

**MONASTERIES AND SERVILE GENEALOGIES: GUY OF SURESNES  
AND SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY**

Nathaniel L. Taylor

forthcoming in *Genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne*, 6: *L'anthroponymie de la dépendance*, ed. Monique Bourin and Pascal Chareille (Tours, 2000 or 2001).

Sometime in the incumbency of Hugh V, abbot of Saint-Germain-des-Prés (1162-82), a certain Guy, who held the title of *maior* of the monastery's villa of Suresnes, denied he was in a state of servitude to the abbey, that is, that he was Saint-Germain's *homo de corpore*. The protesting Guy was hauled into the abbot's court, along with, the scribe tells us, "around fifty of his *parentela* of both sexes."<sup>1</sup> Despite Guy's denials, other acknowledged *homines de corpore* of Saint-Germain agreed that Guy was one of them, and ultimately Guy was constrained to admit his status, do homage and swear fealty. A charter recording this scene, and the act of homage that ended it, was transcribed soon afterwards in a quire along with records of other efforts under Abbot Hugh V to regularize and record the monastery's patrimony and relationship with various functionaries and tradesmen. On the verso of the leaf containing the charter is a genealogy of the *parentela* of mayor Guy, naming one hundred and two people (one hundred in the *parentela* plus two husbands) and spanning five generations (see text, appended, and stemma, Figure 1).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "...ad diem statutum undequaque congregavimus in curia nostra utriusque sexus fere quinquaginta de parentela predicti Guidonis..." See next note.

<sup>2</sup> Paris, BN MS Lat 12194, f. 219r (the charter) and 219v (the genealogy). Ed. René Poupardin, *Recueil des chartes de l'abbaye de Saint-Germain-des-Prés*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1909-30), nos. 214 (the charter) and 226.1 (the genealogy; Poupardin's edition omits four individuals). I am indebted to my friend and former colleague Prof. Robert F. Berkhofer III, of Western Kentucky University, for bringing this document to my attention a couple of years ago, for his kind provision of photocopies of this and other Saint-Germain MSS, and for his collegial discussions of the documents' importance. Further consideration of their fiscal and patrimonial implications can be found in his dissertation, "Monastic Patrimony, Management and Accountability in Northern France, ca. 1000-1200" (Diss., Harvard University, 1997). I am further indebted to Prof. Berkhofer for recently pointing out to me the existence of another published study of Guy of Suresnes: Jean-Claude Lacroix, «Que savons-nous de Guy, «Maire» de Suresnes au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle?», *Bulletin de la Société Historique de Suresnes* 9, whole no. 42 (1985), 67-73. While M. Lacroix there promised that a further study of the family of Guy

## SERVILE LINEAGES AND SERVILE GENEALOGIES

A small number of such texts--genealogies of servile functionaries of monasteries--survive, mainly from the twelfth century, but with a few earlier examples.<sup>3</sup> Genealogies of various kinds from this period have been increasingly recognized as a complex genre encompassing many different kinds of texts.<sup>4</sup> Despite the diversity of the genre, historiographical fashion has remained focused on the genealogies of royal and princely lineages, with only a few well-known exceptions championed by Georges Duby and his followers.<sup>5</sup> In contrast to the more grandiose and paradigmatic dynastic princely genealogies

---

would appear in a later issue of the *Bulletin*, one had not appeared as of 1993.

<sup>3</sup> For example, two eleventh-century genealogies from the monastery of Saints Flora and Lucille at Arezzo, detailing the progeny of serfs or *famuli* who had been the subjects of past donations (*Documenti per la storia della citta di Arezzo nel medioevo*, ed. Ubaldo Pasqui, vol. 1 [Firenze, 1899], nos. 292-3, pp. 400-402; both studied by Cinzio Violante, "Quelques caractéristiques des structures familiales en Lombardie, Émilie et Toscane aux XIe et XIIe siècles," in *Famille et parenté dans l'Occident médiéval: actes du colloque de Paris [6-8 juin 1974]*, ed. Georges Duby and Jacques Le Goff [Rome, 1977], 89-90 and n. 6, with two stemmata *hors texte*). One traces seven generations of descendants of a serf, Maurus, fl. 937/47; another traces five generations of descendants of a serf, Petrus, with several other intermarried servile families. See also some of the texts edited by Maurits Gysseling, "Les plus anciennes généalogies de gens du peuple dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux," *Bulletin de la commission royale de toponymie et de dialectologie* 21 (1947), 211-215; which probably concern ecclesiastical tenants or serfs, but which offer no explicit evidence of the exact status of the subjects. Finally, the rich narrative genealogy of the family of 'Za Era' from the *Cartulaire noir* of Auch has already been studied in this series (Benoît Cursente, "Les leçons d'une généalogie Auscitaine des XIe et XIIe siècles," in *La genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne*, vol. 3, *Enquêtes généalogiques et données prosopographiques* [Tours, 1995], 55-62 and table *hors texte*). While it is similar in tone and goal to some of these already cited, the issue lay in the title to the land of Za Era, rather than in any disputed claims to personal servility on the part of the genealogy's subjects (*Cartulaires du chapitre de l'église métropolitaine Sainte-Marie d'Auch*, ed. Charles Lacave La Plagne Barris [Paris & Auch, 1899], part 1, no. 108).

<sup>4</sup> The best orientation remains Léopold Genicot's fascicle, "Les Généalogies" in the *Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental* (1975) with the "Mise à jour" (1985).

<sup>5</sup> See principally Georges Duby, "Structure de parenté et noblesse, France du nord, XIe-XIIe siècles," in *Miscellanea medievalia in memoriam Jan Frederik Niermeyer* (Groningen, 1967), and "Remarques sur la littérature généalogique en France aux XIe et XIIe siècles," in *Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 1967 de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (Paris, 1967). See also the chapter by Dominique Barthélémy, "Parenté," in the popular *Histoire de la vie privée*, vol. 2, *De l'Europe féodale à la Renaissance* (Paris, 1985).

or monastic celebratory *genealogiae fundatorum*, these genealogies of serfs or tenants were drafted with a legal goal in mind: the perpetuation of memory of a legal relationship (tenancy or servitude) which might be advantageous to the mother institution (usually a monastery or chapter) but disadvantageous to the subjects, whose descendants, particularly if they became prosperous, numerous, or pretentious, might wish to deny such origins.<sup>6</sup> The most famous example of such conflict over status in the twelfth century is that of the descendants of Erembald, castellan of Bruges, who murdered the count of Flanders in 1127 in a desperate attempt to affirm their free status against accusations of servile origins which had been encouraged or accepted by the count.<sup>7</sup> While lay lords like the count of Flanders could make an issue of servility by manipulating courts, perhaps ecclesiastical lords took to creating genealogical memorials of their subjects--a type of prescriptive account designed to be useful to forestall or combat such denials. At any rate, of all such genealogical texts which I have examined--indeed, of all known twelfth-century genealogical texts of any type--the genealogy of Guy of Suresnes is the largest.<sup>8</sup>

The scattered cartularies of Saint-Germain include three other such genealogies in addition to that of Guy, obviously dating from the same general period, both clearly designed to enumerate families of servile status (*Figures 2 to 4*).<sup>9</sup> None of these three is as large as Guy's, and no

---

<sup>6</sup> I have begun a comparative study of these texts in general, not yet published, which was embodied in a paper "Genealogical texts and contexts in the twelfth century," delivered at Harvard University in November 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Galbert of Bruges, *De multro, traditione, et occisione Gloriosi Karoli Comitis Flandiarum*, ed. Jeff Rider (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, 131, Tournai, 1994), cap. 7. Note that in the two-hundred-page narrative Galbert offers no definitive agreement that Erembald and his descendants were serfs of the count. Galbert named some nineteen individuals in the Erembald clan.

<sup>8</sup> The Arezzo genealogies have 35 to 55 persons; in fact, of all (non-royal) twelfth-century or earlier genealogical narratives or lists, the only one that comes closest in size is the stemma of his kin, the descendants of deacon Heimric, drawn by canon Lambert of Saint-Omer in the *Liber floridus*, f. 154r (ed. and reproduced by Gysseling, op. cit.), which contains 80 persons.

<sup>9</sup> Poupardin, nos. 226.2 (the genealogy of cooks and *hospitalarii*, relatives of the married couple Johannes and Alietru, AN LL 1024, f. 86v), naming 29 persons; 226.3 (descendants of brothers David and Robert, BN MS Lat. 13056, f. 125v), naming 18 persons; and 226bis (descendants of brothers

accompanying charters survive to demonstrate their context. Two of the three others contain individuals with the titles *cocus* or *hospitalarius*--ancillary positions within the monastery itself which seem to have been held by serfs of the house.<sup>10</sup>

It is not surprising that Saint-Germain should yield us these documents, given the tradition of enumerating serfs represented by the peerless ninth-century polyptich of Irminon, which enumerates over ten thousand individuals--*servi*, *coloni*, and, like Guy, *maiores* or *villici*.<sup>11</sup> In a fiscal as well as a genealogical sense, the polyptich provides a static snapshot of those individual tenants living at the time the survey was made, with a single valuation of their property and customary trade (if any). At the most, the polyptich shows nuclear families, two-generation groups of parents with children which have long been studied for the purposes of onomastics, family structure, and other social data. The major distinction of the (by comparison) infinitesimal twelfth-century servile genealogies lies in their longitudinal, multi-generational approach to the identification of serfs--in the goal of proving the status of the serfs by linking them to ancestors who had been of (or who had voluntarily entered into) servile condition.<sup>12</sup> For onomastic purposes, the genealogical text, which provides

---

Theobald and Ursus, BN MS Lat. 13882, f. 93v), naming 23 persons. See Figures 2-4.

<sup>10</sup> Alietru (Figure 3), the daughter of a *hospitalarius* and the wife of a *cocus*, was noted as 'feminam nostram de corpore'.

<sup>11</sup> In this context it is important to cite both major editions: that of B. Guérard, *Polyptyque de l'abbé Irminon: ou, denombrement des manses, des serfs et des revenus de l'abbaye de Saint-Germain-des-Prés sous le règne de Charlemagne, publié d'après le manuscrit de la Bibliothèque du roi*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1844); and that of Auguste Longnon, *Polyptyque de l'abbaye de Saint-Germain des Prés, rédigé au temps de l'abbé Irminon*, 2 vols. (Paris 1886-95); the onomastic study in Longnon's introduction (1:254-382) is still rewarding to study.

<sup>12</sup> This added temporal dimension parallels the increasing complexity of purely fiscal texts in a similar period. For this development in patrimonial accounting see, among others, T. N. Bisson, *Fiscal Accounts of Catalonia*, 2 vols. (Berkeley, 1990); for parallel developments in other kinds of personal financial charters (particularly wills and pious bequests), see my dissertation, *The Will and Society in Medieval Catalonia and Languedoc, 800-1200* (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 1995), chap. 6.

some continuity over several generations, can also yield certain insights that a static enumeration of names (or even of family groups) cannot.<sup>13</sup>

The genealogy of Guy itself presents remarkable peculiarities as a statement of genealogical memory designed for a specific legal purpose--the retention of the monastery's right over the individuals in it, who are all, by male or female descent, legally *homines de corpore* of the monastery. The text is introduced with an unexpected and misapplied term. It begins "Hec est progenies Guidonis maioris de Surinis." *Progenies* is a Biblical word: in the Vulgate it means almost exclusively 'descendance' or successors, as in the Magnificat.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, the author of this genealogy cannot have had this sense in mind, because Guy is not the ancestor of the group covered by the text, nor does he figure prominently in it. The genealogy begins with Vitalis, Tiboldus and Heremburgis, who, the text says, "were brothers and sister, and *homines de corpore* of Saint Germain." The descendants of Vitalis, Tiboldus and Heremburgis are then traced in three parallel columns. Oddly, it is not even clear where mayor Guy fits into the genealogy. In the text there are two persons named Guy--one in the third generation and one in the fifth--but neither is qualified as the principal subject.<sup>15</sup> Either way, the text covers not Guy's descendants but his collateral kin.<sup>16</sup> The 'nearly fifty' relatives Guy brought into court were probably most of the named living people in this genealogy.

---

<sup>13</sup> This point is not new; indeed it is the justification for the inclusion of papers around the topic "Les récits généalogiques comme sources d'études anthroponymiques," in *Genèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne*, vol. 3, *Enquêtes généalogiques et données prosopographiques*, ed. Monique Bourin (Tours, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Luke 1:50, 'a progenie in progenies'; cf. also Genesis 46:7; Exodus 6:15, 34:7; and Job 5:25, 18:19, 31:8. However, in Genesis 43:7 it seems to have the sense of collateral kin (fathers and brothers).

<sup>15</sup> The charter of Guy's submission (Poupardin, no. 214), names as a witness "ex parte Guidonis" his *avunculus*, magister Patrus. However, he is not in the genealogy himself, as both named Guys in the genealogy belong to the parentela through their fathers, so Petrus could not have belonged to the subject parentela.

<sup>16</sup> A third alternative, that all the individuals in the text are Guy's descendants (literally his *progenies*), beginning with the first three siblings who would therefore be his children, can be discarded on grounds that the text cannot date from a period three to five generations after Guy's submission (i.e the latter 13th century).

The genealogist would have been more accurate to use the term used by the scribe of the charter recording Guy's submission: *parentela*, suggesting that the persons with Guy shared descent from a common ancestor.<sup>17</sup> However, there is another shade of meaning, less genealogically precise and more colorful, that the genealogist may have had in mind in calling Guy's collateral relatives his 'progenies': aside from the Magnificat, *progenies* is found in the New Testament only twice, both times in the derogatory epithet *progenies viperarum*, 'brood of vipers', applied by first John the Baptist and then Christ to the Pharisees in the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>18</sup> It is not far-fetched to believe that the author of the genealogy might have found a shade of meaning here to match some distaste he felt for the pretentious and duplicitous Guy and his kin. After all, he was writing a memoir of specific utility to the monastery, and, in a legal sense, detrimental to Guy and his kin; his memory of Guy's strident denials may have been fresh and rancorous.

One wonders further about the circumstances of the creation of this genealogy. The accompanying charter says that Guy himself came to court with nearly fifty of his *parentela*. Did these people come to show support for their kinsman, or were they gathered against their will by officers of the monastery? If they came willingly, perhaps they did not realize that their descent from servile ancestors would be recorded as well. Imagine members of the Guy's *parentela*, present at his submission, being asked by an enterprising monk to describe just *how* they were related to him. All who acknowledged kinship were essentially acknowledging their own bondage to the monastery--no matter that they were respectable people asserting pride in their family associations. For Guy's *parentela* was not without some

---

<sup>17</sup> Jan Frederik Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus* (Leiden, 1976), s.v.; while its use in English is rare one can note that it has recently been revived in twentieth-century writings on sociology and genetics (cf. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., s.v.).

<sup>18</sup> Matt. 3:7, 12:37. The pejorative simile of vipers is also applied by the writer of the *Gesta comitum barcinonensium* to the troublesome sons of Ramon Berenguer I, (Berenguer Ramon I and Pere Ramon), 'like viper hatchlings who naturally kill their mother by bursting through the belly' (one killed his stepmother, the other his brother). *Gesta comitum barcinonensium*, ed. Lluís Barrau Dihigo and Jaume Massó Torrents (Barcelona, 1925), 7.

distinction, as we shall see when we turn to considering the individuals in it, their names and titles.

#### **GUY AND HIS PARENTELA**

How complete is the genealogy? In the earlier generations there is a preponderance of siblings enumerated in threes. Two of these nine grandchildren had no offspring; they may have been retained for rhythmic balance, either by the compiler or in the memory of his informants.<sup>19</sup> Here, however, women are not suppressed and descent through female lines is as prominent as descent through males.<sup>20</sup> Below the second generation the ternary rhythmic balance is not maintained. Some lines are pruned to only one representative in each generation, while others branch thickly. The pruned lines--such as that leading to 'count Frodo'--may have been retained in a truncated form to link to a particular individual who was a source of pride or notoriety, but in a branch whose other members were not remembered. The only concrete indication that the genealogy is not a complete enumeration of the progeny of the original three siblings is the ambiguous listing of one of the two persons named Guy with unnamed siblings ("et fratres et sorores eius"). Why did this Guy, alone of all in the genealogy, not have his brothers and sisters named? Is it possible that this Guy was the original subject of the genealogy, the *maior* of Suresnes, whose closest kin (siblings and offspring) would be especially well-known to the monks and advocates of Saint-Germain?<sup>21</sup>

The genealogy is also extremely closely pruned of anyone who does not belong in the blood descendancy of the original three siblings. Of the hundred descendants thirty-seven have offspring of their own, yet only two spouses are named in the entire genealogy (and they are young husbands, contemporary with the compilation of the genealogy: one marriage shows one

---

<sup>19</sup> An instinct for ternary subdivision has affected genealogists since the creation of the Old Testament: think of Cain, Abel and Seth, or Shem, Ham and Japheth; similarly the basic notated rhythms of the end of the twelfth century (Notre-Dame conductus) were ternary.

<sup>20</sup> Indeed, descent through women outnumbers descent through men (21 women with offspring vs. 15 men; plus one, Flandinus/Flandina, who was probably a woman despite the scribal inconsistency with the ending).

<sup>21</sup> I think it likely that this is the Guy *maior* of the caption, though the younger Guy cannot be ruled out.

child, the first of the fifth generation in that branch of the family; the other is still childless and is *in* the fifth generation). Not counting the two named husbands, the *parentela* contains exactly 49 women and 51 men;<sup>22</sup> of the women named, 22 have children of their own shown, while only 15 of the men do. Perhaps this shows that the women who do not have children are less likely to have been retained in the genealogy: in the sparser first three generations there are three childless men named (including a *miles* and a *maior*) and only one childless woman.

By any modest reckoning the *parentela* appears successful as well as prolific. It includes one *miles*, two priests, three other *maiores* (in addition to Guy), and even one man called *comes*. While the *maiores* are to be expected among monastic bondsmen, the other offices are more clearly exceptions, and points of pride: the *miles* certainly, as he is one of two named siblings of Doda, in the third generation before the genealogical present, who had no children themselves. The priests, too, would be pointed out with pride by their kinsmen.<sup>23</sup> As celibates, they would not have perpetuated the family in subsequent generations, so their retention in the genealogy was not strictly necessary for the purpose of keeping track of the abbey's future bondsmen.

The title of *comes*, found once, is more enigmatic. 'Frodo comes' appears at the end of his own branch of the family, with no offspring, siblings, aunts, or uncles. Was he a truly important but now socially distant kinsman, proudly identified by some of Guy's relatives, but who may not have considered himself in the same *parentela*? This would account for his place at the end of an unusually narrow branch of the genealogy. But how many true twelfth-century counts had a monastic serf as a great-grandmother? It is more likely that *comes* is a sobriquet--perhaps even a humorous or mocking sobriquet--having no relation to the aristocratic office, though Frodo could well have been considered an important man by his kin.

---

<sup>22</sup> This assumes a masculine identification of the ambiguous "Hilderitis/Hilderio" and a feminine identification of the ambiguous "Flandinus/Flandina". See edited text.

<sup>23</sup> Note that one of the priests, Andreas *presbiter*, constitutes the only interlinear addition to the extant text. It cannot be determined whether this is a copyist's correction or a factual addition.

The office of *maior*, equivalent to the classical *villicus*, is an essentially rural, servile position: "Les maires ... étaient ordinairement d'une condition plus ou moins engagée dans la servitude."<sup>24</sup> Of the three *maiores* (other than Guy) who are mentioned, all are found in one branch of the family--the descendants of the sister Heremburgis (the branch which also boasts the *miles*): one in the third generation (Everardus) and two in the fourth (Hildoardus and Richardus). Everardus is merely called *maior*, and is not assigned to a *villa*. Belonging already to the third generation out of five, he was possibly already dead when the document was drawn up, and thus his assignment to a *villa* may have been less important than his remembered status. His nephews Hildoardus and Richardus were *maiores*, respectively, of Cachans and Arcueil, which are interestingly shown in two separate forms, one in the genitive (*maior Caticanti*) and the other in the form 'de + ablative' (*maior de Arcolio*), indicating the scribe's absolute indifference to these two forms. While not placed in the genealogy itself, Guy's title is used in the ablative (*maior de Surinis*) at the head of the text.

Aside from those toponymic attributions belonging with the title of *maior*, only five other people in the entire genealogy have surnames, and those are of the toponymic type (*de + ablative*). It is striking that the number should be so small, even in a genealogy of those of servile status. It is more striking that the names all occur in a single branch in a single generation, and are given to women: the sisters Hamelina de Castilione, Avelina de Tirannis, Hildeburgis de Monte Rubio, and Ligardis de Atrio, and their first cousin Ligardis de Nemore. The two brothers of the four sisters, Girelmus and Giroldus, did not bear surnames. All of these women had children, so the names may indicate the villages in which they settled as married women. They were remembered in this fashion by an informant who would identify his relatives not merely by name but by where they had settled. Montrouge and Châtillon, at least, lay only a short distance from the *villae* of Arcueil and Cachan where the sisters' kinsmen were *maiores*.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Guérard, *Polyptyque de l'abbé Irminon*, 1:450. Cf. also J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae latinitatis lexicon minus* (Leiden, 1954-76), s.v. *maior*, §§7-8, p. 628.

<sup>25</sup> I have not identified *Tirannis* (Poupardin's reading of a doubtful name, which I cannot make anything other than the obviously nonsensical *Titiaxiuis*), *Atrio*, and *Nemore*.

The majority of the persons in the genealogy, however (88% of persons named), have only a name, and no sobriquet, toponymic, or distinction of office to identify them: only their place in the genealogy, passing on the servile blood to their own offspring. What names do they bear? It is a remarkably diverse set of names--considering the group is all one kin--with a stock of 72 names among 102 individuals, or a uniqueness of 72% (this count includes the two named husbands): see the table of names, Figure 5. The male stock is slightly more diverse than the female (39 names for 53 individuals, or 74%, versus 33 names for 49 individuals, or 67%). But what of the names? It is perhaps most instructive to compare them with names in use by local serfs at the time of the polyptich of Irminon: undoubtedly many of the abbey's *coloni* of Irminon's day number among the ancestors of this *parentela*. Of the stock of 72 names from the genealogy, the vast majority are of traditional double-rooted Frankish origin. Virtually all of these, and an additional stock of Biblical or Roman names, were to be found among the *coloni* of Irminon's day. Forty-nine of the names (68%) were borne by *coloni* in the original polyptich. An additional four reproduce familiar roots in ways not found in the polyptich;<sup>26</sup> another one is found in a tenth-century interpolation (though not there borne by a serf);<sup>27</sup> and nine are found in the interpolation for Beaugency from the end of the eleventh century.<sup>28</sup> Only nine of the names are not found in any form in the polyptich or its interpolations.<sup>29</sup>

Twenty-three names are found more than once; however, only four are found more than twice.<sup>30</sup> Among the twenty-three repeated names, only one is found repeated by a direct descendant of an earlier owner of the name, and that is at a remote remove of four generations.<sup>31</sup> There is *no* instance in the genealogy of any child being named after a parent or grandparent (at least

---

<sup>26</sup> Newer single-root forms: Frodo, Garinus. Recombinations: Herdeburgis, Teoinus.

<sup>27</sup> Hugo.

<sup>28</sup> Avelina, Odelina, Hemelina, Aales, Helvisa, Hisabel, Matildis, Durandus, Vitalis (in addition to Frodo).

<sup>29</sup> Latin-derived names: Brunellus, Grossa, Iacolina, Flandina, Senata. Frankish names: Bordinus, Rohes. Uncertain forms: Gencelina, Gibelina.

<sup>30</sup> *Robertus* (5 times) *Maria* (4), *Avelina* (3) and *Ingelrannus* (3).

<sup>31</sup> *Heremburgis* (gen. 1) > Doda > Rohese > *Heremburgis*: a four-generation matriline.

those parents and grandparents through whom the kinship with Guy is traced). Why is there less repetition of names--one phenomenon we are taught to expect in families in the early twelfth century? Of course, it is possible that in these descendants of Vitalis, Tiboldus and Heremburgis, we see a *parentela* which cuts obliquely through other, more homogeneous *parentelae*, either linked agnatically or in some other systematic way, where we might see more consistent transmission of names: but this is doubtful. In the genealogy we have several three-generation agnate lines (and one four-generation line) as well as several four-generation matrilineal lines (and one five-generation line); and in none of these does any significant pattern of name repetition appear.<sup>32</sup>

When the male and female names are considered separately (Figure 5), one discrepancy is evident: the men's names are more conservative by far. Eighty-seven percent of their names are identical or onomastically close to those found for *coloni* in the original portions of the polyptich of Irminon. Women on the other hand inherit only 61% of their names or name-roots from the original polyptich. While several of the newer men's and women's names appeared in later interpolations to the polyptich, only two men's names (5% of male stock) don't appear in any part of the polyptich at all; among women there are seven such new names (21% of female stock). Thus while the overall variety of names remained fairly equivalent between the sexes, women had discarded more old names and assumed more new ones, perhaps exercising their timeless aesthetic imperative.<sup>33</sup>

#### **THE OTHER SAINT-GERMAIN GENEALOGIES**

The three other extant Saint-Germain genealogies seem to have had the same motivation for creation as that of *maior* Guy. While they are much smaller than the *parentela* of *maior* Guy, each has interesting characteristics which deserve mention. Only one specific link can be found between any two

---

<sup>32</sup> In the other texts, which are admittedly briefer, there are only three examples of grandchildren bearing the name of a grandparent: Robert de Corceliis was paternal grandson of Robert (Figure 2); and the pairs Andreas and Theobaldus in Figure 4.

<sup>33</sup> Four of the seven newest women's names (plus three of the seven introduced first in the Beaugency interpolation) end in the familiar or derivative ending *-elina* (or *-ina* as in *Flandina*). This element, not found in the original polyptich, clearly reflects a widespread new name-building device. See Figure 5.

of these four texts, and it is indirect: Haimo the cook (*cocus*), whose (unnamed) wife is among the last generation of descendants of David and Robert (Figure 2), was also among the monastery's witnesses against Guy of Suresnes at the abbot's court, a fact which shows that the two genealogies must indeed be contemporary.<sup>34</sup> The *parentela* into which Haimo married was that of two brothers, David and Robert, who must have lived around the end of the eleventh century. David has four generations of descendants; Robert has only three: one son, and that son's eight children, the last of whom is named only as 'the mother of Guibert the deacon.' Three other female descendants are not named in this genealogy--only their husbands are named. Guy's *parentela*, in contrast, only gave a husband's name twice among twenty-one women with children--and the women of the *parentela* were always named. Within the monastery, of course, some of these husbands and sons would be well known--Guibert the deacon, Iohannes the hospitaler, and Haimo the cook--so perhaps it was not thought as important to record the names of their wives or mothers. In addition to these indications of office or trade, we see other surnames in this genealogy, of a type not found in the larger *parentela* of Guy: Anselm Avril, married to another unnamed descendant of David, has a distinctive, alliterative sobriquet as a surname. The other distinctive surname is the sobriquet which is actually inherited: Stephanus Capalu married David's daughter Hersedis and had a son, Robertus Capalu, as well as two daughters; however, Robertus' son Evrardus didn't inherit the surname. The only toponymic surnames here are found, as had been the case with Guy's *parentela*, in a clutch of sisters (and one brother) who must have settled in different *villae* and adopted--at least in the informant's recollection--the toponymics indicating their places settled (one sister has the Latin genitive *Sancti Germani* while her siblings bear the form *de + ablative*).

The third genealogy (Figure 3), which with only eighteen persons is the briefest of the four, also begins with two *coci* (but not Haimo), who were brothers. One of them, Johannes, married a sister of two *hospitalarii*. One of their sons was also a cook, but their great-grandsons included an *aulutarius* and a *clericus*. Three interesting surnames here are striking. Two in the first generation are the brothers-in-law Rinoldus *Paganus* and

---

<sup>34</sup> Poupardin, no. 214, p. 299, line 14.

Iocelinus *diffidens Deum*.<sup>35</sup> While 'Paganus' may also be used as a given name (it appears in the fourth genealogy), the sobriquet 'diffidens Deum' seems halfway between a name and an epigram. One wonders: were these sobriquets literally true for their holders? The third surname, 'Cratecul', borne by their nephew Evrardus, is obscure and may be akin to Lat. *craticula* (fine lattice-work); perhaps, though, it may have a coarser meaning (*cratis-culis* or even *crassus-culis*)?

The fourth genealogy (Figure 4) treats the descendants of Theobald and Ursus. Though slightly larger than the third (naming 23 persons), it is the least informative in that it does not explicitly name any of the members as functionaries or serfs of the abbey, though one should assume that its purpose and provenance matches those of its fellows.<sup>36</sup> The shape of the genealogy is similar to that of David and Robert, though here the branch of descendants of the second brother, Ursus, is sparse indeed: one person in each generation until the unnamed two great-granddaughters, who are only shown for their husbands. The given names in this genealogy are unremarkable, though it is interesting that here are two grandsons bearing the same name as their grandfathers--one from a paternal grandfather, another from a maternal one.<sup>37</sup> And unlike the other three texts, no one here is named with rank, occupation or office, and only four out of the 23 names are accompanied by a toponymic surname. As elsewhere, they are clustered in one branch of the family, with three sisters bearing toponyms while a fourth sister does not. This fourth sister, however, was the mother of the only man in the entire corpus to bear a toponymic surname, Bartholomeus de Cella. Why was it unusual for a man to have been so designated in these texts?

---

<sup>35</sup> Rinoldus Paganus: the spelling of the first name is doubtful (Poupardin gives 'Revolus', which I doubt). 'Paganus' could be a second individual rather than a second name, but the punctuation in the text suggests that it is a second name.

<sup>36</sup> I have not had the opportunity to inspect the manuscript of this fourth text and thus was not able to investigate its paleographical relationship, if any, to the other texts. Unlike the other three texts, Poupardin did not attribute the act to the abbacy of Hugh V: but this was among the *actes omis* inserted at the end of the (posthumous) second volume, and may not have had the benefit of Poupardin's consideration.

<sup>37</sup> The only other example of this being Robert in Figure 2 (cf. n. 32).

The variety in type of surname in the second and third genealogies is somewhat at odds with the uniformity of the larger text of Guy's *parentela* and the family of Theobald and Ursus. One might venture to suggest that the families of cooks and clerics were somewhat more sophisticated than their rural neighbors, and adopted more readily distinctive (and perhaps humorous) forms of surnames--namely those types of names which were making inroads among people of a higher social class and in different regions.<sup>38</sup> In the matter of given names, however, the three smaller genealogies tend only to reinforce some of the observations made for Guy's *parentela*: there is virtually no repetition of names among children or descendants, nor is there any systematic transmission of second names or surnames (aside from the inherited surname *Capalu* in Figure 2).

#### **SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS**

What is one to make of these four genealogies, from an onomastic point of view? A preliminary overview of the names they contain suggests considerable onomastic conservatism, both in the retention of traditional Frankish names, and in the continued freedom to choose from a large stock of such names, in contradiction to the generally-marked trend of the shrinkage of acceptable name stocks and the greater tendency to use--and reuse--names made fashionable by aristocratic namesakes.<sup>39</sup> The obstinate variety of the name stock (72 different names for 100 individuals) is much higher than what has normally been found in other compiled data from aristocratic or socially mixed populations, from many regions of France from the tenth through twelfth centuries.<sup>40</sup> It is all the more striking that such extraordinary variety of names should be found among a group of individuals *all of the same blood*--where one would ordinarily expect the percentage of re-used names to be far greater than among any socially-defined stratum of the local population as a

---

<sup>38</sup> M. Bourin reflects on recent scholarship on social and regional distinctions of type and the advent of the surname in "France du Midi et France du Nord: deux systèmes anthroponymiques?" in *L'anthroponymie, document de l'histoire sociale des mondes méditerranéens médiévaux* (Rome, 1996), esp. 190-94.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Bourin, "France du Midi et France du nord," 188-90.

<sup>40</sup> The table presented by Bourin, "France du Midi et France du Nord," p. 197, shows a higher rate only in the tenth-century Vendômois (80 names per 100), with 65 names per 100 in mid twelfth-century Toul.

whole. While the Capetian aristocracy was following a more limiting fashion in names--choosing more and more frequently from among a small preferred list--it is understandable that the peasantry, under less swiftly-changing social pressures, may have remained freer to use older names, and perhaps thought it less important to adopt a smaller set of repeated proprietary names to identify themselves as belonging to a particular lineage. Nevertheless fashion may well account for the more frequent choice of new names among the women than among the men.

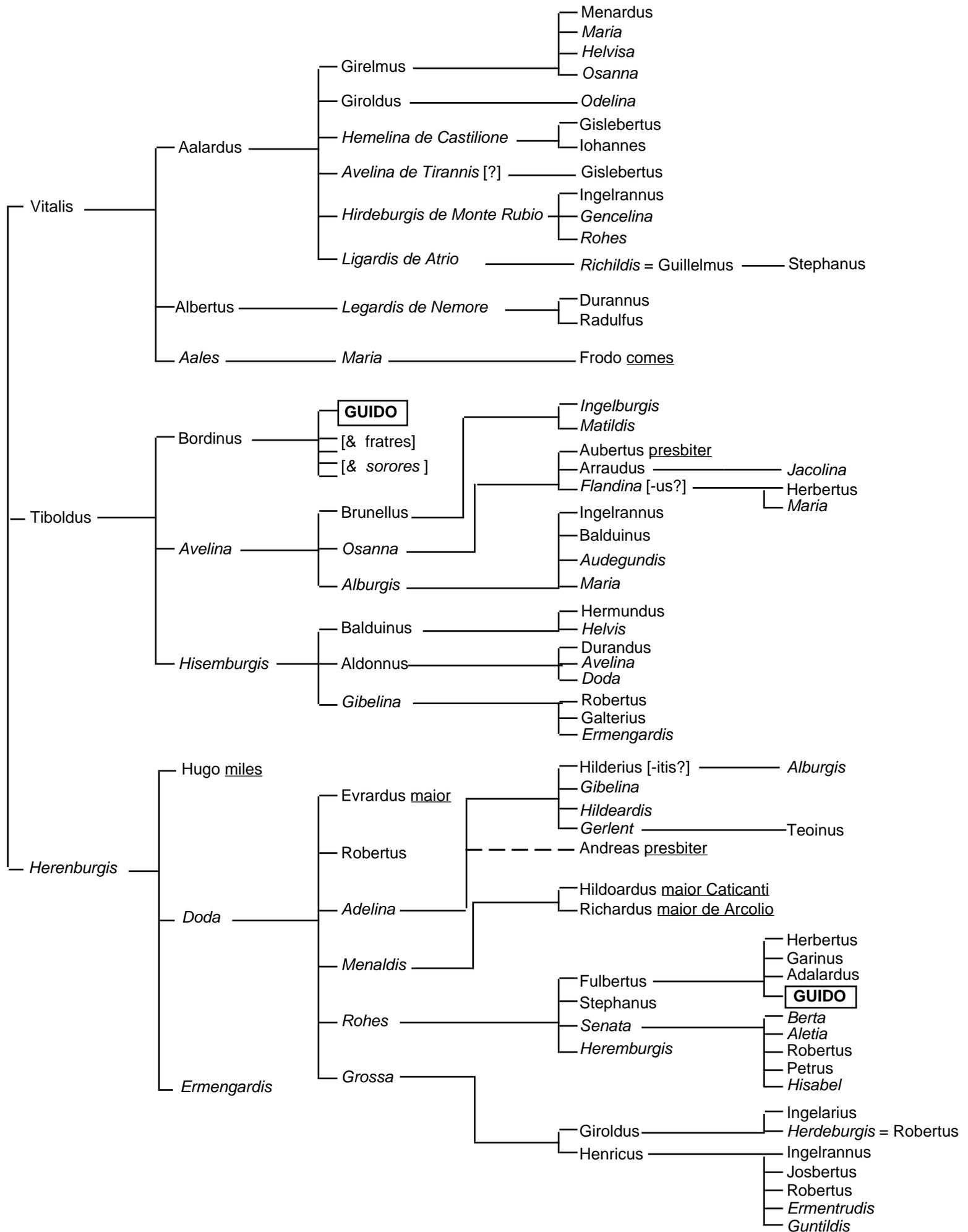
As for titles and surnames, it is clear that the use of toponyms (or names of any other sort) was not considered important by the genealogies' scribes or by their informants, except perhaps to identify the *maiores*, or female cousins who married out of the home village. Other remarkable individuals in Guy's family--the knight, the priests, and the 'comes'--were curiosities and points of pride, while the 'pagan' (*Rinoldus Paganus*), the 'agnostic' (*Iohannes diffidens Deum*), and the enigmatic Evrardus *Cratecul*, in the cooks' family, may have been eccentric uncles, remembered with a good-natured shock.

In sum, these servile genealogies present a remarkable window into an onomastically conservative lower stratum of the population of the île de France in the twelfth century. That Saint-Germain-des-Prés could yield such treasures is not surprising, given the tradition of the polyptich of Irminon. Concerning the study of the names themselves, these observations have only scratched the surface of the potential value of these documents, which may bear riper fruit under extended comparative scrutiny with the rest of the Saint-Germain charter collection, and with the benefit of closer comparisons with the polyptich itself.

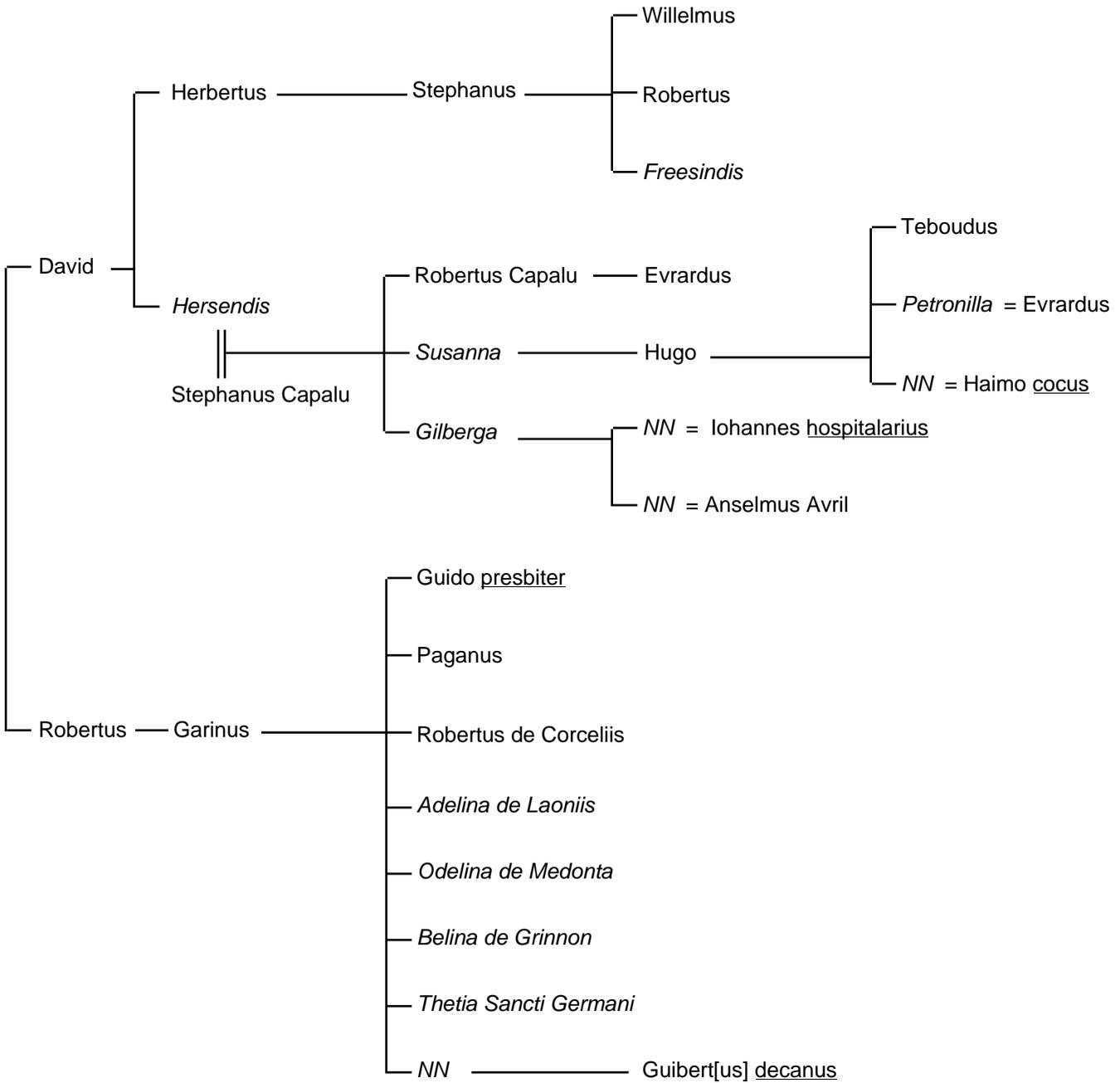
But when one turns to the surnames found (and not found) in such an unusual source, one caveat bears repeating: in any period, but particularly in this transitional period in the adoption of surnames among the lower social classes, it must be remembered that the names may have been created on the spot, or omitted, by the scribe or by his informants; and that their creation, retention or omission were largely dependent on the scribe's (or the copyist's) assessment of their value in the context of the document. In this case, we can be sure that the genealogies were created with an especially keen desire to keep track of the individuals who belonged to the servile lineages: the genealogies were meant to be used for the perpetuation

of the memory and acknowledgment of that servile status. And for a while--perhaps for a generation, at least--one might imagine that these texts served that purpose. But how soon did the names and identities of these serfs fade beyond the recall of their descendants, or of the vigilant monks?

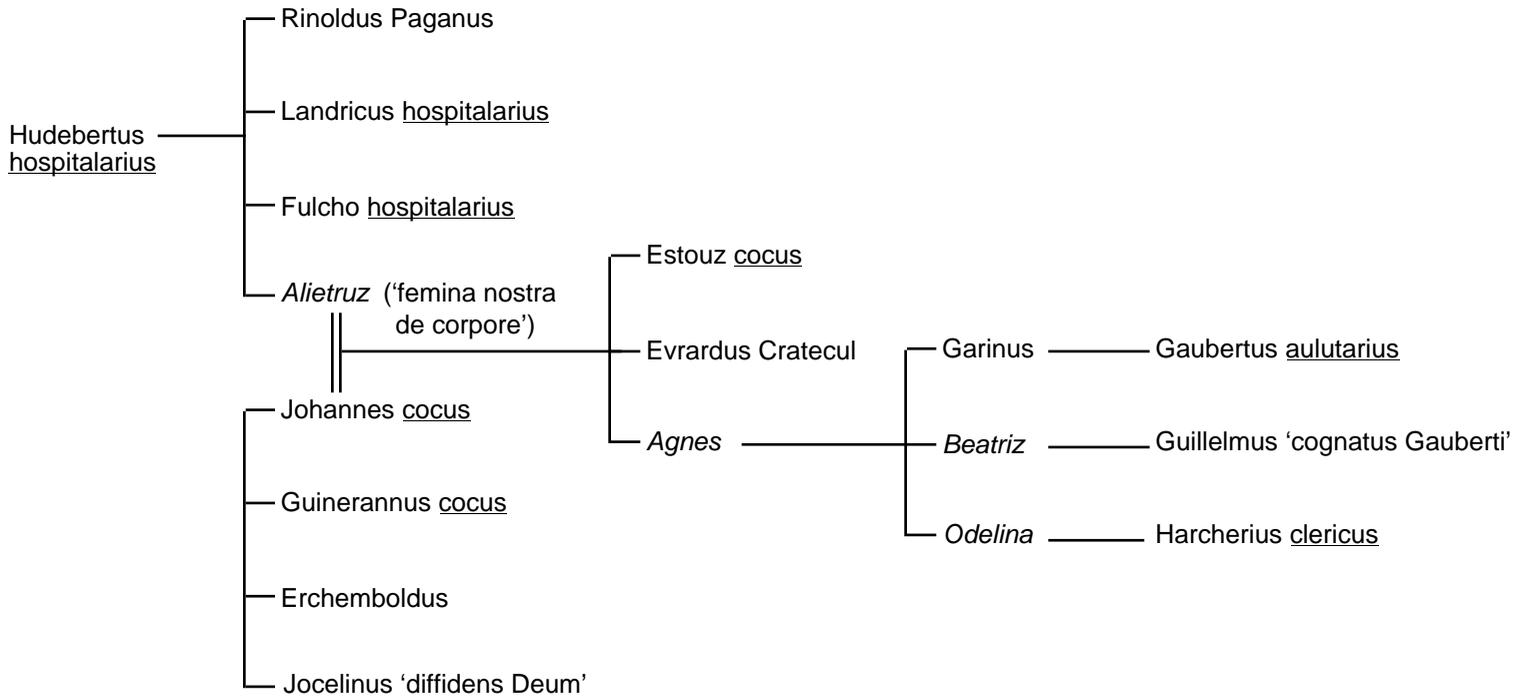
**Figure 1. The *parentela* of Guy, maior of Suresnes**



**Figure 2. Descendants of David and Robert**



**Figure 3. *Coci and hospitalarii***



**Figure 4. Descendants of Theobald and Ursus**

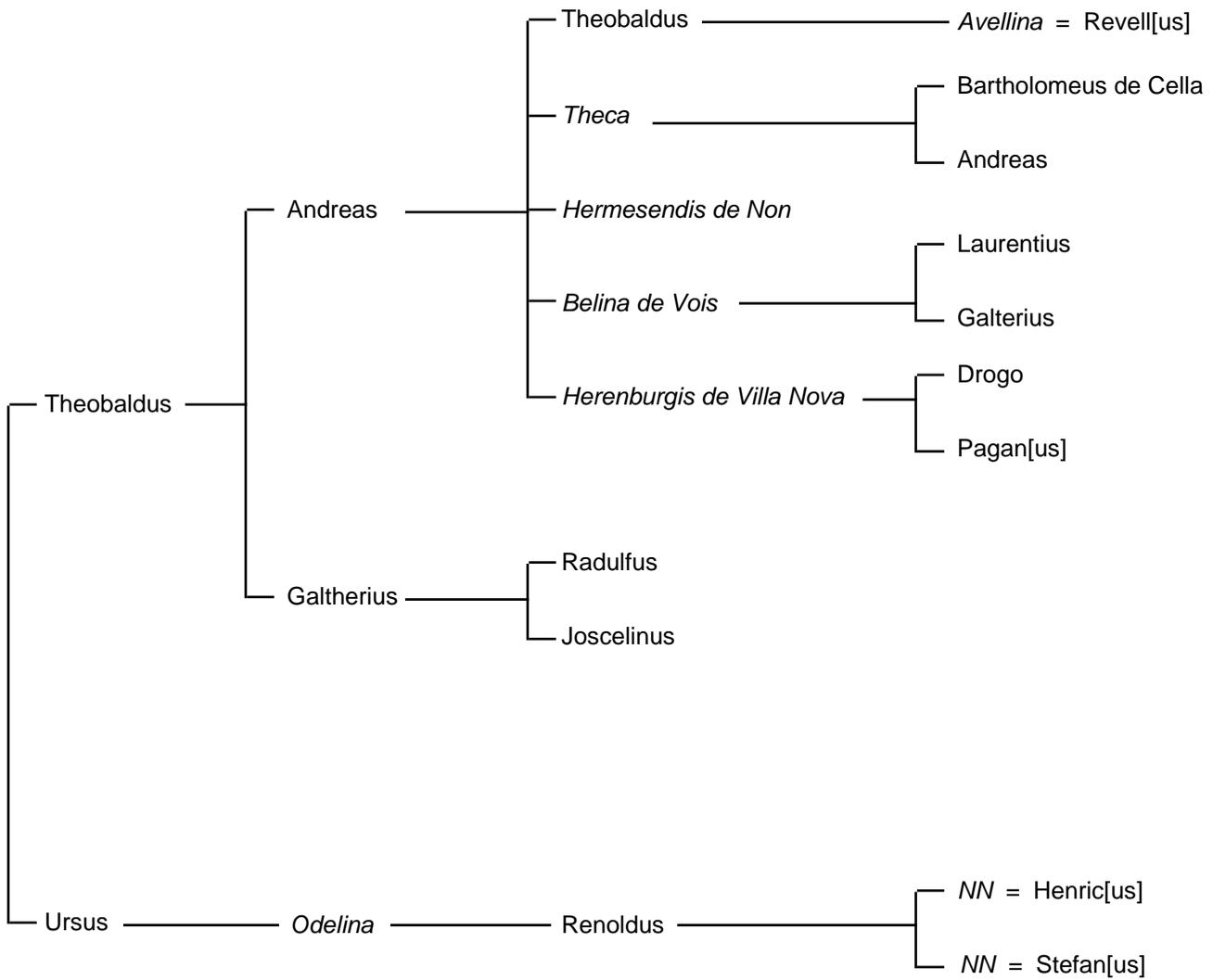


Figure 5. Genealogy of Guy of Suresnes: Name Stock

Columns:

1. Name
2. Frequency
3. Percentage Frequency
4. Presence of name in Polyptich of Irminon  
(codes listed at right)

Codes (Column 4):

- √ = found as *colonus/-a* in original Polyptich  
(with only orthographical variation)
- M = found only in interpolation for Marolles-  
sur-Seine (late s. X) (4.38)
- B = found only in interpolation for Beaugency  
(late s. XI) (5.96 etc.)
- N = not found in Polyptich at all
- R = not found, though the same name roots  
found in other formulations in Polyptich
- ? = uncertain equivalency to earlier form  
found in original Polyptich (listed below)

Total (N=102; Stock=72)

Males (N=53; Stock=39)

Robertus	5	10%	√
----------	---	-----	---

Ingelrannus	3	6%	√
-------------	---	----	---

Adalardus	2	4%	√
Balduinus	2	4%	√
Durandus	2	4%	B
Giroldus	2	4%	√
Gislebertus	2	4%	√
Guido	2	4%	√
Herbertus	2	4%	√
Stephanus	2	4%	√

Albertus	1		√
Aldonnus	1		? <sup>1</sup>
Andreas	1		√
Arraudus	1		? <sup>2</sup>
Aubertus	1		√
Bordinus	1		N
Brunellus	1		N
Evrardus	1		√
Frodo	1		R <sup>3</sup> B
Fulbertus	1		√
Galterius	1		√
Garinus	1		R <sup>4</sup>
Girelmus	1		√
Guillelmus	1		√
Henricus	1		√
Hermundus	1		√
Hilderius [-itis?]	1		√
Hildoardus	1		√
Hugo	1		M B
Ingelarius	1		√
Iohannes	1		√
Iosbertus	1		√
Menardus	1		√
Petrus	1		√
Radulfus	1		√
Richardus	1		√
Teoinus	1		R <sup>5</sup>
Tiboldus	1		√
Vitalis	1		B

Females (N=49; Stock=33)

Maria	4	8%	√
-------	---	----	---

Avelina	3	6%	B
---------	---	----	---

Aales	2	4%	B
Alburgis	2	4%	√
Doda	2	4%	√
Ermengardis	2	4%	√
Gibelina	2	4%	N
Helvis	2	4%	B
Herdeburgis	2	4%	R <sup>6</sup>
Heremburgis	2	4%	√
Legardis	2	4%	√
Osanna	2	4%	√
Rohes	2	4%	N

Adelina	1		√
Audegundis	1		? <sup>7</sup>
Berta	1		√
Ermentrudis	1		√
Flandina [-inus?]	1		N
Gencelina	1		N
Gerlent	1		√
Grossa	1		N
Guntildis	1		√
Hemelina	1		B
Hildeardis	1		√
Hisabel	1		B
Hisemburgis	1		√
Iacolina	1		N
Ingelburgis	1		√
Matildis	1		B
Menaldis	1		? <sup>8</sup>
Odelina	1		B
Richildis	1		√
Senata	1		N

<sup>1</sup> polyptich has an *Aldoinus*

<sup>2</sup> polyptich has an *Adragaudus*

<sup>3</sup> original polyptich has only compounds with root *Frod-*, though hypochoresitic *Frodo* is found in the Beaugency interpolation

<sup>4</sup> polyptich has compounds with root *Garin-* / *Warin-* but not this hypochoresitic form

<sup>5</sup> polyptich has root *Teud-* in other compounds

<sup>6</sup> polyptich has *Herd-* and *-bergis* / *-berga* as roots in other compounds

<sup>7</sup> polyptich has an *Autgudis*

<sup>8</sup> polyptich has a *Magenildis*

