ABSTRACT

SARA DE LA TORRE BERÓN
The Ordinance of 1669 in Application on the Grande Maîtrise de Toulouse as Documented by Louis de Froidour
(Under the Direction of TED L. GRAGSON)

Louis de Froidour was a forest surveyor appointed by Jean Baptiste Colbert during the reign of King Louis XIV in 17th century France. Froidour was commissioned to document and represent the tracts of land owned by the inhabitants of the grande maîtrise de Toulouse, encompassing the southwest region of France. During his acclaimed tenure as surveyor, Froidour earned the title of France’s “Grand Master of Waters and Forests.” Using Froidour’s personal records, archived in the Archives départementales de la Haute-Garonne and the Bibliothèque municipale d’histoire et du patrimoine – Périgord in Toulouse, as well as secondary literature, I evaluated the state of the land in the region Froidour surveyed before the implementation of the Ordinance of 1669. Using this information, I evaluated the lack of uniform land management policies across the grande maîtrise de Toulouse and particularly in the Pyrenees Mountains. The so-called “disrepair” in the land provided an impetus for comprehensive forest reform for the region Froidour surveyed, as well as the entire kingdom. I also evaluated Froidour’s methods of documentation and his personal impact on the surveying of land during his tenure, as well as his influence on later surveyors. Finally, I evaluated the importance of considering indigenous knowledge and established land practices in order for reforms to be effective. This research contributes to the knowledge of land management practices in the area where Froidour conducted his surveys as well as the influence of economic governance on how local farmers determined the use of their lands.

INDEX WORDS: Louis de Froidour, Jean Baptiste Colbert, French Forestry, Pyrenees Mountains, Travel Memoir, Indigenous Knowledge
THE ORDINANCE OF 1669 IN APPLICATION ON THE GRANDE MAÎTRISE DE TOULOUSE AS DOCUMENTED BY LOUIS DE FROIDOUR

by

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DEDICATION

To my mom and dad—

Muchas gracias por todo lo que han hecho por nosotros.

Les agradezco de todo corazón, hoy y siempre.

And to my brothers, Eduardo and Jonathan—

What would I do without you, kiddos?
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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

“Do you have any information on Louis de Froidour?”


The question I had thought specific enough to elicit information when I posed it to the main reader at the Archives départementales de la Haute-Garonne was evidently too vague when regarding such a renowned subject. Thus began my experience in researching the so-called “Father of French Forestry”—Louis de Froidour, the illustrious forester and appointed officer of King Louis XIV. In gathering all of the information about him that I could, both at that archive and in the Bibliothèque municipale d’histoire et du patrimoine – Périgord in Toulouse, Froidour’s main headquarters 400 years prior, I slowly uncovered the story of this man and his enduring legacy in the field of forestry in France.

The challenge of uniform land management is a topic that I found particularly interesting, especially after conducting field work in the Basque commune of Larrau, in the French Western Pyrenees. While this knowledge was gained second-hand rather than from direct, personal experience, I learned that the Basque’s time-tested method of clearing pasture through controlled burning is currently being contested by the French government, which has imposed rigorous burning restrictions. When I learned that Froidour encountered similar issues four centuries prior, I realized that land management cannot be instituted by a ruling head in a faraway state capital without breeding resentment and encouraging non-compliance. Current practices must be considered at the local level as well. In the 17th century, the Basque community of Soule, where
Larrau is located, was more autonomous than it is now, so naturally, there was resistance to sudden imposed land management from the Crown (Veyrin 2011: 35).

Reading preliminary background information on Froidour and his influence in reforming French forests launched my investigation into the actual reforms, and led me to one of its most famous results: the implementation of the Ordinance of 1669—which Jean Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV’s Finance Minister, concluded was necessary in order to enforce uniform management of the King’s forests. Froidour, experienced forester that he was, was commissioned to survey the state of the forests that fell under the grande maîtrise de Toulouse, in the Midi (the south of France) to determine the most adequate method of management.

La Grande Maîtrise de Toulouse (in French: the grand matrix of Toulouse) refers to the region of Languedoc, the ninth département (an administrative district) of France.

Figure 1: Map: la grande maîtrise de Toulouse in France. (Sébastien Poublanc 2013)
It includes the pays of Guyenne, Basse Navarre, Soule, Labour, Dauphiné, and Provence. In the province of Basse-Navarre, the subdivision of the Basque country of Soule was called the Pays de Soule. This area’s inhabitants lived largely under their own governance, but still remained subjects of the Crown. However, due to their Basque heritage, the area was largely self-sufficient and shared commonalities with the country to the West, and the Spanish Basque countries, including the Kingdom of Navarre.

Once assigned the land under the grande maîtrise, Froidour conducted and documented thorough, detailed surveys. Notwithstanding, even though this was already a monumental task, Froidour also kept personal records of his travels, both in his own mémoires, or travel journals, and through correspondence with colleagues. Froidour’s records are not only official land measurements but also his own observations of the people and societies he encountered. One of these ethnographic-esque accounts retells his experience in the valley of Soule, where Larrau is located, which brings my research back to where the idea was sparked in the first place.

In reading through Froidour’s personal retellings of his voyages through the Midi, I learned of the importance of a people’s environment on their livelihoods and vice-versa. The people whom Froidour encountered had an intimate knowledge of the land, and this knowledge influenced their practices regarding the land, including forests. The concept of cultural landscapes considers the heritage and relationship developed between a particular people and their landscape. I was particularly interested in the landscape heritage in the valley of Soule, where Larrau is located, given the fact that I had first-hand experience in the area.
My goal was to evaluate the historical context of France at the time Froidour was commissioned, as well as the state of the land in the regions Froidour surveyed before the implementation of the Ordinance of 1669. I also wanted to evaluate the lack of uniform land management policies across the grande maîtrise de Toulouse and particularly in the Pyrenees Mountains, as I wanted to see the small-scale application in a place where I had already been. I further wanted to evaluate Froidour’s methods of documentation and his personal impact on the surveying of land during his tenure, as well as his influence on later surveyors. Finally, I wanted to see how impositions by the state were mitigated in order to take into account indigenous knowledge and cultural landscape heritage.

SECTION 1.1 – METHODS

The field research I conducted in Larrau was instrumental not only in sparking my interest in the history of the region, but also in the image placement in my memory of what the land and the area look like in the present day.
Through talking with the research team, consisting of geographers and anthropologists looking at the co-evolution of society and landscape in the French Western Pyrenees, I learned about previous and current human activity in the area. The work itself entailed coring trees in different stands in search of fire scars—evidence of previous human-directed fire regimes, as well as digging soil pits and describing soil profiles in various locations. By literally getting my hands dirty, I learned of the influence of human activity on these physical land characteristics. And the most contentious discovery, which connects the 1600s and the present day—although we were not there during fire season—was to learn of the feud between the Souletins and the French government, which decrees prescribed fires can only be set if they follow strict guidelines. This effectively means that many “illegal” fires are set during fire season, since the
Souletins’ time-tested prescribed burning does not match up with the government’s proposed fire regulations.

My primary goal was to answer the question, “How much can I find out about Froidour?” Thus, following fieldwork in Larrau, I traveled to Toulouse to continue my research independently. By procuring records from different archives in the city, I was able to unearth primary literature and see copies of edicts signed by Froidour himself. The *Archives départementales de la Haute-Garonne* (in French: the Municipal Archives of the Haute-Garonne—the department in which Toulouse is located) provided more general records of the *Département des Eaux et Forêts* (in French: Department of Waters and Forests), but nothing specific to the valley of Soule, or even to the Pyrenees Mountains. However, I was successful in finding a copy of Froidour’s seminal volume—*Instructions pour les ventes des bois du Roy*, published in 1668, as well as different articles addressing his various travels and enduring legacy.

The largest repository of information proved to be the *Bibliothèque Municipale d’Histoire et du Patrimoine – Périgord* (in French: The Municipal Library of History and Patrimony – Périgord), which houses an extensive collection of manuscripts and old books. Here, I gained access to various old volumes, whose location I pinned down via an equally old “Catalogue of Documents/Manuscripts,” which had the information for the various folios and their location. Many of these manuscripts had been archived on microfilm as well, so I clicked through black-and-white photograph after photograph in order to glean the information for which I was looking. In addition to these centuries-old sources, I also found periodicals on the forests
and the Pyrenees Mountains in general, which helped give me insight into the background of the region on which I would be focusing. Through this collection of data and information, in the main forms of photographs and electronic copies of the microfilm images, I catalogued the information I amassed, in order to process it once I returned state-side.

As I continued reading secondary literature on the forests in France during the time of Froidour, a recurring idea emerged of the forests being in “a state of disrepair,” and the urgent need for new management methods in order to prevent their further degradation. I proceeded to investigate what exactly was meant by “disrepair” and how officers like Froidour could be used to “bring order to the land.” Through this background research, I began realizing that the main proponent behind this new regime of conservation and exploitation of the forests was in fact not Louis XIV himself, but his Finance Minister, Jean Baptiste Colbert. Thus, I delved into this new character and learned of his innovative ideas regarding his appointed duties. Colbert’s main task of gaining as much revenue as he could for the King resulted in his decision to build a merchant marine, which marked the beginning of a true commercial economy in France. In order to build a merchant marine, Colbert needed the raw material to build ships, which was wood. And where was the source of wood but the forests?

This is where Froidour comes in, and how, through the famed forester’s mémoires, we eventually narrow back down to the valley of Soule, which inspired this undertaking.
In order to know the value of a kingdom, its assets must be measured in all possible aspects. One of these assets is the primarily physical one—land. Louis XIV, who was the reigning monarch of France from 1643 to 1715, had the major objective of adequately measuring and finding the best ways to advance his existing fortune, as well as extracting more wealth through his current assets. Jean Baptiste Colbert, the King’s top financial advisor, envisaged the idea of creating a merchant marine that would bring economic power to the King and to the kingdom of France (Richardt 1997: 124). The first step in this endeavor was to conduct an inventory of the King’s lands, including the royal forests. In order to achieve this monumental task, Colbert sent in his most experienced arpenteurs (a term roughly meaning “surveyors”), to survey and map the forests that were most removed from the Crown, those in the Midi, the south of France. In carrying out this task, Colbert encountered the problem that the land to be mapped was in a state of “disrepair,” and thus, the task to survey and catalogue these lands could be achieved only by the most experienced of surveyors. Louis de Froidour, seigneur de Cérizy, was the principal, one-man solution to Colbert’s dilemma.

SECTION 2.1 – LAND MAPPING

In feudal France, land was important both in its physical components (for example, area, composition, and use) as well as for the dues that were paid in accordance with these characteristics. Thus, maps were not necessary when words could explain the required taxes,
rights, and obligations. The first maps showing boundaries of *seigneuries* and *censives* (tracts of land held by individuals who collected rent on them), as well as *plans parcellaires* appeared in the 1500s (Kain and Baigent 1992: 209). However, they came into disuse because of land fragmentation among inheritors, in that they made it more difficult to know who owned what and what rights applied where, depending on who owned the land (examples are St. Germain des Prés in Paris, and Île de France, where Froidour eventually came in to map land ownership) (Kain and Baigent 1992: 209-210).

In the mid-seventeenth century, science and systematic knowledge were used to develop policies to strengthen the power of the French monarchy. In order to “base taxation on land in a manner as equitable as possible, topographic surveys were absolutely essential” (Kain and Baigent 1992: 205). The *ancien cadastre* was a written register of land determining “rights, obligations, and taxes associated with land ownership” (Kain and Baigent 1992: 206); however, it contributed to and was affected by political and economic reforms. Thus, its scope of influence went beyond cartography and mapping. Colbert used to say this was because as people began to realize the potential value of forests, they were deemed important enough to be mapped and surveyed. He also needed an accurate inventory in order to know how he could use the raw material of wood from the forests to build France’s first merchant marine (Kain and Baigent 1992: 212).

A later switch to *plans parcellaires* (maps demarcating parcels depending on ownership (Watteaux 2005: 72)) occurred because they were deemed not only a more trustworthy method
of estate management but also a more scientific approach, given that maps were more likely to be accurate and factual than written descriptions (Kain and Baigent 1992: 210). Surveys explain the details of the land in addition to plotting the area. There were some private estates that had been mapped by their proprietors, but this was mostly in organized, wealthy regions, such as Île de France, where “attitudes were sufficiently open to allow ‘rational’ economic management” (Kain and Baigent 1992: 210). Although the Midi was not unmapped, this disconnect between Île de France and the Midi regarding extent of knowledge and interest was likely political in nature. The border between France and Spain in the Midi was contentious until the political marriage of King Louis XIV to the Spanish Infanta in 1660 (Veyrin 2011: 185). The resolution to the dispute surrounding the French-Spanish border officially brought the Midi under central state power. However, this centralization, while economically beneficial, was nevertheless unwelcome (Veyrin 2011: 226). Naturally, the newly-acquired lands needed to be surveyed in order for the King to be fully informed of that which had become his.

SECTION 2.2 – THE FALL OF FOUQUET

King Louis XIV was aptly called “the Sun King” for his opulence and extravagant displays of wealth (Beik 2000: 1). However, he had been crowned too young to take direct control of France, and thus he was under the regency of his mother and the Cardinal Mazarin until 1661.
The decade that followed the death of the Cardinal (from 1661 until 1672) was termed the “Golden Decade” of Louis XIV’s reign. It began with the fall of Nicolas Fouquet, former superintendent of Finances, whose fall was partly orchestrated by Jean Baptiste Colbert, his successor.

Previous to his death in 1661, Cardinal Mazarin had collected a substantial fortune, whose fraudulent acquisition was prime fodder for a scandal. Similarly, Fouquet had also been involved in suspicious dealings through which he had amassed a large personal fortune, one he displayed extravagantly. Although Colbert was aware that other officials in addition to Fouquet were also responsible for responding to the demands for funds from the Cardinal Mazarin, he made Fouquet his primary target. Colbert was careful to avoid implicating himself, since he had formerly served as the Cardinal’s intendant, or “man of the king,” who reported his knowledge
of the goings-on of the state (Richardt 1997: 130). Finding a scapegoat to explain the
misappropriation of royal funds would serve two purposes—1) It would maintain the memory of
the deceased Cardinal, and 2) It would assuage public outrage over the opulence and excess of
the financiers, and it would drive the King’s intent to rid his kingdom of previous financial abuse
(Aubert 2010: 100-101). Thus—in came Fouquet.

Fouquet was completely unaware of Colbert’s plans to discredit him, and he continued
living his life as he was used to—essentially gouging the Crown and spending wealth on
anything he wished. In few words, he made “l’argent rouler” (Aubert 2010: 103) (in French:
“made the money roll”). However, Colbert was aware that attacking Fouquet solely based on
finances would not be enough, so he had the mission to further discredit him as a danger to the
King. Colbert framed Fouquet’s “small maritime and commercial empire” (Aubert 2010: 103) as
potentially dangerous to the Kingdom’s security. The fact that Fouquet’s fleet was second only
to the King’s undoubtedly played a role in Colbert’s later naval aspirations for France. If a
subject of the King was to have a fleet, then the King’s navy must be in a condition to defend
itself were the kingdom to be challenged.

Fouquet had the idea of creating a commercial fleet with which he could bring products
from the New World to France. Colbert posed the incriminating question—Was this commercial
fleet for the purpose of enriching the Kingdom, or for Fouquet’s own benefit? This display of
private wealth and power could only “incite the envy and the unease” (Aubert 2010: 107) of the
King, Colbert’s very intentions. Colbert was the perfect instrument for deposing the extravagant
Fouquet. The goal was to deprive Fouquet both of wealth and of a means to defend himself. He attempted to defend himself by saying that his wealth was actually going to Cardinal Mazarin, but to no avail. His scapegoat status was justified by the set up that he could have orchestrated a potentially successful coup d’état. After the fall of Fouquet, who was the last great minister of the Baroque Age, Colbert came in as the first great minister of the modern epoch (Aubert 2010: 115).

SECTION 2.3 – JEAN BAPTISTE COLBERT AND THE GOLDEN DECADE

After the fall of Fouquet, Jean Baptiste Colbert assumed the post of Minister of the State in 1661. He was originally in charge of finances, commerce, and the administration of some provinces across the Kingdom, including Picardie and Languedoc. These duties would soon be followed by his charges of the Crown’s own merchant marine, along with ports and maritime fortifications. He served in other positions and became contrôleur general of Finances in 1665.
In 1669, the marine, commerce, the stud farms, and the galleys were all appointed to him as well. Colbert’s goals included making the most of the King’s wealth as well as magnifying the glory of the Sun King, creating new manufacturing and commercial enterprises, and restructuring the state of the study of arts and letters (Aubert 2010: 119). His main goal was the complete exploitation of the King’s estate, composed of tens of thousands of hectares of forest, municipalities, and tolls on transportation and waterways (Aubert 2010: 127).

Colbert’s approach was to pass a number of reforms throughout the Kingdom, the most important of which was the reform of the royal forests. He was aware of the earlier “pillaging” of the forests in Normandy under Cardinal Mazarin, so he was determined to approach the matter differently. Although Colbert was not knowledgeable in the possibilities of the Midi in terms of forestry, he was aware that a considerable amount of the land belonged to the King, and was
therefore valuable to the kingdom. He wanted to empower the state by better managing its territory (Devèze 1962), which included the proper cataloguing and administering of forests. Colbert knew that the Kingdom’s forests were an important, crucial resource and “the only source of primary energy” (Aubert 2010: 127)—wood for heating, beams for Versailles, and material for constructions. Essentially, “a lot of people depended on the royal forests” (Aubert 2010: 127). From 1661, the general reformation of the forests was formally instituted, which would take over twenty years to implement.

Colbert’s main objective in launching his forest reformation was to be able to develop naval constructions, including frameworks, roofs, and masts, and make maximum utility of the prime materials that many of his agents would encounter in the forests in the Midi. Colbert’s interest in building up the kingdom’s naval units was not primarily for the purpose of defense; rather, it was his goal to establish a merchant marine for France, which would create economic earnings directly for the King. The forests were essential in providing primary construction material for his envisioned merchant marine. Hence, Colbert’s interest in finding out exactly what was “out there” along with its state.

In order to accomplish this, Colbert needed to “cense” (carry out a census of) all the economic resources of the kingdom in order to utilize them in the best interests of the King (Richardt 1997: 124). At the same time as Colbert was reforming the surveying of the forests, the Canal du Midi, Pierre Paul Riquet’s engineering marvel that was to connect the Mediterranean Sea with the Atlantic Ocean, was under construction (Mukerji 2009). Since the Canal du Midi
would create a major trade route between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, it would bring added value to the land, given all of the inventory that would be shipped through. In addition, it would provide a crucial avenue through which to transport the wood needed for the merchant marine, as well as for the different raw materials needed to build industry that the merchant marine would return.

As Colbert realized the importance of the forests in the creation of his merchant marine, the need to survey and map them naturally arose. These forest maps would detail not only the area of the forests, but also the different states of the trees and land in the area (for example, old trees versus young plantations). Depending on the makeup of the land depended how these lands were taxed, so there was a parallel effort to develop a more uniform land taxation system. Louis XIV’s previous method of taxation essentially allowed the King to tax whomever however he wanted, without any sort of checks and balances (Beik 2000: 1). Colbert, who created the eponymous economical doctrine of “Colbertism,” believed that taxing production was more appropriate than taxing individuals (Richardt 1997: 130-131). Thus, a factor of production—land—needed to be assessed.

Naturally, there were some privileged classes who were able to work around being taxed, and finding a uniform system under which everyone was able to be taxed was difficult. It was more efficient to establish specific taxation methods per area than to try to unite the entire country under one general tax scheme (Kain and Baigent 1992: 218). Opposition from the nobility and the clergy, who would suffer the most if taxation was based on property owned,
resulted in the failure of Colbert’s 1679 attempt to establish a cadastre over the entire kingdom. Thus, location-specific taxation became the preferred method, examples of which include the généralités of Limoges, Riom, and Paris, which were each taxed differently (Kain and Baigent 1992: 218).

SECTION 2.4 – THE FIRST REFORMERS SENT TO THE MIDI

Colbert decided to begin the surveying of the forests in the province of Languedoc (the largest province), which already had an “embryo” of forest organization. In the fall of 1665, the two intendants of Languedoc, named Bezons and Tubeuf, were sent by the King to visit the Pyrenees, in order to discover new forests that would be exploitable by the merchant marine (Devèze 1962: 138). The two men were also tasked with finding subdelegates and arpenteurs (surveyors), who would be under the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Toulouse, and under no one else (Devèze 1962: 138). However, due to the fact that neither man was a forester, they were not knowledgeable enough to appropriately survey the appointed area. Moreover, they were unable to hire adequate forest officers, in that they themselves were unfamiliar with the tasks that needed to be done.

On October 27, 1665, Bezons and Tubeuf ordered the fencing off of the King’s lands, or placed restrictions on their access. Absent from these new requirements was any attempt at forest conservation. The wood that was allowed to be moved was only to be used for construction and heating, and the king’s trees were to be marked and sanctioned off. However, the given “droit de
carnaler” (the right to appropriate livestock that went onto a person’s land) posed the problem of who could claim what livestock if borders were breached, particularly those delineating the King’s forests (Froidour 1672). These were only some of the impositions attempted by the two intendants.

Unsurprisingly, these efforts were met with difficulty, given that there were no specialists or persons trustworthy enough to carry out the tasks. This was all the more difficult given the fact that the Midi was in poor shape to begin with. Add inexperienced, confused “reformers” to the mix, and more problems could be expected to arise than to be fixed. In short, Bezons and Tubeuf were unable to perform their assigned task. Therefore, a more experienced arpenteur was needed, one who had proved himself in earlier reforms. This perfect candidate was an officer named Louis de Froidour.

SECTION 2.5 – IMPORTANCE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Forest surveyors were but one kind of surveyor assigned to report the state of the land to Colbert, which was necessary in order to expand his projects for the whole of France, including the Canal du Midi and the merchant marine. There were three main types of people assigned to survey and report characteristics of land: academic geographers, military mappers, and forestry officials (Mukerji 2009). Froidour was one of the latter. Although these officials, who included not only arpenteurs géomètres but tax officials and civil engineers, were the lowest-ranked of the
above mentioned, they had the most intimate knowledge of the land, and “what they knew about the land was local and deep” (Mukerji 2009: 33).

Froidour was not unique in that he went to each place he was assigned and combed it on foot, looking at the land and forests themselves, and also at the local population conditions, since these surveyors necessarily interacted with the inhabitants of the lands they surveyed. These locals knew “where rivers flowed, meadows flowered, trees grew tall, and gorges cut through the mountains” (Mukerji 2009: 33). In short, they were the eyes and ears of the land, traversing through woods and open plains and reporting their qualitative sightings, along with the quantitative measurements required of their titles. This is significant because a local knowledge of the land is crucial to conducting appropriate land management depending on the specific location (Fernández-Giménez and Fillat Estaque 2012: 296).

Local knowledge of the land provides knowledge that outsiders may not be familiar with and may not be able to appreciate simply through observation. While “men of science” could come in and give their educated evaluation of the geography of the land and the type of land management being carried out in the area, those who would truly know how things were taken care of, so to speak, would be the locals who had grown up being taught established and continued methods of land management residents of the area had been using for generations. Traditional ecological knowledge is a specific type of local knowledge that involves the social, economic, and cultural aspects of a people’s interactions with their environment (Fernández-Giménez and Fillat Estaque 2012: 287).
This local knowledge was an important part of the cultural heritage of its respective areas, which was in part influenced by the surrounding landscapes and the people’s methods of interacting with them. This indigenous knowledge proved valuable because it helped to complement the technical expertise of the engineers sent to places on which they had never laid eyes previously. In order for these commissioned engineers to be able to superficially comprehend the land practices in these regions, it was necessary for them to keep in mind that what they were observing on the ground were practices that had shaped and been shaped by hundreds of years of human-landscape interactions (Vacarro and Beltran 2010: 25).

A specific example of this legacy of learned cultural knowledge became evident during the building of the Canal du Midi, which took place concurrently with the forest reforms. The indigenous knowledge of the many Pyrenean peasants who participated in the construction of the canal proved essential and invaluable (Mukerji 2005: 2). The Pyreneans, and particularly the Pyrenean women, had a tacit knowledge of the topography of the land as well as experience in building appropriate water systems on their lands (Mukerji 2005: 2). Thus, collaboration between them and the engineers following Riquet’s directions in the building of the Canal du Midi proved necessary to carry out the project.

This is relevant because it shows that despite the fact that the “mountain inhabitants…were deemed wild and unruly by state emissaries” (Mukerji 2005: 3), they were more attuned to nuances in their land than the learned engineers who were outsiders in a land foreign to them. In the mountains, the experts were the Pyreneans themselves. While seemingly
geographically-limited, this local example impacted the whole of France, as this Pyrenean knowledge was essential in the completion of the Canal du Midi. Without its consideration, the establishment of a crucial transportation and communication vein linking France’s two coasts would not have been possible.
CHAPTER 3 – ALL HAIL THE FORESTER: LOUIS DE FROIDOUR

In May of 1666, Colbert hired Louis de Froidour, seigneur de Cérisy, to “complement” the inadequate Bezons and Tubeuf who were “managing” land. Before being commissioned by Colbert, Louis de Froidour was a lieutenant general of the Département des Eaux et Forêts (Department of Waters and Forests) in the north of France, specifically in the regions of Ile-de-France and Picardy. Froidour’s name was already known in these areas, where he had carried out similar reforms as early as 1662. “Colbert knew him to be honest, zealous, and energetic” (Devèze 1962: 141), and he much needed to tackle the huge task of “bringing order” to the state of the forests further south. Froidour was not only well-versed in the technicalities of surveying, he was also confident and unafraid of managing both the uncharted land as well as its so-called “unruly” inhabitants (Soulet 1974: 124). Although Colbert assigned Froidour a partner, officially titled procureur, in Julien de Héricourt, who had also participated in the reforms in Île de France, Froidour was nevertheless sent into an area where he would at times be isolated or potentially harassed (Soulet 1974). Thus, his strong character and attention to detail made him an appropriate, trustworthy choice to tackle this difficult land and interact with its inhabitants.

The organization of the maîtrises and the jurisdictions making up the maîtrises were fluid because they changed with political and administrative reorganizations (Bartoli 2012: 73).
However, there were not many well-informed, competent people to administrate in terms of forest lands. The administration of forests was quite poor in the *grande maîtrise de Toulouse* compared to that in the north of France. Nevertheless, Languedoc was better off than the other provinces in the Midi, where there did not exist any working royal jurisdiction (in terms of forest management).

The total forest area in the *grande maîtrise de Toulouse* totaled 268,413 arpents, the equivalent of 225,463 acres (Devèze 1962: 269). To give an idea of how large the area tackled was, Louis de Froidour and his surveyors made 1008 plans (maps indicating division of tithe payments) (Kain and Baigent 1992: 206-209) of the 257,000 hectares of the woods around Toulouse, an impressive number. In comparison, the woods around Île de France, Brie, Perche,
and Picardie only took up 44 plans (Kain and Baigent 1992: 212). Froidour’s zeal was inimitable, and he visited every forest that fell under the *grande maîtrise de Toulouse*, including the Pyrenees Mountains, where the *pays de Soule* and its neighbor, the region of Béarn, are located. As part of these mountainous communities, the surveyors measured the *Bois d’Aretzu*, the *Bois de Lambane*, and two other forests, which constituted 2705 arpents, as well as another forest belonging to Béarn constituting 1183 arpents (an arpent is equal to approximately one acre) (Devèze 1962: 269). Only one forest is listed as not having been measured (Devèze 1962: 269).

SECTION 3.1 – INADEQUATE STATE OF THE LAND

Before the passing of the Ordinance of 1669, the forest/land management of Béarn, which is located in the Pyrenees and neighbors the *pays de Soule*, was lacking, to say the least (Buffault 1900). In lieu of organized management, there were common practices in interacting with the forest, but they were neither standard nor widespread enough to be termed “management.” According to Soulet, the mountain inhabitants erroneously believed that the forest was an “almost inexhaustible reserve” (Soulet 1974: 126), and thus, did not put forth efforts for its conservation. While the forests were dense and naturally renewable, stands were not taken care of, nor were mature trees used to their greatest potential. The residents cut down the trees they needed for firewood or for construction, and they did not worry about replenishing that which they cut.
Among the damaging practices included the cutting of massive, old beeches, at breast height, and leaving them to rot, or felling several young trees in order to make clogs when one larger tree would suffice. “Their axes equally cut young pines and evergreens without regret…” (Soulet 1974: 127), making no discrimination between stand age or potential quality. The abuse to which they were subjected decimated certain areas in the Pyrenees. Neither forests nor their conservation were regarded with much importance (Devèze 1962). Unfortunately, this lack of attention to (or knowledge of) management of the forests led to a serious degradation in the woods of their communities, and thus, when the Ordinance was passed, it was but one measure to restore the lands in the area.

As far as private land, each landowner could choose to do what he pleased with his land, whether it was for firewood, for construction, for selling his land, or other ends. This was not reserved for seigneurs, but even for common men, who might have lands that had continually been inherited through primogeniture (Bonnain 2005: 260). According to Buffault, the main problem with this type of “free” management is that many landowners did not know what they were doing (Buffault 1900: 514). The problem is that every inhabitant was charged with the conservation of the forests of the community (Buffault 1900: 514), and this was conducive to everyone leaving it to his brother, so to speak. According to Buffault, the fact that everyone was to take responsibility meant that nobody did.

One of the main factors contributing to the supposed substandard management of Pyrenean forests, particularly those located in the pays Basque, is the fact that the landowners
regarded the forests as secondary, seemingly necessary only for heating purposes as well as construction (Buffault 1900). This poor treatment of forests was described as trees being “arrachés”, as in, the trees being torn up by their roots (Buffault 1900: 515). Trees that were torn up by their roots could not be replanted in the same area, much less in the same spot. Not only was this not conducive to management, but it was not conducive to future conservation or future replanting of the forests. This lack of conservation was naturally problematic. Thus, this land was neither available for new planting of trees nor for the establishment of new pastures in the previous areas. This haphazard clearing eventually led to the “abusive cutting” (Buffault 1900: 523) of the forests when the region’s burgeoning population demanded the implementation of new agricultural methods.

In addition, the introduction of new crops brought in from the New World, specifically maize (Gómez-Ibáñez 1975: 36), resulted in the clearing of previous forest land in order to plant this new food product. The bétail, the area livestock, were allowed to forage the forests as well, as they fed on the nuts rendered to the ground by the masting trees of the area (Buffault 1900). Aside from these two uses, forest and cultivated fields, a third facet of land use was pasture (Gómez-Ibáñez 1975: 18). Thus, the creation of pasture was another reason for which forests were also cut. Add to these intensive uses the fact that the inhabitants transforming their lands took neither climactic nor hydrological influences into account, which are principal factors in the productivity and renewal of forest lands (Buffault 1900: 523). This natural progression of abuse
was catastrophic for the nature of the forests. Such was the observed state of the forests when Froidour and his team conducted their surveys.

SECTION 3.2 – CONSIDERATION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

There is a different side, however, to this situation, looking at it from the Pyreneans’ point of view. The relationship between inhabitants of the Pyrenees and the forest was important, in that the forest served as “both a reserve and a refuge” (Soulet 1974: 123). The forest provided tangible goods such as firewood and kindling for industries and homes as well as the basic building material for essential tools. Thus, the inhabitants of the Pyrenees were always “disposed to fight… and even to die” (Soulet 1974: 124) in order to preserve the integrity of the forest that was so key to their livelihood.

In the highland areas of the Pyrenees, such as Soule, collective property was managed by arrangements with “neighbors” (defined as someone who owned a residence (Bonnain 2005: 258)). This grouping of people agreed to the shared management of their properties, including their forest lands. Examples of this included a shared right to harvest timber for firewood, the feeding of pigs on nuts from masting trees (Veyrin 2011: 34), and the transhumance of cattle from forests to meadows appropriately with the season (Bonnain 2005: 258). Thus, communities practiced their own management, and shared responsibilities in doing so. They spread out work amongst themselves and treated the maintenance of their forests as a community responsibility.
Naturally, this contributed to a cohesive sense of community, as this management of collective property “primarily fueled community cohesion” (Bonnain 2005: 251).

A particular example of this communal management was encountered by Froidour in Campan, located in the Midi-Pyrénées region, which surprised him because it was hard to believe that men who had “less reason than bears” were among those who had the most strict regimens when it came to their land (Castéran 1896: 43). The inhabitants of Campan closed off the forests and prevented any felling, so that the areas would have a chance to recover from previous harmful practices (Soulet 1974: 125). Not only were they managing the land physically, they were also engaging in the exercise as a community.

It is important to keep in mind that this “inadequate state of the land” was termed so by the King’s surveyors and reported as such by later French foresters. In order to understand the complete picture, one must consider both sides of the story. Taking the particular example of the Pyrenees, the inhabitants of the area practiced their own kind of land management, which was appropriate both for the environment and for the long-established cultures interacting with it. It was only expected that the impositions by foreign forest officers would disrupt much more than just the physical management of land.

The fact that these practices had been implemented for generations also meant that the Pyreneans had developed a relationship with the land and their surroundings, which contributed to a landscape heritage for the area. Landscapes “preserve the record of many individual actions,
ideas, and societal practices” (Crumley 2000: 195). Thus, the Basque way of managing their land had been molded over time and influenced their culture as well as their physical interactions with their environment. The diversity of the landscape contributed to “cohesive social organization” among the mountain inhabitants (Gómez-Ibáñez 1975: 25).

SECTION 3.3 – THE ORDINANCE OF 1669

A big change came in 1669, when the famed, titular Ordinance was passed. The ordinance changed the style of management of the forests throughout France, including areas that had previously undergone little management, like the Pyrenees, and the communities of Béarn and Soule. After Froidour’s observations and later reporting to the King, the imposition of a new, strict management regime was deemed necessary to bring the land, and purportedly its inhabitants, under royal control. The Ordinance itself was the result of Froidour’s conclusion, post-surveying, that the forests needed to be managed. Only under royal management could Colbert continue with his plan to exploit the raw material produced by the forests—wood—for his merchant marine. The Ordinance introduced the concept of the “Administration of Waters and Forests,” which established rules to follow and commissioned forest guards to ensure said rules were followed.

The wording of the Ordinance did not grant exception to any one country, as autonomous as it may have seemed, and this included both the community of Béarn, and the French Basque communities, including Soule. This was particularly important in these communities that had
been somewhat under their own rule, largely “function[ing] as autonomous republics” (Gómez-Ibáñez 1975: 24), particularly given the fact that they had been relatively recently annexed to the crown. Given this fact, Louis XIV had a strong impetus to establish and enforce control in these areas, and the management of waters and forests, essentially land management, was a perfect way and opportunity to do so. In addition, this officially outdated and superseded previous “forest management costumes,” which had been followed for centuries (Buffault 1900: 523).

This challenged the established, traditional practices of these communities, regardless of the fact that these coutumes were local regulations that essentially protected the states of the forests, particularly in the Pyrenees (Devèze 1962: 165). Hence, another example of the attempts at extensive control by the Crown! (Buffault 1900: 516).

Unsurprisingly, the fiercely independent Béarnais and Basques were not so quick to cooperate with these new blanket impositions, and they demonstrated resistance. They were used to their own customs, traditions, and manner of doing things, and naturally attempted to hold on to these. Notoriously proud, the Basque inhabitants were so confident in their customs that they encouraged their adoption by other surrounding pays (Devèze 1962: 165). Most of the villagers “preferred[ed] to maintain the traditional integrity” of their own practices and rejected the conditions of the Ordinance (Gómez-Ibáñez 1975: 57). Given this resistance, and the failure to adequately enforce the new rules, the Ordinance of 1669 was not followed for 56 years (Buffault 1900: 517). This is a demonstration that the simple “passing of an Ordinance” was not just easily said and done. While the Ordinance may have been written down and signed on paper, its actual
enforcement took time and effort, particularly in communities more reluctant to change. Reformers sent into the field to ensure compliance with the Ordinance faced stubborn peasants who did not want to be told to change their methods of land management, which had been used for generations. Adding to their already difficult task was the fact that communication was slow and unreliable, as the administration was still trying to strengthen its foothold on areas that were used to functioning practically independently of the Crown (Buffault 1900: 517).

A major complaint coming from Pyrenean farmers included the fact that incoming foresters did not take into account the different types of lands composing their area. Thus, the suggested treatment was a blanket solution that was not appropriate for all types of lands. The officers failed to consider not only the different types of soils in their environment, but also the relief of the landscape. While a general rule may be passed to try to encompass a large area, each individual situation must be taken into account as well, in order to ensure the most appropriate management for that specific area. Given the fact that each region has specific characteristics, practices that are appropriate for one region are not necessarily appropriate for others (Crumley 2000: 204). Thus, it is necessary to distinguish management between different types of lands. This is especially important when the entity in power, the Crown in this case, is removed from the area on which it is imposing new regulations. The fact that the original Ordinance failed to take this into account contributed to hostile reactions from the affected communities.

The enterprising Froidour, his work cut out for him, served as the first reformer who entered the area with the solid resolve to enforce the Ordinance of 1669, post his
recommendation for its creation. Nevertheless, it was not until 1738 that new forest administrators, who were more numerous than their predecessors as well as better trained, were able to truly enforce the rules set forth by the Ordinance of 1669. By this time, the control over the Ordinance was such that it was allowed to be amended, in an attempt to satisfy both the communities and the forest officers. To the benefit of the inhabitants in Béarn, Basse-Navarre, and Soule, the potential fines incurred by violators were lowered, given the low price of wood in these regions (Buffault 1900). This mitigation between the previous overly-harsh impositions of the Ordinance, and the consideration of the opinions of the area’s inhabitants made for a more cooperative populace. Froidour and his observations proved instrumental in reaching this compromise.
CHAPTER 4 – LOUIS DE FROIDOUR AND HIS MÉMOIRES

Louis de Froidour wore many hats and was bestowed a handful of titles, but his first official designation by Colbert was “Commissaire député pour la Réformation générale des Eaux et Forêts de la grande maîtrise de Toulouse,” commissioned to him in 1666. However, it was not until February 1673 that his official title as “grand maître” was formally declared by Colbert. While this title was given to him in the seventeenth century, Froidour is still regarded as “the great master of waters and forests” to this day. Even though modern French citizens may not be able to enumerate his accomplishments, his celebrity has not diminished in 400 years.

Although his duties as surveyor had already been extensive, and Froidour was anything but idle during this time, his new official title came with additional responsibilities. In addition to being a reward for his efforts, Colbert reportedly told Froidour he “must apply himself more than ever” not only to the surveys he had already conducted but to maintaining and following up on that which he had already reformed (Vié 1913: 2).

Froidour was first tasked with surveying the land that fell under the grande maîtrise de Toulouse.
Figure 6: Map: The Midi of France. Shows Froidour’s various travels throughout the region, including his voyage in the Pyrenees. (Michel Devèze 1961)
He was commissioned for this duty in 1666, but it was not until 1667, where an arrêt du conseil included the provinces in his assigned area of labor. In 1672, he was sent to the kingdom of Navarre, which was under French influence at the time, despite its operating somewhat independently of the Crown. “They had their own laws and particular customs” (Bartoli 2012: 84), and thus, the surveyors were required to tweak their tactics in order to accommodate the previous land practices already established therein. Just as in Béarn and Soule, the Ordinance of 1669 was not formally enforced until three years after its passing.

Froidour finished his illustrious career in his home base of Toulouse, continuing to travel and survey until the very end of his days. His last extensive voyage was in 1684, when he traveled to the forests of Bigorre. Froidour finished his days in Toulouse and died in the city in October of 1685 (Bartoli 2012: 7). Interestingly enough, both Pierre Paul Riquet, principal architect of the Canal du Midi, and Froidour, are buried in Toulouse’s main cathedral, Saint-Étienne. After his death, Froidour was succeeded by Timoléon Legras (Vié 1913: 2).

SECTION 4.1 – FROIDOUR’S MANUAL ON FOREST MANAGEMENT

In 1668, Froidour produced a book entitled Instructions pour les ventes des bois du Roy, which explained the procedures that foresters and other civil servants should follow if they were to engage in the selling of lands formerly belonging to the king.
This tome was enumerated and detailed, beginning with a lengthy declaration to Jean Baptiste Colbert, of whom Froidour called himself a “humble servant” (Froidour 1668). This preface is a common formality, as the writer must always make a humble deference to his sovereign. A second declaration follows, but this time to the book’s “dear reader,” whom Froidour also regards highly.

In his address to “Monseigneur Colbert,” Froidour presents the work he has done throughout his time as forest reformer, as well as allude to a possible role in the Réformation générale des Eaux et Forêts (Froidour 1668). He is politely asking for permission to present his findings and ideas to make the reformation more streamlined, particularly by addressing the sales of lands belonging to the king.
As is the custom of the era to show such high respect for figures of authority, especially one so close to the king, as Colbert is, Froidour’s prologue is very respectful and humbling of himself. He simply wants the opportunity to show Colbert what he has done so far in the lands of Languedoc, and to get Colbert’s opinion on his work, so that he would be able to further continue his duties. Being so respectful and humble toward Colbert is directly related to being so for the King. It is interesting that Froidour chose to present his findings, without being commissioned to write a book. He wanted to make sure that his work was on the right path, and what better way to present it to Colbert than by writing “instructions for the sale [and management] of the King’s forests”?

In his “avis au lecteur,” Froidour admits that had he not previously surveyed the grande maîtrise of Île de France, he would not have undertaken such a project.

Figure 8: Photograph: “Avis au lecteur” in Instructions pour les ventes des bois du Roy.
(Sara De La Torre Berón 2012)
Froidour also acknowledges the fact that his “dear reader” might be a private landowner, an officer, a general wood-seller, among other titles. He also addresses individuals who might have forests and want to manage them and earn money from them, regardless of who may own said lands. To his principal audience, commissioned forest officers, Froidour says that his book will “teach through theory and practice, everything that is [their] duties” (Froidour 1668). He finishes this second letter by emphasizing the marginal notes included in the book, to explain specific terms to someone unfamiliar with forest matters.

This second “avis” is important because it emphasizes the need for the creation of, and post said creation, the careful review of, the content that is forthcoming. Froidour justifies the need for such a manual, as from his expeditions, he has seen that the management of the forests is anything but uniform. Given the fact that this lack of knowledgeable forest practices has led to an extensive disrepair in the land, Froidour tells his reader that the purpose of his manual is to answer any question a civil servant may have in the selling of the king’s lands.

Froidour officially begins the content of his Instructions by first defining the word “sale” itself, and explains that there are different types of sales, in addition to different types of lands, that could potentially be sold. In so doing, he ensures that there is no ambiguity in what a sale could mean to someone with little experience in selling land, a characteristic common among many. While landowners could handle land disputes themselves, including the selling and buying of lands, when it came to land owned by the crown, the negotiations were much more delicate. In theory, it was in the interests of the people themselves, as the king’s financial gain would be the kingdom’s financial gain, which would in turn implicate the inhabitants of the kingdom.
Following basic definitions of the terms to be encountered later in the tome, Froidour explains the different types of land that could be encountered. He divides different types of lands by not only the maîtrises under which they fell, but also by the names of specific forests themselves. Among these are included lands under the maîtrises of Toulouse, Castelnaudary, and Île Jourdain. Following the detailed index, Froidour dives into the meat of the matter.

SECTION 4.2 – VOYAGE TO SOULE

In an effort to catalogue that which was occurring in his commissioned area, Froidour embarked on several voyages in the grande maîtrise de Toulouse. During these journeys, he conducted official survey work but also wrote his own personal recollections of the areas and their inhabitants. One of these voyages was his 1672 excursion to the western Pyrenees where the valley of Soule is located in what is currently the Pyrénées Atlantiques department. In addition to surveying the area and producing official reports, Froidour wrote what he calls a “mémoire,” a travel journal detailing his exploits in the valley of Soule. In it, as well as in other mentions, he refers to Soule by its Basque name, “Ciboure” or “Xiberoa.”
In his *Mémoire du pays de Soulle*, Froidour introduces the “country” as he calls it, as an old dependency of the land of Guienne, which has two major official centers: Bordeaux serves as the center for “official business” and Oloron serves as the center concerning spiritual affairs. The area called Soule encompasses but one narrow valley situated between the countries of Béarn and Basse Navarre. Essentially, Soule is a valley dotted with smaller valleys, where there is no shortage of villages. The valley is naturally irrigated by the Saison river, which is not a large river, but Froidour says that past Mauleon “it could be navigated comfortably, if the need arose” (Froidour 1672).

The plain surrounded by the numerous valleys is made up of small groves of oak, connected by large, “haphazardly”-scattered trails (Froidour 1672). This is a clue into the
disorganized state of the area, as well as their lack of management. However, despite this disorderliness, there is plenty of wood to go around, as everyone Froidour encounters has access to enough wood to build a house, replenish firewood, and feed his swine. In addition to the oak, there are patches of bracken, heather, briar, as well as tausin oak (*Quercus pyrenaica*). In contrast, the high mountains are planted only in beech, which serves as wood for heating houses. Where there are no woods, the land consists of pasture or bare rocks, depending on which way the area faces, which determines the extent of sun exposure. Areas that face the north are generally covered in wood.

Likely speaking from personal experience, Froidour mentions the typical climate in the valley, which given its height above sea level, is the perfect environment for clouds and fog to form. This constant “rain, snow, and hail” make for the discomfort of the valley’s inhabitants, and it further exacerbates the fact that the land is already “cold and sparse” (Froidour 1672). Regardless, the experienced and hardy residents of Soule know that with a large amount of manure, the land can be made fertile, and as a result, the plain in particular is well-cultivated. The valleys surrounding the plain have little cultivable land, but nevertheless, they are tended to by their owners and produce wheat and millet annually. Regardless, the grains produced are insufficient to feed the entire valley’s population, and so, grain is typically bought from Spain or near the coast of Bayonne, given a fair price. As far as meat, poultry is uncommon, as inhabitants primarily subsist on beef, sheep, or pork, including the famous “jambon de Bayonne” (Froidour 1672).
The inhabitants have a system of fertilizing their fields, despite the fact that they are not communal lands. There are assignations for spreading manure and mowing different areas, and this results in the clearing of manure off communal paths, as well as accomplishes the more important task of fertilizing the areas from season to season. Froidour mentions the existence of several vineyards, as well as a local drink made from fermented apples and water called a “petit cidre” (Froidour 1672). Since sanitation was subpar to say the least, residents of the region tended to drink weak wine over water. However, despite this cultural practice, Froidour interjects that as the population of the valley burgeoned, vineyards were replaced by lands that were cultivated in order to produce more food for the increased number of mouths to feed.

Froidour trekked in the Pyrenees at the time that organized land management was being implemented, so other trees besides beech were being systematically torn down. He also came in right during a huge population growth, so forests were being felled in order to open up more arable land (Gómez-Ibáñez 1975: 34-35). In order to feed the burgeoning population, more agricultural fields were needed on which corn, which had been brought over from the New World (Gómez-Ibáñez 1975: 26), could be grown. This increased amount of corn supported the population growth, which in turn, heightened the demand for the crop, creating a positive feedback.

Froidour concludes his mémoire with a listing of the influential people in Soule, listing them by name. Some of these family names continue on through today (Coughlan 2013).

SECTION 4.3 – OTHER VOYAGES
Similarly to his voyage to Soule, Froidour continued to detail his every movement, including the memoir of his 1672 visit to the pays de Labourd. Labourd is located in the northwest of the valley of Soule, and is home to the present-day city of Bayonne.

![Figure 10: Map: Labourd, in Mémoire du pays de Labourd. (Louis de Froidour 1672)](image)

In this much shorter memoir, Froidour listed different types of woods and forests, classifying some as groves, private groves, stands of tall trees, shrubs, no forest, woods, thickets, and others (Froidour 1672). He painstakingly described everywhere he went, going from day to day and place to place, even though in some places he found nothing relevant to his surveys.

At the beginning of his assignment, Froidour went to visit officials in order to discuss the situation and order of events with them. He related that they come to an agreement that areas should first be surveyed before deciding to implement anything from the reformation. Froidour was understandably cautious with these on-the-ground officials, and he deliberates with them...
rather than trying to go in and enforce the new rules. He was considerate and practical, as he deemed it important to both see the region and talk to its inhabitants or representatives before making and imposing decisions.

When Froidour returned to the coast, he wrote of how the two cities, St. Jean de Luz and Ciboure are separated solely by a bridge. He traveled west from Bayonne to Ascain, went as far east as the edge of Espelette and returned following the coast, a much quicker trajectory because there were hardly any forests to observe. The majority of the places Froidour visited had sparse, private groves, and he names only a few landowners to whom they belonged. M. de Hurtebise, the owner of the forest of Fagosse, is one (Froidour 1672).

Froidour was shrewd and apt at not only measuring, but of determining what type of stand would do well at specific locations. He shows this aptitude in his description of the community forest of St. Pé, which is one of only a few true “forests” in Labourd. In addition to differentiating between first growth forests and second generation forests, he makes the assessment that the area would be more productive if it were to be replanted with “tausin.”

The “tausin” he frequently names is the chêne tauzin (*Quercus pyrenaïca*), a type of oak that is found in southwestern Europe, including the area through which Froidour traveled. It is found in stands, spread out over great surfaces, or in a landscape mosaic. It can also be mixed with other stands. Unfortunately, the *chêne tauzin*’s economic worth is weak, as its only use is as firewood. However, it does have environmental properties. It provides diversity, improves the soil, acts as a firebreak and is a habitat to a number of animals, including birds, while at the same time it diminishes danger from certain parasites.
In addition to his voyage to Labourd, Froidour also traveled to another province at the foothill of the Pyrenees called Nébouzan, which is located at the intersection of the Garonne and Nestes rivers, in the Midi-Pyrénées region. St. Gaudens, its capital city, was originally known as St. Pierre, but it changed names after the eponymous saint was martyred there. Despite the fact that it was the capital, the commune was small and “poorly built,” with buildings constructed mainly out of wood, and the structure doubled as church and parish (Froidour 1672). While the church was dedicated to St. Peter, history went that the actual Saint Gaudens, who lived and was later martyred there, was so venerated by the people of the town that they decided to change the name of the town in honor of the saint. A notable aspect is its written history, survived by as many as ten thousand volumes of records ranging from sales to “endroits seigneuriaux” concerning the town and its surrounding area (Froidour 1672). In addition, Froidour cited the existence of other titles detailing the history and foundation of the town, as well as different religious wars concerning the main church, near where the archives were stored. Many of these concerned the saint after which the town was named and continued to revere. In addition to the church of St. Gaudens, there is a large religious convent of the order of the Dominiques, again emphasizing the importance of religion to the inhabitants of the town.

As other villages such as Valentine and Miramont, became more populated, the prominence of St. Gaudens, which Froidour cites as being “one of the richest provinces,” diminished (Froidour 1672). Even during Froidour’s time, there was evidence of other villages that had been left, including Saint Balcard, of which “remained but a vestige,” in the form of the ruins of a castle tower and other crumbling buildings (Froidour 1672). Towns that had been
previously successful showed evidence of conflict, both within the general kingdom of France, as well as stemming from “particular wars” between neighbors in the region.

Although at the beginning of his narration, Froidour remarked that he only visited communities “considerable enough to merit a visit,” he was thorough enough that he paid visit to myriad tiny communities (Froidour 1672). In Nébouzan, a gathering of as few as five or six houses would be enough to be considered a village or a commune. In Royaume, the women were tasked with working the land while their husbands traveled to Toulouse. In that particular village, one could see them working the fields and the earth, dressed in the typical neutral coloring of gray, blue, and black. Other visits included Capbern, which had a large fountain with clear, refreshing water, meant to cleanse but not purge, and “refresh circulation” (Froidour 1672). Unfortunately, the buildings were not constructed well either, and this unstableness made it so that the town did not have a commercial future. In comparison, he toured two villages, Sauveterres and Pouvre, which were prosperous due to the gray, black, and jasper marble that they produced and utilized in their constructions.

During these travels, Froidour focused more on describing the makeup of the towns themselves, rather than the outside land, which he detailed in his official surveys. However, he does take a note of all the buildings and structures in the towns, providing descriptions that show the use of construction and its importance, or lack thereof, to the respective people who inhabited the areas. He names towns that were well constructed, as well as those that were crumbling in disuse or neglect.

SECTION 4.4 – FROIDOUR’S PERSONAL, NOVEL APPROACH
What made Froidour remarkable and forward-thinking is the fact that he considered the opinions of the people in the lands that he visited, and did not go in thinking of the best way to simply enforce the King’s demands. What he learned from his travels, aided by the fact that he personally surveyed and took an interest in the livelihoods and opinions of the inhabitants he encountered, was the fact that even though they were removed from the so-called “civilized” scope of Île de France, the people with whom he interacted were in tune with where they lived, and followed land practices that had been effectively working for hundreds of years (Gómez-Ibáñez 1975). The fact that these land practices were not uniform was appropriate, because not all of the lands in the area were uniform. For example, the land in Soule was different from the lands surrounding Toulouse, which were not in the Pyrenees Mountains.

In addition, the different pays had different ways of using the land, and they also had different cultural interactions with the land. Instead of being detrimental, this diversity of people-land interactions, was a positive finding, and it confirmed the fact that an attempt at enforcing uniform practices would be better received if said practices were tweaked to the different lands and the different inhabitants occupying those lands. This diversity was evident in the fact that the people with whom Froidour interacted had different cultural practices, which in turn influenced the way they interacted with their lands. Froidour’s actual documentation of the people, and his writings not only in their land practices but also in their different ways of life made his memoires more of a catalogue of human geography, in addition to the technical aspects of surveying with which he was originally tasked.
After writing his 1668 magnum opus to forest management, Froidour became an advocate for the people with whom he had interacted, as he realized that they had their own time-tested methods for using their land in the way that was most beneficial to them. Rather than encouraging Colbert to enforce a Kingdom-wide reform, like that required by the Ordinance of 1669, he instead encouraged altering the conditions of the Ordinance, so that the different areas the measures impacted were appropriate for the specific people and their land. This accomplished two things. The first was that considering local knowledge was beneficial in that it took into account the specific needs and qualifications of the lands affected by the ordinance. The second gain from considering the inhabitants’ local knowledge is the fact that they were being brought into the proceedings on a much friendlier note. Instead of being told what they needed to do and being forced to do it, they were instead granted the ability to weigh in on the policies and explain that which would be most beneficial to them. This would lead to a quicker and more balanced compromise, and would consider both sides of the story—the orders coming from the Crown, and the people whom those orders were affecting.
CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION

Louis de Froidour was Colbert’s main instrument in the process of creating France’s first merchant marine and the establishment of France’s market economy. Knowledge of King Louis XIV’s forests was essential in this undertaking, and thus, entered the forest surveyors and Louis de Froidour. Froidour’s documentation of the extensive “disrepair in the land” of the French Midi was an impetus for a Reformation in the management of the King’s lands, which eventually led to the passing of the Ordinance of 1669. Froidour’s personal travel writings, including Mémoires du pays du Soulle, show the importance of considering local practices along with official impositions. With his influence, the impositions required by the reform were later mitigated in order to satisfy both the King and his subjects.

When Froidour was making his travels through the Midi, he aptly noted the resistance with which the King’s ordinance would be received, in part because it was an imposition that would challenge an established way of life and way of interacting with the land. In order for the King’s proposed measures to be effectively enforced, but more than that, more well-received, the foresters and officials going into these communities needed to take into account the customs and traditions of the people inhabiting those lands. Froidour alleviated the discord between the native inhabitants and the officers carrying out the King’s orders, in order to reach a sustainable, satisfying agreement. His advocacy for the inhabitants of the lands he surveyed was important, and his mitigation of the situation rendered both sides happier than they would have been had the foresters not amended the King’s instructions.
Froidour’s personal documentation of the areas he surveyed gave him a greater insight not only into local land practices, but also into the livelihoods and way of life of the inhabitants of the area. His forward-thinking consideration of the opinions of the local people was necessary in order for the reforms to be effective. This is applied to the present day in a similar situation in the same area—that of prescribed burning practices by the Basque inhabitants of Larrau.

The concept of cultural landscapes takes into account the importance of the land on human cultures and vice-versa, how human impact has changed landscapes and influenced people and their culture. In Froidour’s time, it was necessary to take into account the opinions of the inhabitants of the Midi. In the present day, the Basque people in Larrau continue to employ prescribed burning, without the approval of the government. This is a recurring pattern, where the King and his subjects, the state and its populace, are at odds in relation with new rules and impositions. In order to reach an agreement, both sides must be considered. Indigenous and current practices must not be dismissed, as they are proven, time-tested methods that are also culturally significant. When a new change is made, mitigation must occur in order for both sides to be satisfied.

Evidence from more than four centuries ago adds another notch to the idea of cultural landscapes and how important they are to be considered in the management of new, government-imposed regimes. The Basque people have lived in Soule for hundreds of years, and they were just as resistant to change their practices of land management at the time of Froidour as they are in the present day. Nevertheless, then and now, considering local practices and knowledge can
mitigate government impositions and lead to compromise. Time and again, this has proven to be true.

Louis de Froidour’s careful consideration of the King’s demands and the people’s opinions, and his successful reconciliation of both, is an example for how a forester should think and act. The legacy of the “Father of French Forestry” continues to this day.
APPENDIX A – PRIMARY SOURCES

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Froidour, Louis de

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