

Summary

Many members of the Bourdillon family descended from Abraham Bourdillon of Geneva (1561-1640) have attempted to prove that Abraham was descended from the de La Platière family. Jules Stalla-Bourdillon (1886-1963) was one of these. The letters he wrote to Francis Bernard Bourdillon (1883-1970) describing his research and his thoughts were passed down to me. I have tried to follow up his research using the internet.

I have not been able to confirm that Abraham was descended from the de La Platière family and I could not find any evidence that the coat of arms adopted by Abraham Bourdillon in 1615 was the coat of arms of the Amblard family.

When I saw the work that Octavie Bourdillon (1909-1992) did, based on the research of Léonard Bourdillon (1725-1802), the direction of my 'research' changed.

Whilst Jules Stalla-Bourdillon recognised that not all Bourdillons in the Auvergne were related, I found examples of different Bourdillon families throughout France in the 16th and 17th centuries. Although I found that the Châteauroux (Indre) Bourdillons were descended from the Chaillac (Indre) Bourdillons, I found no evidence of intermarrying of Bourdillon families even when they lived in neighbouring communes. Furthermore, I found no evidence of a marriage linking a Châteauroux Bourdillon with a Geneva Bourdillon, nor of a marriage linking any Puy-de-Dôme Bourdillon with a Geneva Bourdillon.

As there seems to have been no progress in finding proof of:

1. the marriage of Gilbert de la Platière and Anne Amblard
2. the relationship between Jehan Amblard dit Bourdillon and Gilbert de la Platière and Anne Amblard and
3. the relationship between Jehan Amblard dit Bourdillon and Jehan II de Beaune en Gâtinois

I conclude that currently we are unable to prove a descent from anyone earlier than Jean Bourdillon, whose son Abraham was born in 1561 in Bourges (Cher).

Introduction

Like others before me, I have become interested in trying to prove whether or not I am descended from the de La Platière family. My grandfather, Francis Bernard Bourdillon (1883-1970), had written *Note on the History of the Bourdillon Family* in 1939. He also had extensive correspondence with Jules Stalla-Bourdillon (1886-1963) between 1951 and 1955. The letters Jules Stalla-Bourdillon wrote together with some contemporaneous hand-written notes written by Francis Bernard Bourdillon were handed down to me by my aunt Eleanor Unity Vickers (née Bourdillon 1926-2021).

My wife, Catriona (née Glencairn-Campbell), and I attended the 1983 family reunion at Montvillargene near Chantilly as well as the 1992 reunion at Gerrards Cross. Catriona did a large amount of work digitising the available information about the family and researching and documenting details of individual members. It wasn't until 2008, when my 3rd cousin Peter Bernard Bourdillon invited Catriona and me to join an informal family gathering of his close relatives, that my interest in family history was kindled. Nevertheless, it was only in June 2022 that I read Jules Stalla-Bourdillon's letters with care and then tried to find the proof that he said was lacking of

1. the marriage of Gilbert de la Platière and Anne Amblard in 1502
2. the relationship between Jehan Amblard dit Bourdillon and Gilbert de la Platière and Anne Amblard
3. the relationship between Jehan Amblard dit Bourdillon and Jehan II de Beaune en Gâtenois

Other problems that Jules Stalla-Bourdillon identified included the name of the mother of Jehan II de Beaune en Gâtenois and the origin of the coat of arms that Abraham Bourdillon adopted in 1615.

Background

That the Geneva Bourdillons were descended from the de La Platière family was handed down in a *mémoire* supposedly written in the 16th century and updated in the 18th century. Blanche Bourdillon (1844-1924), descendant of a Bourdillon family based in Maringues (Puy-de-Dôme), left it in her will to Léon Bourdillon (1877-1968). Léon Bourdillon apparently saw the *mémoire* and made notes from it. Whether he ever received the *mémoire* is not clear; if he had it, he never showed it to Jules Stalla-Bourdillon, even though the two of them had numerous discussions about the history of the family.

Jules Stalla-Bourdillon outlined what was believed in 1951 in a letter he wrote to several Bourdillons (see <http://histoirefamillebourdillon.fr/Images/Jules%20Stalla-Bourdillon/Lettre%201951%20de%20Jules%20à%20Francis%20Peter%20Bourdillon.pdf> the mobile app Google Translate does an acceptable job).

It was intended to stimulate interest in family history research. Much of what is described was unchanged in the 1983 document written for family members attending the reunion at Montvillargene.

In brief, the story is that

1. our ancestor - Abraham Bourdillon (1561-1640) - was brought to Geneva by his father to escape the Wars of Religion in France. His father married for the 2nd time in Geneva in 1564
2. Abraham's father, Jehan II Bourdillon de Beaune en Gâtenois, lived in Beaune-la-Rolande, which is about 60 km south of Paris. He is said to have been one of those defending Bourges in 1562 but fled to Geneva after Bourges fell to the Catholics
3. Abraham's grandfather, Jehan Amblard dit Bourdillon, was tried for heresy in Riom (near Clermont-Ferrand) in 1549 and banished from the Auvergne. He is said to have gone to live with his wife's family in the Gâtinais
4. Abraham's great-grandfather, Gilbert de La Platière (c.1465-c.1505), married Anne Amblard. The marriage contract stated that if the married couple were to inherit all the Amblard possessions, one of their sons must give up the name 'de La Platière' and adopt the name 'Amblard'
5. it was not clear whether Philibert de La Platière was the father or the uncle of Gilbert de La Platière
6. Philibert de La Platière (c.1438-1508) had a distinguished career in the service of Louis XI, of Peter II Duc de Bourbon and of Louis XII

In the series of letters that Jules Stalla-Bourdillon (JS-B) sent Francis Bernard Bourdillon (FBB) between 1951 and 1955, JS-B describes the research he had undertaken and the thoughts he had. His final letter reminded FBB of the lack of proof of:

1. the marriage of Gilbert de la Platière and Anne Amblard
2. the relationship between Jehan Amblard dit Bourdillon and Gilbert de la Platière and Anne Amblard
3. the relationship between Jehan Amblard dit Bourdillon and Jehan II de Beaune en Gâtenois

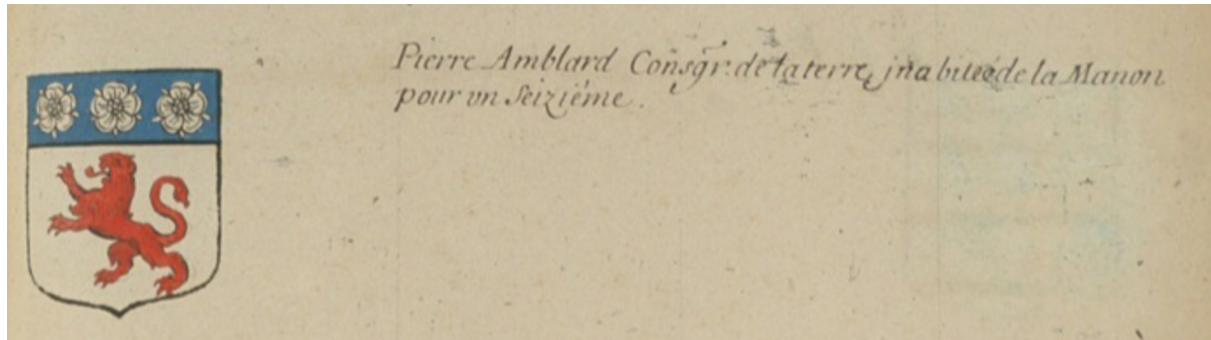
My initial 'research'

I started by seeing if the Internet would enable me to find some of the material that Jules Stalla-Bourdillon had found when he visited Archives or wrote to Archivists. Indeed, it did.

1. Two sources *Le Château des Bordes et ses Seigneurs* by Adrien Bonvallet, 1869 (see

<https://books.google.fr/books?id=IRIYAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>) and *Imbert de La Platière des Bordes, dit Bourdillon, maréchal de France (1516-1567)* by Jean-Pierre Busson, Thesis submitted to the Ecole des Chartes, 1947 mention that Philibert de La Platière had 6 sons but neither mentioned Gilbert.

2. While looking to see if one of the sons mentioned was recorded under 2 different names, I confirmed that Léonarde de La Perrière did not marry Philibert de La Platière and that his son, Imbert de La Platière, was probably born after he married Marie de Fontenoy in 1462. The *Armorial Historique et Archéologique du Nivernais volume 2* by Le Comte de Soultrait, 1879 (https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Armorial_historique_et_archéologique_du/FftKAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1) confirms that there was no ‘Alliance’ between the de La Perrière and the de La Platière family.
3. Elisabeth de Tournebranle was said to be the mother of Jehan II de Beaune en Gâtenois. I have been unable to find any evidence of the existence of Elisabeth de Tournebranle. Six children of Nicolas de Tournebranle have been identified but none of them was named Elisabeth. Nicolas de Tournebranle came from Scotland and was one of Charles VIII’s Scottish Archers and accompanied him on his expedition to Italy in 1494-5
4. I have been unable to find any evidence for the existence of Anne Amblard. The *Dictionnaire des anciennes familles de l’Auvergne* page 6 <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k374278f/f10.item> only says that the family had possessions in the vicinity of Langeac (Haute-Loire) since 1189, while the Savoie Archives https://archives-en-ligne.savoie.fr/ir_pdf/ANC/B/AD073_B_IR223.pdf mention a 1581 inventory of Noble François Amblard, Seigneur de Montagny (Rhône)
5. The marriage of Gilbert de La Platière and Anne Amblard was supposed to have taken place at Sury-le-Comtal (Loire) in 1502. Yet in JS-B’s letter to FBB dated 22-Feb-1953 he says that the marriage contract was partly nibbled away by rats and what remained does not mention Gilbert’s parents
6. The only Amblard coat of arms I have found is one from Provence in the *Armorial de France en 1696* by d’Hozier <http://www.heraldique-blasons-armoires.com/armoriaux/hozier.html>



7. I have found no evidence that Abraham Bourdillon's coat of arms - the crescent with 4 stars (3 above and 1 below the crescent) - was an Amblard coat of arms
8. That the younger sons of the de La Platière family took the name Bourdillon is not in doubt. And Bourdillon is mentioned on several occasions in *Charles VIII et Son Milieu* by Yvonne Labande-Mailfert, 1977. Unfortunately, she does not reference her sources and I wasn't able to track them down from her bibliography. So, I am none the wiser whether it was Gilbert de La Platière or Philibert II de La Platière who accompanied Charles VIII on his expedition to Italy in 1494-5
9. A family tree sent to Frank Wright Bourdillon (1851-1924) by Philippe Bourdillon (1875-1966) of Geneva dated 20-Apr-1911 described "Jehan de la Platière dit Bourdillon", the father of Abraham, as Lieutenant of the Château de la Motte in Châteaurenard (Loiret), before being in command of 15 men defending Bourges (Cher) in 1562. However, the *Histoire de Châteaurenard* by M. Petit 1991 does not mention the Lieutenant of the Château de La Motte, while another source says it was Paul Malingre, Seigneur de l'Aulnay-Bréard, who was the Lieutenant. Paul Malingre married a granddaughter of Nicolas de Tournebranle.

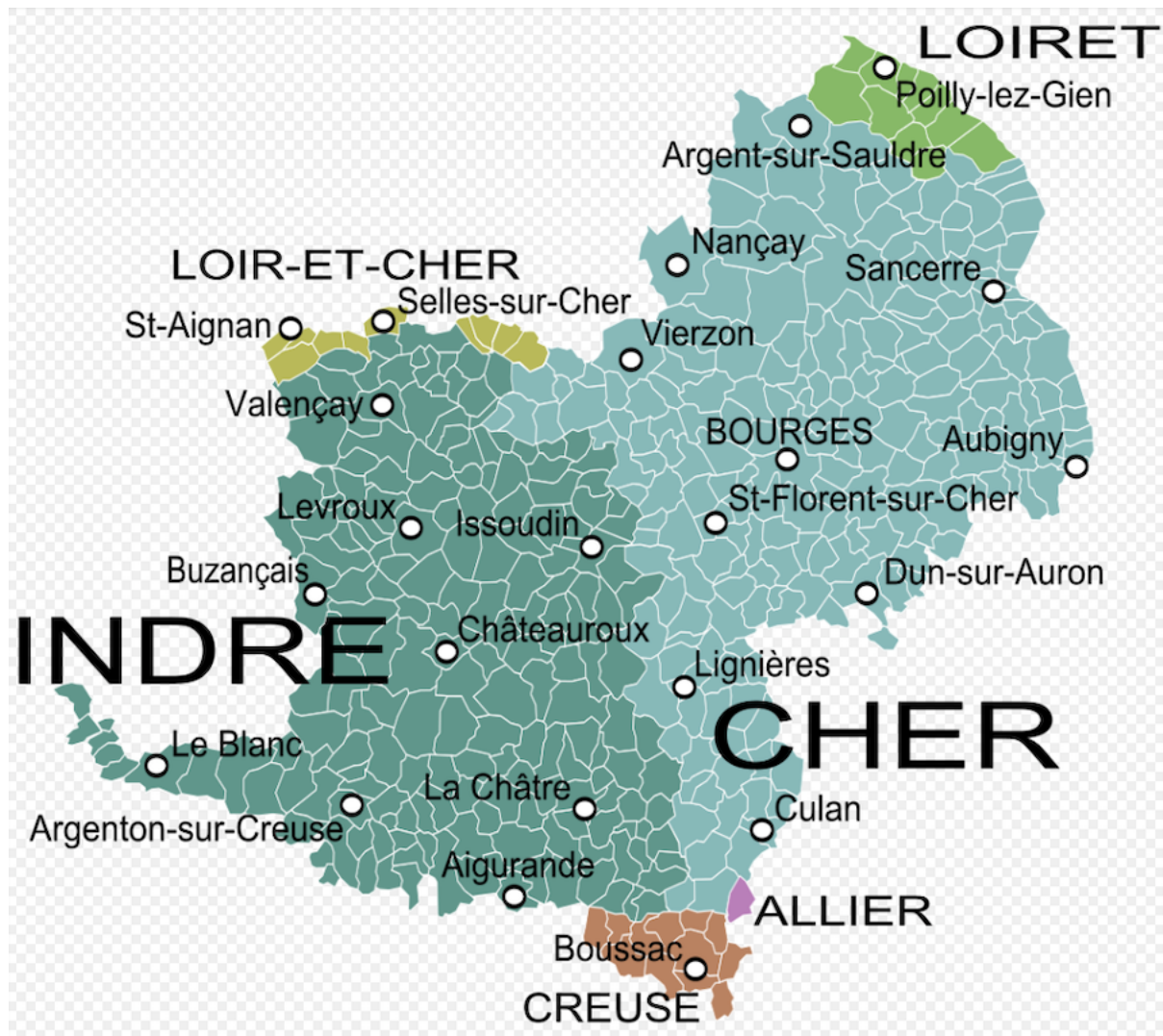
My subsequent 'research'

When I saw a summary of the research of Octavie Bourdillon (1909-1992), known as Vivvy, the direction of my 'research' changed.

The authorities in Geneva kept an impressive set of records from the middle of the 16th century. Some are missing such as the lists of those who came to Geneva between 1560 and 1572 and between 1574 and 1585; also missing are the deaths between 1599 and 1608. One record that is of particular interest is the minutes of the Council meeting of 31 August 1586: "Jehan Bourdillon asks that he be allowed to live in a house in the city, notwithstanding his offer to empty it by sending some of his children away [back to France]". In 1590 he was accused, tried and tortured for stealing leather. The *mémoire* apparently resolved the discrepancy between the transcript of the 1590 trial (which stated

that Jehan was the son of the late Jehan Bourdillon [sic] de Baulne en Gastinoix) and the 1613 document (in which Abraham was declared a Bourgeois de Genève which stated he was born in Bourges in Berri) by saying the latter was an error.

This is a map of Berri showing its relationship to the current Departments



Léonard Bourdillon (1725-1802) was in a privileged position in Geneva in that he was ‘Auditeur’ of the Archives. He wrote several manuscripts describing the Bourdillon ancestry (I have not seen them apart from http://histoirefamillebourdillon.fr/4_1%20Léonard%20Bourdillon%201725-1802.html).

Vivy developed the work of Léonard and made a plausible case that Abraham was *not* the son of Je(h)an Bourdillon who came from the Gâtinais and who married Claude Plantan in 1564 (see <http://histoirefamillebourdillon.fr/Images/Recherches%20Vivy/L'origine%20de%20Bourges.pdf>).

With the help of Google Translate, Vivy states:

Léonard Bourdillon, for his part, gives the following indications, (Manuscript No 1097- Alphabetical, chronological and history of the Bourdillon family, as soon as it arrived in Geneva, at the end of the sixteenth century).

"Abraham, eldest son of Jean. His birth in Bourges in 1561, his arrival in Geneva in 1571, his acquisition of a house and garden at Rue du Temple in St. Gervais in Geneva in 1580, his wound at the Battle of Pont de la Menoge in 1590, his marriage in 1594 with Jeanne Favre, his conduct at the Escalade in 1602, his admission to the Bourgeoisie with his two sons in 1613, his widowhood in January 1640, his second marriage in August 1640 with Louise Gros, her will in 1642, his petition in 1643, his death on November 11, 1647 at the age of 86, his inventory in 1648."

His first wife, Jeanne Favre, was a granddaughter of Pierre Favre, Bourgeois of Geneva, who had married Antoinette Bourdillon, daughter of Simon Bourdillon.

On December 30, 1643, Abraham Bourdillon sent a request to the Council in which he asks to be released from 24 guilders for the expenses of the guards which he paid annually, since he was over 80 years old. It was reduced to 12 guilders by the judgment of the Council and signed by Colladon.

We have seen in the Archives of Geneva the act of the acquisition and construction of a house in Rue du Temple and a garden going as far as the banks of the Rhône, in which he installed a large manufactory of leather in 1580. He therefore had the money to make this purchase.

*If he was the son of Jean de Beaulne in Gastinois,
-how could he have left his father in misery in 1590?
-how could he have married in 1594, Jeanne Favre, of an honourable family, if he were the son of a thief sentenced to the rope and the strappado in 1590, four years before his marriage?*

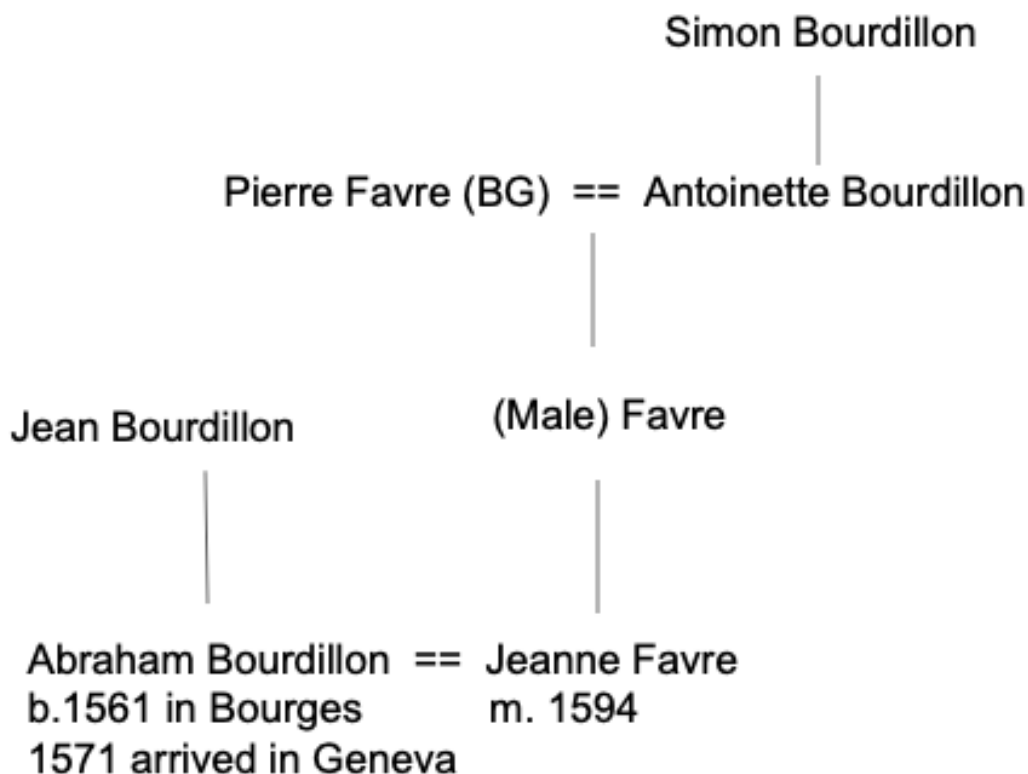
We have had in our hands the death certificate of Abraham (Archives de Genève). The certificate specifies that Abraham Bourdillon died at his home in Rue du Temple de St. Gervais in Geneva, Bourgeois and Leather Manufacturer, aged eighty and six, at 9 o'clock morning, November 11, 1647.

Vivy's arguments are that:

1. the contention that Abraham's birthplace being Bourges in Berri, as stated in the document which created him a Bourgeois de Genève in 1613, is unlikely to have been wrong
2. it is most unlikely that a member of one of the respected Favre families in Geneva would have married the son of someone who had been tried for stealing 4 years previously
3. it is most unlikely that Abraham would have been created a Bourgeois de Genève in 1613 if his father had been tried for stealing

To this can be added the inconsistency of Abraham's father buying his son a house and garden in 1580, and then asking the Council in 1586 if he can live in a house in the city if he sends his sons back to France.

A summary of Vivy's work is:



Legend: BG = Bourgeois de Genève (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourgeoisie_of_Geneva)

As Vivy mentioned that she saw in the Archives de Genève the document describing Abraham's purchase of the house and garden in the Rue du Temple de St Gervais when he was aged 19, from where did Abraham get the money?

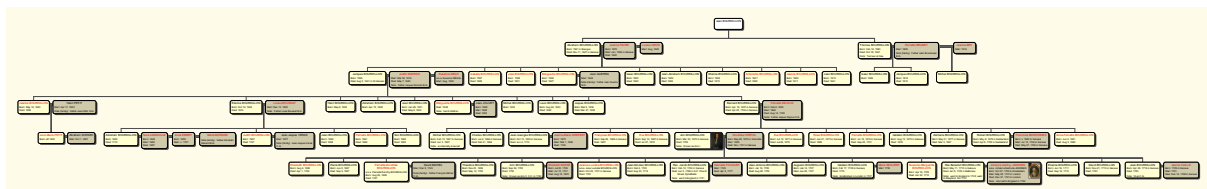
Presumably his father, Jean, provided the money but we know nothing about Jean. What seems clear is that even if Jean Bourdillon was in Bourges in 1562 at the time of the siege, he had sufficient resources to enable Abraham, aged 19, to buy a house and garden in Geneva in 1580 and to set up a leather manufactory.

One of the implications of Vivy's conclusions is that there were at least 3 different Bourdillon families in Geneva in the 2nd half of the 16th century:

1. Je(h)an Bourdillon who came from the Gâtinais and who married Claude Plantan
2. Abraham Bourdillon, son of Jean and born in Bourges, and
3. Pierre-Jean Bourdillon, who may or may not have been a descendant of Simon Bourdillon

There also seems to have been more than one Favre family in Geneva, one of which was "Noble". I have been through all the indexed mentions of Favre in *Notices Généalogiques sur les Familles Genevois* by J-A Galiffe, 1892-5 (see <https://doc.rero.ch/record/12665/files/?ln=en>) There are many persons with the name Favre mentioned in the 16th and 17th centuries and some in the 15th.

Based on *Notices Généalogiques sur les Familles Genevois* by J-A Galiffe, 1892-5 (see <https://doc.rero.ch/record/12665/files/?ln=en>), this family tree shows 5 generations of the descendants of Jean, the father of Abraham Bourdillon.



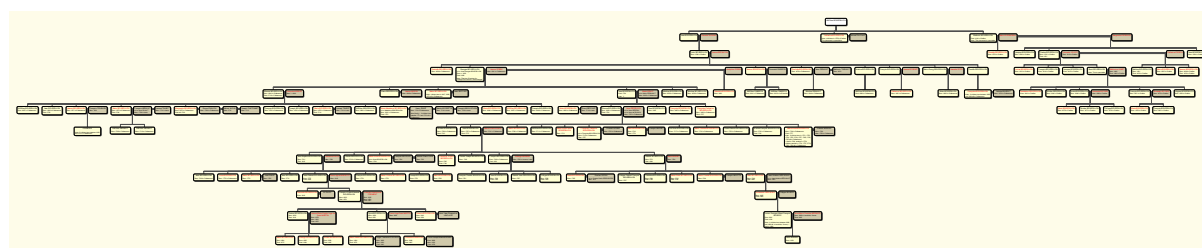
In Jules Stalla-Bourdillon's letter to Francis Bernard Bourdillon dated 23-Feb-1953 he states that Blanche Bourdillon told Léon Bourdillon that the Bourdillons in the Auvergne from Issoire, Mirefleurs and St Privat were not related to the Bourdillons from Maringues. Having subscribed to the genealogy website <https://en.filae.com>, I sought to find out how many other Bourdillon families there might have been in France. When conducting searches on <https://en.filae.com>, I excluded entries found in either public or private family trees. The earliest <https://en.filae.com> records I found mentioning Bourdillon are in the 2nd half of the 16th century. They are from Saint-Germain-en-Laye (Yvelines) in 1556, Chaillac (Indre) in 1565, Angers (Maine-et-Loire) in 1568, Souvigny (Allier) in 1582, Bordeaux (Gironde) in 1584, and Thouars (Deux-Sèvres) in 1588. Châteauroux (Indre) is not mentioned until 1609.

Amongst the things Léonard Bourdillon (1725-1802) did was to go to Châteauroux (Indre) to see if he could find out who the father of [Jean-]Georges Bourdillon (c.1620-1680) was. <https://en.filae.com> enabled me to determine that the parents of [Jean-]Georges Bourdillon were Louis Bourdillon and Jeanne Bezancon:



It also appears that the Châteauroux Bourdillons were descended from the Chaillac Bourdillons. Although [Jean-]Georges Bourdillon (c.1620-1680) married Jeanne Robin (1641) in Châteauroux, his father Louis was born (1596) in Chaillac (40 km south-west of Châteauroux). And based on what I have seen, it's highly likely [Jean-]Georges Bourdillon's grandfather and great-grandfather were also from Chaillac.

This is my construction of the family tree of the Châteauroux Bourdillons and of the Chaillac Bourdillons



Châteauroux (Indre)

I have found no evidence of a marriage linking a Châteauroux Bourdillon with a Geneva Bourdillon. Furthermore, there is no evidence of a marriage linking a Chaillac Bourdillon or a St-Benôit-sur-Sault Bourdillon with a Châteauroux Bourdillon. Nor could I find a marriage linking a Chaillac Bourdillon with a Bourdillon from St-Benôit-sur-Sault, communes that are only 5 km apart.

The 1983 document states that Léonard Bourdillon (1725-1802)

1. made Antoine-Jean-Louis Bourdillon (1782-1856), his 2nd cousin once removed and only 20 when Léonard died, responsible for keeping the library in Geneva in order
2. in 1785 received two relations on the introduction of François Bourdillon of Châteauroux (1749-1801). They came to claim an inheritance in Savoie. One was the son of Anne Bourdillon (b. 1744) and the other the son of Marie Bourdillon (? b.1709)

3. in 1788 M. Sallé, brother-in-law of François Bourdillon (1749-1801), came to see him and promised to add Léonard to the genealogy of his family
4. in 1788 received a letter from Robert de Bourges, a son-in-law of Mme Moreau-Bourdillon (1724-1777)
5. in 1799 received a letter from François-Charles Bourdillon (b.1781), son of François Bourdillon (1749-1801), saying that his father had seen Léonard's brother François (1737-1817) when the latter made a trip to the Berri

There was clearly a belief at the time that the Châteauroux Bourdillons were related to the Geneva Bourdillons. Antoine-Jean-Louis Bourdillon (1782-1856), who left Geneva and set up business in Paris, travelled widely in France, Italy and Spain. He returned to live in Geneva in 1847, but left his library to the town of Châteauroux (see <https://mediatheque.ville-chateauroux.fr/lire-ecouter-voir/dossiers/portraits/39-jean-louis-bourdillon>)

Léonard said that Abraham was born in Bourges (Cher) and that Abraham was Jean's elder son. Whilst it seems very likely that the Jean Bourdillon, who married Pierette Durand, was born in Chaillac and their son Louis was born in Chaillac, it is possible that this Jean Bourdillon

1. lived and made his money in Bourges
2. had a wife whom he married in Bourges and by whom he had Abraham in 1561
3. left Bourges for Geneva in 1571
4. had gone back to Chaillac sometime after Thomas was born in 1580
5. married Pierette Durand
6. had Louis in 1596

If this was the case, Jean Bourdillon was at least 55 years old when Louis was born. A more likely scenario is that Jean Bourdillon came from a different Bourdillon family based in Bourges. Either way, the fact that there is no mention of him in the Geneva records is disappointing.

On <https://en.filae.com> I found that in Bourges (Cher) there were 3 Bourdillons in the 17th century

Noël Bourdillon who married Nicolle Reignier in 1637

Charles Bourdillon who married Martine Rimard in 1647

Catherine Bourdillon who married Gilles Gallebois in 1652

but no Bourdillon from the 16th century. The earliest entry I found on <https://en.filae.com> for Bourges was 1598 for a Barbier.

I could not find on <https://en.filae.com> a Reignier, a Rimard or a Gallebois in Châteauroux or in Chaillac. In *Notices Généalogiques sur les Familles Genevoises* by J-A Galiffe, 1892-5 (see <https://doc.rero.ch/record/12665/files/?ln=en>)

there is mentioned a Reignier de Montmoyen, Seigneur de Chissé, in Geneva in the 16th century.

It would be interesting to know who combined the coat of arms of Abraham Bourdillon with the Pilgrim's Staff that is the coat of arms of the Châteauroux Bourdillons. The combined coat of arms was sewn onto a poche that was believed to have been given by Jules Stalla-Bourdillon to Francis Bernard Bourdillon when FBB visited JS-B in September 1954.



Auvergne

I have found no evidence of a marriage linking any Puy-de-Dôme Bourdillon with a Geneva Bourdillon

In Jules Stalla-Bourdillon's letter to Francis Bernard Bourdillon dated 23-Feb-1953 he says

1. in 1908, through a friend of his wife, Léon Bourdillon learnt of the existence of Blanche Bourdillon and went to visit her
2. Blanche told Léon that there were several Bourdillon families in the Auvergne unrelated to Abraham Bourdillon and his descendants, in particular those from Mirefleurs, St Privat and Issoire
3. according to Léon and Blanche the Auvergne Bourdillons did not originate from Vollore-Montagne
4. Léon told JS-B that François Bourdillon (1737-1817) went to Maringues to renew relations with the Auvergne Bourdillons
5. Léon said that Blanche possessed a miniature of François Bourdillon as well as a family portrait painted by Ragaud. I have been unable to find a painter named Ragaud from France or Geneva; it seems unlikely it was Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659-1743) who trained in Montpellier from 1671-5, then was in Lyon from 1675-81 and then moved to Paris in 1681

On <https://en.filae.com> I found 11 persons with the name François Bourdillon in Puy-de-Dôme between 1760 and 1817:

in Celles-sur-Durolle (3 persons), which is 25 km from Maringues and 8 km from Vollore-Montagne

in Viscomtat (1 person), which is 25 km from Maringues and 4 km from Vollore-Montagne

in Billom (1 person), which is 25 km from Maringues

in Mirefleurs (3 persons), which is 35 km from Maringues

in St Maurice (1 person)

in St Beuzire (1 person), which is 10 km from Maringues

in Lussat (1 person), which is close to St Beuzire

in St-Privat (0 persons)

This too would seem to add to the evidence that there were many different Bourdillon families in France.

Conclusions

1. there were several Bourdillon families in France in the 16th century, not just in the Auvergne. They did not seem to intermarry even when they lived 5 km apart as in the case of Chaillac (Indre) and St-Benoît-sur-Sault (Indre). The one exception is Louis Bourdillon who was born in 1596 in Chaillac (Indre), who married Jeanne Bezancon and who had his children in Châteauroux (Indre).
2. I cannot find evidence of a marriage linking a Châteauroux Bourdillon with a Geneva Bourdillon
3. I cannot find evidence of a marriage linking any Puy-de-Dôme Bourdillon with a Geneva Bourdillon
4. I cannot find any evidence that the coat of arms adopted by Abraham Bourdillon in 1615 was the coat of arms of the Amblard family
5. Developing the work of Léonard Bourdillon (1725-1802), Octavie Bourdillon (1909-1992), known as Vivy, presented a plausible case that the Abraham Bourdillon (1561-1740), from whom we are descended, was not the son of the Jehan Bourdillon de Beaune en Gâtinois who married Claude Plantan in Geneva in 1564
6. Accepting that, together with the lack of progress since 1955 in finding proof of:
 1. the marriage of Gilbert de la Platière and Anne Amblard
 2. the relationship between Jehan Amblard dit Bourdillon and Gilbert de la Platière and Anne Amblard
 3. the relationship between Jehan Amblard dit Bourdillon and Jehan II de Beaune en Gâtinois

I conclude that currently we are unable to prove a descent from any Bourdillon earlier than Jean Bourdillon, whose son Abraham was born in 1561 in Bourges (Cher).