



Transformations to land distribution and evolution of the plantation

The evolution of the boundaries between estates enables us to trace the changes in land distribution in one district of Reunion, during the period when sugar-cane started to be adopted as a crop. The first estate was the result of an initial concession granted in 1698, initially used for food crops and cotton. Throughout the 18th century, it was divided up following legacies and sales.

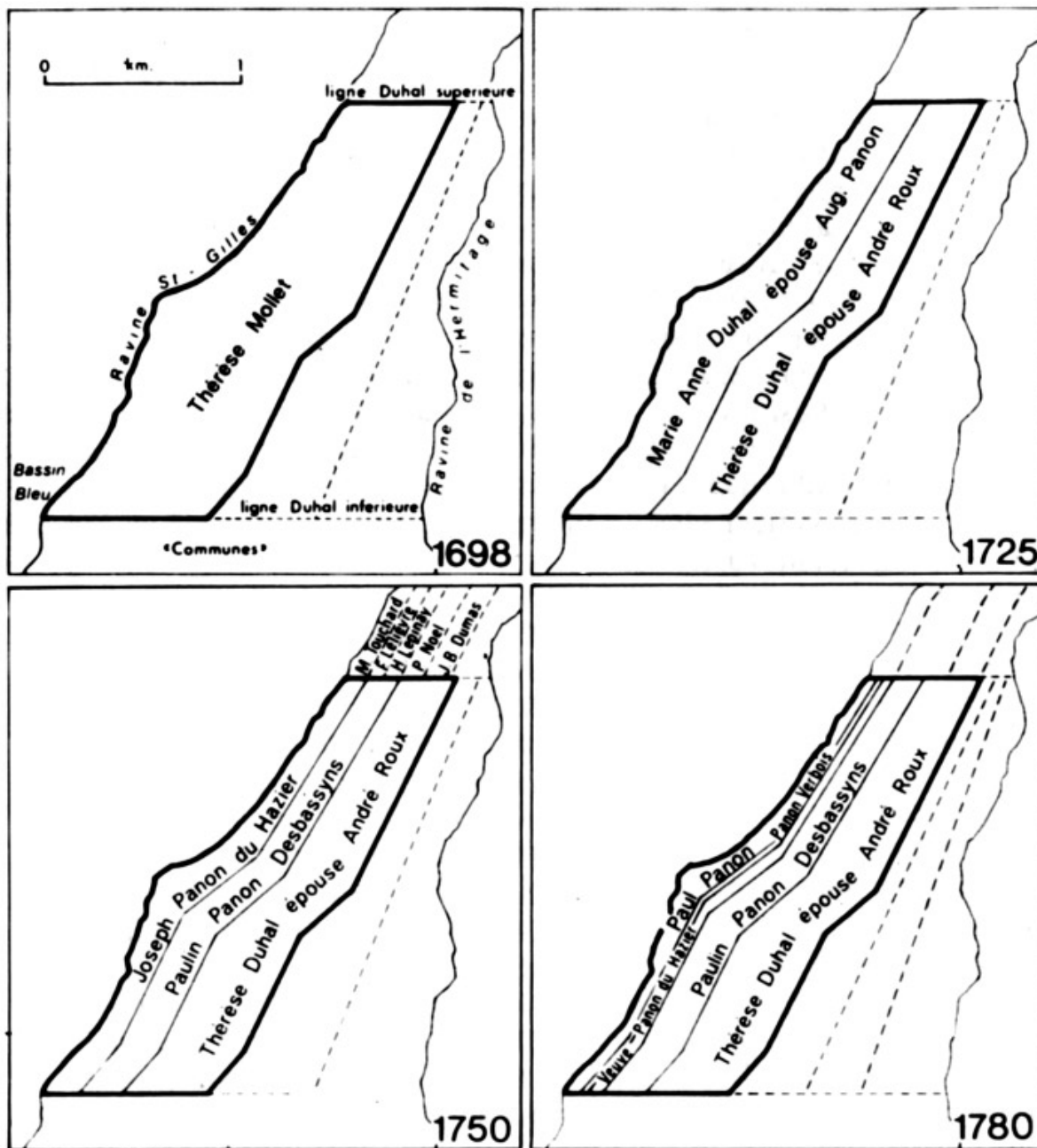
The construction of a sugar refinery went hand-in-hand with an effort to control land-use by the factory owners and the extension of sugar-cane. The recreated estate then went back to the area covered during the first concession and was then enlarged. The replacement of plantations-refineries by factories was a first blow to the estate, which could no longer count on direct profit being made and adopted the system of share-cropping. The estate maintained its unity, but without achieving true economic gain.

It was then bought up by the huge group of Sucreries de Bourbon, which increased the tendency towards concentration and monoculture in the district. We can note, however, that one area, consisting of two narrow strips each measuring 25 rods in width and separated by a third strip of similar width, which the large estate managed to preserve, has survived to this day and is used as a basis for small landowners.

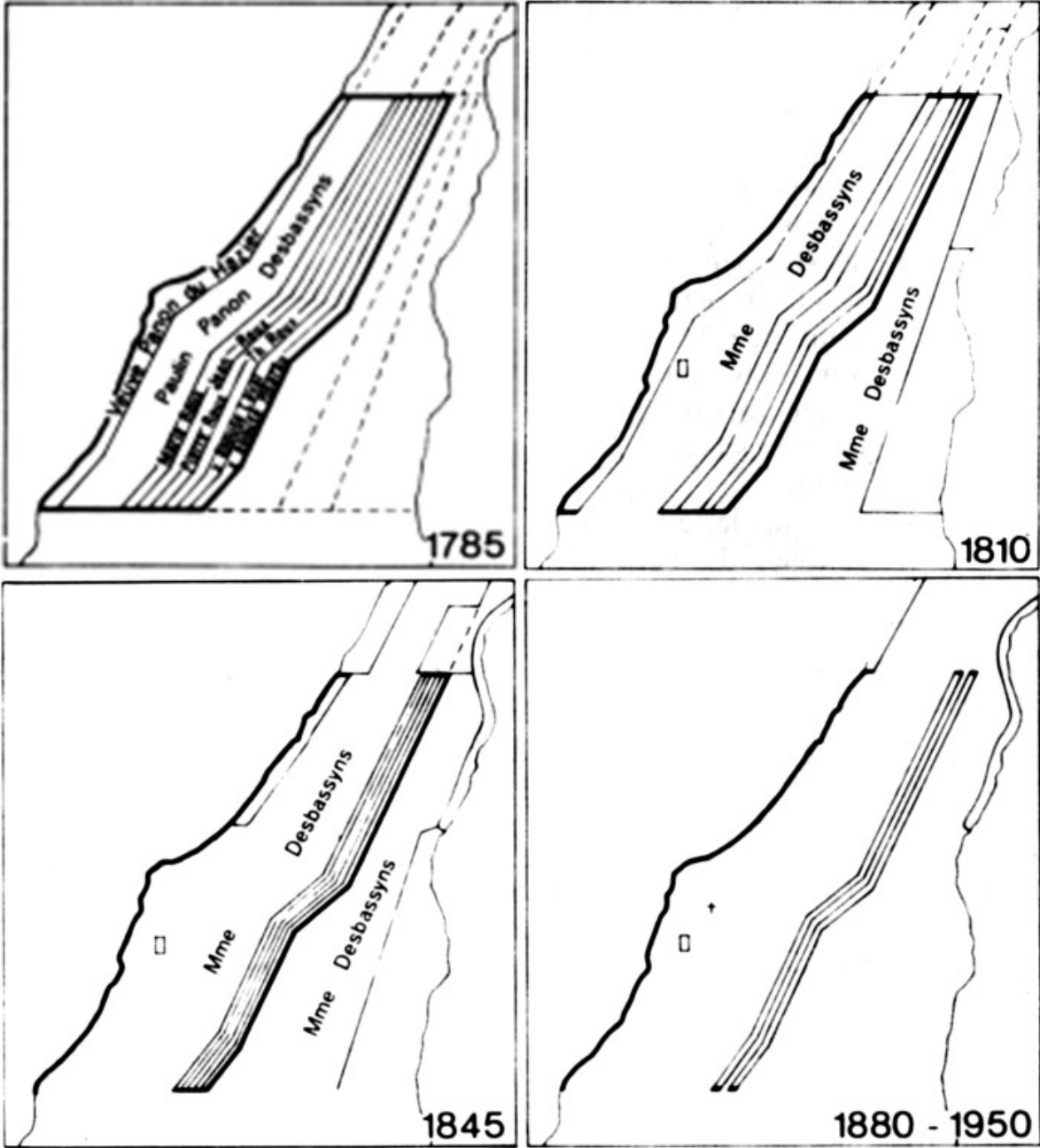
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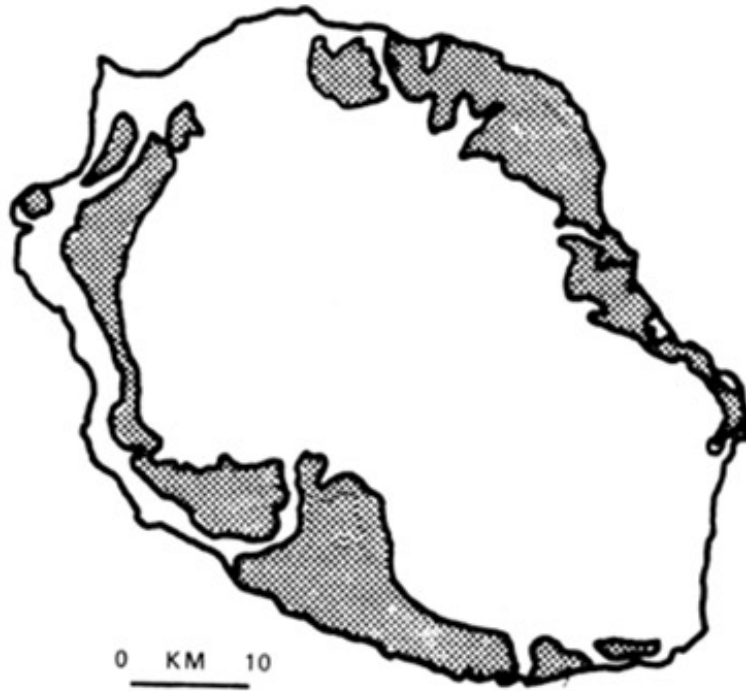


Maps drawn up following the indications of the hand-written journal on the history of Saint-Gilles-les-Hauts by Father Meersseman



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DISTRIBUTION OF SUGAR ESTATES



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