entered into the Kingdom of the Father, and told the Spirits of that Kingdom that he, the Devil, owned a much better Paradise . . . "Spirits, I will bring you into my world", said Satan, "and I shall give you oxen, cows, riches and a wife for company, and you will have your own ostals, and you will have children . . . and you will rejoice more for a child, when you have one, than for all the rest which you enjoy here in Paradise."*' In the hierarchy of essential possessions, then, the *ostal* comes after the cow and the wife, but before the child.

From the ethnographic point of view the juridical-magical significance of the *ostal* of Ariège, just like the *casa* of Andorra, was greater than the sum of the perishable individuals who went to make up the household. The Pyrenean house was a moral entity and its goods were indivisible. It possessed a certain number of rights, rights which were expressed in i.279. One of these is Pierre Azéma and the other is not named.

ownership of land and in rights of usage in the forests and common pastures of the mountains, the *solanés* or *soulanes* of the parish. The *ostal* or *casa* 'continued the personal existence of its dead master'; it was regarded as 'true mistress of all goods which go to make up the heritage'. All the more so because in the village of Montailou the peasants, well-to-do or otherwise, all owned some possessions. They might even be said to be de facto proprietors of the fields and meadows which, if one excludes forests and commons, made up the major part of the cultivated land.

In Montailou the house had its 'star', its 'luck', *in which the dead still had a share* (i.313-14). Star and luck were protected by keeping in the house bits of fingernail and hair belonging to the deceased head of the family. Hair and nails, which went on growing after death, were regarded as bearers of especially intense vital energy. Through this ritual the house 'was imbued with certain magic qualities belonging to the deceased', and could subsequently convey those qualities to other people belonging to the same line. *On the death of Pons Clergue, father of the priest at Montailou, said Alazaïs Azéma (i.313-14), Mengarde Clergue, his wife, asked me and Brune Pourcel to cut some locks of hair from around the forehead of the corpse, together with fragments from all his finger- and toe-nails; and this so that the house of the dead man might remain fortunate; so the door of the house of the Clergues, in which the dead body lay, was closed; we cut his hair and nails; and we gave them to Guillemette, the servant of the house, who in turn gave them to Mengarde Clergue. This 'abscission' of hair and nails was performed after water had been sprinkled on the dead man's face (for in Montailou we do not wash the whole of the corpse).*

The person behind these practices was a peasant woman of Montailou, Brune Vital. 'Madame,' she had said to Mengarde, Pons's widow (i.313-14), 'I have heard that if you take locks of hair and bits of finger- and toe-nail from a corpse, it does not carry away with it the star or good fortune of the house.' Fabrisse Rives, another woman of Montailou, gave further details (i.328). *When Pons Clergue, the priest's father, died, many people from the Pays d' Aillon came to the house of the priest, his son. The body was placed in the 'house within the house', called the foganha [kitchen]; it was not yet wrapped in a shroud; the priest then sent everyone out of the house with the exception of Alazaïs Azéma and Brune Pourcel,*

*the bastard daughter of Prades Tavernier; these women remained alone with the dead man and the priest; the women and the priest took the locks of hair and bits of finger- and toe-nail from the corpse . . . Later there was a rumour that the priest had done the same with the corpse of his mother.* Thus the heirs, to prevent the dead person carrying away with him the good fortune of the *domus*, sent away the many visitors come to express their condolences, shut the door and barricaded themselves in the kitchen, the 'house within the house'. They did not wash the body for fear of rinsing away some precious qualities attached to the skin and the accumulated dirt. These precautions may be compared with those Pierre Bourdieu mentions in connection with Kabylie in Algeria: there too every possible precaution is taken to prevent the dead person, while being washed and buried, from taking away with him the *baraka* of the house.<sup>1</sup>

One day, to the south of the hill where the local château stood, Alazaïs Fauré of MontailloU, carrying an empty sack on her head, met Bernard Benet of the same village (i.404). Bernard proposed to denounce to the Inquisitor at Carcassonne the 'heretication' before his death of the late Guillaume Guilhabert, Alazaïs's brother. Alazaïs was horrified. She said at once that she was ready to do anything to protect her brother's memory; when that was retrospectively threatened, so was his *domus*. *I told Bernard Benet, said Alazaïs, that I would give him half a dozen sheep, or a dozen sheep, or whatever else he wanted, to avoid this affliction which would bring down harm and malediction on my dead brother and on his domus.*

The use of bits of the human body to preserve simultaneously the continuity of the family and that of the house relates to other, similar magic rites belonging to Occitan folklore. Béatrice de Planissoles kept the first menstrual blood of her daughter to use as a love potion to bewitch some future son-in-law. She preserved the umbilical cords of her grandsons as talismans to help her win her lawsuit. These two examples again involve the family line and the family prosperity. Until quite recent times the girls of Languedoc used to put a drop of their blood or a nail-paring into a cake or a potion in order to make a boy fall in love with them.

The fragments taken from the body of the chief of a family in Mont-  
 1 P. Bourdieu, *Esquisse d'une theorie de la pratique* (Towards a theory of practice), Geneva, 1972.

aillou were linked to the *domus* in which they were preserved by a relationship analogous to that between the relics of a saint and the shrine which contains them. Theories on the indestructibility of a king's body and the continuity of the royal house are equally relevant. A few fragments were enough to maintain the physical permanence of the family line and the sacred fire of the *domus*. Both conceptions, royal and peasant, noble and common, must have germinated at some period unknown to us, in the same magical subsoil.

Pierre Clergue the priest, according to Fabrisse Rives, preserved locks of hair and nail-parings not only of his father but also, afterwards, of his mother. He even went so far as to have her buried beneath the altar of the Virgin in Montaillou parish church.

The preoccupation with the *domus* was not 'patrilocal' or 'matrilocal', but ambivalent. True, the citizens of Montaillou and other places speak with emotion about the paternal *ostal* or *domus*: *It would be better*, said Clergue the priest, thinking expressly of the house of his own father (i.255), *for a brother to marry his sister rather than to receive a wife who was a stranger, and similarly, for a sister to marry her brother, rather than to leave the paternal house taking with her a large amount of money as a dowry in order to marry a husband who was a stranger: under such a system, the paternal house is practically destroyed*. The paternal house was also the house where a daughter of Montaillou, married elsewhere and then falling incurably ill, came back to die: *Esclarmonde, daughter of Bernard Clergue (the son of Arnaud and Gauzia Clergue), was married to a man in Comus [near Montaillou]; she fell mortally ill; she was brought back to the house of her father, where she remained bedridden for two years before she died. When she was on the point of death, the other Bernard Clergue – brother of the priest – brought into the house the heretic who hereticated Esclarmonde*. The paternal house might also be the infected cell suspected of having transmitted heresy to a daughter who had left to marry elsewhere. Jacques Fournier asked one informer (ii.92), *'Does the witness know whether the paternal ostal of the woman Fauré, at Lafage, was ever in the past dishonoured by heresy?'* The maternal *ostal*, very important in the Basque region, could also play an important part in the mountains of Ariège. It was in order to get back the maternal *ostal*, confiscated by the Foix authorities because of the heretical acts of his mother, who was burned for them, that Arnaud Sicre embarked on his

career as an informer (ii.21). When it existed as such, the maternal *ostal* created matriarchal structures: the son who inherited it and lived in it tended to take his mother's name, attached to the house itself, rather than that of his father. And the son-in-law who came to live with his wife in her home often took his wife's name instead of the other way round.

Whether it derived from the mother or, as happened more often, from the father, the house in MontailloU, like every self-respecting Pyrenean *domus*, had a head: *cap de casa* in the Andorran region, *dominus domus* in the Latin of the scribes concerned with upper Ariège. The *dominus domus* had jurisdiction over his wife and children; also, in certain circumstances, over his mother. Alazaïs Azéma shows this clearly (i.308): *My son Raymond once used to carry victuals to the parfais in a scrip or a basket; and he never asked my permission to do so, for he was the master of my house.*

Alazaïs Azéma did not feel badly done by in this; she too was a friend of the *parfais*. But it often happened that the head of the house, peasant or noble, tyrannized over his mother. Stéphanie de Chateaubert threw herself at the feet of her old friend the heretic Raymond Pierre, a stock-breeder, and said (ii.417-18): *'I am ruined, I have sold my possessions and enslaved my dependents, I live humbly and miserably in my son's house; and I dare not move.'*

Oppression on the part of the head of a *domus* might affect both his wife and an elderly father. Pons Rives of MontailloU ruled his *ostal* with a rod of iron (i.339-41). He drove his wife, Fabrisse, out of the house, saying the devil had sent her to him: ever since she had been there it had been impossible to invite the *parfais*! As for Bernard Rives, Pons's old father, he did not carry much weight now that the house he lived in was ruled over by his son. One day his daughter Guillemette, wife of the other Pierre Clergue (not the priest), came to borrow a mule to go and fetch corn from Tarascon. But Bernard Rives could only say: *'I dare do nothing without my son's approval. Come back tomorrow, and he will lend you the mule.'* Alazaïs Rives, wife of Bernard and mother of Pons, was equally terrorized by her son, and slipped away.

When the head of a house had a sufficiently powerful, attractive or diabolical personality, submission to him might turn into a personality cult. When Bernard Clergue, in prison, learned of the death of his

brother the priest, who even before the death of old Pons Clergue had become the real head of the fraternal house, he collapsed in front of four witnesses, lamenting (ii.285). *'Dead is my god. Dead is my ruler. The traitors Pierre Azéma and Pierre de Gaillac have killed my god.'*

It should be noticed, despite the undeniable predominance of the male sex, that when a woman in Montailiou was mistress of an *ostal* of some importance she had the right to the title of 'Madame' (*domina*). Alazaïs Azéma, a simple peasant, was called 'Madame' by a woman selling cheese. True, the woman hoped to help sales by doing so. Mengarde Clergue, wife of a rich peasant and leading citizen, was also addressed as 'Madame' by the lesser women of her village (i.312-14).

As the mortal ruler of an entity if possible immortal, each head of a family was invested with the right of designating his own successor, at the expense of other descendants or rightful claimants. This seems to have something to do with the Occitan and Roman traditions of the supplementary portion (*preciput*). The power exercised in this respect by heads of houses in Ariège was in contrast to the egalitarian traditions of Normandy and Anjou, where equitable division of an inheritance between all the brothers – and in the case of Anjou, even between all the brothers and sisters – was ferociously insisted upon. But in upper Ariège it is probable that the will of the father usually prevailed: *There lived in Tarascon two brothers called d'Aniaux or de Niaux, and one of them was a friend of the heretics. He had two sons, and one of these sons was a sympathizer with heresy. His father left him a large part of his possessions and gave him in marriage to the daughter of Bertrand Mercier, because her mother was a heretic* (ii.427). The customs of Ariège and Andorra were based on the testamentary freedom of the head of the family: it was the best way of preserving the *domus* against parcelling up into small divisions. But there remained the vexatious problem of the other children, who would not succeed the head of the family. When they left the family house they merely took with them a dowry or 'legitimate portion'. The dowry was eminently personal; it was detached from the original *domus* of the young woman when she got married, but did not disappear into the undivided mass of the couple's possessions. If the husband died first, the dowry remained the property of the widow, and not of the husband's or the wife's heirs. As Béatrice de Planissoles said after her first widowhood (i.233), *Pierre Clergue the priest sent me a messenger with a document relating to my first marriage, containing the assignation of my*

*dowry. I had once deposited this document with the priest. I did not care a jot whether he gave it back to me or not, because I had already left the heirs of my first husband!* No doubt she meant she had left them with her dowry under her arm.

Dowries presented a major problem in a rather poor society. The prevailing degree of economic stagnation turned every daughter's marriage into a tragedy for the *domus*, which was threatened with a loss of substance. The problem caused Pierre Clergue sleepless nights, so attached was he to the indivisibility of the *ostal*. His preoccupation even drove him to the justification of incest: '*Look,*' said the priest to his mistress in a moment of affectionate abandon and ideological ferment (i.225), '*we are four brothers (I am a priest, and do not want a wife). If my brothers Guillaume and Bernard had married our sisters Esclarmonde and Guillemette, our house would not have been ruined because of the capital [averium] carried away by those sisters as dowry; our ostal would have remained intact, and with just one wife brought into our house for our brother Bernard, we would have had enough wives, and our ostal would have been richer than it is today.*'

Incidentally, this apology for incest also explains the (non-chaste) celibacy of churchmen, and the concubinage frequent in Montaillou. The argument derives from the fear inspired in every aware and organized *domus* by the thought of losing its 'detachable adjuncts', among which were the dowries taken away by the daughters. Also involved was the *fratrisia*, fraternal portion, due to each son who, because he was not the eldest or for some other reason, did not become head of the household. He was thus disinherited except for the *fratrisia* accorded to him by way of compensation by the *domus* or the head of the *domus*: '*I lost my fraternal portion [fratrisia] in Montaillou, and was afraid [because of the Inquisition] to return to the village to claim it*', said Pierre Maury, in Catalonia, in a conversation with Arnaud Sicre (ii.30).

All the evidence, then, suggests that the primacy of the *domus* was highly characteristic of Occitan and mountain liberty. It is significant that in the thirteenth century, when some traces of serfdom still survived in Languedoc, the settlers at Mas d'Azil, and probably those in many other country farms, became free automatically once they had built their own house.

Central though it was in the culture of upper Ariège, the *domus* was more notable for its material and emotional investments than for its

market value: a village house was worth 40 *livres tournois*, i.e. only twice the price of a complete Bible, twice the wages of a team of hired assassins, and almost twenty times less than the amount of money Bernard Clergues spent to free his brother the priest from the clutches of the Inquisition. The dowries and fraternal portions detached from it, small as they were, and despite the compensation represented by dowries brought into the family, always threatened to impoverish the *domus*, if not ruin it altogether. Moreover, the forces of repression, which well understood local ethnographical structures, used to destroy the houses of heretics, burning them or razing them to the ground. It only needed a woman with a long tongue to look through a crack in the door and see Pierre Authié converting a sick person to heresy, and lo and behold the paternal or maternal *domus* at Prades d'Aillon was demolished by the Inquisition (i.278). This being the case, the law of silence was observed as far as possible. Raymond Roques and old Guillemette 'Belote' were united in their advice to women who were too talkative (i.310): *If you don't want the walls of your house knocked down, keep your mouth shut.* If the house of a convicted heretic was not reduced to ashes, at the best it would be confiscated by the Foix authorities, now obedient to the Inquisition's every whim.

Despite its notional durability the Montailou house was in reality a flimsy and fragile construction. The central and essential part of the *domus* was the kitchen (*foganha*), its rafters covered with hams hung out of reach of the cat. It was here that the neighbours came, like Alazaïs Azéma, a simple body despite her title of 'Madame', to borrow a light for the fire, the precious fire which was covered up at night for fear an accident might reduce the *ostal* to ashes (i.307, 317). The fire was watched over by the housewife (*focaria*), the 'woman at the hearth', as the priests' concubines were called in the diocese of Palhars.<sup>1</sup> But the man of the house did not leave the women in sole charge of the fire: it was his job to break sticks for kindling (*frangere teza*). The hearth was surrounded by cooking utensils – earthenware pots, pans, cauldrons, jugs and basins, the latter sometimes decorated. There were never enough utensils, particularly of metal, but what was needed could, in the traditional Montailou way, be borrowed from the neighbours. Near

1 i.253. Apparently the fire did not burn in a chimney but in a hearth in the middle of the room. Was there a hole in the roof?

the hearth stood, by way of dining furniture, a table and benches, the latter also used for sitting round the fire in the evening. Sometimes, but not always, the use of this furniture corresponded to a fairly rigorous segregation by sex and by age, such as still existed until quite recently in lower Languedoc and in Corsica. The shepherd Jean Maury, son of a Montailou peasant, tells of an evening meal in his father's *foganha*, a somewhat more distinguished meal than usual because the *parfait* Philippe d'Alayrac was a guest (ii.471): *It was winter. Montailou was covered with a thick layer of snow. My father, Raymond Maury, my brother Guillaume, the heretic Philippe d'Alayrac, and Guillaume Belot [invited as a neighbour] dined at the table. I and my other brothers, my mother and my sisters, ate sitting round the fire.* The kitchen, as our documents expressly say, was the house within the house, the *domus* within the *ostal*, where people ate, died, were converted to heresy and told each other the secrets of the Faith and the gossip of the village (i.268-9). *In those days*, says Raymonde Arsen, a servant in the house of the Belots (i.372), *Bernard Clergue (the bayle, brother of the priest) used to come to the house of Raymond Belot and talk to his mother-in-law Guillemette Belot in the house called the kitchen ['in domo vocata la foganha'] and they used to send me away for a while (so that I should not hear their conversation).*

So the most intimate part of the house, the *foganha*, fitted inside the larger house, or *ostal*, like one of a set of Russian dolls.

Sometimes people slept in the kitchen. But more often they slept, in several beds, in rooms surrounding the kitchen or on the first floor (*solier*). Was a Montailou house usually a roomy one, up there in the spaciousness of the mountains? It seems to have been slightly larger, anyhow, than its counterpart in Burgundy, which archaeological evidence has shown to be so small.

Excavations would very likely soon reveal the layout of medieval houses in Montailou, vestiges of which can still be discerned at the foot of the château. Until these are undertaken we must rely on documentary evidence throwing light on the way the rooms were arranged. In Prades d'Aillon, a village analogous to Montailou because it was so close and shared the same way of life, Raymonde Michel describes the house of her father Pierre: *In the cellar of our house there were two beds, one where my mother and father slept and the other for any heretic passing through. The cellar was next to the kitchen and had a door leading into it. No one slept on the floor above the cellar. My brothers and I slept in a room on the*

*other side of the kitchen, so that the kitchen was between the children's room and the cellar where our parents slept. The cellar had an outside door opening on to the threshing floor.*<sup>1</sup>

It was in a cellar (*sotulum*) of this kind, containing both beds and barrels, that Béatrice de Planissoles, then living with her second husband, Othon de Lagleize, made love for the last time with Clergue, the priest of Montaillou, who had come to her house under an assumed name. The servant, Sybille Teisseire, Béatrice's fellow countrywoman from Montaillou and her accomplice, kept watch at the door of the cellar while Béatrice, between the casks, *mingled her body with that of the priest.*

Many passages confirm the existence of a cellar beside the kitchen, and also of bedrooms which could be locked and contained beds and benches. Each room was intended for one or two people, who might sleep together or in separate beds. In the house of the Maurys, simple peasants who were weavers and shepherds, the elder brother Guillaume Maury had a room of his own; similarly old Guillemette 'Belote', the widowed mother, in the house of the Belot sons. Clergue the priest had a room of his own in the big family house, which was large enough to have an antechamber on the first floor as well. The bedrooms had windows, without glass but with wooden shutters. At night, anyone wanting to attract the attention of the people inside would throw a pebble at the shutters. More important people, and intellectuals such as notaries and doctors – there was neither the one nor the other in Montaillou – also had an office (*scriptorium*) in their houses, and it was there that they slept.

In general, the fact of having a *solier* (the first floor above the kitchen, communicating with the ground floor by means of a ladder) was an external sign of wealth. To build a *solier*, as did the shoemaker Arnaud Vital, showed that you were going up in the social scale, or at least that you thought you were. As far as we know, only the Clergues, the Vitals (though they weren't all that rich) and the Belots had a house with a *solier*. The *foganha*, heart of the *domus*, was built of stone. The *solier*, and the offices on the ground floor, were lightly built of wood and daub.

But kitchen, *solier*, bedrooms and cellar were not all. The farmers of Montaillou set aside part of the house for the animals. *Eighteen years* 1 i.401. The richer houses, such as that belonging to the Clergue family, and perhaps the Belots also, had one or two bedrooms on the first floor.

ago, said Alazaïs Azéma (i.311), when I had just brought my pigs out of my house, I met Raymond Belot leaning on his stick in the square in front of the *château*. He said to me: 'Come into my house.'

I answered: 'No – I have left my door open.'

This passage suggests that people and pigs lived together in the same house; they may even have used the same door. Similarly, Pons Rives, son of Bernard Rives, kept his mule and his ass in his house. Guillemette Benet shut up her oxen in her house when they had been brought home from ploughing in the evening. Guillaume Bélibaste thought of bringing up a lamb *in domo sua*. Every morning Jean Pellissier, a small shepherd from MontailloU, brought his sheep out of the house. When they were ill, men used to sleep with the animals, perhaps because of the warmth they gave out. *Guillaume Belot*, says Bernard Benet (i.401), brought Guillaume Authié the heretic to the place where my father, Guillaume Benet, lay ill; it was in the part of the house where the cattle slept.

The house had various offices, including an adjacent yard or poultry yard, where people could sit among the chickens and take the sun. The yard was generally decorated by a dung-heap, on which an inquisitive servant might climb to spy on what her employers and the *parfaits* were saying to each other in the *solier*. Beyond the yard was the threshing-floor. The biggest farms, like that of the Martyrs at Junac, and some others, possessed both yard and garden, a stable for oxen (*boal*), a dove-cote, a pigsty near the garden, and barns (*bordes*) for straw on the other side of the yard or near a spring; also a sheep-pen (*cortal*), either adjacent to or at some distance from the *domus*. But these big farms were hardly typical of MontailloU. On the street side there was often, just as today, a bench or table set in the open air beside the door, for people to sit and warm themselves in the sun or chat with their neighbours. The problem of how to shut up the house was not always satisfactorily resolved: when there was only a ground floor, which was often the case, you could lift the edge of the shingle roof with your head and look in to see what was going on in the kitchen (ii.366). (The roof-cum-balcony was flat, or almost, and so could be used for keeping sheaves of corn or as a platform for the women to shout to each other: in the Catalan Pyrenees it did not become a sloping roof until the sixteenth century.) To enter the house one sometimes had only to move aside a plank or a slat. The walls were so thin that everything could be heard

from one room to the next, including heretical conversations between a lady and her lover (i.227). When two houses were adjacent a hole might be made to enable people to pass from one to the other. *Guillemette Benet must know a good deal about heretics*, alleged Raymond Testanière (i.463), *because in the days when the people of Montailou were rounded up by the Inquisition of Carcassonne there was a hole between the house of Bernard Rives (where the heretics had their chapel) and the house of Guillaume Benet. By means of this hole the said heretics passed from one house to the other.* Montailou was a veritable ant-hill. Another direct passage had been made, enabling the *parfaits* to slip unseen from the house of Bernard Rives, mentioned above, to that of Raymond Belot.

Over and above these not always impressive material appearances, what interests us chiefly here is the *ostal's* content of people, of souls. The population of the *domus* often and in various ways went beyond the strict framework of the family of the parental couple and their children. First of all, there were the servants. Jean Pellissier, a shepherd from Montailou, lived away from the village with various people at various times in order to learn or establish himself in his trade. Then he came home again, but instead of living in the house where he was born he dwelt for three years as a shepherd in the house of Bernard and Guillemette Maurs, a married couple. We do not know what wages he was paid. In the same *domus* lived Jean's brother Bernard, not a shepherd but a ploughboy (*labarator vel arator*). There were also Bernard Maurs's two children and his mother, Guillemette Maurs the elder, now a widow (iii.161). So this was not a strictly nuclear family: it consisted of a couple, two children, a grandmother and two servants. The structural mixture did not end there. Next to Bernard Maurs's house was that of his brother Pierre Maurs, another house with Cathar sympathies living in a state of open warfare with Pierre Clergue. (It was Pierre's wife, Mengarde Maurs, who was to have her tongue cut out for speaking ill of the priest.) The two Maurs houses, at once fraternal and neighbourly, formed a unit of friendship and sociability: *A the time when I lived with Bernard Maurs*, said the servant and shepherd Jean Pellissier (iii.76), *I often used to visit the house of Pierre Maurs.*

In addition to the husband and wife, the children, the other descendants, forebears or collaterals and the male domestics, the house might be

extended to include one or more female servants. Some of these were simply illegitimate children, such as were employed regularly in the Clergue *domus*. Thus the illegitimate Brune Pourcel was the daughter of Prades Tavernier, a heretic weaver who became a *parfait* and did not hesitate, from time to time, to let his daughter worship him, according to the Cathar rite. After her service in the Clergue household, from which she brought away several spicy details for the Inquisition, Brune Pourcel married and was left a widow. She then lived in her own very indigent *ostal*, where she spent her time begging, cadging or borrowing hay, wood, turnips or a sieve to bolt the flour. Brune Pourcel was riddled with superstition: when she worked for the Clergues she took hair and nail-parings from the corpses of her employers; she was afraid of owls and other night birds, devils flying over the roof to carry away the soul of Na Roqua ('Madame' Roques), recently dead. But it is only fair to add that many other inhabitants of the village shared Brune's beliefs.

Another servant who was an illegitimate child was Mengarde, the natural daughter of Bernard Clergue. She lived with her father, and was in charge of making bread and washing the shirts of the *parfaits* in the brook – they were made of finer linen than that worn by the simple peasants of Montailou (i.416–17). She later married a farmer.

The servant maids (not illegitimate) who worked in the house of the Belots are better known to us than those of the Clergue *domus*: a good example is Raymonde Arsen, sentenced in 1324 to wear a double yellow cross because of her connections with the heretics. Young Raymonde came from a poor but not destitute *ostal* in Prades d'Aillon and was the sister of Arnaud Vital, a cobbler in Montailou who was also parish guardian of the harvests (*messier*). In her early youth, around 1306, she went to work as a servant in town, in the house of Bonet de la Coste in Pamiers (i.379ff.). Here she met one day Raymond Belot of Montailou, her first cousin (i.458); he had come to market to buy a load of grain. Raymond suggested to Raymonde that she should come and work in his house as a servant. The Belot house, which was considered very wealthy (i.389), included Raymond himself, his brother Guillaume, his sister Raymonde, and another brother, Bernard, who was about to be married to Guillemette, née Benet, the daughter of Guillaume Benet, whose house stood a few yards away from that of the Belots. Once again the links of neighbourhood, marriage, cousinship and domestic service

mutually reinforced one another. Also in the Belots' house lived Raymond's mother, Guillemette, a widow. So in all the house contained a married couple, their children, the husband's grown-up brothers and sister, all unmarried, his old widowed mother and a servant girl. There were also several others, of whom we shall speak later.<sup>1</sup>

Raymonde Arsen explained to Jacques Fournier why the Belots took her on as a servant (i.370): '*Raymond and his brothers wanted to give their sister Raymonde in marriage to Bernard Clergue, the priest's brother.*' To ally the Belot brothers to the Clergue brothers by means of a sister was to weld together two of the most influential groups of brothers in Montailou. It also supplemented the Belot-Benet axis already mentioned, and turned it into a triple alliance of the Benets, Belots and Clergues. To the old links of friendship were joined the even stronger bonds of marriage. Mengarde Clergue, Bernard's mother, and Guillemette Belot, Raymonde's mother, were old friends long before their children got married (i.393). Once again, as in the case of the Belots and the Benets, marriage sprang out of neighbourhood: the Belot house was only across the street from the Clergue house (i.372, 392). But despite these favourable beginnings, the triple alliance (which was also a quadruple alliance – with heresy – since the Benets were allied to the Authiés) did not stand up well to the attacks of the Inquisition.<sup>2</sup> It tells us something, however, about the local attitude to marriage.

So the Belots took on a servant, Raymonde Arsen, to make up for the departure of a sister, Raymonde Belot. The functions of the sister before she left must have closely resembled those of a maid of all work. The taking on of Raymonde Arsen occurred at a special point in the family cycle (the departure of a sister), just as the Maur family's engagement of a ploughman and a shepherd (Jean Pellissier) took place at a time when the children of the young farming couple, who lived with the husband's mother, were still too young to work in the fields.

So the proposal made by Raymond Belot to Raymonde Arsen in

1 The evidence on the structure of 'more than nuclear' families concerns chiefly old widowed mothers living with their sons; but there were some cases of 'matrilocal' affiliation where a mother-in-law lived with her son-in-law (i.260 and *passim*).

2 We may recall that it was through the *domus* of Guillaume Benet that heresy was re-introduced into Montailou around 1300, by the Authiés, back from Lombardy (i.471). The Authiés and the Benets were closely linked by a marriage between the two families (i.233).

Bonet de la Coste's house in Pamiers that day stood at the intersection of several strategies: strategies of family, marriage and business. Raymonde Arsen gave an evasive reply (i.370): '*I cannot accept your offer for the moment, for I have made a contract with my master Bonet up to the next Feast of St John the Baptist [24 June] and now it is only Easter . . . I will see, at the Feast of St John, whether or not I shall come to your house.*'

This little dialogue illustrates the modernity of the contractual bond in upper Ariège: serfdom was non-existent or at the most insignificant, and feudal dependence did not weigh very heavily. At the end of June, Raymonde Arsen made up her mind; she gave notice to her master, Bonet, and went to fetch her natural daughter, Alazaïs, whom she had put out to nurse at Saint-Victor. Then, with her bundle over her shoulder and her baby in her arms, she went up into the mountains which overlooked Pamiers from the south. When she reached Prades, near MontailloU, she entrusted her daughter to another nurse, also named Alazaïs, who took the child to the village of Aston (now in Ariège). Raymonde Arsen herself then went down again into the present department of Aude, to help get in the harvest in the Arques valley.<sup>1</sup> After that she went back to Prades d'Aillon, which, being higher up, gathered the harvest later. So during one short summer Raymonde Arsen lived as an itinerant child-mother, harvester and outsider; she only left this wandering existence to settle as a servant in the house of *Raymond Belot and his brothers*,<sup>2</sup> which Raymonde Belot had just left, as arranged, before the harvest, to marry Bernard Clergue.

In the Belot family, where she remained for a year (the traditional length for a contract of employment), Raymonde Arsen was relegated outside the house in the strict sense of the term. Her bed, which she got ready every evening, was set amongst the straw in the little barn on the far side of the courtyard. Her daily work consisted chiefly in looking after the bread in the family oven and in washing the clothes. True, Guillemette 'Belote', the old mother, undertook part of these tasks: with her own hands she made the fine bread for the visiting *parfaits*, as

1 i.370-71: Arques and MontailloU-Prades complemented each other in seasonal harvest work and transhumance; also in the exchange of Cathar ideas.

2 The house was also referred to (i.458) as *the house of Bernard Belot and his brothers*. The headship of the family was thus spread over or divided between the two brothers.

in the case of Guillaume Authié, a faithful frequenter of the Belot house who made long stays in the *solier*, clad in dim blue and dark green (i.458). Guillaume Authié's presence was the occasion for a veritable family group. The gathering took place on the occasion of the marriage between Bernard Belot and Guillemette Benet (i.371) which, as we have seen, crystallized a whole network of previous relationships: Guillaume Benet, father of the bride and neighbour of the Belots, was also, and had been for a long time, godfather of Guillaume Belot, brother of the bridegroom (i.389). Guillaume Authié descended from his perch in the *solier* and came down into the kitchen where all the rest of the party were met. The brothers Belot were sitting on a bench. The women of the *domus* sat apart on another, lower bench. Raymonde Arsen sat a little way off by the fire, holding the baby belonging to the young Alazaïs, Raymond Belot's other sister, married and living elsewhere but come for the wedding (i.370-71). Raymonde Arsen later left the Belots' house and married Prades den Arsen, taking his family name, the one by which we know her. She settled in Prades d'Aillon in her husband's house, thus completing the circle and returning to her original village (i.370-77). Note the fact that her having had an illegitimate baby was no obstacle when it came to finding a husband.

After Raymonde Arsen had left, there remained another 'female domestic' in the Belot house, who also served as a concubine. Raymonde Testanière, otherwise known as Vuissane, of Montaillou, remained for three years (1304-1307) in the Belot house (i.455-70). She was mistress to Bernard Belot, her employer, and had at least two children by him, one of them named Bernard also. Apparently this subsidiary liaison, made official by co-residence, did not shock anybody, either in the *domus* or in the village. (Bernard Belot, Vuissane's lover, was a very enterprising fellow in general: he tried to rape the wife of his fellow-citizen Guillaume Authié of Montaillou, for which attempt he was imprisoned (i.411) and only released on payment of a 20-*livres* fine, paid to the officers of the Comte de Foix.<sup>1</sup> This incident caused an understandable, if not lasting, cooling off in the relationship between Bernard Belot and Guillaume Authié.)

Vuissane Testanière certainly did not have much luck with Bernard Belot, her lover, landlord and employer. She gave him children, and

<sup>1</sup> Twenty *livres* was equivalent to the value of 40 sheep, or half a house. This Guillaume Authié should not be confused with Guillaume Authié the *parfait*.

literally worked herself to death for the family in the hope that its head would marry her. But Bernard would only marry a heretic from Montaillou whom he could trust, such as the daughter of the Benets. And Vuissane, unfortunately for her, had no Cathar tendencies in those days. Also, it need hardly be added, the Testanières were much less well off than the Belots.

As well as domestics of both sexes, a house in Montaillou, especially if it was rich, might also contain a lodger, usually unmarried. The house of the Belots, which was large and full of people, at one time sheltered Arnaud Vital, a cobbler in the village, brother of the servant girl Raymonde Arsen. Arnaud was a heretic and used to guide the *parfaits* through the mountains, wearing a blue overtunic for the purpose. In exchange for rent or some domestic duties, he had a bedroom in the Belots' house, or perhaps just a bed which he might have had to share with someone else. His workshop was in another house in the parish. Like many cobblers, he was a village Don Juan. He was the lover of Alazaïs Fauré, who loved him and whom he instructed in the heretic faith. She then undertook to convert her father and brother. One day in the Belots' house, where he was a lodger and she a servant, Arnaud played the 'hen trick' on Vuissane Testanière. He gave her a hen to kill – a deed which from the point of view of the Cathars, who believed in metempsychosis, was a crime. Vuissane tried to kill the fowl, but could not bring herself to do it. Having thus established his power, Arnaud tried to rape Vuissane there and then in the Belots' house. She easily stopped him, objecting that this would be incest (i.457–8). '*Are you not ashamed? You forget that I am mistress to your first cousin (and landlord) Bernard Belot, and that I have children by him.*' Arnaud nevertheless continued to live under the same roof, and even married another servant of the *domus*, also named Raymonde. It was an unhappy marriage. Arnaud, in the tradition of certain husbands in the Pyrenees, was strangely silent with his young wife, but would stay away whole nights visiting new mistresses, such as Raymonde Rives and Alazaïs Gavela.<sup>1</sup> But at least this marriage marked the end of Arnaud's residence as lodger or tenant with the Belots. Two months after they were married, the Vital couple left the Belots' house and set up in their own *domus*,

1 This Raymonde, when Arnaud Vital died and left her a widow, married Bernard Guilhou. She became delouser to Mengarde Clergue and her son Pierre, and even, temporarily, the latter's mistress (ii.223–5).

which prospered. One of the unwritten rules of the Montailou *ostal* was that it might harbour all kinds of adults but, in the long term, it generally contained only one married couple.<sup>1</sup>

With this one restriction, the Belots' *ostal* was Liberty Hall. Maid-servants, lodgers and *parfaits* rubbed shoulders with the family; some fornicated or even committed rape; others converted as many people as they could to heresy. It was a rich and complex *domus*. Like other important *domus* in Montailou, including that of the Maury family, it was noted for its sense of hospitality, which implied duties on both sides. To utter threats under the roof of someone who had received you in his house was considered boorish: 'You dare to threaten me in my own domus!' cried Guillemette Maury, addressing her young cousin, Jean Maury from Montailou, who though he was her guest had quarrelled with her and threatened to have her locked up (ii.484-5). Guillemette tried to revenge herself for this impoliteness by poisoning her cousin with salts of mercury – an attempt which failed.

Montailou contained some truncated nuclear families (widows living alone, or with one child), some nuclear couples with children, some couples with several children and one parent (a widowed grandfather, or, more often, grandmother) and some groups of brothers, sometimes together with an elderly mother, sometimes with both parents, in which only one of the brothers would be married (the other brothers and sisters, even if they were grown up, would remain unmarried all the time the group continued to live together). The purely nuclear family was perhaps the most common, but it did not have a local monopoly.

Family structure, in fact, varied chronologically. The same family was successively extended, then nuclear, then extended, and so on. Let us take an imaginary family called Vidal, which resembles as closely as possible the families Clergue, Belot, Benet, Rives and others in Montailou which are known to us. To begin with the family is nuclear, consisting of the Vidal couple and their children. At the death of the father we have a truncated nucleus, which soon becomes a phratry, the position of the brothers gaining in importance as the surviving parent, Guillemette, withdraws to the position of respected widow-matriarch living half apart in a room specially assigned to her. She still keeps an

1 This general but not absolute rule derives from the chronological structure of the family cycle.

eye on the household, but one of her grown-up sons succeeds to the position of head (*chef d'ostal*).

Then the family becomes again more or less extended: one of the brothers, Bernard, marries, and the new couple live for a while with the other brothers and the elderly mother. Subsequently the *domus* becomes nuclear once more: old Guillemette dies and all the brothers except Bernard leave the family house. They either try to build their own *ostal* elsewhere or they enter into another household, probably through marriage. Or again, they might become shepherds – or prisoners of the Inquisition. Bernard Vidal, his wife and their children remain alone as a simple and complete nucleus.

The taking on and dismissal of servants coincides with turning-points in the family cycle, such as the moment when the children become old enough to work, or the time when a daughter leaves home to get married. In some very rare cases we have a fully extended family, a multi-generational group including both mother and father and a younger couple who are their successors. In Montailou only the Rives family corresponds to this arrangement, and even here a quarrel broke up this group when the daughter-in-law was turned out because of temperamental incompatibility.

Another version of the fully extended family was the multi-fraternal group. This included two brothers, or a brother and sister, with their respective spouses. They lived in a group of four, together with their children (there is no instance of this arrangement in Montailou itself, though I have come across several true *frèrèches* – sibling groups – in other localities in upper Ariège at the period with which we are concerned).

Although these forms of family extension were conceptually possible, they were not very frequent in Montailou. Elderly adults, especially the men, died too soon to form a 'quadriga' with a younger couple. And neither custom nor the somewhat restricted scope of agriculture encouraged *frèrèches*. They did become more common later, during the fifteenth century in the southerly estates enlarged through depopulation, and, at the beginning of the Renaissance, in the big share-cropping areas of Tuscany and the Bourbonnais.

Finally, the *domus* cannot be understood without its genealogical links, which connected it with other related, living *domus* through con-

sanguinity (*parentela*). These bonds also linked the *domus* with the past, under the auspices of the lineage (*genus*) of the family, which was the *domus* looked at against the background of the past four generations at the most.

Some authors have seen lineage as one of the most important values of ancient societies. This is certainly true in the case of the nobility. But, as regards Montailou, the sense of lineal continuity was a local and rural one, not of primary importance. It was subordinate to the value embodied in the *domus* itself, in its restricted sense of a family and domestic group of living people residing under the same roof. In Montailou, and in upper Ariège in general, the sense of *genus* was quite vivid, but no more than that: the peasants spoke of someone belonging to a race of priests, a race of liars, a race of heretics, a race of curmudgeons, or a race of lepers. (*Genus* is here translated by the word 'race', though it would be more correct and scientific to talk of 'lines of priests' etc.) The inhabitants of the Comté de Foix regarded leprosy as an example of genetic or lineal continuity extending over four generations, though in fact, with leprosy, the continuity was only pseudo-genetic, arising as it did through infection. Even the humblest were aware of lineal continuity. The shepherd Pierre Maury of Montailou implied that a lineage was either all good or all bad, all Cathar or all spy; but Raymond Issaura of Larnat, a leading citizen and a *parfait*, answered philosophically, referring to the *genus* of the Baille-Sicres, which had produced an outstanding spy, that: *In every lineage there are some decent people and some bad people.*

In general, the *genus* (or, as our villagers sometimes saw it, the *domus*, taken in the long-term sense of lineal continuity) was the bearer of the family name, transmitted in the paternal, sometimes the maternal, line.

More present or influential than the *genus*-lineage aspect was consanguinity, made up of cousins and relations of all kinds living in other *domus* in the same village or other localities near or far. When the shepherd Pierre Maury of Montailou successfully kidnapped his sister Guillemette (with her consent) from her bullying husband he soon began to wonder anxiously (iii.149-53), *What should we do if some of the husband's relations followed us to get Guillemette back again?*

The *domus* was thus at the centre of a whole network of links of varying importance: they included alliance through marriage, family relationship, friendship arising out of common hatreds and sometimes

embodied in invitations to be godmother or godfather to children. Last but not least the network included relationships of neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood could work for the destruction of a neighbour, against whom all the others might unite: *Four of my neighbours, including a woman and a priest, plotted against me to make me lose my possessions and to denounce me to the Inquisition as a heretic*, said Arnaud de Savignan, a plasterer from Tarascon (iii.432). But family solidarity, often inseparably linked with neighbourhood structures, seems to have been very important. When Pierre Casal accused the Cathar missionaries Pierre and Guillaume Authié of having stolen a cow, and threatened to denounce them, the whole clan of Belots and Benets, connected with one another and with the Authiés by marriage, were up in arms and threatened with death any man or woman who denounced the missionaries. *'Take care!'* said Guillaume Benet to Alazaïs Azéma of Montailou (i.318). *'If you denounce them, you are dead!'* Raymond Belot was even more blunt. *'One of these days,'* he told Alazaïs (ii.64), *'they'll find you with your head separated from your body.'*

A typical example of family solidarity was the vendetta of Guillaume Maurs. He was the son of a *domus* in Montailou which the Clergue family determined to destroy. Guillaume Maurs, his father and his brother were all arrested by the Inquisition in August 1308, together with the rest of the population of the village. The mass arrest was the result of denunciations in which Clergue the priest, changing course and renouncing his former Cathar friendships, was implicated. Guillaume was subsequently let out of prison, though two other members of his family remained there. One day, near Montailou, he came face to face with the priest, and seized the occasion to reproach him vehemently for his conduct (ii.171). Pierre Clergue, who knew all about family solidarity, replied with equal vehemence: *'I will see that you all rot in Carcassonne prison – all the Maurs, you, your father, your brother, all that belong to your domus.'*

He more than kept his word: it was because of him, acting through his brother the *bayle*, that Mengarde Maurs, Guillaume's mother, had her tongue cut out for 'false witness'. He and other members of the Clergue family hunted Guillaume Maurs up hill and down dale in an attempt to get him arrested (ii.176, 178). He conducted a veritable vendetta against the whole Maurs *ostal*, a vendetta more 'domiciliary' than the true

Corsican vendetta, later, which was more a matter of general blood relationship.

The exchange between Pierre Clergue and Guillaume Maurs ended symmetrically with Maurs threatening reprisals. '*I will be revenged,*' he cried, '*so beware of me and of all my supporters!*' They went their separate ways, Guillaume to search for aid among his brothers and friends and the allies of his friends.

In 1309 Guillaume Maurs took refuge in Ax-les-Thermes. His brother, Raymond Maurs, and Jean Benet, from another *domus* victimized by the Clergue family although linked to them by marriage, joined him there. The three of them all swore on bread and on wine to be revenged; they would kill the priest, pooling their meagre resources in order to do so (ii.171). This was a genuine pact of brotherhood, with its oath on bread and on wine and its pooling of possessions. Between 1309 and 1317 the conspirators made several attempts to murder Pierre Clergue, either themselves or through hired assassins. Guillaume Maurs, the outlawed shepherd, was so eager for revenge that when he went to confession the priests refused to give him communion because of the hatred he nourished in his heart against Pierre Clergue (ii.173). Even if he had forgotten it, his friends and fellow shepherds would have reminded him. One day when Guillaume was quarrelling with Pierre Maury, the latter reminded him (ii.178), '*Fight against the priest of Montaillou and not against us. He will give you plenty to think about.*' Only the waning enthusiasm of one of the conspirators (Pierre Maurs) and the lack of suitable opportunity caused the final murder attempt against Pierre Clergue to fail. It was not for want of trying: Guillaume Maurs had hired two Catalan assassins and brought them specially from Gerona, promising them 500 *sous*, all included, if they succeeded (ii.190).

The Maurs vendetta was an extreme example. But family solidarity played a part even in the most prosaic cases. Two examples will suffice. A relation by marriage interceded with the Foix officials and activated networks of friends in support of one of his relatives who had been accused of rape (i.280). When Pierre Maury wanted to buy a hundred sheep which he did not wish to pay for straight away, he offered his own brother Jean as security and guarantee (ii.185).

But although the *domus*, in certain circumstances assisted by its relations, could assemble all its forces against a person, a cause, or another *domus*, it could also be subject to internal conflict and tension.

This was especially serious when mother and son, or mother and daughter, were separated by the barrier of heresy. Arnaud Baille-Sicre, for example, railed against the memory of his mother, Sybille, since it was because of her heresy that the maternal *ostal* had been confiscated by the Inquisition. As for Emersende, Guillemette Maury's heretical sister, she took part in a conspiracy against her daughter Jeanne Befayt, a good Catholic, a plot by which the mother's faithful friends were to kill the daughter by pushing her off the bridge of the Mala Molher (ii.64, 65).

These two cases of disintegration of the *domus* were the result of family disintegration caused by the exodus of the heretics to Catalonia. In upper Ariège, before the great departure to the south, Jeanne Befayt had practised Catharism with her mother and father, like an obedient daughter. In Montailou, the Inquisition might somehow succeed in ranging one *domus* against another even though they were connected by a series of marriages: Jacques Fournier managed to set the Clergue family against the Benets. But blood relationship held out better than marriage relationship; the authorities in Carcassonne and Pamiers could not turn brother against brother. The break-up of the Montailou *domus* was only a hypothesis; Pierre Clergue played with the idea only to amuse himself and for the edification of Béatrice de Planissoles during one of their fireside chats (i.225). '*When the world began brothers knew their sisters carnally, but when many brothers had one or two pretty sisters, each brother wanted to have her or them. Hence many murders. That is why*', concluded the Rousseau of Montailou, '*the sexual act between brother and sister had to be forbidden.*' But Pierre Clergue could sleep soundly: the Montailou *domus* might be threatened with destruction by the activities of Bishop Fournier, but there was no possibility of its being broken up from within.